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Integral Views of Wisdom

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Studies of Wisdom:
A Special Issue of Integral Review

Roger Walsh and Jonathan Reams, Editors

Wisdom is radiant and unfading,
and she is easily discerned by those who love her,
and is found by those who seek her….
To fix one's thought on her is perfect understanding,
And one who is vigilant on her account
will soon be free from care.
The Wisdom of Solomon, 6:12, 15.

Across cultures and centuries, wisdom has long been regarded as one of the greatest of all virtues. Yet in recent centuries wisdom largely disappeared from Western awareness, and the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* laments that "the concept of wisdom has come to vanish almost entirely from the philosophical map." So much has it disappeared that when one of us (RW) became interested in the topic and asked the chair of the University of California philosophy department what to read, he replied "Well, we made a great start 2,500 years ago, but things have gone downhill from there."

Why it disappeared is an intriguing question awaiting an integral analysis, but that it disappeared is a tragedy. For like the sorcerer's apprentice, humankind now possesses enormous knowledge, awesome power, and little wisdom, and that imbalance is a recipe for disaster. As Robert Sternberg (2003), former president of the American Psychological Association lamented, "If there is anything the world needs, it is wisdom. Without it, I exaggerate not at all in saying that very soon there may be no world (p. xviii)." Humankind is now in a race between sagacity and catastrophe.

Fortunately, there is now growing interest in wisdom in psychology, where publications—which only forty years ago were virtually nonexistent—increased seven fold from the 1970s to 2008 (Meeks & Jeste, 2009). Reviews are now available on general wisdom (Baltes, 2004; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Brugman, 2000; Staudinger & Glück, 2011; Sternberg & Jordan, 2005) as well as on the varieties or subtypes of wisdom (Trowbridge & Ferrari, 2011; Walsh, 2011, 2012) including personal and practical wisdom (Ferrari & Westrate, 2014; Küpers & Pauleen, 2013; Staudinger, 2014). Measurement scales have been compared (Gluck et al., 2013) and diverse perspectives have been applied to sagacity studies such as cross-cultural (Walsh, 2014; Yao, 2006) philosophical (Cooper, 2012; Curnow, 1999), and integral (Walsh, 2012). There have also been reviews of the implications of wisdom for aging (Sternberg, 2005) and psychotherapy (Germer & Siegel, 2012), for transmission across cultures (Walsh, 2009), and for education (Bassett, 2011; Ferrari & Potworowski, 2008; Maxwell, 2014; Steele, 2014; Trowbridge, 2007).

But the wisdom being researched is far from the kind of wisdom that was historically valued. What is usually studied by experimental measures is practical wisdom, or what was traditionally known as *phronesis*. That's important, of course. However, it is also far removed from the deeper transrational wisdom sought in the world's religious and contemplative traditions, a wisdom variously known as *prajna* (Buddhism), *jnana* (Hinduism), *gnosis* (Christianity), *ma'rifah* (Islam), or c*hokhmah* (Judaism). This wisdom is not only transrational, but also soteriological, i.e. capable of bringing enlightenment, liberation, or salvation. As the Hindu sage Shankara put it, "Just as there is no cooking without fire, so freedom cannot be accomplished without wisdom" (Freke, 1998, p.56).

But of course transrational wisdom – or transrational anything – doesn't fit into the conventional mainstream psychological framework, and can't be easily measured. What gets researched is what does fit within that framework, and what can be measured. Measurement and qualitative experiments are enormously important, but they are also partial. For not everything that matters can be measured, and not everything that counts can be counted. The result is that the deeper dimensions of wisdom are being overlooked. As Wittgenstein (1953) warned, "The existence of the experimental method makes us think we have the means of solving the problems which trouble us; the problem and method pass one another by" (p. 232). No wonder Richard Trowbridge (2011) titled an article "Waiting for Sophia."

In addition, current psychological research is little informed by philosophy or cross-cultural studies. For example, *The Handbook of Wisdom* (Sternberg & Jordan, 2005) has only two pages on "Eastern wisdom" despite the fact that Eastern philosophical-religious-contemplative traditions have focused on wisdom for millennia.

What is needed is an intellectual framework comprehensive enough to situate and integrate all forms of wisdom: rational and transrational, psychological and philosophical, religious and contemplative, Eastern and Western. Today there are various theoretical approaches emerging from diverse sources that address this need for a comprehensive, integrative meta-framework that can encompass such a range of approaches to phenomenon. Integral theory as developed and articulated by Ken Wilber, with its encompassing synthetic conceptual framework, seems ideally suited for this kind of comprehensive integrative approach. This special issue of *Integral Review* represents a first small step in bringing Wilberian integral theory[1] and wisdom studies together.

The confluence of wisdom and integral studies offers several potential benefits. The first is simply to encourage the renaissance of interest in wisdom. The second is obviously to begin to integrate these two fields for their mutual enrichment. The third potential benefit is to clarify the relationship between wisdom and development. Many researchers assume that wisdom is associated with higher stages of development, but the nature of this association remains vague. With a deep interest in development and its implications, integral studies may have much to offer here.

[1] We will write 'integral theory' in its generic form for convenience and it is to be understood that we are referring more specifically to Wilber's articulation of the term.

Wisdom has been a worldwide pursuit throughout history, and religious-philosophical systems such as Judaism, Confucianism, and Daoism, as well as psychologies such as yoga and Buddhism, have explored wisdom for thousands of years (Walsh, 2014; Yao, 2006). With their long term interest in cross-cultural studies, integral researchers are well situated to adopt and encourage a more global approach to wisdom.

This issue offers a variety of integrally informed studies of wisdom. While drawing on the work of seasoned wisdom researchers, we particularly wanted to highlight the work of younger researchers who recently completed their theses. These include Drew Krafcik, Sharon Spano, Jonathan Rowson, and Juliane Reams.

Drew Krafcik and Sharon Spano both studied a topic of great interest to both wisdom and integral researchers. Their central questions were, "Is wisdom intimately related to psychological development, and especially to postconventional or transpersonal development? If so, what is the nature of that relationship?"

Drew Krafcik did a much needed and all too rare kind of study. He examined – not average people, who have been the usual subjects of wisdom studies – but rather wisdom exemplars, i.e. people viewed by their peers as exceptionally sagacious. Moreover, he performed both qualitative and quantitative studies – in-depth interviews as well as a variety of standard psychological measures of personality and performance, including the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT). The result is an exceptionally rich study of exceptional people.

Sharon Spano also focused on questions of development. However, her work used business leaders to look for a relationship between wisdom and ego development as measured by the SCTi-Map (Susanne Cook-Greuter's version of the Sentence Completion Test). She also examined nuances between and within developmental stages and reflective, cognitive and affective dimensions of wisdom. Both her study and Krafcik's found only modest evidence for a straightforward relationship between wisdom and developmental stages.

Jonathan Rowson is an intriguing polymath who has been a grandmaster and British chess champion, a student of diverse topics ranging from philosophy and psychology to culture and spirituality, and has written on topics as diverse as chess, climate change, and spirituality. The interview with him by Jonathan Reams (who also provides a brief overview of Rowson's (2008) dissertation as background) is similarly wide-ranging and beautifully demonstrates an integral mind at work. It also begins to enter into some of the less researched territory noted above by bringing questions of soul and spirituality into the conversation about wisdom.

One of the crucial questions of our time is whether we can find ways to cultivate wisdom. This was the central question for contemplatives and philosophers throughout most of history. Juliane Reams approached this question by studying students in a nontraditional educational format which included an emphasis on happiness and wellbeing. Juliane was intrigued by the possibility that this curriculum might also foster wisdom and sought to understand how the seeds of wisdom might be sown in such a setting. This is a vitally important question because if we are

to foster wisdom in the culture at large, it will have to be through wide-spread approaches such as the education system and practices such as meditation.

Caroline Bassett has contributed several fine reviews of the literature and in her present article she focuses on the link between wisdom and development. She uses several of the leading theories to view wisdom through their respective lenses. She synthesizes these and her own ideas in her emergent wisdom model.

Roger Walsh has had a long term interest in integral studies and more recently an interest in wisdom studies. One idea which lies at the heart of both topics is that perspectives – how and where we look at things from – are enormously important determinants of wellbeing, maturity, and wisdom. This article therefore focuses on perspectives, and the kinds of perspectives associated with wisdom and maturity.

Jonathan Reams has a long term interest in integral studies, as demonstrated by his editorship of this journal. However his interest in wisdom is more recent, and at this point I (JR) wish to say a few words to describe the impact of immersing myself in these the process of editing these articles and encountering the wisdom literature.

While the notion of cultivating wisdom has always been a part of my spiritual practice, it is only in the last few years that I have also encountered research in this field. Thus to me it was only natural to look for and be drawn to the less tangible aspects of wisdom, those facets not amenable to measurement. At the same time, I have found it interesting to see how researchers drew on the construct of wisdom in various ways in order to make it more tangible. I saw, as mentioned above, that bringing what has perennially been the domain of religion or contemplative practice into the academic domain has occupied modern researchers in a pursuit guided by the rules of engagement of their domain of inquiry. Thus the application of scientific method to the study of wisdom can be seen as an attempt to update, upgrade or extend wisdom into the modern world.

At the same time, I cannot help but feel a slight disappointment at the ways in which this move can get caught up in a reductionistic trap inherent in a central notion at the heart of method – the need to define the object of study. In this I note Rowson's (2008) wrestling with this tension by saying that it might be the case that to define wisdom is unwise. I find this to be a healthy tension and one necessary to hold. We need to hold something in hand and mind in order to study wisdom, yet we constantly need to remember that that which we are holding is not wisdom itself.

Thus it appears to me that to get at the heart of a phenomenon or construct like wisdom requires an integral approach; integral in that it can integrate the religious, contemplative, spiritual or transrational dimension along with the rational, measureable and observable dimension. It should also be able to link with the practical domain of wise acting, enabling us to find modern ways to cultivate the wisdom we are clearly in need of today.

Encountering the works presented in this special issue through working with the authors on bringing their more extended research work into this format and audience and reflecting on the intersections, overlaps, diversities and insights they bring, I find myself holding a mixed feeling. On the one hand I know a lot more about how wisdom is understood today, as well as more about how it is not understood – it is not a direct equivalent of cognitive or ego stage development, even though we might not be able to help seeing some threads in common. From this, I have this urge to use this knowledge in service of acting in wiser ways in the world.

On the other hand I notice that there is much uncertainty about wisdom – the more one learns about a subject, the more s/he realizes how little they know about it. This uncertainty sits within me in a manner similar to the urge noted just above, but instead evoking a doubt that I could ever really know if my action is truly wise.

It is from this place of having gone through our own journeys in relation to wisdom that we invite you to encounter the offerings presented here. We have drawn these pieces together and guided them through the editorial process because we feel that they can contribute something to todays need for the jewel of wisdom.

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Words from the Wise: Exploring the Lives, Qualities, and Opinions of Wisdom Exemplars

Drew Krafcik[1]

Abstract: The purpose of this research was to study exemplars of wisdom through a structured, theoretically grounded peer-nomination process. Twenty exemplars were given a variety of quantitative measures that included the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS), Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), Narcissistic Personality Inventory-16 (NPI-16), Humility Inventory (HI), Big Five Inventory (BFI), and the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT). Exemplars also underwent lengthy semi-structured interviews to assess their lives, qualities, and understanding of wisdom. Interviews were analyzed for their significant themes. Results of this study suggest that exemplars of wisdom are humble, spiritual, mindful, insightful, tell the truth, and are open to experiences. They have meaningful, long-term relationships with mentors and loved ones. Exemplars are deeply influential in the lives of others and have very high life satisfaction. The 2 predominant definitions of wisdom given by exemplars were that wisdom is practical and comes from the unknown. Exemplars offered multiple strategies for the cultivation of wisdom-related processes, primarily the relationship with a mentor. Future research may clarify an emerging relationship between transcendent and practical wisdom.

Keywords: Exemplars, qualitative, quantitative, spirituality, wisdom.

Introduction

Would investigating people who are actually considered wise be helpful for the human enterprise? Might they offer reflections about life meaning and satisfaction that elude the rest of us? Could they provide both practical and theoretical insights into wisdom's conception, cultivation, and potential to be learned and taught? What are their spiritual perspectives, generative offerings, and experiences of anxiety and stress? With few exceptions, the psychological investigation of wisdom has primarily focused on randomly selected people and their ideas on wisdom (Trowbridge, 2005, 2008).

[1] **Drew Krafcik, Ph.D**., is an assistant professor at St. Mary's College of California. He is the Interim Coordinator of the Marriage and Family Therapy/Professional Clinical Counselor (MFT/PCC) specialization. Drew has worked professionally as a spiritual care coordinator and chaplain for hospice, as a counselor and mentor for adolescents and young adults, as the associate director of youth and family programs, and as a psychotherapist in community nonprofits and private practice. This paper is adapted from his dissertation: Words from the Wise: A Qualitative and Quantitative Study of Nominated Exemplars of Wisdom.
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Echoing the sentiments of Aristotle (Robinson, 1990) and Abraham Maslow (1971), lifespan experts Lucinda Orwoll and Marion Perlmutter (1990) wrote, "To really know what wise people are like, you have to study them" (p. 174). Advancing this notion, the present research descriptively and empirically explored the lives, opinions, and wisdom-related characteristics of those who have purportedly excelled in its understanding.

Brief Context and Relevance

The modern empirical and theoretical study of wisdom is relatively young, as wisdom's association with philosophy and the advent of behaviorism kept it from the realm of psychological inquiry until roughly 35 years ago. Researchers like Ardelt (1997), Baltes (1990), Clayton and Birren (1980), and Sternberg (1986) ushered in the modern era, introducing wisdom to the realm of psychological discourse. Since 1980, over 100 empirical studies have been undertaken, none of which have included exemplars, with the qualitative exception of Ahmadi (1998, 2000) and Thomas (1991).

More recently, philosophers and psychologists have spent decades trying to define the essence of wisdom, with the Arête Initiative at the University of Chicago (2008) providing a contemporary backdrop for this inquiry. Agreement seems to converge around wisdom being characterized as elusive, multidimensional, integrative, and oriented toward what is good, both individually and collectively. Prevailing psychological and theoretical models have enhanced wisdom conceptions through empirical measurement, the solicitation of implicit opinions, cross-cultural aggregations, developmental paradigms, and personality correlates. Personal components such as openness, insight, generativity, and spirituality have been related to wisdom, and exemplars offer the opportunity to explore and compare these associations. Mindfulness, spirituality, and humility offer particularly new investigations into the psychological study of wisdom, while anxiety, stress, and narcissism would seem to relate inversely.

Modern empirical research most relevant to exemplars demonstrates rudimentary efforts to seek out the wise through a variety of methodologies and inquiries. On the whole, a large proportion of empirical studies have focused on randomly chosen people's conceptions, and no studies carried out thus far have included exemplars. Paraphrasing Orwoll and Perlmutter (1990), learning from wise people necessitates that we actually converse with them. Furthermore, studying and conversing with those who are purportedly wise is thought to contribute an increasingly material wisdom perspective to a theoretically based discipline.

More broadly, researchers (e.g., Sternberg, 2004) contend that the word wisdom "exists as an eternal witness of the hope that humans can make thoughtful, caring, and intelligent choices for the well-being of all whom they affect" (Trowbridge, 2005, p. 50). As some (Ardelt, 2000a; Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990) claim that exemplars embody wisdom itself, it seems relevant to learn about their lives, garner their perspectives and reflections, and assess their characteristics.

Scholarly research into wisdom has yet to explore and assess exemplars, and they, and their perspectives, remain urgently needed. Trowbridge (2005) reflects, "The particular value of studying exemplars carefully is that they can show us the way to wisdom" (p. 248). While it

seems more likely that multiple pathways exist toward wisdom's realization, the lives and opinions of exemplars are promising for the future of this inquiry.

Methodology: Approach, Rationale, and Assessment

Inspired by the suggestions of wisdom's psychological and empirical predecessors, contemporary scholars have given some guidance for carrying out a study of this type, calling it the exemplar and personological approach (Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990; Trowbridge, 2005). The exemplar approach makes use of qualified nominators to identify persons who exemplify wisdom, and once selected, the personological approach recommends a collection of integrative data, including interviews, assessments, and surveys. While "validational support for peer nominations is still sparse in the study of wisdom" (Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990, p. 167), precedence for this research strategy can be found in studies of persons with exceptional adjustment, ego development, and intelligence.

This combined methodology is particularly well suited for the current research when viewed from both theoretical and practical perspectives. First, this protocol provides a means of focusing explicit attention on people who are clustered at the upper end of the proposed wisdom continuum (Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990). Second, it is based on the premise that wisdom can be better understood by the intensive study of those considered to be wise (Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990). Finally, it contends that exceptionally wise people should provide insight into wisdom's nature, including the potential interrelationships among various correlates of wisdom; development, including events and life course processes contributing to wisdom; and consequences, including what it means to live a wise and meaningful life.

Employing Mixed Methods

Fittingly, to best fulfill the primary areas of investigation and actualize the methodologies set forth, I have instituted an integrative research design using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Such interplay between qualitative and quantitative approaches was intended to expand documentation of the "elusive and subjective nature of the construct of wisdom and relate them to objectively assessed dimensions of wise people" (Lyster, 1996, p. 26).

Qualitative

The qualitative methods of in-depth semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis provided explorations into co-participants' lives, opinions, and wisdom-related qualities and characteristics. This course of investigation permitted me to potentially uncover otherwise inaccessible information by following up with emerging areas of interest with the interviewee (Braud & Anderson, 1998). Content analysis also allowed for the discovery of various layers of meaning through systematic identification (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 278) of both predetermined content areas and emergent themes.

Quantitative

Quantitative measures and questionnaires, including the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS), Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS), Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16), Foundational Value Scale (FVS), Big Five Inventory (BFI), Humility Inventory (HI), and Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT) provided performance-based and empirical data about dimensions of wise persons. Converging information was then drawn on to assess the nomination validity of co-participants considered exemplars of wisdom, elucidate the nature of their wisdom, provide an empirical means to compare exemplars to the norm, and provide for an assessment of specific inter-correlations. As a side note, I considered the WUSCT a quantitative measure for this study because I was hypothesizing about the overall WUSCT average score, not utilizing the content of the open ended responses directly as data.

Exemplar Nominators

This research design utilized two groups of co-participants most suited for its purposes: exemplar nominators and exemplars of wisdom.

To address validity in the selection of exemplars, Orwoll and Perlmutter (1990) wrote, "Confidence in the nomination procedure can be enhanced with multiple nominators and particularly qualified nominators" (p. 167). While they provide no specific parameters regarding a nominator sample size, 15 were utilized within the current study. Moreover, these nominators fulfilled the particularly qualified exemplar proviso by being prescreened for the wisdom-facilitative criteria of the world's leading empirical researchers of wisdom, the Max Planck Institute (Ardelt, 2004a; Sternberg, 1998).

The wisdom-facilitative criterion emerged from Baltes and Staudinger's 1993 study and consists of a "background of and/or professional activity in areas we consider facilitative of the accumulation of wisdom-related knowledge" (p. 77). These areas include teaching, pastoral/ministerial counseling, and clinical psychology/counseling. Modern empirical research adds credence to both these findings and the current design rationale, as Staudinger et al. (1998) found that the greatest predictive factor for wisdom is profession, particularly within fields oriented toward the human condition. Additionally, in the Lyster (1996) study, wise nominees were disproportionately represented in human-service professions, particularly the advising professions of ministry, mental health, and education. Helson and Srivastava (2002) also found that a career in spiritual activity "added significantly to the prediction of wisdom" (p. 39).

Moreover, exemplar nominators were sought that have not just one but a convergence of these *wisdom-facilitative* experiences over the longest period of time (Montgomery et al., 2002). Baltes and Staudinger (1993) call this approach "age by experience" (p. 77), and theoretically, the current nominators, having had greater exposure to *wisdom-facilitative* experiences over time than the average person, were predicted to be more capable of articulating the nature of their wisdom and identifying it in others (Trowbridge, 2005).

Once selected, nominators were asked to identify between two and five exemplars of wisdom that they knew personally, identify the two wisest exemplars, and communicate their selections to me. If nominators believed themselves to be one of the two wisest exemplars, they were asked to include themselves. Nominators were invited to a) fill out a demographic questionnaire, b) complete a measure of wisdom characteristics (FVS) that seems to reflect the exemplars qualities, c) write a one-page description of why he or she is an exemplar of wisdom, and d) provide the context and length of time in relationship with the exemplar.

Exemplars of Wisdom

Wisdom exemplars consisted of 20 co-participants identified by the nominators and willing to take part in the study. I preferred no parameters for age, education level, gender, sex, religious orientation, marital/domestic partner status, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity. However, it was my inclination to conduct as many interviews as possible in person. Therefore, many participants resided in the San Francisco Bay Area and I traveled when necessary and possible.

Qualitative Assessment

The qualitative method employed was the in-depth semi-structured interviews. Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with the exemplar group. Questions were chosen that explored the lives, opinions of wisdom, and wisdom-related characteristics of co-participants. Questions were generally intended to be open-ended, allowing the co-participants to respond widely. The interview structure provided for the researcher to first, inquire first about co-participant lives; second, explore their wisdom-related characteristics, and finally, elicit their opinions of wisdom. The rationale for interviewing in this order was to avoid biasing co-participants by leading with explicit references to wisdom.

Sample interview questions included: What is your life like? How did you come to be the way you are? What are you doing for the common good? What are your values? What are your decision-making strategies? What are your spiritual perspectives? What concerns do you have, if any? How do you define wisdom? Can wisdom be learned? What personal and general components or conditions might facilitate its emergence and make it more accessible? Who do you consider to be wise?

Qualitative data from the current study was examined by performing a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Each transcript was read at least three times upon its reception, and computer-assisted text analysis using MAXQDA (Verbi Software, 2007) was employed for coding and organizing the interviews. MAXQDA is used in a wide range of academic and non-academic disciplines, including sociology, political science, psychology, public health, anthropology, education, marketing, economics and urban planning (Hawes, 2006). Advantages include its flexibility, user friendliness, and highly advanced visualization for the processes of coding, memo writing, and browsing. An essentialist or realist approach was then taken which "reports experiences, meanings, and the reality of participants" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). Theoretical, or pre-established areas of interest, and inductive methods or data driven themes were assessed.

In service of illuminating the lives and opinions of exemplars, I explored pre-established categories consistent with the interview questions/research areas as well as additional emergent themes. Emergent themes are defined as common patterns that were observed in the final analysis, but not derived from previous notions. In sum, the goal of the qualitative methodology was the emergence of a larger, more in-depth picture through a detailed description of categories, patterns, and themes for all co-participants included (Gross, 1995).

In order to operationalize this approach, the six-phase process of Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed. First, I became familiar with the data, including having the interviews transcribed, reading and re-reading the data, and noting initial ideas. Second, initial codes were generated across the entire data set based on intensity, density, and frequency. Third, codes were collated into themes, and themes were searched for and data relevant to each theme was gathered. Fourth, themes were reviewed and checked. Fifth, themes were named and defined, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. Finally, the report was produced with extract examples.

Advantages of the TA include its flexibility, accessibility to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research, ability to highlight similarities and differences across the data set, capacity to generate unanticipated insights, and accessible results for the educated general public. Disadvantages included the difficulty of retaining a sense of continuity and contradiction through any one individual account.

Quantitative Assessment

The quantitative assessments are confirmatory and address multiple hypotheses related to assessing exemplar's wisdom-related qualities and characteristics:

It was hypothesized that Exemplars' average score on the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale would exceed the cutoff score considered to be wise, 201.6.

Second, it was hypothesized that exemplars' average scores on the Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Big Five Inventory (BFI) Openness to Experience, and Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS) would exceed the normative mean scores for each measure by at least 10%.

Third, it was hypothesized that exemplars' average scores on the State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), and Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16) would fall below the mean normative scores of each measure by at least 10%.

Fourth, it was hypothesized that exemplars' average score on the WUSCT would exceed the highest conventional stage of adult development, the Achiever, 4.0.

Fifth, it was hypothesized that there would be statistically significant (p =.05) positive correlations between the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS) and: BFI Openness to Experience, Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), and Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS).

Key Summary of Findings

Demographics

The study was comprised of two samples, the exemplar group (n = 20) and nominator group (n = 15) group. Exemplars' average age was 69.5 years, approximately 10 years greater than the average nominator age. Nominators knew exemplars on average 25 years in multiple contexts, most often having exemplars as their colleagues and teachers. Exemplars were predominantly Caucasian, very well educated, and most were married or had a significant other. Nearly all reported having a current religious or spiritual tradition and practice.

Exemplars' Wisdom-Related Qualities and Characteristics

Self-Report Measures

The average exemplar score on the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale exceeded the cutoff considered to be wise, consistent with the prediction. Exemplars' average scores on the Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Big Five Inventory (BFI) Openness to Experience, and Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS) exceeded the normative mean scores for each measure by at least 10%, consistent with the prediction.

Exemplars' average scores on the State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) fell below the mean normative scores of each measure by at least 10%, consistent with the prediction. Exemplars' average scores on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16) and STAI Trait-Anxiety did not fall below the mean normative scores of each measure by at least 10%, inconsistent with the prediction. Exemplars' average score on the WUSCT exceeded the highest conventional stage of adult development, the Achiever, 4.0, consistent with the prediction, although much more will be said about ego development and wisdom later in this paper.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient

There were found to be statistically significant positive correlations between the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS) and: BFI Openness to Experience, Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS), and Humility Inventory (HI), consistent with the prediction. There were found to be positive, but not significant correlations between the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS) and: Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) and Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS), inconsistent with the prediction. These results suggest that higher levels of wisdom were correlated with increases in openness, humility, and the importance of spirituality.

Qualitative Exemplar Wisdom-Related Qualities and Characteristics

Nominator Narratives and Exemplar Interviews

Six significant personal qualities were found in the nominator narratives about exemplars: honesty, compassion, spirituality, integration, understanding, and openness. Four core personal qualities were found in the semi-structured exemplar interviews: they tell the truth, are able to tolerate uncertainty, are grateful and appreciative, and are funny and lighthearted.

Foundational Value Scale

Exemplar qualities rated most highly by nominators on the Foundational Value Scale (FVS) were intelligence, having a sense of meaning and purpose, harmoniousness, and spirituality. The lowest scoring qualities were genius and being animated.

Exemplars' Lives

Nominator Narratives

Overall, nominators described exemplars as deeply engaged in life and meaningful relationships. This finding was evidenced by exemplars' personal impact on the nominators, painful life experiences, valuing helping others, being sought out for counsel, the validation of peers, and remaining in contact with their own experience.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Three core themes were uncovered through analysis in the semi-structured interviews about exemplars lives. First, exemplars reported deeply meaningful encounters and intimate connections with mentors and loved ones. Second, spirituality is important, as reflected in exemplars' beliefs and practices, including the unity of spirituality and life, practicing meditation, attending retreats, and having access to a reflective articulation process. Finally, exemplars are guides for others and have an impactful presence as luminaries, transformational catalysts, and teachers with specific means of sharing with others.

Exemplars' Opinions of Wisdom

Exemplars primarily defined wisdom as arising from the unknown and as practical. Some examples of wise behavior included connecting with another human being, restraining action, and making an important life decision without knowing why. Exemplars thought that people are wise about different things and nominated predominantly spiritual and religious figures as wise.

Exemplars' Ideas about How to Cultivate Wisdom

Exemplars offered multiple (technologies) strategies for the cultivation of wisdom-related processes, although there was disagreement about whether wisdom itself was teachable.

Mentors and Teachers

Ten of 20 (50%) exemplars spoke about (acquiring wisdom) wisdom-related acquisitions through mentors and teachers. Exemplars identified as important: role modeling and watching how mentors and teachers live, practicing what they are practicing, the consistency of relating, being helped to find your own way within, and cultivating deeper accessibility. Below are three examples:

> The best way to learn it is to hang out with wise people . . . You become wise when you spend time with somebody who has some wisdom. And just that consistency of relating for a period of time, you get to know how people think and how they respond and so forth. So that I think that it's a matter of finding the people that you admire and that you want to hang out with or work with. So that's how you pick it up. (EX 10)

> For me with my teachers, I would say it was a twofold process. One was kind of, in practicing what they were teaching, I began to see what they saw. And so I could appreciate the wisdom in them from the wisdom that was growing in me because they showed me how to see in a certain way. And then I realized, oh, that's how they're seeing. So that was, I think, one powerful appreciation of their wisdom. And the other was just in watching how they lived. You know, and it's not to say, I mean, in many of my teachers it's not that I didn't see at certain times, you know, certain faults of things that I thought were not that skillful, but overall, I could really appreciate the wisdom of how they lived just in basically leading good lives, basically wise and compassionate lives. (EX 15)

> I think that a way wisdom is passed on is people find their path, or somehow discover their path, and there's someone ahead of them that can see them on the path. And they say, "No, no, no, no. You're getting a little too far to the right. No, no, no, no. You're going too—a little too far to the left." And that appears to be helpful . . . Then they're doing whatever they're doing . . . with – in their life with all the exigencies and suffering that they face. And through that combination wisdom can result. Not necessarily will, but can. (EX 20)

Let Wisdom Arise From a Larger Source

Eight of 20 (40%) exemplars talked about learning wisdom as a letting go, surrendering, and experiencing an incarnation from something larger than the individual. Examples that illustrate the theme are offered below:

> And that—and I guess that's another argument for saying that wisdom is very much something that happens through you because so is love. It's like when you can let yourself be completely open and let go of your own biases and your own conditioning and your own need to hold yourself together, then both of those qualities can spontaneously emerge. And I think the true gift of spiritual awakening is the emergence of both of those qualities, when they're needed, or when there's, you know, it's not like you go around all the time feeling wise and loving. It's just that life responds to as needed with those qualities spontaneously . . . Then beginning to trust what arises spontaneously. (EX 9)

No, I don't think so. I think that simply the heart or spirit, if you want to use the Jungian term, the self in the larger "S." has a wisdom. It's amazing to me when I give up and let go what information comes to me; what direction I find to go. Say, a wise heart or movement inside of me that I have to constantly return to who, that gives me that. I don't think you can teach it; it comes out of the, it comes out of the experience of surrender. But that's a lifetime. (EX 17)

Being able to surrender is the number one attribute. Can you let go and get out of the way and surrender to something that's bigger than you? (EX 8)

And, in fact, the study we did was, in a way, teaching people to access wisdom, showing them a way that their consciousness could come up with an answer. (EX 14)

The disciplines of how one responds to and takes in, you know, the phenomenon of wisdom can be pointed to and taught and so forth. But it's like can you really teach people to be wise? Can you really teach people to have a deeper inner sense of themselves? Can you really teach them that? And I don't think you can. I think it's a matter of learning how to open one's self up to that. But you can teach the way to be aware and absorb, you know, the honoring of life and its wisdom. But it's not a commodity. I guess that's what I'm trying to say. It's not a commodity you can teach. It's something by the grace of life itself that can be incorporated but it's not an achievement . . . It's an incarnation. Not dissimilar from the Christian sense of incarnation of God and Jesus. So I really think it has a much broader metaphysical quality to it other than just the human accomplishment. And teach, I think, how one can receive it, but you can't teach wisdom. Nobody ever truly has fully incorporated wisdom. It's much bigger than the individual. (EX 11)

Could being wise be taught? Or having this experience of wisdom – I guess what would be more true for me would be the process, the cognitive and non-cognitive. So all the other ones, somatic and intuitive and, you know, getting information from other sources: emotional, body, psychic. The processes that would lead to that experience, the experience of wisdom, and then the subsequent urge to share. I think those can be cultivated, definitely. (EX 4)

Sometimes it is wise to trust how life is unfolding even when we do not a clue about what to do, or why we responded the way we did. Some movement wiser than us may be in charge. (EX 17)

This may go back to one of the things that I really trust and believe – that there is an unfolding wisdom that enfolds us beyond what we can create for ourselves. That life is beneficial to us in spite of all the anxieties and difficulties and frustrations and deprivations and all that stuff. And honoring both the consolations and the desolations, because they're both meaningful. They both have their own way of evolving your life. (EX 11)

Getting Mind Out of the Way, Decentering From Primary Identity as Thinking

Six of 20 exemplars (30%) spoke about learning wisdom-related processes as facilitated by decentering from a primary self-identification with the thinking mind and cognitive processes. All six examples are provided below:

> A reduction in cognitive processes, so that you're not totally in your head, and more access to feelings and education of feelings. (EX 8)

> Another aspect is facilitating empathy and getting the conscious mind, not just thinking, not just sensate – getting the conscious mind out of the way and providing quiet time. It's the same sorts of things that you would think of in some kind of meditation or spiritual practice where you are getting the conditioned automatic reactions out of the way, out of the dominant way, so that any of those that are appropriate may be used, rather than ones that are overly conditioned. (EX 14)

> You can only point. You can only point to a way of holding something that's bigger than the mind. When you stop paying attention to your mind it stops being such a bother. When you stop taking it so seriously. When a thought comes through and you just look at it and say, whoa, that's interesting. Wonder where that one came from. But you don't buy into it and create a big story around it. Pretty soon that function stops functioning in the way it does when you really believe you are your thoughts. I think that most of the time we humans think we are our thoughts. (EX 9)

> Certainly, not conceptually. (EX 20)

> Also there are a myriad number of specific techniques and strategies from gently helping people recognize presuppositions; and then recognize them as presuppositions rather than as facts . . . then encouraging people to test those presuppositions. (EX 16)

> Let go. Get out of your head. Being in the head is a total detriment, a total detriment. Remember the mind is always looking for answers the soul already knows. (EX 8)

Motivation/Commitment/Investment and Doing the Work Ourselves

Five of 20 (25%) exemplars spoke about the relationship between motivation, commitment, and doing the work oneself as integral to the potential to learn wisdom-related processes. Five exemplars spoke about it this way:

> One of the most important things of all for learning wisdom is a commitment to doing so, the commitment to learning and understanding. (EX 16)

> A strong motivation. You can sit quietly for an hour and nothing happens, but if you go in with a motivation to say, "I want an answer to this. I want to know what's right for me," if you set an intention—and that's the word that we're using now – set an intention, then wisdom tends to be pulled into that magnetic direction. (EX 14)

> I think there are a few things. One of the things that has been my prime motivator over all these years is the quality of interest, just being interested in the mind, in suffering, in what causes it. And so in some ways, the truest meaning of the word philosophy, you know, kind of lover of wisdom, it's just that real interest in understanding I think is a very powerful force. What can motivate that interest can be different things. (EX 15)

> In order to make it a real living wisdom, then it has to be a methodology of training attention so that we can see things clearly for ourselves. And that is the whole methodology of the path. So it can be taught, but people need to do the work themselves. It can't be given. There's a famous line in the text about how the Buddhas only point the way, and everybody needs to walk the path for themselves. So the way can be pointed out, and the path of practice can be pointed out, but real wisdom develops only when we actually do the work. And it's the work of paying attention. (EX 15)

> And the thing that worried me the most about that is if somebody else knows and somebody else tells you, then you're always a receiver and you're never an actor. We really only learn through the things we do. (EX 13)

Learn From Experience/Reflection

Four of 20 exemplars (20%) spoke about acquiring wisdom as learning from experience and reflection, a kind of iteration process. Below are four illustrations:

> One acquires wisdom, in large part, by reflecting on experience. And so to teach wisdom involves helping people reflect on their experience. For many people, that means helping get in touch with their experience in the first place. Also there are a myriad number of specific techniques and strategies from gently helping people recognize presuppositions; and then recognize them as presuppositions rather than as facts . . . then encouraging people to test those presuppositions. (EX 16)

> There's a reflection component, there is an iteration of looking at something. Whether it's practical or spiritual within the self or outside the self, there is a reflection and an action and a refinement and a reflection and an action and, from what I know, it's called, you know, double-loop, triple-loop learning when you're going over and over. And then finally comes out something that is helping you overcome an obstacle, reach more joy in your life, solve a problem, practically create something that's going to help your entire tribe survive. That level of internal processing has to be in place. (EX 4)

> When I think about the people I've known through my life who are wise, I think I would conclude that they had a lot of life experience. It just didn't arrive with them in their genes. (EX 19)

> I think a person's ability to learn from experience. (EX 5)

Discussion: State and Stage Development and Transcendent and Practical Wisdom

The study prediction was that Exemplars' average score on the WUSCT would exceed the highest conventional stage of adult development, the Achiever, 4.0. Implicit in this prediction was the idea that wisdom and ego development were likely related and potentially positively correlated. Exemplars average score on the WUSCT was just above 4.0. This finding means that exemplars average score *technically* exceeded the Achiever stage of adult development, consistent with the prediction. Sixty percent of exemplars, however, scored in the conventional stages.

The professional WUSCT scorer, Terri O' Fallon, was uniquely qualified for this study because of her personal interest and ongoing research in late stage development, specifically the late-fifth person perspective (5/6) and the late-sixth person perspective (6+). When I mentioned surprise at exemplars' predominantly conventional scores, she replied:

> At first when I was doing the scoring, I was also so struck by this and didn't want to believe the scores I was getting. I did inter-rater reliability scoring with other people and they just didn't turn out very late for any of us. (T. O' Fallon, personal communication, December 4, 2009)

On the one hand, Cook-Greuter (1985) points out that highly developed individuals may score lower than their level of development. This problem stems from the fact that what Cook-Greuter calls the post conventional stages, 5-6, are post linguistic, while the WUSCT is based on language. This means that the WUSCT, effectively, is trying to evaluate the presence of higher-developmental stages with methods—those being language and writing—that are more commonly associated with lower-level developmental stages. To this point, O' Fallon writes "People at these later two levels not only need an abundance of responses, but they also need to have a variety of responses to different categories. It is very complex" (personal communication, December 4, 2009).

Reviewing exemplar scores on the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), which preceded the WUSCT, exemplars were already "feeling strained," their highest State-Anxiety score, and "unrested," their highest Trait-Anxiety score. It is possible, therefore, that they did not say enough to score higher on the WUSCT due to feeling strained and tired, or tended to conceal their levels of development by giving short, simple answers to save time and energy. Comments from several exemplars at the end of the survey offered support to these perspectives. However, O' Fallon reflects, "We cannot guess what people mean . . . they have to delineate what they mean" (personal communication, December 4, 2009).

On the other hand, the above explanations for lower than expected WUSCT scores, while plausible, might also be relatively weak. If these scores are accurate, however, and wisdom exemplars are primarily situated at a conventional level of development, what meaning can be made of this? What do these development scores mean in relationship to wisdom – perhaps that later stage ego development is not necessarily correlated with wisdom and being/becoming wise?

Interestingly, the WUSCT correlations with the Self Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS) composite and all SAWS subscales were *not* significant. The WUSCT was only correlated significantly with one measure in the entire exemplar battery of tests, including all measure subscales. The positive and significant correlation of the WUSCT was with the Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS). It is my opinion that reflecting on later *state stage* exemplar spiritual experiences could shed some light on the generally conventional ego development scores in relationship to wisdom.

Exemplar Spiritual States, Experiences, and Perspectives

One of the most compelling spiritual perspectives found to be important in the lives of nearly two thirds of exemplars, was an insight into, or an abiding recognition of, being a part of the whole of life, being a part of larger creation, or both:

> I just went into another whole level of recognition of my true nature I guess you would say. And it was like consciousness simply letting go of everything I am. And merging with everything that is. And I don't know. It was like a recognition of truth that I couldn't possibly ever deny again. (EX 9)

> What was striking about it was the understanding of the selfless nature of everything. The limitation of how we usually think of a sense of self as being the particular body we inhabit, you know, and being limited to that frame. That boundary fell away just afterwards. And it was just, there was more a, just a totality of experience rather than any one part of it being me. (EX 15)

> And finally it snapped you know . . . there isn't a spiritual and something else . . . It's the all of everything, nothing is left out. (EX 6)

Interestingly, the recognition of being part of larger creation was not just reflective of a small contingent of exemplars with Eastern religious and spiritual pedigree. Exemplars with Christian traditions and practices spoke similarly:

> If I have to articulate an image of God these days it's simply life. Yeah, simply life. And that life itself has its own way of being. And it is that way of being of our life that is the sacred ground. And we don't have to symbolize or image it in any other way to define it. (EX 11)

> The idea is that we really are part of this universe . . . And so you come to understand that our connectedness, that we are all, and all we are . . . is energy. I mean, that's enough, but that's what we are. (EX 5)

Critically, each of the above exemplars is an ordained spiritual teacher, so they could just be expressing beliefs or ideas associated with their traditions. An argument could also be made that exemplars' spiritual appointments add credence to their words. Levitt (1999) found consistently religious perspectives in her study of Buddhist monks, as did Ahmadi (1998, 2000) in her study of Sufis, which makes sense. Certainly, spiritual and religious perspectives are useful but they

could be garnered from many sources, including sacred texts. Of more relevance is, are exemplars' words reflective of their lived reality, if only for a moment?

An honest assessment of exemplars' experiences of unity would likely require one's own capacity to see what is seen by exemplars. While I make no claims to a shared worldview, sitting and listening to exemplars offer their spiritual views felt like not just words and concepts but their own inner experiences. And being in their presence, for the most part, was opening in ways that were inspiring, motivating, and emotionally moving.

Obviously, my self-report does not validate exemplars' inner subjective life, nor do any of the measures in the study explicitly reflect it. Exemplars did score highly on humility and value truth telling; however. Le (2008a) also found that transcendent wisdom develops later in life than practical wisdom – and – developing transcendent wisdom later in life overlaps with exemplars average age, nearly 70. The significance of exemplars' spiritual insight warranted considering validity, because, if true, exemplars' recognition of being a part of the whole of life expands their identity beyond just humanness to "life, selflessness, energy, true nature, and the all of everything," to quote their words.

A second finding supportive of the recognition of being a part of all creation is found in exemplars' attendance of retreats. Exemplars' retreat experiences were often imbued with profound insights into a greater connection with life:

> That big shift, that transformative shift really happened when I did the 30-Day Ignatian Retreat, which was 11 years ago, but it's still as fresh as can be. I really move back into those states, although I've moved way beyond who I was at that point. But It really had to do with that awareness that came to me during that retreat; that all this "driven-ness" to make my life meaningful kind of got spoken to by an inner voice that emerged of saying, "Remember, J, that I gave you your meaning at your birth." And that awareness was so transformative that it just lifted that anxiety burden of driving myself to make myself meaningful to either myself or the people around me. And allowed me to relax a bit. And it re-contextualized my life in terms of the "driven-ness" to be somebody, rather than simply internally affirm the being that I am. And I think that transition not only brought a lot of relief but, you know, reframed a sense of myself, but then also began to reframe how I experience things in the world, how I experienced other people. You know, so much of my work now is encouraging people simply to be who they are rather than striving so hard to be somebody else. (EX 11)

> When I was in my late 30s, I was in a retreat for 5 days just with myself in silence in a house over the ocean in Big Sur. I guess the story I would relate that could kind of help you or anyone kind of understand in words what happened, because it's very difficult for me, is you hear people talking about some sort of moment or experience, mystical experience, where they feel reborn. Where you have this, it's almost like a wiping out of who you were, and an emergence of someone that even to yourself, you're like, "I didn't used to be like this." And it happens very fast, within moments of something very profound that you experience. I spent many hours of that retreat laying on a towel in the grass staring up at the sun – just like when I was a little kid – outside of this house in Big

> Sur. That was a common link with being as a child as I was, I was down in the grass connected to the Earth and looking up at the sun and experiencing that kind of energy of nature. So that experience, I literally, it was like somebody reset my soul. (EX 4)

Retreats could certainly mean multiple things to exemplars: a time and place of respite and reprieve from interpersonal engagement, especially considering that exemplars are generative, work in professions oriented to the human condition, are married, and most have children. Exemplars' highest trait anxiety item was being "tired," and one of their highest items on the Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS) was, "Other people say that I am a very productive person."

Retreats could also be a means by which exemplars revisit their vocations more deeply and specifically. Retreats could be places to have dedicated spiritual practice, as was mentioned by some exemplars (e.g., EX 11 and EX 16). They could be places to experience silence, or be near mentors and teachers. Retreats could also be containers, or holding environments, for letting go of the routines of daily living and being present in a sustained way to one's inner life.

A third finding potentially related to exemplars being part of larger creation was their second-most-frequently described method for learning wisdom: allowing wisdom to arise from a larger source, and learning access to that source:

> And that – and I guess that's another argument for saying that wisdom is very much something that happens through you because so is love. It's like when you can let yourself be completely open and let go of your own biases and your own conditioning and your own need to hold yourself together, then both of those qualities can spontaneously emerge. And I think the true gift of spiritual awakening is the emergence of both of those qualities, when they're needed, or when there's, you know, it's not like you go around all the time feeling wise and loving. It's just that life responds to as needed with those qualities spontaneously . . . Then beginning to trust what arises spontaneously. (EX 9)

> I think that simply the heart or spirit, if you want to use the Jungian term, the self in the larger "S," has a wisdom. It's amazing to me when I give up and let go what information comes to me; what direction I find to go. Say, a wise heart or movement inside of me that I have to constantly return to who, that gives me that. I don't think you can teach it; it comes out of the, it comes out of the experience of surrender. But that's a lifetime. (EX 17)

> I think it's a matter of learning how to open one's self up to that. But you can teach the way to be aware and absorb, you know, the honoring of life and its wisdom. But it's not a commodity. I guess that's what I'm trying to say. It's not a commodity you can teach. It's something by the grace of life itself that can be incorporated but it's not an achievement . . . It's an incarnation. Not dissimilar from the Christian sense of incarnation of God and Jesus. So I really think it has a much broader metaphysical quality to it other than just the human accomplishment. (EX 11)

The significance of identifying oneself as non-separate from life resonates with several wisdom conceptions in the psychological literature. McKee and Barber's (1999) notion of

wisdom as "seeing through illusion" (p. 151) comes to mind, as does wisdom as insight based into the meaning of life (e.g., Ardelt, 2000a; Kekes, 1995). Achenbaum (2004) writes: "the wise, utilizing their abilities to look upon the universe from several planes, seek insights about how their true nature evolves within themselves" (p. 46). Wisdom as "profound insight into reality" seems possible (Trowbridge, 2007, Cultivating a Wisdom Perspective, para. 3). The transcendent wisdom notion of Le (2008b) also might apply: attainment of insight into reality. From Levitt's (1999) study of Buddhist monks: "Learning the true nature of reality is both a final goal and part of developing wisdom" (p. 104). Ahmadi (1998) points out that in her study of Sufis, the individual self is not in fact separated from other than self. Trowbridge's (2008) reference to the wisdom of the sages: To truly know yourself is to know all things. The point is, being one with all of creation is significant because it might be related to Sophia, "which is knowledge first of things, ultimate explanations and what follows from them, particularly in regard to human fulfillment" (Trowbridge, 2008, p. 44). Recognizing the communion of all life would certainly seem to be related to what follows regarding relative human fulfillment.

Perhaps then, exemplars' speaking about a connection to oneness, or the whole of life, *is suggestive of transcendent wisdom*, although the psychological wisdom-related definitions of transcendent wisdom are, for the most part, not descriptive enough. What is meant by spiritual insight, or by perceiving reality? What does it mean that wisdom is potentially related to state spiritual development? Is wisdom its own particular lines (e.g., transcendent, practical) of development or the highest levels of multiple lines of development (Wilber, 2000)? Is self-development seemingly not necessary for *access* to certain types of wisdom, but is self development/transcendence/awareness part of expressing wisdom cleanly? Perhaps state spirituality relates to perceiving reality, and self-development to interpreting and enacting what is realized in the world?

In general, the psychological wisdom-related research considers transcendent wisdom transpersonal and practical wisdom interpersonal. But what if transcendent and practical wisdom were *related in some way*? Certainly, it is one thing to *perceive* reality and quite another to *act* in accordance with that insight, or from that insight on a consistent basis. This potential connection between transcendent and practical wisdom is a very rare inquiry in the psychological wisdom literature of the past 35 years, with the exception of Aldwin (2009).

In our correspondence during the study, Terri O' Fallon (personal communication, December 3, 2009) reflected on the relationship between state spirituality, stage development, and wisdom:

> Many people have a wonderful spiritual life that makes them very, very wise, but it doesn't mean that they are late developmentally. I have scored people that many have assumed were later level in their development and they tended mostly to be late in their state stages. For example, they may not be able to see a long way out in time, or have a wide universal space field they live in. They may not be able to see general systems, and they may not be able to see certain aspects of polar opposites. They may not be able to see the construction of reality, or certain kinds of projections in the moment. None of these things are needed to be seen as very wise.

I realized that development has little to do with intelligence and for the most part, wisdom. So I had to have a meaning-making scheme that helped me understand this, and developed this model:

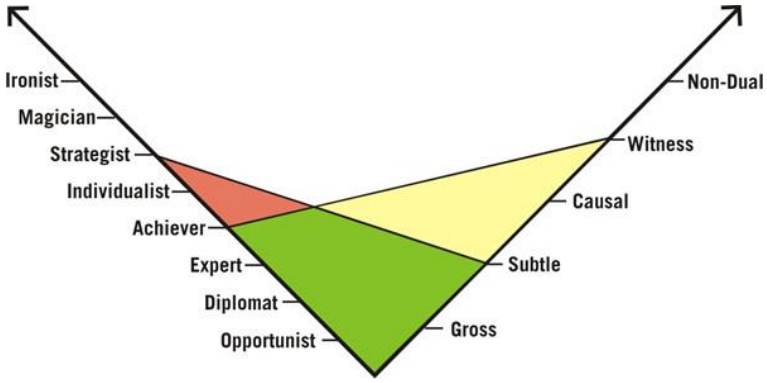

Figure 1. O'Fallon developmental model.

On the right side is the state stages in this V. On the left side are the developmental stages which I scored for you. If you draw a line from the developmental stage someone scores at, to the state (spiritual wisdom) stage they embody you can see that you can have an Achiever that has a triangular space (I call it "consciousness room to roam") that is actually larger than the developmentally later Strategist, who has less wisdom!

I ran into this a number of times in the teaching I have been doing. Some people were incredibly wise even though they didn't have some of the developmental capacities of a later level. In this case, the Achiever has a yellow space to roam in that the Strategist doesn't have and the Strategist has the red space to roam in that the Achiever doesn't have.

(Ego) development doesn't necessarily measure wisdom. At the very latest stages wisdom does occur because you can't get there without later states but this isn't true for most levels.

O' Fallon (See Figure 1) seems to be suggesting that state spiritual development eclipses personal development when it comes to *accessing* wisdom, but what about *expressing* wisdom? Perhaps wisdom (transcendent) comes through (permeates) the state side of development and is implemented through, or in, the context of the stage side of development, which might account for wisdom being defined by exemplars as coming from the unknown and yet practical. Perhaps this perspective could also give credence to the idea of varying developmental *stage or type* expressions of wisdom, although the *source* from which wisdom arose was the same and was applied to the same context. In essence, individuals have access to wisdom, but they are not wisdom itself, and thus wisdom is theorized to develop through multiple pathways that work together synergistically (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000).

O' Fallon's (2009) thinking that personal (ego) development is not necessarily related to wisdom is also congruent with the finding that exemplars are wise in different ways (e.g., lines),

and that their particular personalities (e.g., types) are not shed for wisdom to be present. Nor are exemplars' relative life experiences and knowledge:

> I think of exemplars of wisdom, I think that they're a variety of different personalities that can be wise. And the other thing is I think people may be wise in different ways in different areas. Some people can be very wise in one area and not so wise in other areas. I don't expect that somebody, just because they're a teacher, for example, spiritual teacher, they may have a lot of wisdom in one area and none at all in other areas. And I think that that can be so disillusioning when somebody puts a teacher up on a pedestal and then they turn out to be less than perfect. And they always do, because we're all just human. So I wouldn't hang it on any particular quality except the sense of caring and respect. (EX 10)

And yet exemplars said:

> When wisdom is being spoken, it's egoless, or wisdom is being demonstrated, there's nobody there intruding, in that sense. But there is a way somehow – and it may be different moment to moment. But I think when it shows up that there's a feeling. There's a sense of presence that something bigger than what's human is on board and it needs to be honored or listened to, or be servants to that. (EX 6)

Of relevance, perhaps, is what Levitt (1999) highlighted in her study as the main difference between the Tibetan Buddhist process of self-development and Western psychotherapeutic practices: the one puts forth the unreality of the individual self, and the other seeks a deeper understanding of this individual self – "Ego abandonment and ego strengthening" (p. 102). Trowbridge (2008) points out that Levitt (1999) suggests that psychotherapy and Buddhist philosophy "may be methods, grounded in the metaphysics of their cultures, to develop wisdom" (1999, p. 103).

In the psychological wisdom literature, ego strengthening and ego abandonment is generally separated as self-development and self-transcendence, respectively (Ardelt, 2003; Le, 2008b). Less spoken about, however, in this literature, is the possibility of developing awareness of a self that can then possibly be transcended and included.

One of the only theoretical and practical wisdom conceptions to consider a connection between developing a self and transcending the self is Robins (1998):

> Wisdom is related not just to the expectations, beliefs and the consequent emotional reactions resulting from beliefs, but also to the cognitive, behavioral, physiological, interpersonal, familial and social components that originate from and contribute to beliefs, all of which intimately and dynamically interact and thus co-evolve together across our adult development. In addition to the development and treatment of the ego, and consistent with Buddhist Psychology (Epstein, 1995), Wisdom Therapy simultaneously aims to facilitate the transcendence of the ego. (Wisdom Therapy Institute, Goals, para. 1)

Importantly, a high percentage of exemplars in this study have Western psychotherapeutic training and experience, which is often concerned with self and other development. Many

exemplars also have longstanding Eastern spiritual traditions and practices, often associated with self-transcendence. The relationship between self-awareness and self-transcendence seems significant in discussing the relationship between stage development, state spirituality, and wisdom, and will be explored briefly. A critical limitation in is this discussion, however, is that "self" and "ego" are not precisely differentiated in the study by exemplars (e.g., the separate ego/self-sense and the "egoic" organizing function).

Self-Awareness and Self-Transcendence

In the psychological wisdom-related literature, developing a capacity for self-awareness and self-transcendence seems related to the reflective component of Ardelt's (2004a) model of wisdom: self-awareness, self-insight, self-examination, and the capacity to take multiple perspectives of phenomena (Ardelt, 2004a). Ardelt contends this self-reflection practice informs an undistorted comprehension of reality by facilitating an awareness and transcendence of one's projections and subjectivity.

Le (2008a) also spoke of wisdom as transcending the biases, subjectivity, and self-centeredness that are natural and pervasive in humans. She contends that wisdom is a developmental process that involves self-transcendence.

There are multiple findings in this study that relate to exemplars self-awareness and self-transcending capacities.

Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)

Exemplars' higher than normative mindfulness scores on the MAAS is supportive of self-awareness and self-transcendence. The MAAS assesses a core characteristic of dispositional mindfulness—namely, open or receptive awareness of and attention to what is taking place in the present. Kabat-Zinn (1990) claimed this kind of attention nurtures greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of present-moment reality. This finding is significant for two reasons. First, it suggests exemplars strong valuation of receptive awareness to what is taking place in the present moment. And second, it seems that attending to what is actually happening in the present moment would precede the capacity to respond intimately to it, or to transcend it.

On the MAAS, however, high scores offer little insight into exemplars' subjectivity, especially because the stems are negatively worded. Mindfulness also has not been studied in the psychological wisdom-related research, so a degree of reservation in my meaning making is prudent.

Valuation of Self-Awareness and Self-Contact

Another finding supporting self-awareness and self-transcending capacities is exemplars' valuation of self-awareness and self-contact. Sixty percent of exemplars reported tracking sensations, creating spaciousness around emotions, witnessing thoughts, and staying in touch with moment-to-moment arisings. This finding offers insight into exemplars' subjective notions

of mindfulness, mentioned earlier, and is thought to contribute to a clearer view of subjectivity and the minimization of projection:

> Well, I think it's the gradual strengthening of the faculty of awareness, you know, and self-awareness so that just over the years I've become kind of increasingly mindful of just the different patterns that are going on in my mind in thoughts and emotions. And through the seeing of them more clearly, it becomes easier to, at least a good part of the time, certainly not all the time, but a good part of the time, choosing to act on those that bring about well being and letting those go that seem to bring about suffering. So it all comes out of awareness and self-awareness. (EX 15)

> I'm experiencing everything from the pressure of one leg on another, to a background feeling of pleasure, to pure awareness witnessing the same, witnessing it. And everything in between. It's interesting. I'm just watching the mental process of responding to this. It's like there's a boundless array of perspectives and possibilities. So it's a process of either selecting for any number of reasons one particular perspective or sitting back and allowing some aphoristic response, almost poetic response to attempt to encapsulate the many dimensions. (EX 16)

> The other thing that's meaningful for me is just trying to stay in contact with what's happening to me. What am I experiencing? Kind of trying to refer back to that and check in with it. Then also just allowing myself time to process whatever's going on [pauses], and to try to give it some spaciousness [pauses], and see what's really going on. (EX 20)

Meditative Practices

A third related finding to exemplars' development of self-awareness and self-transcendence is the high prevalence and importance of exemplars' meditative practices. Twelve exemplars (60%) cited practicing various types of meditation, and within that group, eight practiced meditation for 25 years or more. Fifty percent of the total exemplar group also reported having multiple spiritual practices.

Without exemplars clearly defining what is meant by meditation, however, it is hard to speak uniformly to its effects. One exemplar said of meditation, "it increasingly gives you access to lots of inner processes, inner spiritual processes" (EX 11), while others commented on the value of meditation in their lives for focusing, as an awareness practice, and for emotional regulation. Other potential reasons for the high prevalence of meditation could be the age related overlap with a natural time of contemplation in life as well as exemplars' religious and spiritual affiliations.

Combined Qualities

A fourth finding potentially related to exemplars' self-awareness and self-transcending capacities is their combined qualities of openness to experience, humility, and low state and trait anxiety. Exemplars scored highly on openness to experience and humility, both of which were

correlated significantly and positively with wisdom. Exemplars also scored lower than the norm on state and trait anxiety.

Openness to experience was defined, in part, as avoiding narrow-mindedness and self-deception (Webster, 2007). Humility was defined as a non-defensive willingness to see the self accurately, including strengths and limitations (Exline, 1999). The lowest-scoring item on the humility scale was, "I feel slighted when I don't get the attention I should," suggesting exemplars have some degree of freedom from other-oriented self-esteem, or at least value it. In relationship to others, exemplars' freedom from needing to have their self-esteem enhanced by others is significant, as it allows the possibility of exemplars seeing beyond their own needs, and potentially being free to receive someone else.

Regarding state and trait anxiety, in situations where relationships are involved, self-esteem is challenged, or failure is experienced, people with high trait anxiety tend to react with higher levels of state anxiety. Implied in this previous reaction is that high trait-anxiety people may have a fairly rigid internalized self-concept as compared to someone whose self-concept is supple/fluid enough to accommodate being inadequate, failing, or looking bad (Butlein, 2005). Perhaps exemplars' openness to experience, a humble, non-defensive willingness to see the self accurately, and low trait and state anxiety combined to allow a less guarded, more transparent or fluid self-concept, resulting in reduced self-centeredness and projection. The result is more presence and availability to themselves and others.

Wisdom-Related Strategies

A fifth finding relating to exemplars' self-awareness and self-transcending capacities is exemplars' strategies, or technologies, for learning wisdom-related information. The third-most-reported theme for learning wisdom-related material, behind mentors and letting wisdom arise, was "decentering" attention from the thinking mind, suggesting a larger source than just the individual is responsible for the genesis of wisdom:

> You can only point. You can only point to a way of holding something that's bigger than the mind. When you stop paying attention to your mind it stops being such a bother. When you stop taking it so seriously. When a thought comes through and you just look at it and say, whoa, that's interesting. Wonder where that one came from. But you don't buy into it and create a big story around it. Pretty soon that function stops functioning in the way it does when you really believe you are your thoughts. I think that most of the time we humans think we are our thoughts. (EX 9)

Overall, that exemplars could both develop awareness of a self and potentially transcend the developed self is significant. First, it would seem to give exemplars access to their own relative development as human beings. Relative awareness is important in cultivating freedom from self-centeredness, projections, and subjectivity, offering increased presence to oneself, others, and the world.

Second, self-awareness and self-transcendence would seem to make more likely the capacity for exemplars to relatively embody, or live day to day, their arising insight of being one with the

all of creation. In this way, perhaps exemplar's particular personalities and relative stage development are like a prism through which wisdom passes, potentially clarifying or muddling wisdom's enactment in a context. By becoming aware of the relative stage related interpretive lens of what is realized, exemplars can translate and impart the insight as clearly as possible into the world.

Summary: Some Meaning Making and Integration

In the closing moments of my interview with Exemplar 2, he likened religious traditions to the Chinese lantern, a metaphor that has since become a (meta) perspective reflective of my understanding and discussion of wisdom exemplars:

> Think of religious traditions as an eight-sided Chinese lantern and in the middle, there's a candle. You don't know where the light comes from but the light is filtered through those various colors of glass. All those colors of glass, all those pieces of glass are manmade. They distort the light. Now, there are a few that are more transparent than others . . . But all major religions are just like those glass in the lantern. What's the light? You don't know what it is. That's where you come to your mystery again. But you are perfectly free to assess any human construction of any kind once you know about it, once you learn about it. But you have to learn about all of the glass, not just the one. You see? (EX 2)

Perhaps exemplars are akin to the stained glass in the eight-sided lantern, and in the middle is the light of wisdom. For multiple reasons found in this research, exemplars are able to filter the light of wisdom (from a state accessed source) through their humanity into the world with less distortion and more transparency than the average human being.

Exemplar Connection to Source, Ground, or Spirit

Like the inner sides of the glass, exemplars have cultivated, or have been graced with a (state based) receptivity to the source and radiance of wisdom, whatever wisdom is. Exemplars' longstanding practices of meditation, valuation of mindfulness, and attending retreats; relationships with mentors; and long term-experience with multiple religious traditions and spiritual practices are all thought to be related to this capacity to access wisdom.

Exemplars' notions of wisdom also support a receptive element of wisdom. Forty percent of exemplars talked about learning wisdom as a letting go, surrendering, and experiencing an incarnation from something larger than the individual. Wisdom was also defined by exemplars as coming from the unknown, and *access* to wisdom can be pointed to and cultivated:

> Wisdom is something by the grace of life itself that can be incorporated but it's not an achievement . . . It's an incarnation. Not dissimilar from the Christian sense of incarnation of God and Jesus. So I really think it has a much broader metaphysical quality to it other than just the human accomplishment. And teach, I think, how one can receive it, but you can't teach wisdom. Nobody ever truly has fully incorporated wisdom. It's much bigger than the individual. (EX 11)

> For me (wisdom) is what arises when I admit that I really don't know anything. It's like something that comes spontaneously from being willing to sit in the not knowing. And having no personal agenda. So that whatever movement happens is happening almost through you rather than from you. It's being willing not to be attached to your ideas. It doesn't mean that what you know or you've learned or you've experienced isn't useful, because in a way that, for me, that integrates with this other kind of intuitive knowing. But it's sort of like letting the flow arise rather than going at it from an analytical perspective or a memory perspective. I don't know. I guess I think of wisdom as kind of a universal quality that pops up once in awhile in anybody. And it's coming from some other source in a way. So it plays through us when we're not overly involved in our concerns. (EX 9)

Exemplars' recognition of wisdom as incarnational, or coming from another source, is similar to the notions of transcendent wisdom put forth in previous literature. Transcendent wisdom is associated with "interest and skill in the transpersonal domain" (Wink & Helson, 1997, p. 12) insight into reality (Le 2008b, Trowbridge (2008); seeing through illusion, wisdom as a priori, or derived from intuitive insight (Barber & Mckee, 1999); and transcending the personal, is insightful, and demonstrates spiritual depth (Wink & Dillon, 2002). Transcendent wisdom could also be part of what Trowbridge (2008) refers to in his sense of one's ability to perceive reality, reflected in Exemplar 9:

> What it does is it ends the seeker when you recognize the truth. It just eliminates that. You realize you're not there. There's nobody really there. There's only a set of experiences. And that you are this – that what I am and what you are, there's absolutely no difference at the core. Every living thing is the same thing. It also eliminates any tendency to think that you're different than anyone else because everyone else is this too. It's just totally obvious. And so it just kind of ends the journey. (EX9)

Spirituality is thought to be related to this insight. Sixty-five percent of exemplars spoke about the spiritual as being inseparable from the wholeness of life, and the same percentage of exemplars expressed having a reflective articulation process though which they have access to an intuitive awareness out of which come creative and spontaneous images, words, and concepts relevant to their current context.

Almost all exemplars valued the importance of spirituality in their life as measured by the Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS), which was also positively and significantly correlated with wisdom. The highest stem on the SPS was, "Spirituality has played an important role in my life." Eighty-five percent of exemplars reported having a current religious or spiritual tradition; 80% had spiritual practices; 50% have more than one spiritual practice; and 55% attended retreats.

Relative, Reflective Self-Awareness

The lantern glass itself is conceived of as exemplars' relative stage development and conditioned identity. Exemplars' valuation of, and capacity for, self-awareness and self-reflection is thought to relate to an awareness of their own self-knowledge and development. To varying degrees, exemplars are able to see and assess within themselves their own human,

cultural, developmental obstacles to clear and continuous/ or abiding access to source. Metaphorically, this increasing self-transparency and permeability allows light to flow from the inside of the lantern out through the glass with minimal distortion.

This capacity for self-awareness is similar to the Le and Levenson (2005) conceptualization of self-transcendence, or "the ability to move beyond self-centered consciousness and to see things as they are with clear awareness of human nature and human problems, and with a considerable measure of freedom from biological and social conditioning" (2005, p. 444).

The capacity of exemplars to mindfully witness and potentially facilitate their own development (moment-to-moment experiences) is also similar to the reflective component of Ardelt's (2004a) model of wisdom: self-awareness, self-insight, self-examination, and the capacity to take multiple perspectives of phenomena (Ardelt, 2004a). This self-reflection practice informs an undistorted comprehension of reality by facilitating an awareness and transcendence of one's projections and subjectivity.

Related present study findings include: exemplars' valuation of self-contact and self-awareness, higher than normative mindfulness scores; learning wisdom as decentering from thinking; technologies for learning wisdom as ego-deconstructive; high resonance with the Humility Inventory; and lower than normative state and trait anxiety. The fact that many exemplars are psychotherapists or counselors points to the direct engagement of exemplars with professions oriented to the human condition, many of which are related to developing self-knowledge. Exemplars being predominantly psychotherapists and counselors may also reflect the professional community from which nominators were found.

Conscious Expression

The outer edge of the lantern glass is conceived of as exemplars' conscious relationship with others and with the world. Exemplars' interpersonal relationships likely align with what the psychological wisdom literature considers practical wisdom. Practical wisdom was defined as skill and interest in the interpersonal domain (Wink & Helson, 1997), facilitating the optimal development of self and others (Webster, 2007), living a good life in society (Le, 2008b) and the ability to make good choices regarding human affairs (Trowbridge, 2008).

The high importance and prevalence of exemplars' loving relationships, valuation of truth-telling, higher than normative generativity scores, multiple avenues of generativity, deep connections with others, being sought out for counsel, and roles as educators, therapists, and spiritual teachers all are supportive findings.

Conclusion

When there is some degree of development/accessibility for exemplars in all three areas – (a) spiritual insight (transcendent wisdom): or a deep receptive potential to or recognition as (and as) the unknown source of light; (b) self-awareness/ self-knowledge/ self-transcendence or an awareness of relative humanness; and (c) conscious engagement, or interpersonal accessibility

in relationships/contexts (practical wisdom) – wisdom can flow through and permeate exemplars' humanness, responding to the arising contexts of life with minimal distortion.

Exemplars' reflective articulation process, acting in the world as luminaries and visionaries, making life decisions intuitively, and experiencing oneness with all of life seem reflective of this connection between transcendent and practical wisdom, embodied through exemplars, understood through the use of the lantern metaphor. Ultimately, exemplars – momentarily, or, perhaps, in an abiding way – seem to become aware as, and of, both their immanence (humanity) and transcendence (divinity), such that both impact the world with practicality.

While the spiritual perspectives reflective in the findings of the study place the current research in the minority of psychological wisdom-related research of the last 35 years, it is worth noting the observations of Trowbridge (2008):

1. The divine, religious aspects of wisdom have been mainly ignored by psychologists.
2. Wisdom cannot separate itself from religion or questions of ultimate meaning, so long as what is wise is connected with judgments regarding what is best for men and women.
3. The traditional understanding of wisdom cannot be simply accepted.

Final Thoughts

What seems most important about wisdom is that it is alive. It is not a prescription. It can use multiple pathways of knowing. It arises from things we already know and will birth insights that otherwise would never come, in response to the unique context we are in. We will both feel out of the way and deeply intimate in relationship. Wisdom reveals the truth of the moment, but is not necessarily validated in a moment of understanding.

Wisdom is paradoxical. It requires doing and being, is meditative and generative. Wisdom arises both alone and in communion.

Perhaps, then, wisdom is expressed, or is translated, through many personal developmental lenses. Whatever developmental perspective is interpreting and enacting wisdom, recognizing when one is speaking from a personal place versus allowing wisdom to use the personal, is incredibly useful. But maybe that recognition is not necessary at all, or is in itself part of development, accessible and useful in some contexts and not in others. Ultimately, perhaps the word wisdom is just another referent to a process, a capacity that must be lived in order to be alive.

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Constructive-Developmental Theory and the Integrated Domains of Wisdom: Are Post-Conventional Leaders Really Wiser?

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Abstract: How leaders experience wisdom is important to our understanding of leadership behavior as well as to our overall understanding of leadership. The article explores qualitative findings that may advance academic discourse and research at the intersection between leadership, wisdom, and constructive-developmental theory. The present study examined how 12 executive leaders who assessed at the conventional and post-conventional stages of adult development experience wisdom. It is significant in that it addresses a gap in the literature between wisdom and constructive-developmental theory. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine how executive leaders understand their leadership role in terms of the cognitive, reflective, and affective domains of wisdom. Contrary to research that defines and operationalizes wisdom as the integration of these domains, findings indicate that participants experience wisdom in one or more of the domains of wisdom. Participants were also assessed for their meaning-making capacity to determine their stage of development using the SCTi-Map instrument. Contrary to research in constructive-developmental theory that suggests that post-conventional levels of development may equate to higher levels of wisdom, findings also indicate that there was no significant difference between how leaders describe their propensity for wisdom and their measured adult stage of development. Leaders who assessed at both the conventional and post-conventional stages of development described a propensity for wisdom. Analysis of participant responses suggests that the wisdom, in all its complexity, has its own trajectory and therefore necessitates inquiry into the lines of human development to include integral perspectives associated with spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial measures. The results of this study indicate the potential for additional research that explores wisdom in the context of both adult lines *and* adult stages of development to determine if specific correlations do exist.

Keywords: Constructive-developmental theory, human development, leadership, stages of development, wisdom.

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Introduction

Wisdom is an important construct for effectively dealing with the complexities of our modern society (McKenna, Rooney, & Boal, 2009). It is also considered an essential element of outstanding leadership (Rowley, 2006; Sternberg, 2007; Yang, 2011). Constructive-developmental theory is a useful construct in broadening our understanding of the meaning-making systems of leaders (Cook-Grueter, 1999; Torbert & Associates, 2004) and how they may experience wisdom.

While there has been extensive research in wisdom theory as well as the intersection between adult development and leadership, there has been little research that explores the direct linkage between wisdom, constructive-developmental theory, and leadership. The present study examines how 12 executive leaders who assessed at the conventional and post-conventional stages of adult development experience wisdom. It is significant in that it addresses a gap in the literature between wisdom and constructive-developmental theory.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine how executive leaders understand their leadership role in terms of the cognitive, reflective, and affective domains of wisdom (Ardelt, 2000, 2003, 2004a; Clayton & Birren, 1980). Contrary to research that defines and operationalizes wisdom as the integration of these domains (Ardelt, 2003, 2004a), the results of this study indicate that participants experience wisdom in one or more of the above domains; the integration of all three domains was not always present.

Participants were also assessed for their meaning-making capacity to determine their stage of adult development using the SCTi-Map instrument (Cook-Greuter & Associates, 2008). Contrary to research in constructive-developmental theory that suggests that post-conventional levels of development may equate to higher levels of wisdom (Barbuto & Millard, 2012; Cook-Greuter, 2005), findings also indicate that there was no significant difference between how leaders describe their propensity for wisdom and their measured adult stage of development. Thematic analysis of participant responses indicated that leaders who assessed at both the conventional and post-conventional stages of development described a propensity for wisdom. Based on these findings, the present study suggests that wisdom, in all its complexity, has its own trajectory and therefore necessitate inquiry into the lines of human development to include integral perspectives associated with spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial measures. The results of this study indicate the potential for additional research that explores wisdom in the context of both adult lines *and* adult stages of development to determine if specific correlations do exist.

The Relationship between Wisdom, Leadership, and Constructive-Developmental Theory

The recent socioeconomic crisis, including unstable fluctuations in the market and the complexity of an uncertain global economy, has challenged organizational leaders to reevaluate how they do business. Additionally, the distinct features of a networked society in the age of information require that leaders must now consider how they take action in the context of globalization and rapid fire communication (Bennis, 2007). As more and more organizations place greater emphasis on ethical and environmental issues, social responsibility, bottom line

sustainability, and knowledge management, leaders are being held more accountable for their actions (Maak & Pless, 2006). In a global stakeholder society, for example, leaders are not only expected to be fiscally accountable to shareholders. They are also accountable to a range of stakeholders for the broader economic, environmental, and societal impact of their organization (Wade, 2006). Such high levels of diverse accountability require the integration of wisdom, creativity, and intelligence (Rowley, 2006; Sternberg, 2007). There is a far greater need for excellent judgment, insightfulness, and higher levels of strong moral character (McKenna, et al., 2009).

Wisdom, as an evolving construct, is now, more than ever, relevant to how leaders make key decisions for the common good (Sternberg, 2007). While there is no one agreed upon definition of wisdom, theorists contend that it is important to our understanding of leadership (Bennis, 2007; Yang, 2011). Wisdom enhances a leader's overall ability to make moral and ethical choices (Lloyd, 2010) and increases the capacity for complex decision-making. Constructs related to wisdom include organizational wisdom (Kessler & Bailey, 2007), leadership wisdom (Yang, 2009; 2011), and wisdom management (Allen, 2008). From a practical perspective, greater understanding of wisdom and these related constructs have the potential to offer valuable insight into other aspects of organizational behavior that can potentially generate higher levels of business performance and success among leaders thereby influencing their overall ability to impact society (Bennis, 2007; Sternberg, 2007, Yang, 2011). The implication is that social responsibility is an essential component of leadership-related wisdom (Yang, 2011). Wise leaders are committed to the long-term welfare of both immediate stakeholders and humanity in general (McKenna et al., 2009; Sternberg, 2007).

In order for organizational leaders to more fully demonstrate a capacity for such transformative action, leading theorists contend that leaders can and should develop higher levels of wisdom (Barbuto & Millard, 2012; Sternberg, 2007; Yang, 2011). Principles of wisdom are particularly relevant to this time in history because wisdom is characterized by flexible, intuitive methods. The underlying premise therein is that if the basic tenets of wisdom are understood, leaders can also be evaluated according to robust criteria based on the principles of wisdom (McKenna et al., 2009). Leadership effectiveness can no longer be measured by organizational performance and profits alone.

While theorists suggest that wisdom is a key to how leaders effectively deal with complexity and in how they obtain a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Bierly, Kessler, & Christensen, 2000), it is worth noting that neither the construct of wisdom within organizations nor the processes associated with the cultivation of wisdom have received much attention in management and leadership discourse (McKenna et al., 2009; Rowley, 2006; Small, 2004).

While many definitions and research methodologies abound in the field of wisdom theory, one aspect of wisdom is often expressed. Wisdom, in all its complexity, represents the pinnacle of human development (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Kramer, 1990; Labouvie-Vief, 1990; Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990; Pascual-Leone, 1990). As such, research linked to the study of wisdom is on the rise (Barbuto & Millard, 2012; Webster, 2007). While its relevancy to leadership and constructive-developmental theory is still unfolding, future research in this area promises an alternative approach to understanding the complexity of human development.

Ongoing and consistent research in the field of constructive-developmental theory has the potential to at least partially bridge the gap between leadership and wisdom. Leading theorists in this field continue to broaden our understanding of how leaders at differing stages of development engage in the transformational process of leadership. One underlying assumption of constructive-developmental theory suggests that leaders who demonstrate later stages of development have perspectives and insights that may also purport to greater levels of wisdom (Cook-Greuter, 2005). Barbuto and Millard (2012) further propose that as one transitions from one developmental stage to another, development will coincide with progression in wisdom development. The findings of this study suggest that wisdom can be experienced within earlier and later stages of development, albeit in different ways. I will more fully explicate these findings in the discussion sections of this article.

Theoretical Framework

Wisdom Theory

The theoretical framework for the present study is situated at the intersection of leadership, wisdom theory, and constructive-developmental theory. While references to the construct of wisdom span ancient teachings from Sumerian to Hebrew cultures, empirical studies within the psychological sciences only began to emerge in the late 1970s (Birren & Svensson, 2005). The literature includes paradigms of wisdom that have been debated since the field began to more fully emerge in the 1980s and '90s: (a) theological and philosophical perspectives on wisdom, (b) wisdom and the sciences, (c) the nature of wisdom in complex environments, and (d) the ongoing debate between explicit and implicit theories of wisdom. From this review, two major psychological wisdom paradigms emerged as relevant to the present study: wisdom as an expert system of knowledge (Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004; Baltes & Smith, 1990, 2008; Baltes & Staudinger, 1993, 2000) and the wise person theory (Ardelt, 2000, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, Clayton & Birren, 1980).

Since the focus of the study was on how conventional and post-conventional executive leaders experience wisdom, the present study is situated within the implicit theories of wisdom. More specifically, the present study aligns with the research on the wise person theory of wisdom because it is a first-person interpretative approach that aims to examine the real life experience of leaders. Greater emphasis was therefore placed on attributes of wisdom as an essential component of leadership (Ackoff, 1989; Jeannot, 1989; Jones, 2005; Prewitt, 2002) and as a positive result of human development (Kramer, 1990; Labouvie-Vief, 1990; Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990; Pascual-Leone, 1990).

Major Debates in the Field

Within the context of explicit and implicit theories of wisdom, debates in the field are divided by two main ways to conceptualize and study the construct. The first approach is based on a traditional view of ancient writings of Western philosophers wherein wisdom is studied as a theory of knowledge, judgment, and advice about difficult and uncertain matters of life (Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004; Baltes & Smith, 1990; 2008; Baltes & Staudinger, 1993). The second approach is based on Asian philosophy and addresses wisdom from the perspective of *wise*

persons (Ardelt, 2000, 2003, 2004a). Western explicit theories of wisdom most often focus on knowledge and analytic capabilities, whereas Eastern implicit theories tend to emphasize the embodiment of the cognitive, reflective, and affective domains of wisdom (Ardelt, 2004a; Takahashi, 2000). These three domains as set forth in Table 1 served as a first-person interpretive lens in examining the wisdom experience of participants in this study.

Table 1: Definitions and operationalization of wisdom as a three-dimensional personality characteristic.

Domain of Wisdom	Definition	Coded to Assess How Leaders
Reflective	Different ways participants reflect; the qualities of reflection; how participants overcome subjectivity and self-projection	– reflect on adversity in life – reflect on differences in others to include social/cultural values – reflect on the essence of their work – reflect on themselves in relation to people and situations – reflect on multiple perspectives of other – gain self-insight and reflect on own capacities/strengths – reflect on spiritual and religious aspects of life – reflect on wisest self in relation to phenomenon and events
Cognitive	How participants structure experiences and make meaning from them. What is the logic behind their perspectives of self in relation to world? Desire to know truth and attain deeper understanding of life.	– describe adversity in life – accept ambiguity and uncertainty – describe essence of work in relation to purpose or calling – balance adaptation of environment with interest of the common good of society – integrate complex thought, action, and feeling – make important decisions in midst of uncertainty – take opposing views into consideration – describe themselves in relation to larger system – describe the construct of wisdom – increase own capacity for wisdom
Affective	Different aspects of emotion demonstrated in behavior	– respond to adversity – respond to ambiguity – demonstrate empathy and compassionate love for others – balance empathy and goal achievement – feel and act on behalf of greater good of organization – demonstrate humility – use humor to offset challenges – create results in dire situations

Adapted from Ardelt (2003 and Clayton & Birren (1980).

Wisdom as an expert system of knowledge vs. the wise person theory

In the early 1980s, the Max Planck Institute for Human Development and Education (commonly referred to as "The Berlin Group") developed what is still the most widely used explicit model of wisdom. Introduced as the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm (Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004: Baltes & Smith, 1990; Baltes & Staudinger, 1993), wisdom is defined as a high level of exemplary expertise in dealing with the fundamental problems related to the meaning and conduct of life (Kunzmann & Baltes, 2003). Examples of such fundamental problems include complex life and death issues, career moves, family conflicts, and life-span transitions such as aging or loss of a loved one.

As the preeminent leaders in wisdom research, Baltes and his associates set forth the premise that such pragmatics of life address wisdom within the context of life planning, life management, and life review (Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004; Baltes & Smith, 2008). Additionally, wisdom-related or expert knowledge is researched and assessed according to five wisdom criteria: rich factual knowledge, rich procedural knowledge, life-span contextualism (strategies, judgment, advice concerning matters of life), value relativism (differences in values, goals, and priorities), and uncertainty (Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004; Csikszentmilhalyi & Nakamura, 2005). Expert knowledge about the meaning and conduct of life approaches wisdom when all five criteria are present. The criteria are designed to reflect a balance between intellect and character and thereby offer an integrated perspective of wisdom.

The Berlin Group offers a stringent perspective on wisdom as a knowledge-based construct that emphasizes the functional consequences of wisdom over *how* one acquires it. While these theorists do take into consideration the cognitive, emotional, motivational, and virtuous aspects of the individual (Ardelt, 2004a; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004), they are juxtaposed against research on wise people claiming that such individuals are an imperfect illustration of wisdom (Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004). Wise sages as we know them (e.g., Buddha) are, therefore, recognized as carriers of wisdom-related knowledge rather than the road to understanding the construct of wisdom. The contention herein is that most wise individuals move through several reconstructions and purifications. Because they are fallible and imperfect, they cannot reach an ideal level of wisdom (Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004). The Berlin Group therefore contends that research should focus more on wisdom as a body of knowledge rather than on implicit studies of wise persons.

Within the context of adult-developmental theory, however, one underlying premise of the present study is that the road to wisdom *is* paved with reconstruction and purification. While the Berlin Group's research on wisdom as an expert system of knowledge is important and vital to our understanding of wisdom, it is a non-hierarchal model that does not recognize aspects of developmental movement (Alexander, Druker, & Langer, 1990). It therefore fails to acknowledge potential for the transformative processes associated with such movement and higher stages of consciousness. Developmental theory contends that each stage of development is more complex than the previous stage because as the person evolves, he/she is able to integrate and differentiate previous stages of development into a more complex understanding and experience of life (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Torbert, et al., 2004). This ability to integrate and differentiate may translate to higher levels of wisdom (Barbuto & Millard, 2012; Cook-Greuter,

2005). The Berlin Group, however, does not acknowledge later stages of development that encompass and reorganize based on earlier stages of development (Alexander, Druker & Langer, 1990). Further, as a cognitive model (Ardelt, 2004a; 2004b), it eliminates perspectives associated with reflective thought and higher states and stages of consciousness.

The wise person theory of wisdom expands upon wisdom as an expert system of knowledge by acknowledging that even the most profound wisdom literature, e.g., the Bible or the ancient Vedic texts, remain intellectual or theoretical knowledge until the wisdom associated with that knowledge is realized by a person (Ardelt, 2004a; 2004b). Wisdom is therefore more than an intellectual construct. It is the experience of knowledge as it is re-transformed into the person's ability to arrive at some deeper understanding or meaning-making about a situation or life event. Interview protocols that seek out the wisdom experience of an individual's own life situation offer a unique perspective in that they align with an important premise linked to the construct of wisdom: the value and importance of interpretive knowledge (Kekes, 1983).

To have an understanding of the pragmatics of life without being able to adequately apply that knowledge to one's own life circumstances does not equate to wisdom. Interpretative knowledge, therefore, does not refer to an intellectual interpretation of facts but to a paradigm shift in knowing. Wisdom is not a state of perfect knowledge (Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004); it is a state of *being* (Ardelt, 2004b). This state of being is realized through reflection on one's life experiences and how those experiences transform the individual (Ardelt, 2004b; 2005). This state also encompasses the knowing or cognitive capacity of the individual as well as how the individual affectively responds to others; it should therefore be measured by assessing the wisdom experience of people rather than by the wisdom of their knowledge. Wisdom is therefore perceived as a property of the individual and the integration of the cognitive, reflective, and affective characteristics of that individual (Ardelt, 2000; 2004a; 2005).

In keeping with this paradigm of wisdom as an implicit theory that measures the wisdom experience of people, this study was designed to elicit the personal experience of individual executive leaders and to determine how, if at all, those experiences may have transformed them as individuals.

Constructive-Developmental Theory

In her pioneering work on ego development, Loevinger (1976) postulated that there is an order to stages of development. In essence no order or stage can be skipped; each stage is more complex than the previous, and each stage is based on the preceding stage and therefore prepares the individual for the stage to follow (Loevinger, 1976). The present study focused more specifically on the framework of constructive-developmental theory that encompasses the specific body of work linked to neo-Piagetian paradigms. These theories are deemed such because they expand the early work of Jean Piaget beyond the scope of childhood cognition to include the transformational processes and emotions associated with stages of adult development (McCauley et al., 2006). These stages of development set the foundation for work by later researchers such as Torbert (1987; 2004), and Cook-Greuter (1999).

Constructive-developmental theory, or what some theorists refer to as adult stage development, is positioned as constructive in that it explores how individuals construct or interpret their life experiences. Similarly, the theory is positioned as developmental in that it explores how those interpretations can change and become more complex over time (McCauley et al., 2006). The theory contends that a person's growth and development is a process whereby the individual adopts more complex ways of making meaning of life experiences (Kegan, 1982; Cook-Greuter, 2000; Torbert, 1987). Each stage of development is more complex than the previous stage because as the person evolves, he/she is able to integrate and differentiate previous stages of development into a more complex understanding and experience of life. Accordingly, McCauley et al. (2006) states that: "Constructive-developmental theory concerns itself with two primary aspects of development: (a) the organizing principles that regulate how people make sense of themselves and the world (orders of development) and (b) how these regulative principles are constructed and re-constructed over time (developmental movement)" (p. 636).

Developmental theorists divide the spectrum of human consciousness into four main tiers: pre-conventional, conventional, post-conventional, and transpersonal (Cook-Greuter, 2004, 2005). Every stage has the potential for strengths and weaknesses, and each stage offers specific characteristics associated with impulse control, character development, interpersonal relations, and conscious preoccupation to include self-concept—none of which can be measured separately because they are so intimately intertwined (Loevinger, 1966; 1976). For over two decades, theorists in the field of leadership and management have looked to stage development theory as a way to better understand how leaders think, take action, and make meaning out of their experience of leadership. Since the field of constructive-developmental theory is the stage development theory most often associated with leadership and management (Cook-Greuter, 2004; McCauley, Drath, Palus, O'Connor, & Baker, 2006), it is one of the core theoretical frameworks for the present study.

With this most important premise of human development at the forefront, the present study offers a deeper understanding of wisdom through the experiential lens of executive leaders in the context of their adult stage of development. What they *say* about their experience of wisdom will add to the body of knowledge of first-person descriptions of *how* executives live out aspects of wisdom as primary leaders in their respective fields.

Constructive-developmental theorists contend that individuals who measure at the post-conventional levels have a greater capacity for integration of complex thought, action, and feeling (Cook-Greuter, 2004). While the research is not yet fully defined on how this integration may interrelate with theoretical perspectives on wisdom, leaders who measure at post-conventional levels are deemed more successful at positioning their organizations through change and in adapting to complex environments (Cook-Greuter, 2000; Fisher, Merron, & Torbert, 1987; Merron & Torbert, 1987). By contrast, the conventional levels of development are viewed as the stages more associated with linear perspectives. Leaders who measure within these stages, for example, may demonstrate wisdom via analytic logic. However, they would not necessarily recognize their capacity to construct meaning.

In discussing the intersection between the theoretical frameworks on wisdom and constructive-developmental theory, the focus of this study is limited to categorical descriptors associated with the conventional and post-conventional stages of development as defined by Cook-Greuter (2005) and Torbert & Herdman-Barker (2013).

The conventional stages refer to three developmental stages: the Diplomat/Conformist (3.0), Expertise/Self-Conscious (3.5), and Achievement/Conscientious (4.0). These three stages pertain to developmental levels of most individuals after the age of 12; approximately 80% of the population measures within these ranges, with most individuals indicating a transition from the Expertise/Self-Conscious stage to the Achievement/Conscientious stage. For example, thirty-percent of people in a mixed sample of 4510 profiled at the Achievement/Conscientious action logic (Torbert & Herdman-Barker, 2011).

Table 2: Differentiations between Categorical Descriptors and Scoring of 3 Developmental Models.

	Torbert **Action Logics**	**Cook-Greuter** **Ego Development Stages**	**Scoring**	**O'Fallon** **StAGES Model**	**Scoring**
				Illumined	6.5
	Ironic	Unitive	6	Universal	6.0
				Transpersonal	5.5
	Alchemical	Construct-Aware	5/6	Construct-Aware	5.0
	Strategic-Systems Oriented	Autonomous	5	Strategist	4.5
Post-Conventional	Values-Oriented	Individualist	4/5	Individualist	4.0
	Achievement-Oriented	Conscientious	4	Achiever	3.5
Conventional	Expertise-Oriented	Self-Conscious	3/4	Expert	3.0
	Diplomatic	Conformist	3	Diplomat	2.5
	Opportunist	Self-Defensive	2/3	Rule-Oriented	2.0
	Impulsive	Impulsive	2	Opportunist	1.5
Pre-Conventional				Impulsive	1.0

Adapted from Cook-Greuter (2002) and Torbert (2013). Note: O'Fallon (2014) has identified three stages within the earlier stage identified as Unitive by Cook-Greuter and Torbert. In light of this data, O'Fallon also views the Construct-Aware Stage as the first Post-Conventional Stage. Additionally, Cook-Greuter and Torbert do not score for the Rule-Oriented stage.

The post-conventional stages refer to the three developmental stages: the Values-Oriented/Individualist (4.5), the Systems-Strategic/Autonomous (5.0), and the Alchemical/Construct-Aware stage (5.5). At the first post-conventional level, people begin to realize that the meaning of things is dependent upon their own perspective and interpretation (Cook-Greuter, 2005).

Table 2 represents the linguistic diversity between the Ego Development Model as expressed by Cook-Greuter (2002) and Torbert's Action Logics (2011, 2013). The StAGES model (O'Fallon, 2014) is also represented as the latest stage development model. Since it can be somewhat cumbersome and confusing to move between the various linguistic descriptors set forth by Cook-Grueter and Torbert, I will utilize the StAGES numerical scoring for the range of stages represented in this study. The significance of the StAGES model will be more fully explicated in the discussion on Future Research.

The Study

Research Design

The reasoning and processes involved in describing how someone experiences wisdom can be more challenging to detect via quantitative methods (Yang, 2011). The study was therefore designed as an exploratory qualitative study that involved a 1st-person interpretative approach to investigating leaders in their natural settings. In-depth semi-structured interview questions were designed to elicit the candid responses of 12 executive leaders and to determine how those responses related to their adult stage of development. The SCTi-Map was the instrument used to determine those stages.

Methodology

Selection and Recruitment

Executive leaders were purposefully recruited and selected via the researcher's corporate database and nominations from other leaders. The criteria for selection centered on mid-to-senior-level executives engaged in government, corporate, or non-profit settings (to include educational and religious entities) who had undergone a form of major transformation in their organization within the prior 5 years. For purposes of this study, major transformation is defined as corporate downsizing, loss of client base, loss of profits, or any self- identifying factor that has constituted a major shift in systems, processes, policies, or the infrastructure of the organization, to include leadership strategies. Every effort was made to secure a diverse population to include religious affiliation, gender, age, and ethnicity. The objective was to select executive leaders within these environments who scored within the conventional or post-conventional stages of adult development based on the results of the SCTi-Map.

Sample Population

The age of participants ranged from 44-70 with the median age at 60. Religious affiliation was only moderately represented by one atheist and one participant in the Hindu faith. Since the

focus of the study was on executive leaders who measured at the conventional and post-conventional stages of development, this limitation was not a factor. The sample population was comprised of 8 males and 4 females. The private sector was represented by 41% whereas the public sector was represented by 16% of the population. Four of the participants (33%) were from non-profit organizations, and one participant was from a private foundation. The education level of participants ranged from Bachelor's Degree to Doctorate Degree and included two participants with Juris Doctor Degrees. Executive level positions included 50% of respondents at the Founder/President or CEO/COO level, 2 senior-level pastors from a large mega-church environment, 2 equity partner attorneys, 1 managing partner of an international medical technology company, and 1 technology consultant. Annual operating budgets ranged from $400,000 to $175M.

Procedure

The study involved two methods of data collection: the administration of the SCTi-Map (Cook-Grueter, 2008) and semi-structured interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Contact summary sheets and analytic memos were also utilized to reflect on preliminary themes that rose from the initial interviews and to capture ideas and relationships between codes during the process of coding and analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

A pseudonym was assigned to each participant prior to their taking the SCTi-Map assessment. The SCTi-Map responses for each individual were then scored by an independent rater who has been trained according to the standards and protocols of Cook-Greuter and Associates. In an effort to minimize transformational bias (Cook-Greuter, 2011) toward any one specific stage during the analysis process, participants' scores were withheld from the researcher until after completion of the first coding and analysis cycle. Participants stages ranged from 3.0 to 4.5. Since Cook-Greuter's instrument depicts the 4.5 stage at the post-conventional level, no additional recruitment was deemed necessary. However, it should be noted that this decision proved to be a limit to the study in that some researchers view the 4.5 stage as a transitional stage to the post-conventional levels.

All participants were interviewed for 60-90 minutes. Three participants were interviewed over the phone due to distant locations. The remaining 9 interviews were conducted face-to-face by the researcher. Interviews were tape recorded and 10 of the 12 interviews were transcribed by an independent professional. The additional 2 interviews were transcribed by the researcher to protect anonymity of two of the participants who are very well known. Each recorded interview was transcribed verbatim and proofread word-by-word by the researcher.

The semi-structured interview questions related to the leaders' perceived role within the organization, personal wisdom experiences, wisdom as a construct, values and beliefs, the essence of their work, and responses to adversity.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2009) involved two separate and distinct coding cycles. The first cycle involved multi-phases of analysis to ascertain rich, thick descriptions (Maxwell, 2005) of

the leaders' responses. This initial phase was important to determine if their responses indicated a propensity for wisdom. Interview responses were coded into key aspects of general wisdom theory (Baltes & Smith, 1990, 2008) and personal wisdom theory (Ardelt, 2000, 2004a, 2005). Once the data and initial findings from the first cycle of analysis were clearly delineated, the results of the SCTi-Map were revealed to the researcher.

First Coding Cycle: Analysis, Coding, and Emergence of Leaders' Experiences of Wisdom

The first coding cycle was divided into four separate phases.

Phase 1: review of transcripts

Phase 1 was aimed at understanding how the participants construct and make meaning of their wisdom experience (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Consistent with a data-driven approach to analysis, the first six interviews were reviewed for preliminary code development. Each transcript was coded and analyzed using a multi-step iterative process of thematic analysis as set forth by Boyatzis (1998). This process involved the categorization of data, analysis of narrative structure and contextual relationships, the integration of themes, and the interpretation of major themes and descriptions (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2005; Newman, 2003). The researcher systematically reviewed and analyzed over 15 hours of interview transcripts. This process allowed for insight into the overall theme of each transcript and how the theme might compare to contact summary sheets that were written post-interview of each participant.

A second review of the transcripts involved pre-coding methodologies (Saldaña, 2009) that identified key statements and helped determine patterns of expression. Those patterns of expressions were then compared and contrasted with one another to determine emerging codes. To ensure consistent quality of codes, a code book was developed to ensure that the definition and description of the codes would be accurately applied to future coding. The initial six transcripts were reviewed a third time and coded against the emerging themes to determine consistency of judgment.

Phase 2: code transcripts

The raw data of the final six interviews was then used to further validate the emerging themes. Once consistency of judgment was determined with respect to the emerging codes, the researcher reviewed the conceptual framework, the interview protocol, and the research question as a guide for articulation of meaningful themes. Additional codes were then developed to allow for responses within the individual domains of wisdom. To test the wise person theory of wisdom, responses were then subjected to an additional level of analysis to determine how they corresponded to the coding within the separate domains of wisdom, the reflective, cognitive, and affective. Research indicates that wisdom is a real-life phenomenon that can be recognized by others without much difficulty (Baltes, Staudinger, Maercker, & Smith, 1995). Based on this assertion, the researcher analyzed all 12 transcripts again and identified 847 "wisdom" responses within the three domains of wisdom.

Content from all 12 transcripts was then analyzed via a first cycle of descriptive coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2009). This level of coding was chosen as a form of analysis because it is well suited to studies with a variety of data forms. As an iterative process, this level of analysis involved repeated review of raw data. Codes were then expanded or collapsed accordingly.

Phase 3: interpretation of data

This phase involved review of all analytic memos to identify key learning points from the first cycle of descriptive coding. A summary of each code was written, and summaries were arranged into clusters to determine higher levels of abstraction and how themes might emerge or converge (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Summaries were also analyzed in terms of the integrative domains of wisdom.

Phase 4: finalization of themes

This phase involved a return to the raw data to determine if the coded segments of the interview did in fact correspond to the emerging themes. Themes were refined as the data were repeatedly analyzed to ensure accurate representation. This repeated immersion in the interview transcripts allowed for rich, thick data to emerge and for a deepened understanding of the phenomenon. A final stage of clustering resulted in the organization of themes based on the domains of wisdom. Each theme was then named and tagged with an exemplar.

Second Coding Cycle: Analysis and Coding of Domains of Wisdom in Relation to Stages

Since the study was designed to elicit the wisdom experience of executive leaders who scored within the conventional and post-conventional stages of development, it was important to engage in a second coding cycle once the SCTi-Map scores were revealed. The purpose of this cycle was to analyze and code participant responses to determine if there was a relationship between their stage development score and their responses within each of the integrative domains of wisdom. This process involved reentry into the originally coded data. Patterning and clustering of the data was used to determine the descriptive responses of the participants and how those responses corresponded to the three domains of wisdom and their individual stage of adult development.

Phase 5: analysis of responses across the integrative domains of wisdom

Participant responses previously coded into the cognitive, reflective, and affective domains of wisdom were divided up by participant and analyzed to determine their primary domain of wisdom. Responses included all data previously coded in the subcategories of the coding schema as defined in Table 1. This table represents the definition and operationalization of wisdom as an integrated three-dimensional component of personality. These definitions were adapted from earlier research (Ardelt, 2003; Clayton & Birren, 1980) in an effort to accommodate a more qualitative and interpretative approach to the research. Clayton and Birren (1980) originally determined these domains through a multidimensional scaling process of 12 wisdom attributes (Ardelt, 2005).

The purpose of this level of analysis was to determine if participant responses were integrated across all three domains or if the participants described their experiences from a primary domain (e.g., cognitive, reflective, or affective). Because cognition is required in order to experience the reflective or affective aspects of personality (Wilber, 2000), the categorical responses were divided according to the cognitive, cognitive/reflective, cognitive/affective, and the cognitive/reflective/affective domains of wisdom.

The process involved a review of the coded data for each participant to ensure that the response in each domain was in fact appropriately coded according to the definition as outlined in the coding schema. A percentage of responses for each domain was then determined (Appendix A) to ascertain the primary domain of wisdom described by the participant. For example, 25.96% of the overall responses in the cognitive domain were expressed by Participant 1. Those responses were separated out from the remaining participant responses. Each of his 28 cognitive responses were then analyzed line-by-line to ensure they fit into the cognitive domain. Responses that reflected a direct cognitive response, according to the definition, were separated out and assigned a percentage rate. For example, Participant 1 indicated 19% of his responses in the cognitive domain. Responses that indicated more of an integration of the three domains or of the cognitive/reflective, cognitive/affective domains were separated out into those categories and given a percentage rate as appropriate. Participants' primary domain of wisdom was then determined by their highest percentage rate. For example, Participant 1 indicated 48% of his responses in the primary wisdom domain of the cognitive/affective category.

Phase 6: analysis of responses across the stages/action logics

The purpose of this level of analysis was to determine if there was a relationship between how participants experienced wisdom, via their primary wisdom domain, and their stage of development or action logic (Torbert and Herdman-Barker, 2013). Participants' responses previously coded into the three domains of wisdom were analyzed and coded against the action logic lexicon for each stage of development. For example, if a cognitive response aligned with the lexicon and understanding associated with the 3.5 action logic, that response was coded at the Expertise level. Responses were then mapped across several action logics as appropriate for each participant. This detailed level of analysis involved coding representative of each action logic against the single or integrated domains of wisdom. For more information regarding the outcomes of this detailed level of analysis, see Spano (2013).

Key Findings

Based on the literature on wisdom and constructive-developmental theory, it initially seemed probable that leaders who measured at the conventional stages of development might fail to indicate a propensity for wisdom beyond a linear, cognitive perspective. Similarly, it seemed probable that those who measured at the later or post-conventional stages of development would indicate integration of the three wisdom domains. Key findings, however, suggest otherwise.

The initial cycle of analysis was necessary to determine if the leaders presented as "wise" based on the definition of wisdom as it corresponds to the three domains of wisdom outlined in Table 1. It was anticipated that participants who lead within more linear, analytic disciplines, e.g., attorneys or engineers, might demonstrate a propensity for wisdom, if at all, only within the

cognitive domain of wisdom. However, this did not prove to be the case. Based on thematic analysis of the initial data, all 12 of the respondents indicated a propensity for wisdom albeit in different ways. The significance of the initial key findings that emerged within each of the domains of wisdom emphasized the complexity of human development and the elusive nature of wisdom.

The process of thematic analysis as outlined above revealed the major themes depicted in Figure 1.

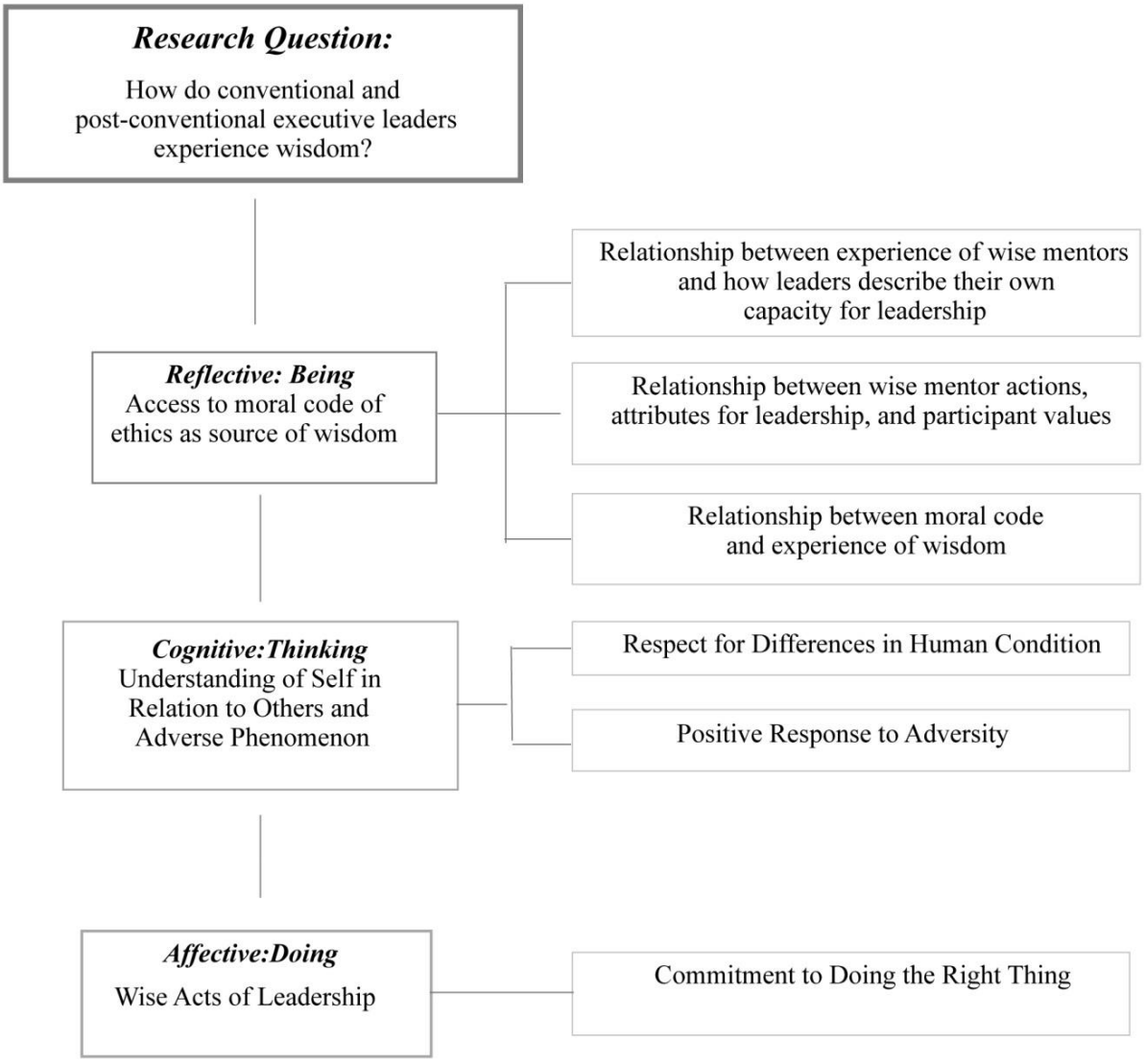

Figure 1: Themes and Key Findings First Cycle of Analysis.

A brief overview of the findings from the First Cycle of Analysis will be now be discussed.

First Cycle of Analysis

Reflective: Access to Moral Code of Ethics as Source of Wisdom

From a reflective stance, all participants access a strong moral code of ethics as a source of wisdom. They may, however, do so from introspective practices such as prayer and meditation or through more cognitive processes. The reflective component of wisdom speaks to how participants move beyond knowledge and skill and what they know for certain through the process of logic and formal reasoning to understanding issues of knowing in the face of uncertainty (Kitchener & Brenner, 1990).

Responses indicated that all 12 participants were able to move beyond knowledge to levels of "knowing" by accessing a moral code of ethics. This moral code is embedded in who they are. It stems from societal and religious norms that have been impressed upon them in early developmental years. This moral code was also formulated by early career experiences with someone they described as a wise mentor. How they construct meaning within the context of this moral code is one aspect of how they experience wisdom. This system of morality or code of values guides choice and actions. Wisdom is not something they do as all decisions and resultant outcomes are not perfect; it is, however, part of their existence or way of being. These findings indicated that the participants are wise leaders, each in different and unique ways; this individual way of being is reflected in the way they live out the day-to-day experience of wise leadership.

Cognitive: Understanding of Self in Relation to Others and Adverse Phenomenon

Respect for differences in the human condition

Wisdom is manifested in our understanding of differences and the multiple perspectives of others (Ardelt, 2000; Kitchener & Brenner, 1990). Consistent with this premise, all participants demonstrated a deep understanding of themselves in relation to others and a surprising respect for differences in the human condition. This respect was described in relation to employees, clients/customers, and in some instance, the greater society.

Participants expressed appreciation of employee differences within an underlying theme of respect, care, and/or responsibility. This appreciation, however, was expressed differently based on the organizational sectors represented. For example the public and private sector respondents expressed client appreciation via a more cognitive response of solving problems for the client, increasing the bottom line for the company, and being accountable to a board. While these differentiations may seem obvious responses from anyone in a leadership role, participant knowledge and ability is strongly engulfed in a passionate desire to make a difference for their clients. Wisdom is therefore expressed via their ability to provide information and advice on the pragmatics of life such that their clients can make the best decisions for their businesses.

Leaders from the non-profit organizational sector, however, offered a more altruistic approach that included a systems perspective beyond the client or immediate needs of the community. Both the pragmatic and altruistic approaches to wisdom require some integration of the reflective, cognitive, and affective domains; however, this process is lived out or expressed at different levels. For example, in the pragmatic levels described above, wise leaders may reflect

from rational thought or logic; they rely on facts. Those who engage in reflection from a broader systems perspective, however, seem to arrive at more altruistic levels of respect and appreciation beyond the scope of the individuals they directly serve. Such expression of service often extends beyond the organization, for example, to the global society.

Such acts suggest understanding and acceptance of the positive and negative aspects of human nature (Ardelt, 2005) as they relate to the construct of wisdom. The diversity of these responses, however, also indicates that how leaders experience wisdom within the integrative domains of the cognitive, reflective, and affective aspects of personality is not a clear path of discovery. The interrelationship between the domains of wisdom is complex and requires exploration into the multidimensional aspects of the spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial measures of an individual in order to more fully understand how leaders fully live out their experience of wisdom. Questions related to the phenomenon of adversity were therefore explored in the hopes of gaining some level of insight into the more complex aspects of the participants' meaning-making systems.

Positive response to adversity

Research indicates the importance of examining wisdom within the context of adversity (Ardelt, 2005; Kekes, 1983; Kitchener & Brenner, 1990). This aspect of wisdom also includes how individuals understand themselves in relation to the inherent limits of knowledge and how they understand and accept the unpredictability and uncertainty of life (Ardelt, 2005). Adversity can be expressed as any negative misfortune or crisis that results in calamity or distress for the individual. Depending on the meaning-making systems of the person, to include perception, interpretation, and levels of wisdom, even a minor infraction can be viewed as adversity. One clear aspect of adversity is that it is part of the human experience. How individuals maneuver their way through such moments of misfortune is often determined by their theological, philosophical, or psychological approach to life.

While not all adversity leads to greater levels of wisdom, research indicates that the ability to cope with crisis and hardship may not only be a hallmark of wise individuals, it may also be one of the pathways to wisdom (Ardelt, 2005; Pascual-Leone, 2000). Wisdom theory therefore suggests that leaders would be fully capable of dealing with any crisis and obstacles they may encounter (Ardelt, 2005; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004; Kekes, 1983; Kunzmann & Baltes, 2003).

Findings indicated that 11/12 of the participants expressed an ability to endure and persevere through extreme measures of adversity. One participant did not feel he had experienced adversity because in his estimation adversity is greater than the day-to-day challenges of life. Daily challenges, in his estimation, are simply problems to solve. Since he had not experienced loss of family, income, or extreme illness, he did not view adversity as part of his life experience.

Consistent with the literature on wisdom and adversity, participants engaged in *active coping* as set forth by Ardelt (2005) in several specific ways: (a) reframed the situation to make the best of it; (b) demonstrated the ability and willingness to take control of the situation based on their own experience, skills, or talents; (c) came to the understanding that one doesn't always have control over external circumstances; (d) accepted that adversity is part of life and that life is

unpredictable and uncertain; (e) accepted that death or loss is a part of life; (f) expressed a trust in the benevolence of others and, in some instances, God.

The aforementioned findings suggest that how leaders handle adverse circumstances may have an impact on how they develop their own capacity for wisdom. Participant responses indicated that adversity is viewed as an opportunity to gain insight and wisdom about self and others. Through adversity, participants learned to embrace challenge, have faith in their own experience and/or God, and to make better and wiser decisions.

Affective: Wise Acts of Leadership

The ebb and flow of how participants reflect and think about daily organizational life is translated into affective behavior, the *doing* aspect of wisdom, or what can be deemed as "wise acts" of leadership. While participants did not expressly describe their actions as "wise," the process of thematic analysis revealed interesting differentiations in how they deliver products and services. Responses were coded according to thoughts or actions specific to client needs versus those for the greater good of the organization or those set forth on behalf of the common good of society. All 12 participants expressed a commitment to doing the right thing. Twelve of the executive leaders described affective responses specific to their clients. Additionally, all 12 expressed actions for the greater good of the organization. However, only 6/12 responses demonstrated affective behaviors for the common good of society.

The significance of these initial findings was not fully realized until the SCTi-Map scores were revealed. While the first cycle of analysis indicated that there were differentiations in how participants described their commitment to doing the right thing, the second cycle of analysis indicated that there was no significant relationship between stages of adult development and how the participants demonstrated affective behavior towards either the client or the great good of the organization or society at large. Leaders who measured at both the conventional and post-conventional levels of development described affective behavior for the common good of society.

In conclusion, these "wise acts" of leadership are focused on that which is right and just for the client/customers served, the overall good of the organization, or the overall common good of society. In either instance, wise decisions are made based on what is "right and just" for someone or something outside and beyond self. There was little to no evidence of egocentricity in the responses of these executive leaders.

These initial findings further emphasized the complexity of wisdom and the need for greater understanding of the participants' spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial development. While each of 12 participants indicated a propensity for wisdom, they did so in unique and different ways. Findings from the First Cycle of Analysis did indicate, however, that they do so within the broader scope of a strong moral code, an understanding of self in relation to others and adverse phenomenon, and in their commitment to doing that which is right and just for their organizations, the people they serve, and, in some instances, society-at-large.

Their propensity to experience wisdom in unique ways within the context of their adult stage of development was further substantiated by findings of the Second Cycle of Analysis.

Second Cycle of Analysis

The second cycle of analysis was important to ascertain if the leaders experienced wisdom within the integrative domains of wisdom, and, if so, how that experience related to their adult stage of development. Since the findings were surprisingly contradictory to existing theories on wisdom and constructive-developmental theory they are presented in support of my argument that wisdom has its own trajectory and therefore necessitates inquiry into the lines of human development as well as the stages of adult development.

Results of the SCTi-Map

The SCTi-Map scores denote each respondent's primary stage or center of gravity (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Torbert & Herdman-Barker, 2013). Participants' individual scores ranged from 3.5 to 4.5 and are representative of the Total Protocol Rating which indicates the statistical measure and qualitative appraisal of the SCTi-Map protocol as scored and assessed by Cook-Greuter. What this essentially means is that the TPR rating is a combination of the statistical score from the inventory, and it also includes the qualitative judgment of the rater. For example, if a participant scores within a statistical range of 4.5, the expertise of the rater might also discern that the respondent's sentence stems indicate an early or late stage of development within that range; hence the plus and minuses depicted in Appendix A. Note that Participant 9 indicates a score of 4/5-. This score indicates that this particular participant has only recently transitioned to the 4.0 stage; she is in the early stage of this level.

The results of the SCTi-Map indicated that eight of the participants measured within the conventional ranges of development: three measured at the 3.5 level, and five measured at the 4.0 level. The remaining four participants, measured at the post-conventional stage 4.5. It is also worth noting that three of the four participants who measured at the post-conventional level were women.

While these scores are representative of the participants' center of gravity (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Torbert & Herdman-Barker, 2013), it is not unusual for the dynamic of development to include a pull toward later stages of development. Under the right conditions and depending on the person's state of consciousness, e.g., the concrete, subtle, causal, and nondual tiers (Wilber, 2006) an individual may indicate meaning-making capacities and actions within later stages of development or vice versa. For example, a person may have a peak spiritual experience at the earlier concrete state of consciousness, however, that peak experience does not necessarily mean they have moved to a later stage of development.

The complexity of this developmental movement can perhaps best be described as a "rocking back and forth" (O'Fallon, Personal Communication, 2014) as individuals experience themselves in transition between earlier and later stages. The results of the SCTi-Map for this specific population, therefore, also indicated a range of responses from earlier to later stages. This range represents the nuanced dimensions of the meaning-making capacity of the individual. A participant may indicate scores in earlier stages just as readily as he may indicate scores in later stages of development.

As further evidence of this premise, five of the participants who scored within the conventional range of 4 also indicated SCTi-Map responses in the 4.5 range. Three out of the four participants in the post-conventional range of 4.5 indicated assessment responses in the 5.0 stage. After the results of the SCTi-Map were revealed, the second cycle of analysis further supported the propensity for these specific participants to gravitate toward later stages of development.

Analysis of Wisdom across the Stages/Action Logics

The second level of analysis also involved mapping participant interview responses across multiple stages of development according to the lexicon of stage-development theory as recently set forth by Torbert and Herdman-Barker (2013). The reason for shifting from the SCTi-Map lexicon to the Action Logic lexicon at this point of analysis was to ascertain how participants' wisdom experience corresponded with the leadership perspectives set forth by Torbert & Herdman-Barker (2013). Torbert's latest model, The Global Leadership Profile was not yet available at the time this study was conducted.

This second level of analysis indicated that it was much easier to map the conventional level responses across one, two, or even three action logics. In most instances, these responses mapped either one level below or beyond the respondents' center of gravity score. Participants who scored at the later post-conventional action logics, however, expressed more complex responses that mapped across 3-4 levels. For several, these responses were even two stages beyond their center of gravity score.

This element of the study is indicative of the ebb and flow of human development and the "pull' toward later action logics. Participants who scored within the later action logics more specifically indicated a movement and transition toward a deeper understanding of self and the ability to more fully self-integrate into frameworks beyond their center of gravity. This aspect of the analysis was important in that it pointed to a possible relationship between how participants mapped across multiple stages of development and how they might experience wisdom within the integrated domains of wisdom.

The Integrative Domains of Wisdom

The results of this study did not indicate a significant relationship between the integrative domains of the cognitive, reflective, and affective aspects of personality and how participants experience wisdom. Additionally, there was no significant relationship between participants' adult stage of development and how they experienced the domains of wisdom. The significance of these two findings will be more fully explicated in the following discussion.

Summary of Key Findings

Key findings of the overall study suggest that wisdom can be experienced and expressed in both the single and integrated domains of wisdom. Participants from every level of development expressed responses that correspond to one or more domains. The integration of all three domains is difficult to measure because cognition is so closely related to the domain of

reflection. This study can only point to what each participant revealed about their reflective processes. This factor presents a limitation to the study in that there is no way to fully determine how, if at all, participants access the reflective domain to include the full integrative domains of wisdom as defined in this study. One can cognitively experience wisdom in the moral decision-making process as readily as one can access wisdom in moments of deep introspection which may ultimately lead to deeper and more meaningful experiences of life and conduct toward others. The integrated domains are not necessarily accessed by an individual all the time. Sternberg (1985; 1998; 2004) reminds us that even wise individuals are not always wise. One can be wise in a variety of situations and in a variety of ways.

With respect to stage development theory, Appendix A indicates that wisdom can be experienced within multiple stages of development. For example, an individual who measures within the 3.5 range may experience the cognitive/affective domain of wisdom at 48% just as readily as a participant who measures within the 4.5 range does at 49%. The literature suggests that wisdom occurs more readily at the later stages of development because individuals at these later stages have a greater propensity to engage in thought processes or "empty mind" experiences that allow for more complex perspectives such as a deeper understanding of self in relation to the world and systems-at-large (Cook-Greuter, 2005). This overriding premise suggests that developmental movement includes a movement toward wisdom that involves increasing balance between differentiation and integration.

While the literature clearly points to the deep and profound meaning-making systems of individuals at these later stages, it is not clearly identified with any specific definition of wisdom. The study-at-hand, however, has analyzed a small, yet specific population of leaders within the context of the integrative domains of wisdom, and findings suggest that wisdom can and does occur within multiple stages of adult development. .

In conclusion, key findings indicated that:

- Wisdom can be experienced at both the conventional and post-conventional levels of development.
- Wisdom can be experienced within one or more of the multidimensional domains of the cognitive, reflective, and affective aspects of personality.

Discussion

Findings of the present study suggest that the complexity of wisdom necessitates inquiry into the lines of human development to include the integral perspectives associated with spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial measures because stage development theory, while vital to our understanding of human development, offers a limited understanding of how leaders experience wisdom. Further, the cognitive, reflective, and affective domains of personality may be influenced or affected by an individual's spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial lines of development. Finally, the relationship between lines, states, and stages of adult development in the context of wisdom can provide a deeper understanding of how leaders effectively engage in behaviors associated with wisdom.

Before discussion on the reasons for these contentions, it is important to reiterate that participant responses associated with this study are but one aspect of how leaders construct meaning of their wisdom experience. While there is some indication that several of the participants (6/12) indicate more cognitive responses, it is presumptive to conclude that responses at another point in time would not indicate more integrated perspectives. Even within the more cognitive stance, participants indicate an ability to respond to people, life situations, and the overall pragmatics of life with wisdom. The participants in this study make good decisions based on a strong moral code of ethics, demonstrate empathy and compassion towards others, and exhibit positive responses to adversity. How they reflect and make meaning of those situations may extend beyond the cognitive responses offered in this study; this study is limited to responses of a small sample population at one given point in time. Additionally, it must be noted that this study does not represent participants from the later stages of development, namely, 5.0 and beyond. It is possible that participants who measure at these later stages may indicate a greater propensity for the more integrated domains of wisdom.

Constructive-Developmental Theory and How Leaders Experience Wisdom

My first contention that stage development theory offers a limited understanding of how leaders experience wisdom can be substantiated in two specific ways:

- Depending on the operationalized definition of wisdom, progression in human development may or may not coincide with progression in wisdom development.
- Based on the findings of this study, wisdom can be experienced at both the conventional and post-conventional levels of development.

With respect to this first contention, the underlying premise for this study was based on research in constructive-developmental theory that indicates that later stages of development correspond to higher levels of wisdom. As one transitions to later stages of development, higher levels of wisdom emerge (Barbuto & Millard, 2012; Cook-Greuter, 2005).

In an overview of Kegan's Orders of Consciousness, Barbuto & Millard (2012) offer a significant perspective on the relationship between the stages of development and how such development coincides with a progression in wisdom. In this synopsis, the highest order of development corresponds to wisdom via an individual's awareness of self-limitations and openness to the complexity of issues, the ability to connect multiple perspectives, and a willingness to adapt to the uncertainty of life. Other leading constructive-developmental theorists indicate that higher levels of differentiation and integration within the post-conventional stages indicate higher levels of wisdom (Cook-Greuter, 2005). Additional empirical studies (Yang, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2011) proposes a process view of wisdom arguing that when leaders exert positive influence to promote good lives for themselves, members of their organization, and society in general, wisdom is displayed through their leadership. Wisdom is therefore viewed as a positive real-life process that encompasses core competencies of cognitive integration, a vision for a good life, and the action required to embody that integrated thought and the positive effects of the action on self and others (Yang, 2011). As one of the most recognized constructive-developmental theorists in the field of leadership, Torbert, et al., (2004) views wisdom as an

ongoing integration of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person inquiry in the midst of action with others. Such wisdom involves the integration of being, knowing, doing, and effecting in a timely manner.

While each of these theorists point to the relationship between constructive-developmental theory and wisdom, the findings of this study suggests that the relationship between adult development and how leaders progress in wisdom may be more complex than previously understood. Based on review of the literature on constructive-developmental theory at the outset of this study, it was anticipated that leaders who measured at the earlier stages of development would fail to indicate integrated responses within the three domains of wisdom. However, when the results of the SCTi-Map scores were revealed, a surprising result emerged. Leaders who measured at the conventional and post-conventional stages, as demonstrated in Appendix A, indicated integrated responses within the primary domains of wisdom, e.g., the Cognitive/Affective and the Cognitive/Reflective. These slight, but important differentiations in the data, point to the complexity of human development in relation to the multidimensional aspects of wisdom and indicate that progression in human development may or may not equate to a progression in wisdom development, again, depending on the operationalized definition of wisdom. Without further inquiry into the spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial lines of development, it may be presumptuous to assume that progression in stages of development equate to a progression in wisdom.

Additionally, findings also suggest that it cannot be presumed that leaders who measure at later stages of development experience wisdom more readily than those at the earlier stages. For example, Participate 1 who measured at the lowest SCTi-Map conventional score indicated 48% of his responses in the primary domain of the Cognitive/Affective. However, with 33% of his responses falling within the Cognitive/Reflective/Affective domains of wisdom, he was also the only participant to indicate integration in all three domains (Appendix A). Constructive-developmental theory would suggest that someone who measures at this level might experience wisdom purely from a cognitive level that relies on external norms and standards and an express level of expertise from external sources (Barbuto & Millard, 2012). While it is difficult to ascertain the nuances of these measures within a small sample population, in-depth thematic analysis suggests that additional lines of development that might include spiritual and emotional perspectives are worthy of consideration.

The Integrative Domains of Wisdom and How Leaders Experience Wisdom

My second contention that the cognitive, reflective, and affective domains of wisdom may be influenced or affected by an individual's spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial lines of development is exemplified by the fact that participants indicated responses within one or more multiple domains of wisdom.

Research indicates that respondents who scored high on cognition utilizing the 3DWS (Three Dimensional Wisdom Scale; Ardelt, 2003) also scored high on the reflective and affective domains of wisdom (Ardelt, 2004b). Wisdom is therefore described as the integration of these three dimensional personality characteristics (Ardelt, 2004a; 2004b). The reflective component is emphasized as an important aspect of wisdom (Ardelt (2000, 2004a, 2004b).

Table 3 indicates the average percentages of the overall categorical responses in each domain in relation to the stages/action logics represented in the study. None of the three representative stages indicate a high percentage in the integrative cognitive/reflective/affective domain. However, participants' responses do indicate percentages within the multiple domains of cognitive/reflective and cognitive/affective.

Table 3: Wisdom Domains and Action Logics.

Action Logic	No. of Participants	Average Percentages In Integrative Domains			
		C	C/R	C/A	C/R/A
Expertise	3	34%	21%	30%	15%
Achievement	5	57%	14%	23%	3%
Values Oriented	4	37%	15%	37%	10%

Note: The categorical domains are represented as Cognitive, Cognitive/Reflective, Cognitive/Affective, and Cognitive/Reflective/Affective (Ardelt, 2000) and are based on data code sets.

Table 3 further indicates that participants within the Expertise, Achievement, and Values-Oriented action logics had lower response rates in the Cognitive/Reflective domain. Research on constructive-developmental theory points to the probability that people who score in the later stages of development, 5.0 and above, might have a greater propensity for higher levels of self-awareness and reflective engagement (Barbuto & Millard, 2012; Cook-Greuter, 2005; Torbert & Herdman-Barker, 2013); they might therefore experience more significant levels of wisdom based on their integration of all three domains. One of the limitations of this study is that none of the 12 participants assessed within these later stages of development. For more detailed exemplars of how participants experienced wisdom within the domains of wisdom, see Spano (2013).

Findings suggest that the three-dimensional domains of wisdom are present in the meaning-making systems of these participants albeit in different forms. For example, those participants who measured at the 4.5 range indicated an average percentage range (37%) in the cognitive domain that is not too dissimilar from that expressed by the those who scored within the 3.5 range at 34%. While this percentage is balanced with their cognitive-affective domain (37%), it cannot be presumed that their wisdom experience is more integrated than those who scored within the 3.5 range and indicated a higher percentage rate of 15% in the cognitive/reflective/affective domain. However, even this percentage in the integrated domain as expressed by the Expertise level is skewed due to the high 33% responses of Participate 1. Appendix A indicates that two of the participants actually scored higher in the cognitive domain. These differentiations in percentages point to the complexity of this construct and further suggest that wisdom can be experienced within the single and integrated domains of wisdom.

One of the most comprehensive studies on wisdom in recent years exemplifies the many complex nuances of wisdom as a construct. In examining exemplars of wisdom, Krafcik (2011)

points to the significance of inquiry into the spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial lines of development. His study involves quantitative and qualitative measurements of exemplars' perceived levels of stress, life satisfaction, state and trait anxiety, personality traits, generativity, mindfulness, humility, ego development, spiritual perspectives, and potential for subclinical narcissism. As Krafcik hypothesized, exemplars indicated adult development scores that exceeded the highest conventional stage of 4.0; the study did not include exemplars within the earlier stages of development.

Additionally, one pertinent result of the Krafcik study indicated that among exemplars of wisdom, spirituality exceeded the normative score on the Spiritual Perspective Scale by 15.7%. Spirituality, as its own line of development (Wilber, 2006), is important to our understanding of wisdom (Ardelt, 2004; Kramer, 1990).

One of the limitations of the present study (Spano, 2013) is that, without a measurement of perspectives on spirituality, it is difficult to ascertain how the cognitive, reflective, and affective domains of wisdom are affected by participants' spiritual development. This line of reasoning can be further explicated in a third contention as follows.

States, Stages and Lines of Development

Finally, the third contention is that the relationship between lines, states, and stages of adult development in the context of wisdom can provide a deeper understanding of how leaders effectively engage in behaviors associated with wisdom. The findings of the present study suggest that without analysis of the complex interrelationship between states of consciousness and stages and lines of development, it is challenging to determine precisely how leaders experience wisdom. Stages and states of consciousness overlap in complex ways. A leader may experience a peak mental state within any stage; this state is interpreted based on his or her current stage of development (Wilber, 2006). The interrelationship between states, stages, and lines of development produces a variety of interpretative experiences that may or may not result in the experience of wisdom.

This relationship between states, stages, and lines of development was more significantly realized as the present study unfolded. Findings indicated that participants each had access to a moral code of ethics as their source of wisdom. This moral code of ethics evolved from positive and meaningful experiences with mentors early in their career paths and from societal and family norms over time. With the exception of one self-declared atheist, each participant expressed some level of spiritual or religious understanding. Several participants were selected for the study because they are known to be wise spiritual leaders in their community. Participants described behaviors often associated with higher levels of spiritual development, e.g., consistent acts of prayer and meditation, acts of generosity and benevolence, compassion, empathy, a deep and profound belief in something beyond self, an abiding love for others, and so forth. Two of the pastors from an evangelical mega-church, for example, were interviewed because of their philosophical and spiritual perspectives on the meaning of life and their ability to impact global societies. Findings indicated, however, that both of these participants scored in the 4.0 range and that they experience wisdom within the primary domain of the cognitive (Appendix A).

Krafcik (2011) indicates that an individual's state of spiritual development can override their stage of development. Such nuances add to the complexity of human development. For example, in contrast to the 4.0 scores of the two spiritual leaders, it is worth noting that the self-professed atheist scored at the later 4.5 stage with 49% of her responses in the Cognitive/Affective domain. States of consciousness represent the space in which developmental lines arise (Wilber, 2006). Depending on the different states of consciousness, developmental lines increase in complexity. Research that examines how these interconnections relate to wisdom can also prove invaluable in determining how leaders transition from early to later stages of development and how they experience wisdom. For example, the male Hindu participant in this study who measured at a post-conventional level expressed a higher state of consciousness via his daily meditative practices. Exploration into how such individuals' lines of development are affected by such higher states could be useful to our understanding of how leaders' experience wisdom.

These findings are significant when interpreted through the lens of recent research that indicates that exemplars of wisdom do not recommend one spiritual path (Krafcik, 2011). Such differentiations point to the importance of further inquiry into the spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial lines of human development.

Stages and lines of development as positioned within the framework of constructive-developmental theory are relevant to the field of leadership in that organizational leaders preparing to meet today's challenges would be wise to consider the relationship between the overall system and the entire leadership practice, to include the leader's consciousness or stage of development, his behavior, and the domains of culture (Kübers & Weibler, 2008). The results of this study indicate the potential for additional research that explores wisdom in the context of both adult lines *and* stages of development to determine if specific correlations do exist.

Limitations to the Study

This section identifies the limitations and delimitations of the present study to include aspects of the research design, sample size, sampling procedure, instrumentation, and researcher bias.

Sample Size

As is appropriate for a qualitative study that examines the in-depth first- person experience of participants, the sample size was limited to 12 participants. This sample size is not sufficient for generalizations about the wisdom experience of executive leaders or the overall population. It is sufficient, however, to generate perspectives on how conventional and post-conventional executive leaders experience wisdom in the course of their daily lives. It may also help define future research questions and methodologies in the field of leadership, wisdom, and constructive-developmental theory.

Sample Procedure

The sampling procedure created some limitations. Despite the desire to include participants from a variety of geographical areas, the researcher's national database now includes individuals who have transitioned outside of leadership roles due to the recent economic crisis. Despite

outreach to over 26 leaders, 10 respondents are key leaders in one geographical area. Another limiting factor was the decision to include two leaders from the same mega-church. This decision, however, was predicated on the unique aspects of this organization as a global entity and the fact that both leaders represent entirely different roles at a local and global level.

Sample Population

The sample population includes 4 women and 8 men. While every effort was made to equally balance the gender factor, it was challenging to find executive-level women who were available to participate. Since women are still only 40% of the executive population, the researcher's data base includes a greater number of male leaders. Even though the study includes fewer women participants, it is worth noting that three of the executive-women scored at the 4.5 post-conventional level of development. This aspect of the study is interesting in that it posits the need for future gender based research that examines the differences between the wisdom experience of leaders from earlier and later stages of development.

Age was another factor of limitation in that many organizational settings include executive leaders in more seasoned stages of life (e.g., 40s and beyond.) The researcher did not have access to younger executive leaders who may be rising up in other fields, e.g., technology.

It should also be noted that the sample population criterion defined as "executive leaders," is limiting to the study. This specific limit responds to leaders whom, by the very nature of their status and role, may have greater capacity for wisdom. By focusing on this specific population, the study excludes responses from individuals in subordinate positions who might add to existing literature on wisdom and adult human development.

Another limiting aspect of the study involves the participants' stages of adult development. The SCTi-Map scores of the participants in this study indicated responses in the 3.5 stage to the 4.5 stage of development. Because it is somewhat difficult to locate participants in the later stages, more particularly within the corporate environment, the study excludes the wisdom experience of individuals who might score in these later stages. This factor presents a limitation to the study in that individuals who score within the later stages of 5.0 and beyond might offer a different perspective on how leaders experience wisdom within the integrative domains of wisdom.

Additionally, the study is designed to examine the interview responses of participants. This methodology presents a limitation to the study in that all data are self-reported and do not include third-party observations or other data points beyond the SCTi-Map scores. This factor points to the potential for participant self-bias and any proclivity to state their experiences from an subjective stance.

Instrumentation

The SCTi-Map assessment instrument has been rigorously validated through the work of Cook-Greuter (1999) and Torbert (1987, 2004). However, it is but one instrument that proffers one perspective of human development on an individual at a specific point in time. Additional

instrumentation that measures and evaluates the construct of wisdom would also have been valuable to this study, e.g., the Three Dimensional Wisdom Scale (Ardelt, 2003).

Researcher Bias

All participants were selected via the researcher's data base or via nomination from a mutual colleague. Every precaution was taken to avert potential bias via analytic memos and journaling. However, the study may have benefited more from a nomination process that allowed for involvement from participants completely unknown to the researcher.

Implications of the Study

The purpose of this study was to elicit the wisdom experience of conventional and post-conventional executive leaders and to determine whether and how this experience related to the leaders' stage of development.

Implications for Leadership Development and Theory

Any expressed linkage between how leaders experience wisdom and their adult stage of development can be meaningful to future leadership development processes. The results of this study do not offer a significant relationship between conventional and post-conventional stages of development and the participants' experience of wisdom; however, the findings are nonetheless meaningful because they suggest that leaders at both stages have the potential to live out the experience of wisdom in ways that positively impact the organization. They are also significant in that leaders who come to understand their own experience of wisdom in the context of their stage of development have the potential to access higher levels of both wisdom and developmental movement. Leadership development processes that encompass aspects of stage development theory and wisdom theory could prove beneficial to the overall effectiveness of leaders.

Implications for Wisdom and Constructive-Developmental Theory

Wisdom Theory

The underlying premise of this study is that wisdom is vital to our understanding of self in relation to the world. How we respond to situations and people is dependent on our ability to exercise wisdom. Wise leaders are better equipped to handle the complexities of our global society.

This study is but one whisper in a large and still emerging conversation. Scholar/practitioners are only beginning to explore how wisdom can potentially impact leadership capacity and overall organizational development. The rapid changes in our society alert us to the fact that we must come to a better understanding of what it means to develop leaders beyond skills and competence. More comprehensive models of leadership that specifically align theory and practice are required. Scholar/practitioners can aid in these symbiotic efforts by "facilitating a more approximate fit between organizational context and the strategies and design of leadership interventions" (Zaccaro & Horn, 2003, p. 774).

The results of the present study suggest the importance of a leader's strong moral code of ethics as a source of wisdom. Somehow, in the midst of our chaotic environment, leaders must find ways to think and behave in more ethical and moral ways. The wisdom experienced and expressed by the executive leaders in this study represents a bridge between wisdom, leadership, and constructive-developmental theory. Implications of this study suggest that research must and should extend beyond the existing conversations of expert knowledge and the integrative aspects of wisdom to include the spiritual, emotional, moral, and interpersonal lines of development. Wise leadership is now becoming more critical to the future of our organizations, our environment, and our international societies. If we are to move leadership beyond the hierarchal model of authoritative power, control, and bottom-line results, we must come to understand what it means to live from value based perspectives that generate results for the greater and common good.

Wisdom theory, while still somewhat new as a psychological construct, demands that we access the hearts and minds of leaders such as the participants of this study[2] so that we can more clearly define that which they themselves take for granted: their unique ability to solve real-world problems in real time based on their own humble capacity to do that which is right and just – maybe not all of the time, but at the very least, much of the time.

Constructive-Developmental Theory

Research and application of constructive-developmental theory continues to expand in the field of human and organizational development. The relationship between adult stages of development and wisdom represents a non-linear, spiral effect, meaning that whether wisdom or higher stages of development occur first is difficult to surmise.

Findings of the present study suggest the potentiality for a reciprocal relationship between these two constructs. Several themes are consistent between the two constructs: (a) the inclusion of the cognitive, affective, and social elements; (b) the developmental nature of both constructs; (c) the increased ability to deal with complexity; (d) the ability to be self-aware and reflective; and (e) the impact of challenging situations and dissonant events to trigger further development (Barbuto & Millard, 2012).

The significance of the present study is that it expands upon these conclusions by exploring the nuances and differentiations in how participants experience the *integrative* domains of wisdom. Findings suggest that the wisdom experience of these 12 participants, while unique to each individual, does not necessarily correspond to their stage of development. Due to the complex and multidimensional nature of both wisdom and adult stages of development, more research is needed before scholar/practitioners can unequivocally propose that the integrative domains of wisdom directly correspond to stages of development.

[2] For rich descriptions of participants of this study, see Spano (2013).

Implications for Future Research

The relationship between a leader's propensity for wisdom and his/her adult stage of development has profound implications for leadership development (Barbuto & Millard, 2012). Future research should be intentionally designed to advance developmental processes in both areas as follows:

The Leader/Stakeholder Relationship

Responsible leadership and stakeholder theory expands the leader/follower relationship to include key stakeholders (Maak & Pless, 2006). Executive leaders who are interacting with multiple individuals within a variety of contexts will be better equipped to do so if they have developed a greater understanding of their stage of development and how, if at all, that level equates to their capacity for wisdom.

The participants of this study indicated that how they experienced their wise mentors impacted how they came to develop their own moral code of ethics and their own capacity for leadership. Much of the integration between their moral code and their leadership capacity occurred at a subconscious level. It wasn't until the participants had an opportunity to recall their memories that they came to fully realize the impact of this wise mentor on their lives. Most often, they were surprised to notice that they had come to emulate much of what they had experienced in this leader.

This finding has significant implications for research that involves the mentoring capacity of leaders. How leaders come to understand and explore their moral code and how they live it out in the day-to-day practicum of leadership could prove important to the leader/stakeholder relationship. Leaders have the potential to foster wisdom in their followers (Barbuto & Millard, 2012). Awareness of their own developmental stage and how their meaning-making systems impact their ability to effectively live out their role of leadership can potentially impact their capacity to influence the leader-follower relationship in positive ways.

Differentiation of Target Audiences

The present study was designed to include executive leaders from diverse backgrounds. Greater emphasis was placed on the leadership capacity of the individual, however, than it was on their industry or the industry's role within society.

The relationship between the two constructs may be more expressly researched in terms of industry and/or disciplines. For example, findings suggest that those in the more analytical fields (engineer, attorney) may experience wisdom differently than those in the more humanistic fields of religion or social administration. Additionally, there was an apparent difference between the wisdom experience of leaders in corporate environments and those who exercise authority in not-for-profit organizations.

Finally, research into the wisdom experience of women leaders vs. men leaders would also prove invaluable. The study pointed to some interesting differences in the way women recalled

their experience of adversity and the wisdom gained versus that of their male counterparts. The women were far more straightforward in describing their experience whereas 4/8 male participants were very emotional in describing their adversity and what they learned from that experience. Even as they expressed emotion, the four male participants spoke to their need to be strong for others in these moments of loss. Literally caught off guard by their own emotions, it was as though the interview was the first time these men had spoken of their feelings on the matter. The women, however, expressed greater comfort and understanding of their story and how they came to resolution after a period of reflection.

Such nuances may suggest that women may have a greater propensity to move beyond the cognitive level of wisdom to the more integrative reflective and affective stances that equate to wisdom.

Additionally, this study focused on the wisdom experience of leaders who measured within the 3.5 range to the 4.5 range of development. Further research is needed to determine if leaders who measure within the earlier or later stages of development might experience wisdom more within the integrative domains of wisdom than findings of this study indicate.

The Spirituality of Wisdom

The relationship between the human experience of spirituality and wisdom is so complex that it warrants specific research in its own rite. The nature of business is transformed when viewed and experienced from a spiritual-based context (Delbecq in Miller & Miller, 2006). Delbecq further states that "one of the most striking features of the spiritual-based context for wisdom leadership is that the primary purpose of business and of wisdom leadership is spiritual fulfillment and service to society" (Miller & Miller, 2006, p. 9).

This study has encapsulated the leadership of these participants in the context of their moral code. For some, this moral code includes a high level of spirituality, but spirituality conjures up all kinds of definitions and experiences in the human mind. Based on findings associated with the Spiritual Perspective Scale, Krafcik (2011) indicates that higher levels of wisdom are correlated with increases in openness, humility, and the importance of spirituality. Future research that more clearly defines how spirituality impacts a leader's propensity for wisdom could enhance meaningful life/work experiences for leaders.

From the perspective of constructive-development theory, spirituality presents even more complex dichotomies. For example, two of the leaders in this study are deeply spiritual men, yet, even so, they measured at the 4.0 conventional level of development. On the other hand, three of the leaders who measured at the 4.5 post-conventional level professed no specific spiritual beliefs or practices.

Wisdom and Differentiation-and-Integration

The experience of wisdom within the context of stage development theory may be more significantly understood through the lens of differentiation and integration than through the integrative aspects of existing wisdom theories. Development is defined as the purposeful

transformation toward higher levels of simultaneous differentiation and integration (Cook-Greuter, 2005). Differentiation refers to an increased understanding of the specificity of concepts held in one's knowledge of the world (Zaccaro & Horn, 2003). Development and cognitive psychologists characterize the beginning of cognitive growth in terms of increased differentiation in schemas, knowledge structures, and ways of understanding (Kegan, l994; Piaget, 1954; Zaccaro & Horn, 2003). Integration refers to the understanding of assumptions (Cook-Greuter, 2004) and a linking of unrelated concepts through higher order abstraction (Zaccaro & Horn, 2003). Differentiation begins in the conventional stages of development and increases toward higher levels of integration at the post-conventional stages. While this study inadvertently explored the nuances of differentiation and integration, analysis was not intentionally pointed in this direction since the greater emphasis was placed on the integrated domains of wisdom.

Research that explores how leaders differentiate and integrate their experiences could be perhaps the most vital to our understanding of how leaders' experience of wisdom corresponds to their stage of development. Barbuto & Millard (2012) contend that the connection between constructive-developmental theory and wisdom could have profound implications for future leadership developmental processes and for wisdom development in followers.

Life Experience and Adversity

The interview protocol of this study was designed to elicit the meaning-making systems of participants via semi-structured, open-ended questions. While every participant expressed the viewpoint that wisdom comes from life experience, future research into the depth of such experiences could prove meaningful to our understanding of how individuals from all walks of life grow and develop their capacity for wisdom.

The literature clearly indicates that a person's capacity to positively maneuver through the many aspects of adversity may enhance one's capacity for wisdom (Ardelt, 2000). Adversity, however, is a broad and ambiguous construct within its own rite. This study was designed to elicit responses about wisdom in the context of adversity; however, adversity was not the sole focus of this body of work. Future research that deals more specifically with the many aspects of adversity would expand our understanding of wisdom. Specific areas worthy of consideration include how wisdom precisely correlates to life experience, how one learns from mistakes and poor life choices, how one acquires wisdom via the adversity of personal tragedy, or how one experiences wisdom from hazardous occupational settings or from being exposed to life-threatening conditions.

The StAGES Model

The more recent StAGES Model set forth by O'Fallon (2014) offers up a great opportunity for future research in that her extensive longitudinal studies have further delineated the Unitive/Ironist or 6.0 post-conventional stage of the earlier models. This body of research depicts three later stages more expressly described as Transpersonal (5.5), Universal (6.0), and Illumined (6.5).

The significance of this model lies in the fact that it synthesizes earlier ego development theory, the concrete, subtle, and causal tiers, and an understanding of later stages of

development, all of which are embedded in the Integral Theory AQAL Model (Wilber, 1996, 2000, 2006).

In experiencing the many complex premises underlying the StAGES Model directly within the Pacific Integral Community, I found this particular model to offer a deep and profound understanding of the complexities of human development. Further research that explores the StAGES Model in conjunction with Wisdom Theory may prove instrumental in deepening our understanding of how leaders experience wisdom in the context of their internal, external, and collective worlds.

Conclusion

The study was designed to explore the wisdom experience of conventional and post-conventional leaders. The intention is to open scholar/practitioner discourse between three significant fields of research: leadership, wisdom, and constructive-developmental theory. While the aforementioned qualitative findings are interesting and meaningful, they suggest the need for additional research that explores wisdom in the context of both adult lines and adult stages of development to determine if specific correlations do exist. As with every academic endeavor, more questions arise than answers.

Recent shifts in the global economy and the many challenges associated with a networked society in the age of knowledge and information suggest the need for leaders who are self-reflective and self-aware. Additionally, today's leaders must be capable of engaging in complex levels of differentiation and integration of multiple ideas and solutions. A hundred plus years of leadership theory points to a shift from early quantitative research on traits, behaviors, power and influence, leader-follower relationships, and situational theory (Yukl, 2010) – each emphasizing leadership effectiveness – to now include equal focus on qualitative research, to include cognition and perception, e.g., phenomenological studies (Bass, 2008).

Constructive-developmental theorists have offered a plethora of research that helps us understand how individuals construct meaning and how that meaning equates to effectiveness and overall positive outcomes. The many facets of wisdom have been explored and researched from a philosophical, theoretical, and psychological perspective since man began to ponder the meaning and significance of life. Each of these disciplines has contributed to our understanding of the human condition. While we have come to understand a great deal about how leaders construct meaning and how they may or may not engage in behaviors associated with wisdom, we still have a limited understanding of the relationship between those meaning-making systems and their states, stages, and lines of development.

At the outset of this study, I quietly presupposed that leaders who measured at the later stages of development would indicate a greater propensity for wisdom within the integrated domains of wisdom. Findings indicated otherwise. There was no significant relationship between participants' stage of development and their propensity for wisdom. Leaders measured within the single and multiple domains of wisdom at both the conventional and post-conventional levels. The findings suggest that, depending on the operationalization and definition of wisdom, the

progression in human development may or may not coincide with a progression in wisdom development.

The significance of these findings lies in my contention that wisdom, as a complex multidimensional construct, requires further inquiry into the spiritual, emotional, and psychosocial lines of human development. Exploration into the interrelationship between how a leader thinks and the possible underlying source of that meaning-making system, e.g., lines of spiritual or emotional development, is necessary if we are to more fully comprehend how leaders construct meaning and engage in behaviors associated with wisdom.

It would be easy to review the findings of this study and reduce them to a cliché about the essence of leadership or what it really means to embody wisdom. Halfway through the process of analysis, I found myself asking, what does it matter, after all, if a small select group of leaders presented themselves not as perfect, but as experienced, good solid individuals who were engaged in purposeful work? So what? Would these findings add anything to that which we already know? As the data began to reveal a group of leaders who exhibited focus, passion, and an overall desire to do the right thing, my thoughts deepened.

As a society, we anticipate the promise of good leadership. Unfortunately our daily experience with corporate debacles and Wall Street narcissists alerts us to the dangers of leadership gone awry. How do we do that which is right and just when up against deceitfulness, deadlines, and the unscrupulous and egocentric behavior of others? How do we create positive results in our personal and professional lives with those who are at different stages of development than ourselves? With those who may be more or less wise?

The significance of this study goes beyond the findings of any first-or- second-cycle of analysis. The significance lies in the hearts and minds of 12 executive leaders who dared to share their stories. Among the global chaos that has enveloped much of our society, they offer the promise that leaders can and do cultivate wisdom; they can do that which is right and just for the greater good of all. Extensive and repeated qualitative analysis of their transcripts, their voices, offers unique perspectives on wisdom than cannot be captured via statistical data alone. These leaders represent all that is possible for every leader, every society. Each of these leaders has described an ability to actively cope with adversity and this ability to cope has moved them to significant levels of understanding about themselves and others. They exercise wise acts of leadership not because they should but because it is who they are. They get up each day, passionate about the work they do, and they make the hard choices. And in the midst of all their challenges and frustrations, they do their best and hope that it is good enough. Each leader, from the early conventional level of 3.5 to the later post-conventional stage of 4.5 indicated an ability to be selfless and self-aware. For them, wisdom represents a quest to reach our highest potential. But this quest is quiet, unheralded by the things we accomplish. It is less about what we do and more about whom we become along this journey called life.

In the grand and vast valley between theories, this study fills a small but meaningful gap. It serves to remind us that no matter the horror of the evening news, the goodness of leaders such as these will prevail. As scholar/practitioners, it is why we do the work we do. It is why leadership matters.

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Appendix A: The Integrative Domains of Wisdom

Domains of Wisdom								
P	**Score**	**Primary Action Logic Orientation**	**Profession**	**Cognitive**	**Cognitive/ Reflective**	**Cognitive/ Affective**	**Cognitive Reflective Affective**	**Primary Domain**
1	3/4	Expertise	Real Estate Attorney	19%	-	48%	33%	C/A
2	3/4+	Expertise	COO /Transportation Authority	42%	18%	34%	6%	C
3	3/4+	Expertise	Environmental Engineer	41%	45%	8%	5%	C/R
4	4-	Achievement	CEO/Philanthropist	48%	14%	33%	-	C
5	4-	Achievement	Senior Pastor	75%	15%	10%	-	C
6	4-	Achievement	Worship Pastor	47%	28%	21%	-	C
7	4	Achievement	CEO/Disability Organization	21%	14%	49%	14%	C/A
8	4	Achievement	Engineer/Business Leader	98%	-	2%	-	C
9	4/5-	Values	Real Estate Attorney	37%	12%	49%	2%	C/A
10	4/5	Values	CEO/ Transportation Authority	61%	1%	36%	-	C
11	4/5	Values	Technology Consultant	24%	37%	15%	22%	C/R
12	4/5	Values	President/Advocate	26%	11%	46%	15%	C/A

Note: Percentages are based on number of overall responses in cognitive, reflective, and affective domains of wisdom.

A Brief Overview of From Wisdom Related Knowledge to Wise Acts: Refashioning the Conception of Wisdom to Improve our Chances of Becoming Wiser

Jonathan Reams[1]

This brief overview is intended to accompany the interview with Jonathan Rowson also in this special issue of Integral Review. Written in 2008, Jonathan's dissertation provides an example of observing an integral mind at work. Reading through the it one cannot help but be aware of the easy, flowing nature of how Jonathan's mind is able to integrate a wide range of fields of inquiry, models, positions within academic and societal relevance and discourse while somehow making it easy to read.

The dissertation begins with a very personal introduction on why the topic of wisdom and how it is important to become part of the problem in order to become part of the solution. This is a counterintuitive phrase he attributes to Bill Torbert and it equates to the notion that unless you have a lived experience of a certain kind of challenge, and participate in the world, it's very challenging to understand how the problems, as Kegan and Lahey say, can 'solve us.' In that sense Jonathan approaches the topic of wisdom as a personal problem of learning to become wiser as well as understanding the social and political needs for wisdom in society today.

The dissertation is divided into four parts making up ten chapters. The first part is looking at wisdom research itself. It begins with a traditional literature review which takes us through an array of works by researchers from the major schools of thought as well as outside them in the field of wisdom literature. From this review you see a number of themes beginning to appear. There is something of a relationship between spiritual intelligence and needs and wisdom. There is something to do with this notion from Francisco Varela of the virtuality of self that is somehow related to wisdom. There's a distinction made between wisdom as a general personality characteristic and the notion of wise acting.

Our relationship to wisdom is also linked to the notion of catching ourselves in the act of self-deception. In this way, Jonathan positions wisdom as a form of transformative learning, a theme he comes back to a number of times. In reviewing this array of literature and research on wisdom

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he perceives that the main challenge is that wisdom is a premodern idea relying on the tools of modernity to fit a postmodern world.

It is this kind of challenge of wisdom as a concept or phenomenon that in some ways we can all recognize when we see it, or at least have a felt sense of recognition and resonance for it, and yet it's almost impossible to define. In fact, later on Jonathan says that to define wisdom is unwise.

The second chapter looks at the problem of why it's so difficult to approach the word wisdom in a wise way, and that this notion of indefinitely defining wisdom is in itself problematic. To deal with this Jonathan looks at wisdom as a finite province of meaning, as a meme and even as a koan. This approach of trying to understand why it is so challenging to define or even discuss wisdom is the nub of this chapter. We encounter the reality of this challenge in that the very act of naming and positioning this difficulty is to step to the margins of what is considered appropriate for doing an academic intellectual project in relation to something that doesn't really fit in that modality.

In the third chapter Jonathan moves into a description of how he did his research. While not what one would consider a traditional methodology chapter, it does serve this function as he describes the first, second and third person notions of awareness, appreciation and appraisal that he utilized in this work. It's very clear that there is a strong heuristic orientation of observing his mind at work in relation to the topic. To illustrate this he uses a story from his time as a chess player (where he was three years in a row the British Chess Champion). He utilized his ability to observe the different phenomena arising in his mind as a metacognitive way of helping him understand possible distractions and/or blind alleys of thinking that can arise during a chess match. Applying this kind of metacognitive functioning to his own process of research is what gives this dissertation a light readable quality, where we feel we're going on this personal journey with Jonathan.

The second person part of the research constituted utilizing a number of stories that were considered to be descriptive of wisdom or wise acts in some form or another and to use those as a dialogue piece to have a number of other respondents read and give responses to whether or not they considered the stories exemplars of wisdom and, if so or if not, why or why not? This second person part of the research appears here and there throughout the dissertation but there is no traditional empirical findings section in relation to this. As well, the third person appraisal has a lot to do with taking a meta-theoretical approach to the existing theories and research around wisdom.

In part two, positioning wisdom, Jonathan addresses some of the challenges he faced in applying this approach to the topic. The first is talking about getting beyond a rationalistic neurosis in research. This involved describing the notion of bricolage as a general kind of meta-theoretical handyman approach to weaving through not only the landscape of wisdom literature, but also the philosophical and psychological issues involved in wisdom research.

He then takes a look in chapter five at human nature as bodies, brains and breakdowns and talks about embodied empathy and wisdom as transformation. Chapter six, *knowledge about*

wisdom requires wisdom about knowledge, gets into the epistemological challenges that face doing this work and recognizes that knowledge is active and not just representational. Essentially this entails a need to stand back from and be as conscious and explicit as possible about the lenses and perspectives one is bringing into the work and how they create the particular perceptions available. In this there was an interesting relation to the work of Watzlawick, who talks about taking total responsibility in our lives, total personal responsibility, and how this action actually leads to total freedom. This was a very interesting chapter looking at epistemology and knowledge in relation to doing wisdom research.

Part three looks at a deeper understanding of wisdom, or at least moving towards it and in chapter seven unpacks the notion of transformative learning as the essence of wisdom. Jonathan sees wisdom as a confluence of experience, perspective and transformation. In this way he comes to the concept from Varela of the virtuality of self. He recognizes that as we go through transformative processes what we were once subject to or embedded in as an identity shifts to an object of reflection that we are no longer identified with. From this we start to see that the notion of self is actually much more fluid than we imagined; that change is natural in humans. From this he notices how Varela moves towards this notion of a virtuality of self, not as self being unreal, but as the self not being the ontological grounding of reality we often take it to be.

Chapter eight then builds on this and talks about seeing through the self; from being a self to having a self. This is captured by the notion that each of us as a self is a theory, or "each of us are a theory which is a self." Somehow we 'self spin' imaginative events and create all sorts of distractions and dead ends for ourselves. The notion of expertise as knowledge is translated into first person experience of the virtuality of self and the transformative effect this is able to have on us.

Part four is about the challenge of becoming wiser. The first three parts lay out the field of wisdom and its research, what it is, where it is situated and why it is important. Part four looks at what is the path towards gaining wisdom? This is what Jonathan problematizes as the main challenge in the existing research on wisdom, that while it does a lot of descriptive work it does not do so much to try and explain to us how to move on a path towards becoming wiser.

To redress this, he draws on a number of pieces of work to look at some very specific issues related to what he calls the "psycho social battleground of wisdom" in chapter nine. These have to do with; the biological divisions we have constructed between mind and body, a notion of naïve realism that we already see things as they are and should be, and the notion of self-deception which we touched on earlier and is a very strong component of what seems to be a natural blockage on the road to wisdom. As well, the notion of a self-serving bias, that we already see our own change much more than we see it in others, as well as a negativity bias, group think and status anxiety are included in the list of issues Jonathan puts forward as impediments on the path to wisdom. In this sense, there are implications for pedagogy which are explored in the conclusion, with a sense of the importance of dissonance in cultivating wisdom as a step in the process of transformative learning.

Overall, this meta-theoretical heuristic journey through the landscape of literature, stories (third person as well as personal ones) and reflections on wisdom makes for very enjoyable

reading. In my experience, after having been exposed to a lot of the literature reviewed on wisdom from earlier work, it is clear to me that the approach that Jonathan has taken enables the field of wisdom research to have a perspective on itself. There are new insights about wisdom, that in essence it is a transformative process about cultivating a sense of detachment from our identification as a self, realizing the virtuality of that self and yet utilizing the self in creating and cultivating the kind of habits of mind that will lead to spontaneous wise acts in the world.

Wisdom, Spirituality and the Virtuality of Self: An Interview with Jonathan Rowson

Jonathan Reams[1]

I had the good fortune of meeting Jonathan Rowson in the fall of 2013 at the offices of the RSA in London. I have also had the opportunity to read his Ph.D. thesis on *From Wisdom Related Knowledge to Wise Acts: Refashioning the Concept of Wisdom to Improve Our Chances of Becoming Wiser.* On my first reading of it, I felt like I had taken a journey, gently guided by a mind floating along a stream of intellectual thought, research, public opinion and more, somehow navigating his way through all of it in a way that opened new horizons of how wisdom can be conceived.

When undertaking this special issue, I wanted to find a way to include Jonathan's work. I didn't just want him to write an article based on his thesis, although that would have been nice. I managed to arrange for an interview, and have provided a brief set of reflections (also in this issue) on his thesis aiming to summarize it and entice readers into reading it for themselves.

The interview itself was stimulating, wide-ranging in scope, and heartfelt in the degree of personal engagement Jonathan brought to it. Reading the transcription for the process of ensuring accuracy and cleaning up things, I again found enthusiasm and energy rising. There was at times a real felt sense of tension in the conversation and in the lived experience it was describing, as we were drawn into enacting the qualities described to the best of our abilities. It is my and our hope that you enjoy listening in while reading.

Jonathan's current formal bio is as follows:

Dr Jonathan Rowson is Director of the Social Brain Centre at the RSA. After degrees spanning a range of social science disciplines from Oxford and Harvard, Jonathan's Doctoral research at the University of Bristol featured an analysis of the challenge of overcoming the psycho-social constraints that prevent people becoming 'wiser'. He writes for The Guardian's Behavioural Insights Blog, was formerly a columnist in the Herald, Scotland's national newspaper, has authored three books, and is a chess Grandmaster and former British Champion (2004–6). He recently authored: Spiritualise: Revitalising spirituality for 21st century challenges.

The interview took place on the morning of December 16th, with the aid of various technological mediations. Given that we have same first names and last initials, it was easiest to distinguish us by using last names.

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Reams: Jonathan, first thanks for taking the time to do this interview. I'll say I've thoroughly enjoyed reading and then re-reading your thesis: From Wisdom Related Knowledge to Wise Acts: Refashioning the Concept of Wisdom to Improve Our Chances of Becoming Wiser.

Rowson: Thank you.

Reams: My first question would be do you feel a little bit wiser from having done that?

Rowson: Well, I finished it about 6 years ago and I was motivated to finish it by the main thing distracting me at the time, which was the election of Obama. So it was November 2008 that I submitted it and I remember the lead up to it had this trade-off between the distractions of the American presidential election and actually writing the report. That's just to give people some historical context for how long ago it was.

Going through the process I don't think it would be right to say a resolute no, it hasn't made me any wiser, but nor would it be right to say yes. The truth is there's a connection between untangling one's thoughts about something and knowing what you're seeking in the world. There is something about that process of seeking that leads towards wisdom.

So although it doesn't in itself make you any wiser, it can be quite useful underlabor. For example, writing the thesis made it abundantly clear to me just how important practice was. There's a notion of experiencing and methodologically undergoing certain things to have a chance of being wiser when it matters. So in and of itself the writing does not create the wisdom. But it does create a way to unfold that might help you get there.

Reams: What kind of things are in tension with this? I know later in the thesis you describe moving from the positive description of the how, what and where of wisdom toward describing wise action. But then you also take a chapter to look at some of the things that, if this is so obvious, why don't people do it? What is your sense of that tension?

Rowson: Wisdom is a concept that invites a lot of folk understanding. It is part of our everyday lexicon and it is symbolized in songs and books and people have a certain implicit understanding of what is meant by wisdom.

What the thesis was about is on the one hand how adequate that folk conception is and what literatures are there to sense different ways of looking at wisdom. Then what do I as the writer and researcher think about all that? In that context it became clear to me when I think of the moments that I'm most moved by what seems to be something wise, when I'm struck by a certain receptive quality or empathetic quality or some ethical conviction that is somehow enacted; when I see those things coalesce in a particular moment I think: Wow, that's what I'm looking for. Whatever that was is a quality that I'm trying to unpack here.

Now what that means for means for me is a recognition that on the one hand such things can emerge spontaneously without prior preparation. But it's also clear there are barriers

for that kind of presence of mind and heart in the right moment. And those barriers ears include the ego, they include self preoccupation, they include a lack of mental complexity to actually bring into one's own mind the perspectives of others and those things together are the kind of pathways you need to undertake so you have a greater chance of acting wisely; even if it doesn't in and of itself create the act and even if that act does not depend upon those prior forms of preparation.

There does seem to be quite a strong correlation between working on one's self, for instance through thinning the ego and gradually growing in our capacity for perspective taking, and growing in empathetic communion with others. The moment for wise action tends to arrive in situations that are socially and ethically complex; a an act or decision or even just a form of words, but being able to do the right thing as those conditions arise. These things – becoming wiser and acting wisely – do seem to be connected.

Reams: Right. Then that leads me to two different tracks I want to make note of here. One is that in your thesis you describe Robert Kegan's work and how moving towards a fifth order transformational mind rather than a self authoring mind seems to describe characteristics of that are very much aligned with what you just described in terms of being able to take multiple perspectives and integrate them and even have a perspective on your own perspective.

Yet in your thesis you also moved away from trying to base wisdom as being directly related to those later stages of cognitive development. Can you reflect on that for a moment?

Rowson: Ok. On the one hand you have these maps of post formal thinking sometimes described as adult development. Certain integral theories and some of these maps are very, very sophisticated, classically involving quadrants of different kinds, bringing in social and cultural influences, the relationships between interior and exterior aspects of consciousness, and so forth.

There are these models out there and they're mostly theoretical. Some of them have some empirical validation and others don't. So on the one hand you have all that rich and interesting intellectual stuff, and on the other hand you have the visceral, vivid felt sense of what it is to be in the presence of somebody wise, or to observe a wise action. Then the question becomes: How are these two things related, if at all?

Let me give a brief anecdote and come back to this question to contextualize it. A couple of days ago I was responsible for looking after five five-to-six year old children. It was an after school play date and I had to take them all home from school. I was the only person looking after them and, of course, with five young children and twenty young limbs it's difficult to keep track of what's going on.

There is a busy main road on the way home from the school. It's a short walk but it's slightly dangerous; a fairly dicey, slightly nervy situation when walking with five young kids. At one moment my son was getting quite distressed because I was trying to hold his

hand while also trying to hold another child's hand with the same left hand. He was getting distressed because he didn't want to share and also he wasn't that comfortable.

The girl who was holding his hand and mine as well looked at me and saw that there was a slight, well, she looked at my son and saw there was this problem and without saying anything she kind of smiled at me and crossed over past me and went to the other side and held the hand of another child and we carried on walking. And she gave me a little look as if to say: Is that better now?

Now that happened quietly and unobtrusively and I wouldn't go so far as to say it was wise. It would feel like a stretch to call an act of a five year old wise but in that moment she picked up on a huge number of subtle cues as to what the correct course of action was.

I'm sure if you did a developmental study of this five year old you wouldn't find anything like the kind of perspective taking qualities one would expect or need for wise action. But nonetheless, I wouldn't want to say that there wasn't an emergent, proto quality of wisdom in the kind of perception that she had.

I guess that's the long way of saying I'm not locked into linking wisdom too closely to a particular developmental theoretical model because there is something beautiful about the freshness of a particular act by almost any kind of person in any given moment.

In contrast, not being fully ensconced in the world of integral theory but knowing enough of it; having read a fair amount of Wilber and Kegan and a few others, my feeling is that these concepts, if I stop being seduced by them intellectually and just stand back from my mind and stop finding these models so delicious and interesting, all these pathways and maps and terrains of how one can progress, and I just stand back for a minute, they all feel, well, a little *heavy*.

You know if I'm honest, the felt sense of these models is that, yes, they're intellectually delicious, yes they speak to our experience in a quite a profound and illuminating way. But there is also a strong sense that they are 'not it'. In the old Zen sense, they are the map not the territory, and while we need good maps there is something about the territory that gets lost when you fixate on them too much.

Reams: It's very interesting how you describe this. There are two distinctions I'd like to make in relation to that. One is that in this special issue where our interview will be published there are two other theses where the researchers looked at people who were nominated as wise from various criteria and even were scored on different measures of wisdom and were given ego development assessments. What they found in both of those is that there is not a strong correlation between late stages of cognitive development and wisdom.

Rowson: Right! And that doesn't hugely surprise me. We are in complex terrain here because it depends on how deep you want to go, but my mind is bringing forth various things. First, it's the basic ontological question of; if wisdom is a feature of reality in what does it

inhere? Does it inhere in a particular cognitive apparatus that could be unpacked in neural terms? Does it inhere into intersubjective complexity such as relations between minds, or perhaps between bodies in a given social cultural environmental context? Or is it somehow downloaded from above in some sort of divine or creative insight that is strictly unpredictable and uncontrollable?

I think most people would want to say it's a little bit of all of those things and also something about their coalescence. So I would imagine these developmental pathways might sometimes be necessary without having sufficient conditions inherent in them. But there's something very sweet, simple, almost innocent about wisdom that doesn't seem to require complexity of insight.

Reams: Let's look at that.

Rowson: This can apply in the situation like the one I mentioned and various others; a kind of visceral, slightly breathtaking quality of a simple grasp of what needs to be done in that moment, or a form of words that really connect deeply with somebody. And that's all true, as far as it goes.

But on the other hand, these developmental models are very important for pointing towards what it means to grow as a person. I think the idea that there is no connection between growth and wisdom would be pretty problematic because I think part of what we think of as wisdom is something that one grows into or acquires through experience.

Reams: Right. So there is something in what you're saying that I think might fit with the notion of two different distinctions. One is that we're talking about stage development and in a way we're talking about wisdom as a kind of general virtue of character that a person carries that enables them to be more likely to act wisely and not be hung up by their ego or a lack of empathy or whatever.

But we're also talking, I think, in your story about the five year old girl, about states and wise acting rather than a generic sense of wisdom.

Rowson: Yes and when you say states what do you mean exactly?

Reams: I'm just thinking that state experiences in integral theory, at least in Wilber's model, are related to temporary things. You can have a peak experience, a momentary insight of something.

Rowson: Okay so you're talking about states, streams and stages.

Reams: Yes.

Rowson: I know where you're coming from now. Yes that's right. I think it's Wilber who says these things are separate and need to be distinguished but they're not completely

unrelated either. As I understand it, certain stages are more likely to give rise to certain states even if they don't strictly reside in them.

Reams: Right. So I'm trying to weave a number of things from your thesis together here. We're in this place at the moment where we have this example of the five year old girl in a way doing some act that we could say has some characteristics of wisdom. We wouldn't call her a wise person necessarily but we could say she acted wisely in that context in that moment. She didn't pull a tantrum or whatever.

Rowson: Yes.

Reams: You also talk later on in your thesis, and I want to get into this more later, but as a way to introduce it now, you talk about Francisco Varela and the notion of the virtuality of self.

Rowson: Yes.

Reams: I have this image suddenly when you're describing this girl and we're talking about states as opposed to stages and wise acting, that there is some way in which this virtuality of self leaks through a person and enacts itself in some act that people look and say that was wise. Does that make sense?

Rowson: Yes it does. This virtuality of self idea needs a little unpacking. Most people who will be reading this probably know this broad domain, and will immediately associate it with Buddhism and the concept of annata or no-self. It is closely related to that. It's a fundamental insight that also goes back to people like David Hume and the Western tradition, many who recognized that if you examine your spirit closely there is no essential self or ego to be found. There are mainly fragments of experiences and thoughts that pass, but no particular sense or locus around which these arrive.

Varela has a nice expression for this. He says, "There's no landing platform for experience," which for me was quite an evocative way of putting it. If you imagine experience as the thing we experience, the thing that's going on in our psyches, there isn't a place where that settles. There is no self to bring that contingent flux into its bosom. There is just this experience that's going around.

Of course, in models like Kegan's you'll see that you have self authorship and have a sort of self locus to make sense of that experience, and structure and order and make judgments about it and so forth. But I think nonetheless the more deeply one goes into certain meditative practices the more you can see that yes, there isn't really an essential self. However, that's not to say the idea that there is no such thing as a self actually makes any sense! Because clearly that's how we experience the world, and the self has a lot of functional social and cultural relevance. It's an integral part of how we relate to other people and make sense of the world.

Again, we're in one of these paradoxes or contradictions where you want to say simultaneously the self is extremely real and very much at the center of our lives, but also fundamentally unreal. And the term "virtuality" that Varela uses I found quite helpful for that because, we know virtuality through the virtual which we often describe as the internet, forms of the internet. But virtuality also gets at the notion of fragility and not quite being real as well.

So to speak of the self as being virtual is to acknowledge simultaneously that it's not what we assume it to be in everyday life, but equally that it's not completely non-existent.

Reams: I know late in the thesis you do have this discussion in relation to the virtuality of self, of what is the self in that sense. The phrase that comes to mind for me is that there is some "domain of validity" in which the self as a construct and a way of organizing experience seems to be appropriate and useful. Then you're pointing to a domain of validity that may have a lot to do with wisdom where it may get in the way and be a limiting construct.

Rowson: Yes, I think that's a good way of looking at it. I think you can be completely subject to the self and then you can recognize the self and the various stages beyond that, many of which I have no first person access to. What Varela argues is that he's talking about ethical know-how which is not quite the same as wisdom. But it's wonderful - he talks about certain examples of what it would mean to act with virtue in a given situation.

Varela says the capacity to do that is directly related to the progressive ability to experience this virtuality of self and know it from the inside. To know at some level there's nothing to hold onto. You don't have to be attached to your identity or your desires in a way that prevents you from acting well.

Again, this is a slightly more vernacular popular example. To slightly jump a little bit, in the report that is about to come out [this is referring to a report for the RSA Jonathan has written, and which can be found here] about spirituality I distinguish between self and soul, and this might be quite useful for this point. When you're at a dance and you're a relatively shy introverted person or just someone who doesn't really want to be too flamboyant in your movements, you often are on the edge of the dance floor and feel a little bit inhibitive and say: "I don't dance. I like to write papers and go to conferences" and so on. But you also know at some level that you'd be a lot better off if you just let go and got on the dance floor.

The qualities of inhibition and self preservation and identity construction that are preventing you from dancing are part of the same type of problems that might prevent you from really seeing what another needs, really hearing and really sensing what's going on in a given situation.

Whereas the part of you that just says "let's go" and says that reputation, that sense of self, that sort of limited conception of who I am doesn't really matter that much, and then

you go dance. You find then after 30 seconds or so of self consciousness you find you're in this much more free liberated state where you can enjoy yourself. It feels truer to who you are as well. It's closer to reality.

Reams: Right. You talk about openness to experience, which is one of the "big five" psychological constructs researchers have found to be empirically valid. This openness to experience has something to do with accessing the more authentic self, but you're also going to make the distinction then between self and soul.

Rowson: Yes, I think this is quite a handy distinction. This is not in the thesis, but helpful here. I spent three years studying philosophy at Oxford in seminar rooms and tutorials with people who are analytically quite fierce and who want to get away from a Cartesian notion of separation of mind and body, and also in my current role as Director of the Social Brain Center at the RSA – a place where intellect and policy are hegemonic and spirit and even emotions are somewhat subordinate.

In any case, there is a kind of professional assumption that consciousness is ultimately material and any notion of the soul is an old fashioned folklore construction we can do without. But actually in recent years I very much changed my mind on that. I think the notion of a soul is absolutely indispensable and it's very valuable and to be spoken of with some pride.

That doesn't, of course, mean there is a little essence that's sort of shiny and pink on the inside close to your heart. It's not soul as product or entity, but soul as the fullest possible context of human experience. Soul gets at what it is to be *an experiencer as such* in the fullest possible context of time and space and life and death and love and loss and so forth.

It's actually something that goes beyond self. You could say that self is about commentary on experience, but soul is closer to experience as such. I know that in Wilberian models and so forth that he goes from self to soul to spirit, but the models are not fresh enough in my mind to link to that. For now, I find that notion of soul captures something quite deep about the playful quality of being alive, the creative quality of being alive. On the other hand I have come to see the self as the identity, the personality and the commentary, which often manifest as barriers to a life fully lived.

Reams: I think that is a very helpful distinction. Of course, it resonates with a lot of stuff I've said and written over the years as well. It leads me to then link this notion of the self to the mind and even to David Bohm's notion that he talks about as thought as a system, where the system of thought constructs an identity, and it's a mental construct, but then it identifies with that. So in that context one of the notes I made here is it seems you're talking about the mind as a servant not a master. And that you try to point to the pathway towards generating wisdom or being able to fall prey to spontaneous wise acts as a need to cultivate certain habits so the mind is more open and amenable to those insights and impulses from soul and not constrained to stay on the edge of the dance floor because the self image doesn't align with being open to that experience.

Rowson: Yes, that's well put and it's more or less how I would put it too. I view self as something virtual but therefore functionally real even if it is not ontologically real. The self is something interesting, even compelling, but also problematic; something I think we need to work towards understanding, integrating and ultimately transcending.

Whereas the soul on the other hand is something I see to be more deeply embraced as part of being fully human. I think there is something about shaking off the self or recognizing that it's a kind of constraint, but we also need it to get through life, so there is something to be said for being at peace with it too – in fact the two things – deeply accepting and fully transcending, may even amount to the same thing in practice.

The soul, on the other hand, is something to be reconnected with and re-experienced because I don't think of the soul as something that reinforces an identity, reinforces a construct of who we are. I think the soul is much more about being fully present for whatever is going on, and that includes other people. Indeed, in this sense moments calling for wise action are not 'set pieces' calling for a formula, but more like a sudden switch from self to soul, in which we free up levels of awareness that allow us to act more judiciously than we could through mere self-expression or self-concern.

Looking back on my thesis, I see more clearly now than I did then that empirically it's very hard to go anywhere with this idea of wise action. You can't really simulate it. You can create scenarios with several people where you're asked to enact a certain difficult complex situation and see what emerges, but that's quite labor intensive and would require a lot of heavy lifting. I say this now because I don't want people to think that wise action is somehow one of these cliff hangers in a Hollywood movie where you say just the right words or do just the right thing to resolve the dramatic tension.

I see it more like an extra-ordinary daily capacity. Sometimes you get home from the office and your head is full of work and you can't really connect with your wife because despite your best abilities your mind is lost in your last email. I think there the challenge of wisdom is somehow to be able to come out of it and be present for the person who needs you. That isn't easy. That is partly a practice related issue in the sense that your mind needs the prior experience of dis-embedding from what it's embedded in. I don't think there's any real short cut to that. There are times when we really can't shake off our immediate experience and connect. But I think various forms of spiritual practice may offer a way out of that.

Reams: Right. So as I'm listening to you describe this I have this image for the average person there is maybe a phenomenological fuzziness and fusion because they'll have a lived experience as soul you could say, and they will have all these kinds of self-images and mental constructs about that experience all kind of mushed together.

Rowson: Yes.

Reams: Earlier I asked you about the process of doing the thesis. Part of that process was that you had this array of stories that you interviewed people around and through that

process I saw people making distinctions about what seems wise and what isn't and why and what perspectives are there on that. The process of being able to differentiate and make distinctions seems to have given you a better sense of this distinction between self and soul which could lead to understanding how do you cultivate practices to enable the self to be more open to soul.

Rowson: Yes, that's in effect how I see it. I think it's also useful to use language that creates some friction against dominant paradigms. So self is an uncontroversial term and it's heavily saturated with perspectives from a whole range of disciplines. But soul is one of these terms that has a different power or different atmosphere around it in terms of the way we talk about it.

Because your hardened scientist materialists wants to say the soul, well we did away with that and we're now working on the mind, and really there is the brain left and even the brain breaks down into neurons and genes, and so forth. So there is this heavy reduction and the soul is right at the beginning of that.

But you also have people like Iain McGilchrist and Nicolas Humphrey and various other scientists who are saying look: even William James if you look at his early writings, speaks about the soul being something we have to do away with. But if you read how he talks of it, it's like very much a "thou doth protest too much" moment. You can really sense that he doesn't want to do away with it (the soul) but feels he has to.

So these people are saying look, it's a very useful concept and if we lose it we lose this perspective of the whole that is how we live at least some of our lives. Some of our richer and deeper moments have this sense of fullness that we can't just disavow. We can't just say those are not 'real'. We need language for those moments that goes beyond emotion and beyond mind and beyond aesthetics and so forth. And the language of the soul, I think, helps to do that.

So it's a brave and somewhat contrarian act that amounts to saying look: I insist on using these terms that are slightly awkward.

Reams: Yes, I've encountered the same because I've used the term soul in publications, and for me the logical distinction is to say all the self characteristics have this transient virtuality to them. So as a ground of being I would prefer soul, which has this sense of eternalness and I'd much rather ground my being in that than in an ephemeral self.

In relation to academic discourse for example I like to reference Mario Beauregard's work, because he's doing neuroscience and talking about how you can interpret if from a non-materialistic view.

Then there is something you talk about in your thesis, that even talking about wisdom is intellectually subversive.

Rowson: Yes, yes, very much so. That said, I sense there are these pockets of resistance in the intellectual world, broadly conceived. At one level there are those who will pay lip service to it but won't really quite know what to do with it. So we've got people like George Lakoff and Mark Johnson writing about the embodied mind and they are asking rhetorically: what is the spirituality of the embodied mind? What is it?

Or people like Jonathan Haidt, maybe, who's saying religious perspectives, particularly as they are manifest in certain implicit ideas of value and the sacred, are experienced as profoundly real, even if the attendant beliefs may not be. But rather than probe these tensions further, they are often presented as afterthoughts. And so in effect you have impressive people saying: I think someone else should look at this in a bit more detail, but if I look at it too much I might undermine my own reputation for scientific impartiality.

Some of course look at it more head on and they have a difficult challenge because there isn't this dominant notion of what intellectual common sense is supposed to be. One of the people I think is best at 'fighting back' is Rupert Sheldrake'; I don't know if you've come across his work?

Reams: I had dinner with him at a conference 16 years ago.

Rowson: Okay. He's quite an important voice I think. Someone described him as a fly buzzing around the heads of the dogmatic materialists. He won't go away because he insists on asking the questions in a scientific fashion. Can you explain this with your available data? Where exactly is memory in the brain? How does it make sense?

Reams: Yes, DNA can explain all these things.

Rowson: What exactly is matter? What is your theory of matter? Where exactly is your materialistic consciousness. He's probing people all the time and he's not the only one of course.

Reams: Amit Goswami is another one.

Rowson: Say again please?

Reams: Amit Goswami, the physicist. He's another one who has done that, he's even done the math around it.

Since this is in the area of what you're talking about now, one of my favorite type of questions is; how might you characterize your cosmological framework?

Rowson: Right.

Reams: Because I think that's the lens that's implicit in how you're looking at all this, that enables you to make these distinctions, engage in these practices and processes. So there is something that is enabling all of this.

Rowson: I can speak to that from personal experience now because as I mentioned before the interview started, I just submitted a report that roughly took me two years to complete and involves about 300 or so people and it's about spirituality in the public realm.

One of the things I cited early on, and I think this was a difficult but correct move, was not to make it about fundamental beliefs about how the world is, so I'll come back to what that means for cosmological framework. But what I decided was look; you have broadly three relationships with spirituality. You have the conventional religious spirituality which, of course, includes many different traditions and within those traditions are lots of disagreements and so forth, but they all share a certain perspective of what the world is and what follows from that for our action.

Of course, as I said, there will be big disagreements but they share this idea of there is a metaphysical picture and then an ethical set of ideas that come out of that. Then you have something that's called spiritual but not religious, although I think that's an increasingly problematic term. There is a very broad group of people who don't particularly identify with any religion but don't want to disavow the spiritual, and by the spiritual they often do mean something non-material, whether a being or a certain kind of experience they can't account for. For example, they might think there is an immaterial soul even though they might not be able to hold that under cross examination.

Then finally you have atheistic sectors of spirituality, which is what people like Sam Harris and so forth are beginning to develop, stemming from the recognition that a liberal humanist world view lacks something. It lacks an aspect of experience that connects to us at the level of depth and transcendence and meaning and the sacred, none of which are really going to go away.

I decided that the only way to do justice to the idea of the spiritual was to carry all three of these perspectives and try to hold the tension. I decided that if spirituality was ever going to have a chance to be recognized as a valid subject of shared public concern, everybody had to have at least some stake in it. Now that makes it difficult because you have some people saying look, the spiritual is meaningless unless you have a view of something immaterial, a divine presence or purpose or providence that shapes the world. Others will say look, I don't really want to be on the same page as people who think we all ought to go back to church even if we don't believe in God, and so on.

So there is a lot of tension in that approach, but I decided that actually you can unpack a view of the spiritual that includes all these things and I tried to do that. I mention that now and the report will explain how I went about that, but what I want to share is the kinds of reactions I've had to that.

In a speech about the report I gave recently [which you can find here] I distinguished between three broad reactions and I based them on the facial expressions people give me when I start talking about the spiritual. So should I go on about this?

Reams: Yes.

Rowson: Good. The first reaction is from what I call the spiritual swingers. By that I mean people who look at you when you mention the spiritual, they look at you eagerly and excitedly, feeling that you're one of them and on their turf and we should speak more about this. But they don't typically distinguish between different kinds of spiritual engagement. So for them going to a three month Vipassana Retreat is a-piece with a quick visit to the Tarot reader or buying a new age self-help book. There isn't really any sense of discrimination about what the spiritual refers to. So I call them the spiritual swingers, and they are very keen for this discussion to take place. That's not to disparage them and it's not as though they couldn't discriminate, it's just at the moment in many cases they're not doing that.

The second group I call the religious diplomats. They look at your warmly and welcomingly but with a slight hint of distrust. Imagine people who are maybe on the liberal side of Christianity, or maybe secular Buddhists, and relatively secularized people in the Vedantic tradition who are still practicing in various ways. They will think you're onto something very important and yes it's actually a big part of public life but they'll distrust it because they don't really see how it works outside of a tradition or institutional context with particular doctrines or practices. So they are keen to see where you can get to, but don't seem to really believe in it at some level. I call them religious diplomats because they're encouraging but you also sense that they have an agenda of their own which is to preserve the integrity of their own traditions.

Finally you have what I call the intellectual assassins, and they're the hardest to face. They look at you with a kind of disgust and disdain. They look at you as if, what the hell are you talking about? This spirituality is nebulous nonsense and you know it. You went to Oxford for God's sake, why are you talking about the spiritual? These people are actually quite hard to deal with.

I realized after a while, of course, that these three constructs are projections and that I have them all in my psyche. They're all different ways in which I wrestle with what it is to speak of the spiritual. On the one hand I'm quite skeptical and so I'm not at ease with a spiritual free-for-all, an "anything goes" approach. On the other hand I can clearly see this is a big part of my life and I feel as though it needs to be a bigger part of the world's conversation, at least in advanced democracies, advanced capitalist or late capitalist or post capitalist societies.

So I see this very complex picture emerging where, within the sociology of religion they're realizing that the secularization narrative hasn't really happened. It's just not true that the triumph of reason and death of God has really happened. Instead you have this

confused incipient world of different beliefs and different perspectives that hasn't yet taken real shape in any sort of crystallized form, and may never do.

One the one hand that's a bit dizzying and troubling and it makes sense that people would want to go back to religion in that context. On the other hand you have the sense that if only we could keep the conversation going we might find something that works or begins to make sense for those who feel they could never 'go back' to religion, no matter how much it reforms.

Reams: Lots of the things there and I'm just making some notes to hold some of them. One is how I hear some of what you're saying is that some people are struggling to come to what I would call a trans-rational rather than a pre-rational view of spirituality.

Rowson: Yes that's right.

Reams: Some of the swingers find it easy to be with the pre-rational because they don't want to get bogged down in having to do the heavy labor or make rigorous distinctions to clarify things. So anything is good as long as it isn't that rational view. The ones who are really within the rational view are like the diplomats. I would surmise them to be saying yes that's all nice, we know there's something more there, but it needs to be rooted in some kind of rational explanation.

Rowson: Yes.

Reams: And the assassins, well that's a whole other matter. But would there be…

Rowson: They are important because they are the high priests of the academy and also the high priests of much of policy making. I think the intellectual assassin mindset, which in effect says defend your terms and measure your measurables and then assess your impact. That's the kind of mentality a lot of these people have, at least in their professional role, and I call them assassins because they're quite skilled. It's not necessarily that they don't sense here's something going on. But whether because they're defensive or uncomfortable with the language that they think of as pre-rational, they're the biggest challenge in some ways.

Reams: Right, and the picture I have from what you're saying, which is they may have some phenomenological experience or practice or connection to something, but the mind is more of a master than a servant and so the intellectual need to put things in the frames that it can relate to drives it more.

Rowson: True.

Reams: So a couple of questions. One is; is there another category other than those three reactions that you would like to encounter?

Rowson: Yes. It's funny I didn't put this into the speech but I thought about it. I think the appropriate response is a mixture of all three of these. So you want the critical discrimination of the intellectual assassin, you want the deep historical and institutional understanding of the religious diplomats and you want the kind of radical openness to experience of the spiritual swingers.

The question is what do you get when those three, when they aren't just thrown in and sort of mixed together but somehow optimally connected so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. I don't know what the term would be for that kind of person but…

Reams: Well I think Kegan's notion of being able to…

Rowson: Something approaching wisdom might be it.

Reams: Yes. Having a self-transforming mind would enable you to take on the characteristics of those different perspectives, views and attitudes as appropriate but not identify with them.

Rowson: Yes exactly. I think maybe the point is just that. It's funny with Kegan and Wilber, for me it's like they're not second nature to me to that extent. I'm often reminded of them and see – of that perspective again - and oh yes, that's how it fits.

In this case, I wasn't thinking developmentally, but perhaps the spiritual swinger might be more Kegan's stage two or three but the other two are probably a bit more stage four in my view of them. But yes you're right, probably what you need is something more stage five like or beyond that in that sense is worth working towards.

Reams: Right. I think the distinction I would pull us back to is that is something you're looking for as a sense of character or way of being that has enough of a type of soul presence to manage the self and the embodied reactiveness that you pointed to as some of the issues that keep us from making this progress on the path towards wisdom.

Rowson: Yes, and for me the picture is always complicated by certain things. If I have weaknesses as a thinker - and I certainly do! - one of the main ones is knowing what is out and what is in scope. I tend not to draw boundaries very well. I'm interested to think about the social and political context of any given personal pathway.

We live in a time of a fairly unstable economy and technological proliferation, potential ecological collapse, all are arguably already underway. You have all these things in the back of your mind, and then for me it doesn't make sense to speak of personal cultivation without some awareness of those situational factors that provide the context for it. That's difficult because it's already complicated and it gets even more complicated when you bring that in.

Reams: Right, which gets us back to the question around cosmological framework.

Rowson: Yes. My own cosmological framework would be, well my biggest formative experience as a person is playing chess professionally for many years. I became a Grandmaster and was the British Chess Champion and it was a huge part of my life. I wrote three books about the game. I wondered recently what exactly transferred from that main specific expertise.

I didn't put this in the spirituality report but I did write it at one point and I realized there are three main things. One of main ones relates to the fact that in chess we often use this expression, "keep the tension". There are moments where you can clarify the situation, for instance you might make a pawn exchange or a piece exchange or take some tension out of the position, something that's unresolved and you resolve it.

Actually, a lot of chess skills is marked by the capacity (a) not to do that and (b) to handle the tension well, because the argument is that the more complex your grasp of the position, the stronger you are, the more the tension will work in your favor because you'll be able to read all the different ways in which the tension might resolve itself and there are more potential pitfalls for your opponent, whereas you can manage them better. So the idea of keeping the tension is quite important to me.

In terms of my cosmological framework, chess also gave me the very strong inclination to inquire into what the other side is thinking. That's the reason I bring in the intellectual assassin. Some of my friends who are more into spirituality say: "You're always complicating it. Why are you always trying to convince people? Just do your own thing and enjoy it."

For me it's very important to sort of lock horns if you like with the important perspective and see what comes out of that. So my cosmological framework includes quite a big sense of pluralism and dealing with the other side and dealing with the shadow and so forth.

Finally, there is a third main thing I got from chess which was a suspicion of grand strategy. I know from chess deep down that anything that suggests if you do A and then B and C, D, E, then F will follow tends to come unstuck around B or C on a good day. So those three things together would mean any framework has to have a huge amount of scope for how we deal with the unresolved and holding spaces for conflict, a sort of deep respect for opposing views, a deep understanding that there will never be an overarching picture that will tell everyone what to do. There has to be room for conflict and chaos.

So my framework would have to have plenty of space for the tension being held and opponents being respected and a kind of view of progress that was sufficiently nuanced and tentative that you could actually believe in it.

Reams: So all that, and there may be more, but I want to stop for a minute. Some of the notes I made when looking at your thesis included a number of things about the virtuality of the self and the path to wisdom. I got this feeling for a sense of detachment or non-attachment at the heart of enabling all these things. And even as you describe this

process, and you describe it a little bit in your thesis, of what was interesting for you in playing chess, it was observing how your mind would relate to the very things you were just talking about now. That, to me, requires a certain kind of non-attachment to the mind and its processes to be able to witness it.

Rowson: Yes. I think I've had that from a relatively young age – probably mostly because of chess, but perhaps also from being a type-one diabetic since I was six; you are just obliged to be a bit more experientially self-conscious. But at the same time I don't think that is it in and of itself a good thing! You can use that for good or ill.

What I'm reminded of by the mention of the detachment is the Zen teaching story about the different stages of the ox. I don't know if you know the one I mean but broadly the first one is about discovering the ox, the second is seeing it and you begin to wrestle with it and you're thrown off it and get back on it and so forth. As I remember the story it resolves itself by the man and ox being separate and then the man is alone and then the penultimate stage of this spiritual journey involves wrestling with the ox which, of course, represents the ego and that tells the story of seeing it in one's experience, beginning to wrestle with it, beginning to see how powerful it is and slowly getting some control over it.

The final one is called 'Entering the Marketplace with Open Arms'. That is about coming back into the fold. So on the one hand yes you detach, have to go through this struggle, this wrestling match with your inner forces and see them and in some sense and overpower them and in some sense make peace with them. But having done that it's not as though that's the battle. That's only the preview to the battle. The real difficult work is when you reengage with other people and you come to try and help others in their own way and that's a long journey, that's not something that a meditative vision does for you.

Reams: No, and I want to make a distinction because I recognize that the way you're using the term here or unpacking it is something I encounter a lot and so I want to come back to that. Also what you're describing also is Joseph Campbell's notion of the heroes' journey, you have to go out and slay the dragon but then you have to come back, and how do you bring what you've gained from that experience back to the community?

Rowson: Yes, that's part of it and we're in this magical space, and we talked about this but since we're on this, I'm reminded of Frodo in Lord of the Rings actually. What I find as one of the truest, beautiful parts of that story in that book and film is the idea that Frodo couldn't really stay in the Shire. The idea that he'd been through too much, he'd too been bruised and changed by it fundamentally, he couldn't carry on being a Hobbit in the Shire.

I think there is something in that too. If you have any Scottish readers there is a famous slightly nationalistic song called Caledonia and there is a line in there: "Lost the friends I needed losing; found others on the way." I think there is something to that as well. There is a lot of loss on a spiritual journey it's not all just about gain. It's about pain and the severing of some cherished attachments.

Reams: Yes very much. So in that sense the severing of attachments or I think often of identifications that we in a way become disillusioned, in that we lose some of our illusions about our self and others. At the same time, and that's why I say detachment or non-attachment, for me there is an implicit connotation that detachment is in no way disengaging from the world. It is about being fully present in the world and yet at the same time not had by it, not lost in it.

Rowson: Yes, that's helpful. I think you're right. It's one of the terms that has certain implicit meanings that aren't altogether helpful. To detach in a way is to reengage rather than be lost.

Reams: I think this comes back to your distinction between self and soul. Where is the point of detachment? What is it we are detaching from? It may be that it's from this virtuality of self if we're not identifying with it as the ground of our being, it allows us a freedom.

There was a line in your thesis from Watzlawick that you cite, that I noted very strongly that he talked about taking total responsibility for creating our own world, but that at the same time this gave us total freedom.

Rowson: Yes, which is slightly terrifying. I have probably moved away from that now. I think my thinking in the last few years, of having been married and having a child, I have a much stronger felt sense of interdependence than I think I had at the time I wrote the thesis. You know, just being a functional 21st century grown up – staying sane, not to mention flourishing, is pretty exacting.

So the idea that we can ever have that degree of control over our own reality I think, well, it's not entirely untrue but you have to really find your inner power. One of the best books I've read in the last few years if I'm fully honest is a book about archetypes of the mature masculine psyche. It's a Jungian book, but I found it very helpful, called *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover.* It's about how these different types of undercurrents of our life need to be brought to fruition to function properly as a man.

There are, of course, female and feminine parallels all along I'm pretty sure, but it made sense to me because at some point when I was struggling I realized that I had more or less outsourced all these archetypes to other people and I had to reassimilate them in my own way.

So things like just taking ownership of difficult domestic decisions that you might prefer to defer or outsource, that would be King-like energy, or even getting the bills paid, making sure you fix the things that get broken in the home, and perhaps most importantly demarcating what is really in your 'kingdom' and what isn't i.e. What matters and what doesn't.

Then warrior energy is, broadly, what are you fighting for? What really matters and what doesn't? Lover energy is getting in touch with the soul like qualities of sensuality and playfulness. And there is a magician energy that is full of insight and knowledge and

specialist understanding. That's always been my delight, but also my problem. To live a balanced life you shouldn't let the magician energy run riot. It's about having a mature conception of it.

I mention all that now because I think once you bring in other people – colleagues, friends, children, parents, spouses- into the equation, it's extremely exacting to actually 'create your own world'. You have to discover whatever personal power of control or perspective that you can, and that requires maturation, quite rapid maturation sometimes, but it's a maturation that can only come about through adapting to the worlds of other people; it really can't come about in isolation.

Reams: Yes. There is something about this that for me always bumps into some of the connotations or implications of cosmological framework, because people say it's all well and good to be the person responsible for creating your world until you end up in certain circumstances where as you say you're suddenly in this much more interdependent dynamic and you see why you're not in control of these things, but how are you going to be responsible for them and have the freedom that comes from that.

In this case, I like to reference for instance, James Hillman in the Soul's Code about going back to Plato and the Myth of Er and the notion that we don't come into this world as blank slates. That genetic nature and nurturing of our environment together cannot explain all of our character and being in the world. There is something prior to that that comes in and in that sense can bring in with it some sense of fate or destiny that gives us circumstances that we wonder, where did we create this from? And yet in a deeper more profound sense we have created it before we came here.

Rowson: Right. Well this is an interesting one and when I come back to keeping the tension on the spiritual, this is a good case in point because part of me very much wants to go with you on that and say yes that's true to experience and coheres with a lot of things I believe and do. Another part of me here is the rational skeptic saying, yes certainly there is not a blank slate, there is an evolutionary endowment including a certain epigenetic process whereby culture and genes and so forth give rise to certain preconditions.

I forget who it was but I think it was Jonathan Haidt who said that "innate does not mean fixed and determined. It means organized prior to experience."

Reams: Okay.

Rowson: I think that's quite a useful expression. Innate means organized prior to experience. In other words, there is a default setting that isn't trivial and is quite important. The default setting shapes what follows in important ways. The question is, does that default setting include archetypes in the Jungian sense? Does it include some in built sense of the hero's quest in Campbell's sense? I don't really know the answer to that but I think it *could* but I am far from certain that it does.

Reams: Right. So as I listen to that response I also would want to refer back to this distinction between self and soul and is it possible that some of these things you're describing are relating more to the concept of self and less to the presence of soul as a kind of ongoing learning entity?

Rowson: Well it's possible. I mean, I wonder. Part of me wants to find the courage to say yes I believe we have something very much resembling a soul. It may not be ontologically material in the same way the body and skeleton are but it's nonetheless real and when we're born there is something like an individual soul, and it is somehow part of a greater world soul; a part of me really thinks that and really wants to go with that.

But I can't go all the way there. There's another part of me that is pulling back and pressing the brakes and saying: Look, the soul may be an emergent property and come about through the experience of being in the world, and observing other people and going through certain experiences. It may not be there as such when you're born. On the other hand I don't know what that would mean, or how it could be exactly.

That book that I mentioned about the archetypes, there is something deeply real about that. When I came across this it wasn't just intellectually satisfying, it was emotionally validating and made me feel yes, this is true. At some level, fundamentally to function fully and feel well and feel functional in society, I need to get back in touch with these aspects of my psyche that I've forsaken.

Reams: Right.

Rowson: These aspects of my psyche, they are at the soul level, you're right, they're not really self related, they are more about the journey and quest and the archetypes. I guess I would say I'm with you on that, but a part of me is reluctant to close the door on that and wants to keep some air for the skeptic to breathe.

Reams: But what I hear in that is you applying what you described as your learning about how to be in chess, to hold the tension. That there is clearly a tension there for you and that becomes a living question. So you don't want to bring closure on it because that takes away the openness to learning and growth and letting that tension as you quote Kegan and Lahey, "let the problem solve you rather than you solve it."

Rowson: Yes, I had forgotten that expression. I remember enjoying that. So yes, the challenge is, and this is keeping it real again, that disposition makes you quite difficult to live with! It might be intellectually interesting and it might even be true to how we should think at some level about certain things. But people you're managing at work, or family at home often want a resolute decision, and quickly. And saying let's keep it open and let's not resolve the tension is by no means always welcome. People in your life want to know the big fundamental existential decisions and you're like, well, why didn't the problem solve me? I'm not sure that kind of perspective is always helpful.

Yes, I guess I'm doing it again. I'm keeping the tension again, but that does seem to be quite a big factor in how I approach things. I hope that if we speak again in five years I

may have somehow developed a somewhat less problematic relationship to this issue. At the moment it doesn't particularly feel like a strength; it feels more like a feature that permits certain things, but with certain problems.

Reams: I made a note before this interview about where you talk about the significance of Varela's claim of the need to have first person experience of the virtuality of self.

Rowson: Yes.

Reams: The tension that I hear you describing in your thesis and talk about now is that when there is not a conscious awareness of that kind of experience in a clear way, then the perceptual means that you have to encounter that question generates a lot of this tension. It's like a Zen koan and its generating tremendous tension. I could say for myself, from my own experience, having had a really profound experience of that virtuality of the self, I see how it has worked on me for 23 years now, that it has enabled me to relate to that dichotomy in a way with much less tension.

Rowson: Yes, okay, good to hear that. I guess I have a sense within myself that there is a great deal of development still to go. In some of my better moments in the last few weeks and months I have been performing simple human acts well. So being on time, feeding my son well and mindfully, making sure I was available for my wife, speaking well to colleagues and making sure I'm listening. Simple, important things.

Such things actually require presence and require me to get out of my typical mindset. Those achievements have been quite satisfying because I sense that feeling of self-control and inner growth and just the simple act of being present and how difficult it is in daily life is quite a significant. When you get it, you think if I can be like this more of the time then I can't really ask for more. Just to enjoy those simple moments of living more fully and deeply because you're present to them.

Reams: Right. This goes back to something you were writing about in your thesis, that one of the challenges of, for instance, defining wisdom is that most of the definitions do not have a good path towards becoming wiser built into them. In that sense it's actually unwise to try and define wisdom. What I hear you describing now is a sense of an actual lived path towards becoming wiser.

Rowson: Yes, I think you put it quite well there. There is a wonderful essay by, I think, Chandler & Holiday in one of the Sternberg wisdom collections where they write about whatever wisdom is, it shouldn't be 'a charred fragment from our psychometric past'. They were recognizing that the wish to measure and define might be antithetical to the qualities we're trying to bring to bear.

By contrast, I think within religious traditions they actually have pathways towards wisdom, but it's just that many aspects of our culture have become a bit wary of conventional religion and we often don't see them as such. For example, the Buddhist eightfold path is the quintessence of a pathway towards becoming wiser. But why don't

we see that? Well for some it doesn't feel like their thing. Some are put off by the fact that it's explicitly religious or there is too much of a commitment to one pathway. But they have presented both a story of how things are and a story of how we have to be to live better and more fully. There are similar things in other religions as well.

Reams: But I'm reminded of a moment where one of my colleagues at Integral Review, Bonnie Roy and I were at the Metanexus Conference back in 2007 and there was a panel that Marty Seligman was chairing. They had top scholars from the Jewish tradition, the Christian tradition and the Islamic tradition and they were all going on at length about all these things. Bonnie got up there and asked, so what does your theology have to say about cultivating love?

Rowson: Right.

Reams: And they all sat there and said nothing. They really didn't have a response to that.

Rowson: That's sad to hear. In the report that is about to come out we speak about four main reference points for our discussion of spirituality that keeps these three perspectives on board, that appeases the intellectual assassins and placates the religious diplomats and also helps the spiritual swingers to find something.

Love is the first of those, death is the second and then self and soul are the third and fourth. I feel these four things have to be at the center of the conversation because they seem to me to be the most fundamental. On love, I think, any sort of spiritual perspective that doesn't have a story to tell about love is fundamentally lacking. And to be fair, Christianity has love right at heart of things, which gives me a weird kind of cultural pride.

Reams: I think the challenge was this was a group of theologians.

Rowson: Right. So the thing is there is an experience of love that many of us know, most of us I guess, which involves a kind of welling up on the inside, but it's unlike anything else; and it is so clearly true and real at some fundamental level and is a sign of what we care about and should be living for, but it comes and goes so infrequently that we don't always recognize it as being the sign of how we should live.

I think speaking the language of love and recognizing that we're going to die, realizing that the self is somewhat problematic and something to be worked through and to some degree overcome and then reconnecting with the soul. For me this is the sort of broad tapestry of what the new spirituality might look like.

Reams: That brings me to a question, as we have started out talking about wisdom and wisdom related knowledge to wise acts and all this, it's clear that somehow in the mix of this is a lot of spirituality.

Rowson: I think so. When I wrote the thesis I recognized that, but didn't make too much of it. Now I would probably push that a bit harder. I think like soul, spirituality is a phenomenon, also a term we should be a bit more fortified by using. I think there are lots of people who never come across the term or don't think of themselves as spiritual who might nonetheless be wise. But I don't think that matters too much. I think they are pointing to similar things. They're pointing away from our place and by that I mean a kind of status and our personality and identity and back towards our ground; and by that I mean our fragility, our pending death, our relationships that matter deeply to us, our experiences of love in our life.

So this distinction between ground and place, I think for people who are wiser they have a much stronger sense of the ground and a much better perspective on their place. They are less caught up on what it is to get on in the world and more fully attuned to what it means to be in the world.

So for me the two are quite closely linked. There are certain distinctions of course, and you can get wise managers and the term wisdom is a little bit promiscuous like that - it goes everywhere. Spirituality is a little bit more specific probably.

Reams: Yes. Where that question would lead into is, is there any sense of where this is heading? I know you have the RSA project and I remember being at one of the events, and you have the report coming out now. Is there a sense of where you might want to go with this work in the future?

Rowson: We'll see when and how and in what institutional capacity, but there are a few things going on. In addition to the spirituality work I spent a year in 2013 thinking about climate change from not a particularly spiritual perspective. I was looking at economic models and scientific projections and various social movements and so forth. And in my other work I sometimes think about inequality and educational reform and various other practical policy things.

For me the question at the moment is, how do you get better at bringing these things together? I am becoming a much comfortable using this kind of language more freely and confidently because I think there is a large but mostly latent appetite for it. We shouldn't shy away from words that matter to us and that point towards things that are important. For me it's not hiding away and retreating from my own personal development, it's very much about helping others to articulate what they already feel about these things.

Because whenever I've spoken about for example, the spiritual roots of climate change, people are quite attentive. My experience is that they 'get it' and at some intuitive level they know that the major problems we face are at some fundamental level 'spiritual'.

So the challenge is to enrich our conceptions spiritually enough so that it has a sort of tractable and comprehensible quality. But also to realize that it's not enough to map it out. One has to live it to some extent too. The challenge for me is to do that while

simultaneously making sense of big complex political issues. So really it's how do you link the spiritual and the political in a way that doesn't drive you insane.

Reams: And if you can navigate that, you'll definitely be on the path of wisdom.

Rowson: I only can hope, but it remains to be seen!

Reams: Thanks very much for your time today Jonathan.

Rowson: Pleasure, thanks a lot.

The Cultivation of Wisdom in the Classroom

Juliane Reams[1]

Abstract: This article focuses on a research project that was designed to inquire into the cultivation of wisdom in the classroom in the context of a newly implemented school subject called Glück (English: happiness). Glück was introduced in order to make a difference in traditional mainstream schooling as a reaction to school curricula that emphasize data and knowledge transfer. It is different and new because it embraces the kind of learning that includes the senses, the mind, body, spirit and the guts. Its multidimensional approach makes an attempt to validate a renunciation of the reductionistic perspective of traditional and contemporary schooling. How it is implemented served as a transformational process through a set of experiential exercises, group discussions, contemplative practices, teamwork etc. It is my aim to give an insight into what I understood as an alternative learning arena embedded in a traditional schooling system and the implications for further development beyond the transfer of data and information in adolescents. Zooming in on Glück, I aim to provide some perspectives on how key experiences and the reflection upon them can lead to the cultivation of wisdom.

The understanding of cultivating wisdom I have gained from this study is that it is a dynamic process where the creation of new structures of meaning making emerge through the interaction with others, with oneself and the reflection upon one's own interior processes that can help unfold, know how to use and refine tacit knowledge. Part of this process is actively discovering and transforming complex information in order to embody it and make it one's own.

Due to the assumption that traditional schooling mostly puts an emphasis on conveying informational knowledge (Hart, 2009; Sternberg, 2001) (to the more or less attentive) students and another assumption that wisdom is often seen in connection to age, this article makes an attempt to give an alternative perspective. In this article I propose a synergistic model of the interior process that enables the activation of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and the development of age-appropriate wisdom in stages in due consideration of the nature and life tasks of adolescence.

Keywords: Adolescence, Bildung, happiness, positive psychology, reflection, self-awareness, wisdom theory.

Introduction

My interest for this subject had a very personal origin. Something that struck me first when I did my master's degree in counseling was that one of my professors had a completely different

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way of teaching. His teaching method stood out from other teachers who I remembered from school and university and also from the other teachers in the program I was in at the time. In his lectures, I found myself in an interactive arena where my opinion was actively requested and my critical thinking and questioning was welcomed. As well, deep reflection and disclosure of my somewhat not so cultivated interior landscape was appreciated. Being stimulated to think for myself instead of being told what to think was not a familiar approach to me.

Another reason for my interest in linking my research subject to this school subject was that wisdom is a concept that adolescents often appear to be underestimated in. Conversations with people not involved in my research showed that the implicit understanding and opinions about (the development of) wisdom was wide-spread and often seen in connection to age. The older, the wiser, but not in connection to people of a young age so much. There is current wisdom literature that tries to refute this assumption (Sternberg, 2001; Pasupathi, Staudinger & Baltes, 2001). Many contemporary wisdom researchers also claim that wisdom does not automatically increase with age (Ardelt, 2010; Baltes & Freund, 2003; Jordan, 2005; Staudinger, 1999; Sternberg, 1990b).

The most important personal reason to engage in this research subject was the fact that I had been suffering from the education system for at least nine of my thirteen years (in the 80s into the early 90s) of traditional schooling in high school. Classes appeared to me more like indoctrination and often not more than accumulating informational knowledge. I was also affected by the impression of a high discontentedness among young people in my home country (Germany) and learning about Glück made questions and interest come up in me.

As I explored the constructs behind Glück, I found that the curriculum emphasized key elements essential for young people to create a better life for themselves in very practical terms. The integration of culturally relevant themes and even basic living conditions; such as buying groceries and cooking a meal together, to the curriculum was supposed to create awareness about these as being a resource to happiness beyond material welfare (Kaminski, n.y.). It also provided a container for them to reflect, get to know themselves better and explore the circumstances that facilitate lifelong learning.

Observing the Glück classes also revealed that the focus on gaining life competences appeared to have overlaps with the constructs of wisdom. If happiness was the key to gain life competences, what might be part of that process? Informed by roots in Nicomachean ethics and the theoretical foundation in Positive Psychology (Seligman, 2011), Antonovsky's concept of salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987), and Motivation Psychology (Heckhausen & Rheinberg, 1980; Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Rheinberg, 2002; Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 2010; Storch & Krause, 2005), Glück's intention to cultivate happiness in the students raised the question in me if wisdom is cultivated in parallel. If so, how does it reveal itself? Or was a potentially arising wisdom-related knowledge an unintended consequence or outcome of the curriculum? What characteristics of this sensitive life phase regulate or facilitate an age-appropriate development of wisdom-related acting?

Societal Needs of the 21st Century

Several societal needs and expectations indicate the necessity for a paradigm change in educational settings and traditional school curricula which are limited to a maximization of information through indoctrination (Hart, 2009; Gerver, 2010). Complex challenges the younger generation has to face in the contemporary context of a modern and fast moving globalized world creates a need for adaptation through a complete transformation in the principles and processes of public education (Robinson, in Gerver, 2010). This seems to be a consequence of recent discussions about educational concepts embedded in larger societal expectations and issues that illustrate the gap between traditional schooling and what today's students' needs are in order to be prepared for a future in an ill-defined world. Gerver (2010) emphasizes the imperative for change in traditional schooling and corroborates this with the need to prepare the new generation for "a successful life as adult citizens … making positive contributions to the world around them, … and develop the skills and behaviors that will see them flourish in the middle of the twenty-first century and beyond" (p. 4). Creating a space for the momentum of change is a challenge for any traditional school agenda and will require an arena for multi-dimensional learning and teaching. Another important factor is the role of the teacher in times of a "need of a fundamental shift of mind … about the concept of educational change itself" (Fullan, 1993, p. 3).

Questioning the existing education paradigm and moving from a system that maintains mental models of what education implies to a system that invites innovative teaching, transformation and embraces the kind of intelligences that facilitate the students´ holistic self-cultivation is challenging. It challenges not only the process as such, but also the existing concept of Bildung.

Moving from the earlier emphasis on conveying data and informational knowledge transmission to actually challenging the students to; observe and reflect upon their feelings, thoughts and behaviors, contemplate on purpose and goals, and help them develop an intrinsic appetite to learn, will inevitably raise questions in any traditional education system. It will not only require an emergent understanding powerful enough to break the existing dominance of the paradigm in society, the invigoration of innovative teaching, and also the ignition/cultivation of another kind of intelligence and learning in the students. This process of cultivation has a generative character as it can help students expand their repertoire of skills and refine and deepen their existing skills helping them to navigate their life tasks better, understand and overcome self-limiting beliefs and embrace personal growth and development.

Bildung

How does Glück fit with the term "Bildung"? What I took from observing classes, the interviews and from Glück literature (Fritz-Schubert, 2011a, 2011b) and working on this article was that the curriculum`s set-up and orientation turned out to resonate with the concept of "Bildung". This term is traceable back to Plato, Meister Eckhart and was later connected to German Enlightenment, Idealism, neo- humanism, and the philosophy of education. Bildung was also defined as liberal education and "became connected to the liberation of the mind from traditional dogma so that one can think for oneself to form oneself. In that sense, Bildung is

Selbst-Bildung (Selbst = the self, the I), which involves imprinting a picture of oneself on oneself" (Cuypers & Martin, 2013).

A broad range of thinkers such as; Humboldt, Hegel, Kant, Nietzsche and many others have laid different foundations to describe the connotation of the concept of Bildung in the European context. "Bildung" is different from its English translation "education" in that it (Bildung) encompasses the deeper and more holistic aspect validating meaning, purpose, the individual´s flourishing and self-development. The term "education" seems to have a more formal nature and this is critical for Bildung. Nevertheless, the latter etymologically refers to the verb "bilden" and "Bildung" to what can be described as "a process of designing an image (Bild)" (Schneider, 2012). A specific content-based formal knowledge is helpful to meet societal demands and is a part of the concept of Bildung. However, *designing an image* implies a more profound and active process of appropriation and internalizing knowledge to make it more accessible. It encompasses a process of growing into something, building character and manifesting ones aspirations and goals. It is my hypothesis that the conceptual framework of Glück can lay a fertile ground for this process by offering a container for a) a dynamic and holistic process of personal maturation as opposed to a mere accumulation of factual knowledge, and b) gaining perspective on this process, self-fulfillment, self-realization and self-leadership in order to be a "well-functioning participant" of society with aspirations and goals and the ability to think creatively and critically.

The current understanding of Bildung appears to be context-bound.[2] The international discourse on Bildung requires an attempt to synthesize the comprehension of different strands and to understand them as distinct from each other as well. There are similarities and differences between the concept of Bildung in Germany, the English-speaking research and the more recent concept of "transformative learning" coming from the US and Canada (Nohl, 2006). The notion of learning added a new aspect to traditional theories of Bildung in recent years (Meyer-Drawe, 2008). In the European context Bildung encapsulates processes of meaning making having transformative implications for the learner´s personality and embraces childhood, youth and adulthood. "Transformative learning" theories were developed in the US and Canada/in the English-speaking context to explain learning focusing on adulthood.

Teaching for Happiness / Wisdom

When researching adolescents` development of wisdom it is essential to account for the sensitivity of the life phase they are in. Adolescence is turbulent in many ways. It is molded by the development of critical thinking, the ability to make rational decisions about what to do or what to believe (Slavin, 2006), reflectivity, a tendency to think about what is going on in oneself and do self-inquiry. The awareness for their own uniqueness and separateness from others increases (ibid.) which is a part of their individuation (Jung, 1933), another important life task in this stage.

There are differences in several domains between intellectual knowledge and wisdom-related knowledge (Assmann, 1994; Chandler & Holliday, 1990; Clayton & Birren, 1980; Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1990; Sternberg, 1990a; all in Ardelt, 2000). Ardelt (2000, 2008)

[2] http://implexus.org/profiles/blogs/international-conference-transformative-learning-meets-bildung-fr

points to differences between intellectual and wisdom-related knowledge in these six domains;[3] goals, approach, range, acquisition, the effects of the knowledge on the knower, and the relation to aging. The overall picture of these differences is that intellectual knowledge is quantitatively oriented. It refers to the accumulation of factual evidences that provide predictability and values a scientific ground work that invites a narrower and more reductionistic world view. The nature of intellectual knowledge is that it is prone to be outdated. As opposed to this, wisdom-related knowledge refers to (an openness to) experiential learning and the integration of the knowledge of the body, mind and spirit. Thus, it provides a more multi-dimensional depth to relating to and making meaning of life in a holistic way.

My understanding of these differences is that (the acquisition of) wisdom-related knowledge overlaps with vertical development and is related to growing perspective taking and cognitive complexity in how we learn and think. In contrast; acquiring intellectual knowledge refers more to additive, or horizontal development. A synthesis of both intellectual knowledge and wisdom-related knowledge, requires a vertical step up in cognitive development to be able to take a perspective on both at the same time and then to integrate them. Knowing how to apply it demands that a person can act from within this new level of understanding. This may create a finer-meshed, awareness based approach to mastery and navigating different life tasks.

Making such a contrasting juxtaposition as in comparing intellectual knowledge and wisdom-related knowledge is like comparing a reductionistic, scientific approach and the holistic and integrated approach. The tension of opposites in this contrasting illustration of these two types of knowledge presents possibilities for developmental progression, from solely validating intellectual knowledge that values control, predictability and logical sequencing (Hart, 2009) towards integrating wisdom-related knowledge that values intuition, acceptance of uncertainty and ambiguity, and non-linear learning processes. Of course, the possibility that adults are in Kegan`s later stages of consciousness is more likely than for adolescents,[4] because the latter do not have a set of required reference points in their lives yet. Nevertheless, setting and nurturing the seeds for the ground work for the cultivation of wisdom in that particular life phase is critical.

Teaching for happiness is of course an ambitious endeavor. Teaching for wisdom alludes to an ignition of the students` developmental processes through a synthesis of their cognitive abilities and their wisdom-related knowledge (Sternberg, Jarvin & Grigorenko, 2011). The hypothesis is that a more creative and integral/multi-disciplinary approach to teaching as opposed to traditional methods can open spaces for the individual to fuel the own process of development. Positive Psychology research (Seligman et al., 2009) on the positive effects on academic achievement in well-being programs supports the focus on positive education. Thus, going successfully through the 2 year Glück curriculum could help boost academic attainments. It could also fuel the individual´s intentionality to improve other skills necessary to make meaning of the world, find the own voice, make wiser decisions etc. Both teaching for happiness and teaching for wisdom,

[3] Ardelt´s article focuses on the differences between intellectual and wisdom-related knowledge in the later years of life. It showed that many of the points in her listing were applied to early life stages in her article from 2008.

[4] While Krafcik and Spano (this issue) did not find evidence of a strong link between wisdom and later stage ego development, others such as Rowson (2008) noted overlaps between language describing characteristics of wisdom and language describing later stage ego development.

are dynamic activities. Teaching for wisdom will want to make an attempt to encourage the individual to step out of a socially programmed consensus consciousness, think critically, question assumptions and develop a deeper understanding of the architecture of one's own reality. It will try to foster the individual`s ability to make wise judgments and navigate and operate upon certain life challenges.

One`s explicit knowledge that is gained through data transfer has to be *"beefed up"* with implicit knowledge in order to be able to make wise judgments (Sternberg, 2001). This happens when attending to our inner processes. Happiness and wisdom can, in that sense, not be *taught*. It is rather indirectly, though actively, acquired and constitutes the inner condition of the adolescent that the individual brings out into the world. Teaching for wisdom fuels a developmental process of transformative nature whose major purpose is to empower the students' self-cultivation, the refinement of tacit knowledge, bring forth the ability to think critically and thus enable a shift in consciousness/their mindset. The fundamental idea behind bringing the cultivation of wisdom into the classroom is that teaching is not about telling the students what to think, but rather how to think (ibid.). In Glück, this is supported by an appreciation of numerous ways or multidimensional types of learning with attention to each student`s subjectivity. Glück`s main goal/ ambition, the cultivation of happiness, seems in many ways to be concordantly aligned with the cultivation of wisdom.

Transformative Education

Theorists and researchers have laid out various perspectives on transformative learning theory bringing great complexity to the field. The vantage points in diverse philosophical assumptions and underpinnings (constructivist assumptions, humanist assumptions, and critical social theory assumptions) are the fertile ground for a transformative learning theory that might appear fragmented and with clear boundaries as it displays a set of dominant perspectives (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Considering the breadth of orientations and zooming in on them, Cranton and Taylor (2012) describe transformative learning theory as "cognitive and rational, as imaginative and intuitive, as spiritual, as related to individuation, as relational, and as relating to social change" (p. 7) and highlight the need for a more unified theory.

Most work on transformative learning theory is done in the field of adult learning. Theories of Bildung are used in adult learning as well, but the concept of Bildung also encompasses childhood and adolescence. Adolescence is a formative period with a broad range of developmental changes wherefore the call for a certain type of education seems evident for this life phase. While we need to be cognizant of the developmental differences between adolescence and adulthood, we also need to make an attempt to adjust our assumptions and consider adolescence as a valuable period for the encounter with alternative teaching methods that can be transformative.

One example for transformative education is Paolo Freire´s concept of critical pedagogy that focuses on liberation and transformative optimism (Freire, 1974). He argued for the political nature of education as the place where individuals and society are constructed. His thought-provoking pedagogy endorses problem-posing as a key to critical dialogue and focuses on how the questioning of the system and knowledge is essential for the development of a critical

consciousness. Freirian critical education emphasizes the importance of a democratic and transformative relationship between the learner and the teacher, the learner and learning, and the learner and society. It invites the learner to be critical, question the system they live in and actively create the future they envision (Shor, 1993).

We can also find alternative education with transformative character in the Montessori and Steiner education movement. Both have an emphasis on a holistic education based on the child´s needs encompassing the spiritual, mental, physical and psychological development.

Brief Description of Relevant Approaches to Wisdom

The roots of the concept of wisdom go back to the classical philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. The postmodern understanding of wisdom and current wisdom literature generated several definitions of wisdom, because the concept of wisdom as a human attribute has changed over time in parallel to the evolutions in the society (Birren & Svensson, 2005). This article will only depict some notions that seemed most relevant in relation to the Glück curriculum.

Wisdom is related to our social-societal functioning and "universal knowledge that guides our behavior in ways that optimize productivity and well-being on the level of individuals and on the level of society at large" (Kunzmann & Baltes, 2005, p.110).

Wisdom is in this article defined as a construct that arises from a process of refinement and cultivation of tacit knowledge (Sternberg, Jarvin, & Grigorenko, 2011). This definition is also informed by understanding wisdom as a construct that regulates the use of certain skills (e.g. abstraction, reflection, self-awareness), which are involved in making wise choices for acting in the world (Sternberg, 2003; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010). Wisdom is characterized by features such as the ability of critical-reflective thinking, self-awareness and sagacity in actions, decision making and meaning construction (Hart, 2009; Mezirow, 1990; Sternberg & Jordan, 2005; Sternberg, 2003; Sternberg, Jarvin, & Grigorenko, 2011; Garrison, 1997).

There are many different theories and approaches to understand wisdom, and all of them cover aspects which are relevant for this article. However, in order to discuss the cultivation of wisdom in relation to educational settings and the model proposed in this article, the most relevant seems to me to be Sternberg`s Balance Theory (1998, 2003). It aims at a balancing of one´s own interests and finally the common good. Balance Theory also points out that wisdom requires knowledge, and acknowledges tacit knowledge as the foundational feature of wisdom (Sternberg, 2001; Kunzmann & Baltes, 2005).

It gives validation to explicit formal knowledge as in intellectual skills relevant to a given theory of intelligence. But it also emphasizes this kind of knowledge´s limitation as not being sufficient in order to engage the world in a wise manner. Wisdom is a multi-faceted intelligence and appears as knowledge balancing interests. In Balance Theory,

> wisdom is defined as the application of tacit knowledge as well as explicit knowledge as mediated by values toward the achievement of a common good through a balance among a) intrapersonal, b) interpersonal, and c) extra-personal interests, over the a) short and b) long

> terms, to achieve a balance among a) adaptation to existing environments, b) shaping of existing environments, and c) selection of new environments. (Sternberg, 2001, p. 231)

The balance in this theory implies the seeking for good outcomes for oneself as much as for others. In this process, it is also necessary to be able to make distinctions as the common good may be better for some than for others. Problem-solving that requires wisdom-related skills will then always need to integrate at least some elements of each of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extra-personal interests (ibid.).

The initiation of developmental steps through an activation of tacit knowledge requires experiential learning. "Tacit knowledge is action orientated, it helps individuals to achieve goals they personally value, and it can be acquired only through learning of one's own experiences, not "vicariously" through reading books or through other's instructions" (Kunzmann & Baltes, 2005, p. 115). Balance Theory also highlights the ability for four types of thinking. These are;

- analytical thinking (which includes an ability for metacognition, critiquing, judging, evaluating, comparing and contrasting, and assessing),
- creative thinking (including creating, discovering, inventing, imagining, supposing and hypothesizing),
- creatively insightful thinking, and
- good practical thinking (including applying, using, utilizing and practicing) (Sternberg, 1997).

Nevertheless, mastering these types of thinking does not necessarily imply the ability for wise acting, but it opens the possibility of having more choices and a broader range of options to face tasks and life in general. However, wise acting does require the capacity to take certain matters as an object of reflection and seeks for a more sophisticated way to engage the world. Having more choices is an essential step towards wise acting but requires the ability to reflect on it from different angles to make good judgments about possible courses of action.

The Nature of Adolescence and Its Life Tasks

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development (Piaget, 1954) and Erikson`s Theory of Psychosocial Development (Erikson, 1950, 1968) are to be considered seminal descriptions of human psychological nature in personal development (Coleman & Hendry, 2009). Both Piaget's and Erikson's theories proceed in stages and are characterized by certain life tasks the human being is supposed to master.

In Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, life is viewed as a series of eight stages (Erikson, 1950, 1968) in which each of them has a particular task. Erikson framed these particular life tasks as developmental crises dependent on if they are mastered in a successful or unsuccessful manner. The stage the participants of my research study are in is the late part of the fifth stage characterized by identity versus role confusion. Part of this stage is that adolescents figure out who they are and who they can be (Sternberg and Williams, 2002). From an Eriksonian perspective, "wisdom (…) develops from the person's coactions with the world and the transformation of the person's actions as they are directed toward the adaptive resolution of a

series of psychosocial conflicts" (Takahashi & Overton, 2005, p. 46). Erikson understands wisdom as a concept that entails a certain equanimity and "involved disinvolvement" (Erikson, 1982, p. 61) with life. His model of psychosocial development points to the synthetic/transformational feature of the experience of wisdom and is broadly defined as "reflective understanding", a sense of detachment or a high level of meta-awareness of the self and situational contexts" (Erikson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1986, 2005, pg. 46-7).

Like Erikson`s Theory of Psychosocial Development, Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development also proceeds in stages. According to his theory, my participants would mainly be in the formal operational stage in which adolescents have a greater ability for hypothetico-deductive and abstract thinking (Piaget, 1954; Coleman and Hendry, 2009). Thus, the ongoing development of abstract and reflective thought is a part of the formal operational stage in adolescence.

To sum this up, Davis-Seaver (2000) highlights three different notions of the ability to think critically from a developmental perspective. She points to three seminal theorists and claims that the ability to think critically depends upon physical/biological maturation (Piaget) or upon resolving psychosocial tasks at a maturational level successfully (Erikson). She also highlights Vygotsky, who sees the developmental aspect in the ability to speak and in the formation of concepts which begins in early childhood, but takes shape and matures as higher-order thinking in puberty. Adolescence is the life phase of identity confusion and insecurities that drive the young individual´s need to seek recognition from peers. Adolescence is also a phase of rapid growth molded by the development of critical thinking (Slavin, 2006; Paul & Elder, 2014), "the ability to make rational decisions about what to do or what to believe" (Slavin, 2006, p. 269). These abilities come along with the development of reflectivity, a tendency to think about what is going on in oneself and do self-inquiry. The awareness for their own uniqueness and separateness from others increases (ibid.) which is a part of their individuation (Jung, 1933), another important life task in this stage. Part of the process of individuation and the age-related ability to use formal operations is also to make distinctions which are connected to the capacity of taking a hypothetico-deductive approach to problem-solving (Coleman and Hendry, 2009). Another important capability that develops in adolescence is "to think about mental constructs as objects which can be manipulated and to come to terms with notions of probability and belief" (ibid., p. 36). This can be linked to adolescents starting to think operationally, and who are not anymore embedded in hers or his perceptions but can detach oneself from them, and take them as an object of reflection and attention (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Uhlendorff, 2010).

In relation to a successful accomplishment of adolescence's life tasks, the Glück curriculum puts emphasis on the procurement of life competencies (Fritz-Schubert, 2011a, 2011b) which demand the abilities described above and that adolescents are supposed to develop in this life phase. The curriculum itself aims to help the adolescents to make progress on the life tasks by offering a schedule for self-exploration stretched over two years.

Meaning-Construction

In order to assume adult roles or confront the expectations (noted above) from society, adolescents may arrive at the point where individuation is a developmental challenge (Jung,

1933; Cole & Hendry, 2009). Zooming in on Glück, this is in a broad understanding also part of the aspired outcomes of a successful accomplishment of the curriculum. Confronting this developmental challenge and relating to oneself and the world demands the ability for meaning construction, it creates learning and is embedded in the constructive-developmental framework. The constructivist perspective on learning is that the human is in a process of creating knowledge and actively discovers and transforms complex information in order to embody it and make it one's own (Slavin, 2006). Taking a neo-Piagetian perspective on development as a process in his constructive-developmental theory, Kegan perpetuates the theoretical view of Piaget and claims that the epistemological, "deep structure of any principle of mental organization is the subject-object relationship" (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). The kind of experiencing that the subject-object principle facilitates is what is related to consciousness (ibid.), self-awareness and self-reflective thinking which is highly addressed in the cultivation of wisdom.

Gaining self-awareness requires reflection and a development of awareness of what is going on inside oneself (Jordan, 2002). The process of developing self-awareness proceeds in three stages of which the last one, transforming, includes the individual's intentionality that opens for an abjuration from the embeddedness in the old frame of reference (ibid.).

> Transforming our epistemologies, liberating ourselves from that in which we were embedded, making what was subject into object so that we can "have it" rather than "be had" by it – this is the most powerful way I know to conceptualize the growth of the mind. (Kegan, 1994, p. 34)

These shifts can initiate transformation.

It is a developmental process that carries along progressive changes which represent a higher sense of what to do of one's life, relationships and choices (Kegan, 1994), which is a relevant matter in adolescence. Moving from an egocentric mind to a socialized mind in adolescence is a process that asks progressive changes, and which can trigger inquiry in the young person about how to engage the world. Being socialized includes meeting and facing expectations from society as for example to be a "good citizen" who is aware of certain rules in life (ibid.), gain mastery over certain skills and accomplishment of certain life tasks (Piaget, 1954; Erikson, 1950, 1968). These are also the aspired to goals of the Glück curriculum.

Wisdom – A Matter of Age?

The assumption that wisdom is considered as a peak performance or end state of human development seems to give a touch of exclusivity to the possibility of enhancing wisdom-related knowledge only in later stages of development. This notion can be challenged to some degree. Adolescents` age-appropriate natural intellectual developments of generalization, logical thought and abstract conceptualization makes a case for considering young peoples´ internal and external processes in these domains as also pertaining to wisdom. While adolescents might not have such a sophisticated view on life yet (Sternberg and Jordan, 2005) or not accumulated enough experience yet to be considered wise, the seeds for later wise acting can be viewed as being planted during this phase of life. Thus personal growth and development tends to crystallize during this phase of life in the individual`s progress toward higher levels of meaning making and

performance (Baltes & Smith, 1990). This creates an opening for individuals of a young age to also participate in the discussion on wisdom. Regarding Erikson`s stages of psychosocial development, the sample of interviewees were in the fifth stage characterized by identity versus role confusion. This stage embraces that adolescents figure out who they are and who they can be (Sternberg and Williams, 2002), a life phase to make generalizations from key experiences and explore one`s own personality. From an Eriksonian perspective wisdom would occur later, in the last stage of his stage model (Erikson, 1950). However, the focus on the development of wisdom as a construct related to post-formal thought or age exclusively seems to be outdated. Current wisdom literature promotes adolescence and young adulthood as important life phases regarding the potential development of wisdom-related knowledge (Pasupathi, Staudinger, & Baltes, 2001; Richardson, & Pasupathi, 2005; Sternberg, 2001; Bassett, n.y.[5]). Normative and age-appropriate knowledge develops in steep growth curves between 15 and 25 (Pasupathi, Staudinger, & Baltes, 2001).

Zooming in on the nature of adolescence, individuation and the search for one's own identity indicate that it is a sensitive period of orientation. The young person seeks for knowledge to contemplate on these life problems as a direct response to their age-appropriate identity confusion (Ardelt & Jacobs, 2009). It is a "period of privileged encoding of autobiographical and other types of experiences" (Richardson & Pasupathi, 2005, p. 149) and heightened memory for experiences associated with reminiscence to create the kind of narratives and nexuses necessary to develop wisdom-related motivation and knowledge. While the seeds for the development (may) get set in adolescence, translating wisdom-related knowledge into action will require self-regulatory capabilities which come through experience. However, the key building blocks that facilitate the development of wisdom-related motivation and knowledge emerge in adolescence and early adulthood (ibid.). Adolescents also have attained the ability for abstract thought (Piaget, 1952) and metacognitive skills necessary to develop a certain kind of thought that facilitate wise thinking.

It can thus be argued that wisdom can be developed in every life phase or at any age. Facing developmental tasks from birth throughout all the different life stages, wisdom-related knowledge will emerge and manifest itself. As a part of personal growth and self-cultivation, wisdom will emerge from exposure to experiences that show up differently in different life phases (Ardelt & Jacobs, 2009; Ardelt, 2008; Bluck & Glück, 2004).

Although there seems to be a common understanding among many wisdom researchers that most demonstrations of wisdom will reveal itself in peoples´ later life stages (Ardelt, 2008; Bassett, 2015), its actual development seems to follow a steeper learning curve during adolescence than in adulthood (Pasupathi, Staudinger, & Baltes, 2001). Wisdom can be found in younger people too, especially in the ones who had to deal with hardships in their life (Bluck & Glück, 2004; Ardelt, 2008). It seems that the accumulation of certain key experiences is the sticking point that generates the connections and fuels the growth of wisdom. From this, we can surmise that withdrawal from making key experiences and opening oneself to the learning that comes with them won´t make one wiser. In contrast, feeling more coherent with oneself and the social environment, being more at ease with challenging life situations and one´s uncertainty

[5] www.wisdominst.org/WisdomInThreeActs.pdf

coming along with identity confusion and individuation and to engage in the world will provide a broader range of possibilities to accelerate this growth process.

Teaching for Wisdom in Adolescence

All these arguments seem to give a body of evidence to the importance of having opportunities for laying a foundation that helps to spot certain acupuncture points that create a finer-meshed and generative tissue for the cultivation of wisdom in the young person. Still, the cultivation of wisdom in adolescents demands certain circumstances facilitating their growth. Apart from these arguments, there is another reason that speaks for teaching happiness and wisdom in the classroom. The curriculum holds a frame for social learning through the interaction with peers which is significant in terms of personal growth in the proximal learning zone (Vygotsky in John-Steiner, Souberman, Cole, & Scribner, (Eds.) 1978; Slavin, 2006; Coleman & Hendry, 2009).

The holding environment of the safe container (Winnicott, 1965; Bowlby, 1988) in the class offers a space of trust where the individual is invited to experience encouragement, support, valuable feedback and creative energy in the peer group. This reciprocal relationship opens for self-inquiry, being present to one's own personal growth and learning through the creation of individual and collective awareness in the container (McClure, 2005). The quality of the holding environment will be crucial for the initiation of certain developmental processes in the adolescent. An essential part of this is the way of teaching.

Sternberg´s WICS[6] model is based on his Balance Theory and argues that wisdom, intelligence and creativity are developing expertise. They are presuppositions for citizens and professionals of the future, and for anyone else who aspires to meaningful success in life (Sternberg, 2009).[7] Sternberg argues that teaching for wisdom requires three types of teaching;

- teaching analytically (to encourage students to analyze, critique, judge, compare and contrast),
- teaching creatively (to encourage students to create, invent, discover, imagine if…, suppose that…, predict) and
- teaching practically (to encourage the students to apply, use, put into practice, implement, employ, render practical what they know).

A synthesis of these three different skill sets can give the students a broader range of possibilities for action and behavior. My research focused on an example of how this kind of teaching can be applied. The next section provides some background on this curriculum and a description of the research methodology.

The Roots of the Glück Curriculum

Glück is basically focused on giving the students a possibility to explore and experience how they can create a better life for themselves by providing a space, activities, and exercises to make

[6] WICS stands for "wisdom, intelligence and creativity, synthesized".
[7] http://www.clarku.edu/aboutclark/pdfs/sternberg_wics.pdf

and reflect upon key experiences. From this they can identify and explore alternatives for acting and decision making in future situations. Refining their ability to make generalizations from the experiences is a critical part of their wisdom-related learning process.

The message and contents of Glück is something a person can learn (Fritz-Schubert, 2011a, 2011b; Seligman, 2011; Lyubomirsky, 2007) but gaining life competencies requires effort and motivation. The Glück curriculum therefore embraces the notion of positive education, a wide range of learning styles and has a very practice-based approach instead of overloading the students with theories. The development of wisdom-related knowledge can in these learning processes help regulate the applicability of the aspired life competencies. It is also therefore critical for the subjective experience of the curriculum.

Glück Classes, Facilitation and Exercises

It is a major goal of the Glück curriculum that the students experience their creative strength in connection to the meaningfulness of their actions, and to unfold their intrinsic pursuit to reach for goals and realize them in their daily actions. This way they sit in the driver´s seat of their own growth processes, formulate and realize their goals and generate an enhanced motivation to learn. The ongoing practice of self-unfoldment through positive key experiences also increases their self-trust which can give them reference points to make connections for future situations as well. Thereby, the emergence of existential anxieties can be avoided (Kaminski, n. y.). Glück wants to bring forth an improvement of the students´ social competence and academic learning achievement, increase of resilience, gain of more energy, having better health and joy in life (Fritz-Schubert (2011a, 2011b), even (or especially) at times when life is tough and certain skills are required in order to master life`s challenges. To experience flow and develop joy in acquiring certain skills and reach goals is an important part of this process. The safe container in the community of the class facilitates the conditions to practice turning inwardly, explore and learn individually and collectively how to show up in the world, and act in the world instead of being acted upon.

An elaborated set of concrete exercises (which the curriculum calls positive key experiences) are as part of the Glück classes. They aim at helping the students become aware of moments of flow, a feeling of trust, responsibility and sense for community. The students` processes are supported through facilitated group reflections in class and followed up through homework reflection papers which have to be handed in as semester assignments.

In order to give a little taste of the positive key experiences in the curriculum, I want to mention the “Free Fall” and the “Value Hierarchy” exercises. Especially the “Free Fall” was frequently mentioned in the interviews in relation to its positive impact. In the “Free Fall” several adolescents stand close together on the floor right behind a table. One adolescent stands on the table with the back turned towards the other ones on the floor. Taking a deep breath and when feeling ready the one on the table lets herself/himself fall and the others catch her/him. These kinds of key experiences are supposed to give them a feeling of trust and self-confidence as much as responsibility, authenticity and team spirit. It is supposed to give them a richer treasure trove of experiences that allows the individual to acknowledge options for generalization and eventually transferability of the gathered learning to future situations and considerations. Future-

defining relevance was considered in the purpose of the exercises that ask for teamwork as well as the acknowledgement of aspects that link together altruism and mental health.

In the "Value Hierarchy" the adolescents get several building bricks which represent a certain value. The class is then asked to discuss the values which are most important to them and then about which role and position in the hierarchy these values appear most important to them. The goal is to come to a mutual consent of which values are in which position when physically building a pyramid with the cubes. The top position of the pyramid represents then the value with the highest relevance to them. The quality of the physical interaction in the exercises is as important as the quality of the students` presence, attention and communication in the group process. The students` narratives revealed that the experience of working physically together, negotiating and reaching for a common goal was helpful for their understanding of their uniqueness, togetherness and concern for the common good.

The Glück curriculum is stretched over two years. The main constructs I have been able to perceive from reviewing available literature on the Glück curriculum are based upon several aspects of everyday life such as; the benefits of social togetherness, the experience of happiness, pleasure in life, their own achievement, the body in motion and as a means for expression, mental and physical well-being, nutrition, practical necessities in everyday life (such as planning the daily agenda), cultural codes as a base for social life and the self, including their own social responsibility as a member of the society. Mental training, meditation techniques, relaxation exercises, sports, yoga and drama activities to cultivate their sense of intuition are integral parts of the curriculum (Kaminski, n. y.; Fritz-Schubert, 2011a, 2011b).

Theoretical Foundations of the Glück Curriculum

A historical event, Caesar`s crossing of the Rubicon river, creates some of the theoretical background and illustrates a model in Motivational Psychology that demands from the learner setting a specific goal and by going through phases, strive after it, make decisions and eventually reach the goal. The Rubikon model (Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 2010; Storch & Krause, 2005) describes four phases of acting – pondering (abwägen), planning (planen), acting (handeln), and evaluating (bewerten).

In positive psychology, the theoretical anchor for Glück, Seligman (2011) appeals for imagining positive education and stresses the importance of well-being. Schooling could, "without compromising either, teach both the skills of well-being and the skills of achievement" (p. 78). Well-being taught in school would ignite a paradigm shift and create a space for students to help them increase their creative and holistic thinking and their life satisfaction in general, foster better learning (ibid.), discover inner strengths, learn from crises, show responsibility, be more self-sufficient, have joy in everyday life and promote an optimistic attitude towards oneself, society and life in general (Fritz-Schubert, 2011a, 2011b). Well-being and positive moods enhancing learning, stimulating more creative and holistic thinking and broader attention (ibid.), create positive implications for the development of skills of achievement, increase life satisfaction and help prevent depression. This interconnection between the skills of well-being (for the most connected to happiness) and the skills of achievement (or academic performance)

and increase of life satisfaction raises questions about the conditions. Which conditions facilitate this, and how can it be achieved?

One approach to answering this question can be found in research on coherence in relation to the wide-spread scope of well-being and the subjective mastery of life which generated results that can be linked to wisdom. Research from the HeartMath Institute and Antonovsky's theoretical frame of salutogenesis exemplify this approach.[8] The HeartMath Institute's research shows interactions between the neurons in the heart leading to a state of psychophysiological coherence that showed a significant improvement in cognitive performance, including memory and even academic test performance (McCraty, Atkinson, Tomasino, & Bradley, 2009). Another effect that is ascribed to a high coherence between heart and brain interaction is its positive impact on helping to maintain a person's mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being. The research acknowledges the impact of positive emotion and introduces the term *heart rhythm coherence hypothesis* that verifies that the higher the degree of emotional stability and system-wide coherence, the better is the facilitation of cognitive and task performance" (ibid.). HeartMath Institute research claims that "emotional coherence - a harmonious state of sustained, self-modulated positive emotion - is a primary driver of the beneficial changes in physiological function that produce improved performance and overall well-being" (ibid., p. 15).

The sense of coherence (SOC) in Antonovsky`s principle of salutogenesis describes and measures a person`s subjective way of making sense of one's own life and the world. It is also an indicator and major factor in defining how well a person copes with stress and stays healthy (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987; Bengel, Strittmatter & Willmann, 2001; Petzold, 2010). Adolescence is the period of life where the SOC is still open for changes while it becomes more settled (static) around the age of thirty (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987). The SOC consists of three factors; comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. A strong SOC indicates an ability to orientate in the world (comprehensibility), ability to activate resources and master certain situations (manageability), acknowledging life and its challenges as something meaningful and put energy into the solution of problems (meaningfulness) (Fritz-Schubert, 2011a, 2011b). The increase of the SOC is an explicit goal of the Glück curriculum and is regularly evaluated (ibid.).

Although two different starting points – the HeartMarth research is based on the psychophysiological concept of coherence and Antonovsky´s model of salutogenesis on coherence as a psychological concept – it appears that both approaches resonate with the development of skills that fuel wisdom-related knowledge and performance. Both approaches point to states of enhanced awareness and wholeness that can initiate maturation processes. Wisdom is related to receptivity to imagination, intuition, and the kind of thinking and knowing that is below the neck.

What shaped my understanding of the concept of wisdom is that is in an interconnected relationship with the heart`s intuitive intelligence (McCraty, Atkinson, Tomasino, & Bradley, 2009), and feeling coherent in oneself and one`s decisions. Coherence manifests itself as balance, harmony, flow, integration, structure, being in sync, an enhanced sense of intuition, and system-

[8] Antonovsky's work is an explicit part of the Gluck theoretical foundations. The HeartMath research is not, but seems relevant enough to also mention here.

wide alignment within. All these are qualities that are aligned with the presence and attention necessary to turn inward, be able to engage the inner landscape, hold that in a good space, surrender and transcend the ego. Incoherence in contrast creates disruption, disintegration, stress, and disharmony. It appears that a developing coherence in consciousness is characterized by psychophysiological, system-wide coherence embracing mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing and resilience (ibid.). A high SOC score in Antonovsky`s salutogenesis` three terms comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness also seems to be interrelated to a developing coherent consciousness.[9]

Another possible interrelation is that the three components of the salutogenic frame – comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness – contextualized in the Glück curriculum can be seen in a connection to what wisdom theorists define as *wisdom criteria*. Expert knowledge, referring to the meaning and conduct of life, approaches wisdom if it meets these five criteria (Kunzmann & Baltes, 2005), which are (1) rich factual knowledge, (2) rich procedural knowledge, (3) lifespan contextualism, (4) valuation of relativism and (5) tolerance and ability to understand and manage uncertainty. While the two first criteria are on a basic level and not sufficient for the development of wisdom-related knowledge, the three last criteria are meta-level criteria. They require a broader body of experiences and learning to embody than the basic level criteria. Considering the contents of the three terms in the salutogenic framework it seems that the five wisdom criteria not only fit the aspired outcome of the Glück curriculum but resonate with the contents of the wisdom criteria. They give clues to how a person engages her/ his social and physical environment and makes decisions in certain domains.

Putting it all together and looking at the interconnection of the three components – the accomplishment of life tasks, the theoretical background of Glück and wisdom theory – a fluent orchestration of these components defines the zone for the cultivation of wisdom. Existing research from the University of Mannheim[10] showed that Glück had a positive effect on the students` subjective well-being but also described one confinement in relation to the individuals` emotional stability. The interviews with 106 students showed that the higher the degree of emotional stability in the individual before the accomplishment of the Glück curriculum, the higher was the positive outcome for the individual. This puts the notion that happiness is something one can learn into something we have to look at in relation to where the individual is at and consider that the classrooms are filled with individuals so that this statement must not be overgeneralized.

The essence of my research arose in the process of observing classes and listening to the narratives in group discussions as well as in interviews. Exploring the lectures and scrutinizing the interviews for signs of transformational processes gave a more holistic picture of what I perceived as a synthesis of foundational life stage criteria exposed to a conceptual frame which is

[9] Seeing these two notions of coherence, it would be interesting for future research to explore the degree to which there is an overlap between the concepts of coherence when considering heart and brain interactions and the salutogenic framework, or if a feeling of a sensed incoherence actually also contributes to the development of wisdom-related knowledge.

[10] http://www.uni-mannheim.de/1/presse_uni_medien/pressemitteilungen/2011/august/unterricht_zum_gluecklichsein/druckversion_pi52/08_08_unterricht_zum_glacklichsein.pdf

embedded in the constructivist developmental framework. The holding environment created a space for reflection and critical-analytical thought. Integrating and looking beyond the theories about the development of children's` and adolescents` capacities and life tasks, I was interested in the concept that regulated the use of these capacities besides their subjective well-being.

My Observations and Interview Approach

I interviewed seven students who were between 17 and 20 years old (3 female, 4 male) and two teachers. Before picking a sample of interviewees, I was told that the students were already quite used to giving interviews as the media had shown a lot of interest in the implementation of Glück. It turned out that this was an essential factor when doing the interviews. The students' personal narratives revealed more of how their perception and subjective experience of the Glück curriculum related to the development of skills related to wisdom-related knowledge. They also disclosed more about their process of discovering their relation to their own meaning making.

Interviewing Adolescents: Critical Reflection vs. Descriptive Cheerleading

The semi-structured interview guide contained questions to find out about what motivated the adolescents, what they learned in class, if and how they applied what they learned related to their everyday life, and how they experienced the lessons as a means in order to develop certain abilities. The main purpose of the interviews was to stimulate the students' reflective thinking through facilitating their process to gain broader insights into how and in which ways their attendance of Glück helped them in relation to wisdom-related criteria.

The presupposition for this was to help them find a language to describe their subjective experiences. My motivation was to help them go beyond a "flat" description of the class and give rich answers of what revealed itself. Framing the interviews to each of them as a possibility to reflect about their insights, impressions and feelings towards Glück before the start of the interviews, I proposed to each of them that these conversations can be a possibility to go deeper into layers that maybe they had not considered to talk about before. All of them accepted this proposal very openly and gave verbal and non-verbal signals that they were interested in a deeper self-inquiry.

However, when conducting the interviews, I observed that there were discrepancies between the students` way to respond to the questions. While some of the students showed not so much variation in their answers and gave responses which had more of a descriptive nature, other students answered in a more critical manner than I had expected, reasoning abstractly. The interest of the media might have caused that some of the interviewees were kind of "trained" or "programmed," and more descriptive in their interviews rather than reflective and critical. It was probably unconscious that their narratives were more aligned to a good description of the Glück curriculum rather than their own subjective meaning making. The other students who had been more reflective brought another nuance and broader approach to my research as their critical attitude displayed more critical-reflective skills which eventually revealed more of a transformational process going on in them.

Limitations of the Research Study

In my research study, there are a number of limitations I am aware of. Due to the wide spectrum of definitions and theories about wisdom in recent literature, I had to make choices in order to narrow down the scope of my research field. This resulted in a strict limitation of the theoretical lenses I used. Thus there could be other perspectives and interpretations of my data that I missed by narrowing the scope of theoretical lenses. The main limitation I perceive, is that I have built an extensive theoretical model and interpretation based on a relatively small amount of empirical data. The fact that my study turned out to focus mainly on two participants, who appeared to give the richer data in relation to my research question could be seen as problematic. It also turned out that two of my interviewees did only in some marginal areas mirror the overall impression I got from the rest of their group. They were supportive for the data, and stayed more in the background of the analysis. This is a limitation of the study as it might appear not broadly representative.

Future Research

The limitations in my thesis open the way for more research to corroborate and sustain the empirical findings that emerged this research study. Having the major impressions from my research study and acknowledging the importance of development and impact of wisdom on young people, I would propose a long-term study of a research sample attending Glück and examine their subjective experiences succeeding through the wide-spread scope of items the Glück curriculum focuses on. One step of this could be following up and interviewing more students at the end of their two year program. Another possibility for future research is a deeper examination of what the concept of coherence used by the HeartMath Institute and Antonovsky's salutogenesis might have in common.

Description of the Findings

The empirical data showed that generally speaking, the participants perceived the Glück curriculum as both useful for their development and applicable in everyday situations. They also perceived it as a useful learning arena beyond their traditional school curriculum. All of them mentioned and appreciated that in Glück they do not have to stay quiet but are encouraged to speak up and that they get a feeling for who they are. Regarding their subjective perception of their development the following key findings emerged.

- The Glück curriculum helps the adolescents to use and refine tacit knowledge which suggests that Glück teaches for gaining a higher degree of wisdom-related knowledge.
- The process of reflection, generalization and development of self-awareness changed the adolescents' subjective perception of their own outcome of their attendance in Glück.
- The process of reflection, generalization and development of self-awareness also helped to develop their understanding of lived key experiences in a larger life context.
- Developing more self-awareness and understanding for the impact of the Glück curriculum revealed developmental growth going on in a parallel mode.

The key findings display fine grained transitions between each other as the students` answers displayed that development happened in nuances and a small range. The data implies that one course of Glück will not totally transform them. But what I found was that zooming in on details in the scope of a broader scheme of wisdom, adolescence`s life tasks, transformation and the curriculum, small changes emerged.

Talking highly appreciatively about the good companionship and the safe container in class, all students disclosed that their individual and collective awareness seemed to have enhanced. More perspective taking, knowing oneself better and reacting differently in difficult situations was mentioned in particular. They also talked about an improvement of skills that support teamwork and team spirit in general, a better social aptitude, self-esteem and self-efficacy. All of the interviewed adolescents proposed that Glück has a potential to nurture these qualities but stated that they do not ascribe the development of these abilities only to Glück. There was a consensus that they already came with certain capabilities before the Glück curriculum was introduced to them. It seems that even if they assert their own sense of self and growth as not exclusively attributed to their attendance of the Glück classes, but maybe going on in a parallel mode, there is a chance that it nonetheless helped them become aware and articulate this certain outcome.

It looks as if Glück was somehow involved in helping them find a language for something that they notice to have had in themselves from before. Framing it might have helped them validate their assertiveness in their verbal and nonverbal responses. This certain tacit knowledge might have been pushed more into the foreground as it became more explicit through their self-inquiry and being exposed to the curriculum. The meaning making in their chain of thought showed more complexity as the interviews progressed. They took time to reflect and be present with their inner dialogue which showed in their facial and vocal expressions as sighing, giggling and their moments of silence. These expressions were important data and were a fully integrated part of the transcriptions and analysis. Being mindful of their body language during the interviews and listening to the recordings of the interviews over and over again also helped me to deepen my understanding of their process.

The moments of reflective silence in the interviews can be seen as beginnings of learnings felt in the pre-reflective experience of negativity that is a transformational break with the own learning history and habitual mode of being (English, 2012).

> These breaks or gaps in experience cannot simply be closed by attaining new knowledge, but they can be productively dealt with through reflection and inquiry. Learning begins in the breaks and gaps in experience and come forth as a "response to the call of the other." (p. 221)

I observed that the reluctant attitude some of the participants showed initially towards the curriculum turned into something that was much more neutral, and in some cases even very positive. As soon as they had started to articulate their experiences and what changes they noticed since the first day in Glück they made this knowledge more explicit. Their narratives brought them from their critical feelings to a more authentic space where their criticism was not just there for the sake of being critical. Some narratives brought forth elements of cognitive dissonance to

deal with. Contextualizing the new perspectives actually expanded the container and gave another quality and nature to it. Holding this tension, a higher level of self-awareness and authenticity could emerge.

Deep contact with oneself and others in the context of the classroom helped them build a better understanding for who they are, their inner world, their strengths and weaknesses and about their abilities to build and maintain relationships. Building and balancing their knowledge about their relationships supported their process of enhancing their awareness about themselves on three levels; individually, collectively and inter-relationally.

Glück helped the students to discover, refine and internalize new skills and learnings. Parts of these learning processes had been going on in a parallel mode. Reflecting upon the curriculum, the key experiences and the impacts of Glück in their lives helped making this knowledge more explicit and tangible to them.

It also supported enhancing their ability to listen to the gut feelings. Their sense of their self as an individual and in a community and of actively being a co-creator for the greater good was mentioned to have matured throughout the program.

Description of the Model Emerging from the Findings

In the research process, three main categories with appertaining subcategories emerged; (1) Criticism with the subcategories “assertiveness” and “ rejection”, (2) Social interaction with the subcategories “learning together” and ”safe container”, and (3) Skill development with the subcategories “abstraction”, ”reflection”, and ”self-awareness”. The latter, skill development, along with its subcategories, revealed itself as a level that enabled the students to enter a space where their skills synthesized in order to become a presupposition for wise acting.

Analyzing the data led to the conceptualization of a model exploring the stages in the evolution of wise acting.

Abstraction → Reflection → Self-Awareness → Wise Acting

The model illustrates the individual`s inner process and synthesis of the pronounced subcategories abstraction, reflection and self-awareness as a stepwise model aiming for wisdom at the peak position. It depicts a possible developmental process of an interior operation which I assume to lead to the possibility of cultivating wisdom and focuses on the individual`s inner condition enabling skill acquisition and skill refinement in relation to this. The quality of this subjective inner condition is an expression of the individual`s level of “knowing-how” which is related to the level of wisdom-related knowledge and performance. Its quality also governs the learning going on in parallel.

The other main categories of criticism and social interaction appear to establish a frame for the model in the background. They reveal themselves as external but with indirect and supportive influence on the internal operation illustrated in the model above. Criticism’s subcategories assertiveness and rejection illustrate the adolescents’ embeddedness in a thought pattern (a frame

of reference) they are held by. The critical perspective is in relation to the stages in the evolution of wise acting in the model as it stimulates the adolescents' abstract and reflective thinking. The social interaction's relation to the interior process in the model is the creation of the interpersonal dynamic conditions that enable the accomplishment of the internal operation.

Abstraction

The first step of the model is abstraction. The development of abstract thinking is part of the formal operational stage (Piaget, 1954). The formal operational stage begins approximately at an age of eleven and lasts into adulthood. Being in their late adolescence the participating students are therefore supposed to already have developed the ability for abstraction which implies a capacity to make use of concepts, draw logical conclusions from what is observed, understand generalizations and make distinctions. Assuming that all of the interviewed adolescents have successfully gained mastery over the development of abstract thinking, it seems to be mirrored in the way they related to the interview dialogue.

Clear distinctions were made when framing and re-framing impressions of how exercises and certain activities were perceived. Learning how to frame well is conducive to becoming wise, and implies a capacity that enables the human to recognize and discern what is important when having to face decisions (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010).

The students' selective perception of the differences in attending Glück in comparison to attending other traditional school subjects showed the ability for abstract thought. One of them said "The other school subjects are exclusively about the particular subject matter and which grade you get in the exam, while in Glück it is about how you engage and how you act in relation to others." Several exercises and activities purposes, their significance and relevance according to appropriate timing for their implementation were mentioned and inquired for their meaning in the context of the classroom. The ability to contextualize and reason logically was part of the process to actually understand what concept was behind the exercises and let their narrative shape their meaning making. Sternberg (2001) states that the fundamental idea behind bringing the cultivation of wisdom into the classroom is that teaching is not about telling the students *what* to think, but rather teach them *how* to think. Constructing learning in a wisdom-based approach to teaching, considering their own and other's points of view is essential in order to actively promote learning and a balanced understanding instead of egocentrism (Sternberg et al., 2011).

In relation to the model, the students´ capability for abstract thought was expressed in the way they reasoned logically and generalized the outcome by looking at it as beneficial for situations in the future. Their age-appropriate natural intellectual demand for generalization, logical thought and abstract conceptualization was stimulated by the critical standpoint they had towards the accomplishment of Glück. Being exposed to the curriculum and relating to the feelings coming up seemed to help them conceptualize new learnings through processes of interpretation and meaning making (Mezirow, 1990).

Understanding the concepts and making generalizations of the exercises' outcomes and purposes would contribute to their understanding of what they actually learned when doing the exercises. The ability to conceptualize, generalize and reason logically is a presupposition for

framing and re-framing experiences and feelings, understanding them, widening the consciousness horizon in order to be able to act wisely. The learnings the adolescents get from generalizing wisdom-related experiences will benefit their ability to develop a coherent view on their life according to the role these experiences have in a bigger picture or life context. (Richardson, & Pasupathi, 2005).

Critical reflection requires the ability to make abstractions. Abstract thought appears to introduce self-inquiry and be the bridge to critical reflection in order to make sense of experiences, make them objects of reflection and make the learning tangible that way. Here the journey to wisdom might begin when the seed for wisdom gets nurtured.

Reflection

There seems to be a smooth transition from abstraction to the second step, reflection. The interference of the critical-reflective thought was stimulated through the adolescents' ability to abstract, make distinctions, generalize and conceptualize their experiences. Generalizing and reflecting upon experiences in class, in the reflection paper homework or the interviews, the gathered data could be arranged and re- arranged as an internal process in order to make interpretations (Mezirow, 1990) and judgments which can lead to general shifts from negative to positive outcomes (Pasupathi, et al., 2001).

While some of the students had a critical to neutral attitude to Glück in the start of the interviews, deeper questioning made them go from a factual description of Glück into personal stories and how they act or re-act in their everyday lives. Their attitude changed to being more adaptive or neutral-accepting towards the curriculum and they did actually name concrete changes of behavior.

Generalizing the experience and making intense reflection about it seemed to have touched the students' ability to take a meta-perspective, recognize the possibility of certain different viewpoints and the ability to re-consider assumptions by taking them as an object of reflection. Especially for one of the students in the second group, this process might have been triggered by recognizing a tacit underlying pattern that ran him and made him create assumptions. Embeddedness in one's own subjective perspective (Kegan, 1994) would exclude an objective view that often is related to the development of self-awareness (Jordan, 2002). Recognizing a variety of different points of view and then developing a holistic and ecological awareness is typical for wise persons (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1990).

Through reframing the judgments about the curriculum the student's initial rejection was put into more workable terms. The student "relocated" himself on another level towards it and became more agile in his way to look at the class and its impact on him as soon as he suspended his former assumption about the curriculum. It resulted in gaining more awareness of a holistic picture and interconnections which contributed to the student no longer being had by his initial averseness.

When telling and retelling different kinds of incidents or experiences from their lives outside school and what kind of meaning this left in relation to their everyday consciousness they seem to

have developed an ability to reframe unclarified experiences. This way of reframing these unclear situations might transform this person when allowing them to step into a space of self-inquiry. Part of their reflection was putting new insights into more workable terms and generating conceptualizations of the outcomes. This process of deep self-inquiry included the recognition and integration of new knowledge.

Being critical and reflective seems to include taking action, being explicit and making choices on behalf of oneself. Hooks (2010) claims that "this insistence on self-responsibility is vital practical wisdom. The vital link between critical thinking and practical wisdom is the insistence on the interdependent nature of theory and fact coupled with the awareness that knowledge cannot be separated from experience" (p. 185). It seems that the adolescents' logical, critical thinking coupled with new insights and internalization, embodiment of learnings through lived experiences that they gained in reflections have contributed to reach a higher level of knowledge, a cultivation of tacit knowledge that is related to practical wisdom. In that case certain activities and exercises that are accomplished in the Glück curriculum and are accessible for reflection help to make the refinement of certain wisdom-related skills explicit.

The more a person reflects upon matters by taking them as an object of reflection the more complex will the view on the world and life in general become as one refines the capability to see, recognize and act on things (Kegan, 1994). This notion can be linked to a process of transition to the next step, self-awareness.

Self-Awareness

This section will focus on the deeper layers of the students´ process of developing self-awareness. Some additional connections will be interlaced as many of the components presented in this article are essential for the development of consciousness and change.

The transition from reflection to building up a higher level of awareness is smooth. The nature of critical reflection is to question the presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built (Mezirow, 1990) which resonates with being open-minded to recognizing assumptions by self-inquiring reflection. Three of the adolescents sometimes expressed an explicit unclarity about assumptions or about what drove them according to a certain matter. Svantesvoll (2011) describes passive and active modes of experience. Being subject to something and being unable to make distinctions refers to passivity. In contrast, having a conscious and clear relationship to the experience and being object to refers to the active mode. It seems that the reflection and re-reflection going on in the interviews when answering questions or telling stories sharpened the students` skills to acknowledge new learning and have insights about the outcome of Glück by making this transition from the passive to the active way of relating to their experience. Of course, these shifts are part of a longer process and require the exposure to all kinds of experiences rich in learning. The students might have been "ripe" to be scaffolded into shifting modes in the interviews.

Noticing that they were a bit "trained" to talk in public about Glück, I realized it would be necessary to try to lift their attention and focus up a bit to their actual subjective experience of the learnings they described. All of the adolescents had acknowledged at a certain point a

discrepancy between what the assumption in the start was and what they came to through the interview. This discrepancy alludes to this initial unconsciousness in the passive mode (Svantesvoll, 2011) of what was going on inside them which turned into insights after they had successfully conceptualized the experience representing the active mode. Putting this together, and from a developmental point of view, wisdom-related knowledge happens through these micro shifts in consciousness. The kind of information that is anchored as tacit knowledge is brought to awareness and made explicit. Through this shift it is available for wiser decision making.

Although there was no exuberant enthusiasm in the answers flowing into an epiphany of a ground breaking experience, there are certain signs of small developmental changes going on in them. Having these experiences of insights includes that the adolescents have developed a higher level of consciousness in relation to them by taking them as an object of reflection. Examining their assumptions revealed emerging structures of awareness that resonates with subject-object psychology.

An important aspect in their development of awareness for the others' needs and their own self-awareness was accomplishing certain exercises which resulted in the embodiment of new learnings. Physical experiences like the "Free Fall" and the "Value Hierarchy" were mentioned to contain a special component that made the learning experience tangible. When being fully engaged in group processes, collaborating towards a common understanding or goal, finding solutions together, communicating and integrating all different points of view as a part of the group process make the experience of the new learning something that can be internalized. Having been part of that process can open a space for an embodiment of new knowledge on a deeper level.

As knowledge cannot be separated from experience (Hooks, 2010; Sternberg, et al., 2011) it gives these practical key experiences in such processes a strong space in order to gain more practical wisdom when successfully, or not that successfully, interacting with others. Such learning experiences are often dependent on a holding environment. The holding environment of the container enables the individual to build up certain capacities as for example gain awareness, open up, take action and learn from each other. This way the container provides a possibility to immerse into deeper layers in inter – and intrapersonal relationships that can help to foster wisdom-related knowledge and action. Making experiences with others that creates this kind of knowledge in oneself or others is related to wisdom and requires the expertise to understand situations in an insightful and wise manner (Sternberg, 2003).

The Inner Conditions and Processes that Facilitate Wise Acting

It is my belief that proceeding thoroughly through the steps of the model – abstraction, reflection, self-awareness – will at some point lead the individual to an ability for wise acting. These internal processes, which are necessary to start this journey, constitute the inner condition of the adolescent. The quality of this subjective inner condition is an expression of their "knowing-how", and it is facilitating the move from the passive to the active mode of learning (Svantesvoll, 2011) which comes along with the subject-object shift (Kegan, 1982; 1994). It also governs the learning going on in the parallel mode mentioned earlier. Glück tries to foster the

inner conditions and promote the individuals´ shift of their current capacities which gives them more conscious choices, and can contribute to wise acting.

The rise of self-awareness will encompass an additional process in a parallel mode because the newly gained and higher degree of openness enables the appreciation of others' sphere of perception as well (Hart, 2009). As the adolescent gains new awareness progressing through each succeeding stage in the model, a space for new insights and learnings opens up. When being able to free oneself from the contents of awareness, the development of meta-awareness (which is an awareness of awareness) can emerge (Jordan, 2002).

The culmination of this model, which illustrates the adolescents' ability for wise acting, is conditional upon all of the previous stages in the model. Through reflection on the data it appears that a successful mastery of all the previous stages seems to be essential for the increase of the adolescent`s ability to enter a higher level of wisdom-related knowledge and performance.

The model makes an attempt to depict the adolescents` interior process as a part of this development. Adolescence and young adulthood are sensitive and turbulent life stages with many changes and challenges regarding personal development and societal demands. Relating to, navigating and mastering these changes and challenges functions as a platform for the individual to make, balance and evaluate key experiences which is critical for the cultivation of wisdom.

Discussion

In this article I have argued that the development of wisdom-related knowledge can be a parallel process to the development of happiness. Both, becoming happier and wiser are dependent on certain circumstances that initiate developmental growth processes. One of the findings in this small research project was that some of the students` narratives revealed that a certain degree of uncertainty about their acting or being in the world was more in play than for other students whose narratives referred to more difficult life circumstances or an exposure to a broader range of experiences.

Analyzing the data showed that turning inwardly in processes of reflection, generalization, and the development of self-awareness in that young age supports the development of understanding lived key experiences in a larger life context. It also clarified that the exposure to the Glück curriculum helped them listen to, refine and use tacit knowledge, and make it more explicit. Operating upon experiences and internal processes demands certain skills such as critical-reflective thinking but an ability to orchestrate these, allowing for a certain shift in the young person`s mindset to happen. As well, a safe container assuring a holding environment is also necessary. Thus, the cultivation of wisdom in adolescence requires the consideration of age-appropriate wisdom-related learning and the appropriate conditions of support.

Glück has apparently triggered something in the students that goes beyond the accomplishment of rapid information learning techniques that are often emphasized in modern society. A broader body of knowledge and a growing awareness about their own inner condition that promoted change in them made some important learning tangible enough for a closer inquiry. What I hypothesize is that reflection and generalization of the impression of the key experiences

facilitated their inner condition by nurturing the tacit knowledge and opened for the acquisition of age appropriate wisdom-related skills.

The model helps understand the development of age appropriate wisdom-related skills considering the interviewees` developmental stage, their life phase, and personal features. Proceeding through the stages facilitates vertical development, the kind of learning that relates to how to think differently, see the world through a new lens, and transform the architecture of the current way of knowing. This developmental step resonates with subject-object-psychology and proposes in this research study the adolescents` renunciation from their ego-centric perspective to a broader, more open perspective. They show signs of making tacit knowledge more explicit, gaining a finer grained perception of who they are, and how they show up in the world.

Understanding the development of age appropriate wisdom through this model requires to look at the internal processes that constitute and balance the individual`s inner condition. The quality of these internal processes and inner condition is an expression for the quality of their vertical development.

This perspective on wisdom parallels other views like developmental theory. Wisdom-related thought appears to be intertwined with the capacities Kegan proposes to be necessary to cope with the mental demands of transitioning from adolescence to adulthood. To sum up, it is likely that people of that young age have not had as many possibilities to make generalizations from all sorts of lived experiences as older people might have. Developmental theorists might claim that a certain age and a certain developmental stage is a presupposition for acting wise but adolescence is a period that should not be underestimated. There are currents in adolescence (usually represented in Kegan`s second and third stage of development) that advocate for a strong standpoint in this assertion. Looking back on Antonovsky`s theory of Sense of Coherence, adolescence is the life phase in which the SOC is characterized by openness for changes before it in adulthood tends to consolidate and become steady (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987).

This research study showed evidence that the multidimensional approach of the curriculum and holding environment can facilitate the cultivation of wisdom. It nurtures the naturally given developmental features and tasks of this life phase. Its multidimensional approach supports the individuals' process of developing and cultivating wisdom. The students` age appropriate and natural intellectual demand for logical and critical-analytical thought, abstract conceptualization, discernment and discrimination, generalization and individuation facilitate the way the conditions that enable developmental growth that leads to wise acting. In order to orchestrate these arising demands and abilities and allowing for the refinement of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, the cultivation of wisdom requires an age appropriate wisdom-related learning.

The students who had initially expressed a critical view towards Glück had been subject to this emotion and were to a degree identified with it in the start. The reflection upon the positive key experiences and outcomes triggered some distinction making in them so that their attitude eventually shifted to be more neutral and even positive towards the curriculum. Revising and making a new interpretation of experiences` meaning (Mezirow, 1990) will create learning, unravel and transform the prior way of knowing and move towards deeper understanding, wisdom, and more effectiveness in the world (Cook-Greuter, 2004).

The learning that went on in parallel in them is part of their unconscious learning processes. The cultivation of knowledge is a dynamic activity where the articulation of tacit knowledge makes it more explicit to the learner. This means that the new knowledge is crystallized and more tangible to put in a context or in action. In order to internalize new knowledge it has to be embodied and owned.

Inquiring into how Glück could be accelerating the cultivation of wisdom as distinct from normative stage – and age-related development, requires zooming back out on the curriculum`s holistic nature, scaffolding and its roots. Informed by Positive Psychology and the multi-disciplinary approach to learning it meets the deep inner longing for emotions that are attuned to being positive and becoming oneself as the core to leading a happy life. Actively experiencing one's own learning and growth curve initiates a sense of self-worth and confidence in meeting the world´s challenges. It conveys the feeling of being the author of one`s own biography.

The Glück curriculum does not use the term "wisdom" explicitly in its make up, but emphasizes happiness. The hypothesis for this article is that providing students with a formal educational context where they can learn to formulate their own perspective on what constitutes positive emotions will also show parallels to an equivalent process in wise thinking. The scaffolding provided by the teacher can help the students to develop wisdom, but there is no formal course of actions or "to do list" (Sternberg, Jarvin, & Reznitskaya, 2008). The scaffolding can in these ways initiate and support this learning curve while the student´s process is to go through stages that define the own new perspectives. Constructivist agendas highlight scaffolding as relevant to the acquisition of wisdom (Palincsar & Brown, 1984, 1988). Going through the curriculum can give the students tools which can give them a better foundation for wise acting later in life. Putting these considerations from above together, it can be seen that the concept of Bildung expands and includes more aspects of the whole person rather than excluding them.

Contemplating on how a school subject like Glück might have helped me in my teenage years, I believe that it would have had a very positive impact on my perspective on life and my own being in the world. Of course, all this is hypothetical, but I believe I would have learned to be less inclined to my self-limiting beliefs, be more detached (from social pressure), feel less socially awkward, less shy, more pro-active, less prone to negative biases caused by my low self-esteem, and I guess I would have been more serene to engage the world with less anxiety to not perform well enough. The list is long, as I struggled with the whole range of things a teenager can struggle with. I tend to be sure that I would have built skills much earlier to grow detached from these issues and assumptions. I would have been more self-aware. I guess I might have acted wiser sometimes. I was not a bad student but honestly, I tend to remember the not so good experiences from school. I see clearer now how much of a difference the emphasis on positive emotions and positive key experiences in the safe container of a classroom can make. In hindsight I think that school would not have been such a deterrent to what I would consider now as relevant learning. Learning for life would have been such a different and more appealing approach than learning for the next exam!

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Much Madness is Divinest Sense: Wisdom and Development

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Abstract: No one has yet come up with a complete understanding of wisdom. We can approximate it, we can circle it, we can gaze at it longingly, we can try to seize it with both hands. In my attempt to understand wisdom, I look at it through several different lenses – recent research into measures of wisdom, the discoveries of neuroscience, integral theory, post-conventional development, how wisdom operates in daily life, and my own findings. They include my four-part model and my assertion that wisdom lies on a continuum from rare and rarefied to humble and pragmatic. Finally, I discuss how individuals can enhance their own wisdom and encourage it in others.
Wisdom is large; it contains multitudes.

Keywords: Adult development, brain research, knowledge, practical, useful, wisdom, wise.

Life by Emily Dickinson

MUCH madness is divinest sense
To a discerning eye;
Much sense the starkest madness.
'Tis the majority
In this, as all, prevails.
Assent, and you are sane;
Demur, – you 're straightway dangerous,
And handled with a chain.

Emily Dickinson tells us a lot about wisdom in this short poem, although it is entitled *Life.* To those with a discerning eye, those who can see more deeply into the mystery of things and into the patterns that lie therein, those people see something that makes sense where others behold only randomness and chaos. However, in most cases in our world, the view of the majority prevails, and those with discerning eyes can be considered not to be trusted – not promoted, not voted for, not accepted in the conventional world.

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How often have we seen those with keener sight shunned by society, if not killed? I am thinking, of course, of Jesus and Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. But not all. Some are accorded the greatest respect, such as the Buddha who lived to a ripe old age. Eleanor Roosevelt with her compassion and action for the disadvantaged died in her later years, and Nelson Mandela lived into his 90's. The Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1991, Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, continues her work to lead her country towards democracy.

I give examples above of those we perceive as model and exceptional human beings. Yet in my view, wisdom is not limited to people like them. Wisdom is a real thing for real people, people like you and me, although the scope and impact of our wisdom likely will not be as broad and deep as theirs.

Some years ago I began to wonder about wisdom, what it is, and how we can know it. How can we understand wisdom? But then, after reflection, I realized that understanding wisdom requires a broad brush approach – one cannot know it by one method only. Hence, I changed the question to this: "How can we see wisdom?" deliberately using the verb "to see" as more inclusive than understanding, which is a primarily cognitive activity. In order to see wisdom in its complexity and subtlety, we need a more comprehensive approach.

Hence, I devised a taxonomy of three basic approaches to seeing wisdom (Bassett, 2006, p. 283). They include what I called then the *metaphysical* side (non-empirical reality) that comprises philosophy and theology/religious studies. On the *word arts* side we have myths and folk sayings, the literary arts, and biography. Finally, on the *analytical* side, we find conceptual/theoretical/descriptive approaches as well as empirical ones (though the two are related), which include practical knowledge/expertise, developmental, and personal attributes of wisdom. Thus, we can find wisdom in philosophy and religion; in myths, novels, poetry, other arts; and we can try to understand it more directly using analytical techniques.

Since that publication, however, I have re-conceptualized the taxonomy and changed it in a major way – into a spectrum where we see wisdom but with different colors, so to speak. On one end (the ultraviolet, to continue with the metaphor) we have descriptions of wisdom or words about it, such as philosophy, myth, and inspiration from the religions of the world. We would also find biographies of people considered wise, as well as the analytical approach, that is, conceptual, theoretical, or research-based studies of wisdom. At the other end, the infrared, we find direct experience of wisdom through, for example, the arts. I am thinking of Emily Dickinson's poem above and much of the wisdom (and folly) that we find in great literature. This direct apperception is not limited, however, to the literary arts. Wisdom can be found in music, in the visual arts (take a look at Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* where Sophia, the original goddess of wisdom, appears under God's left arm – she is the closest being to him), and other media, as well as in observing wisdom in the actions of people near or far. One source of finding such people would be in the lives of some Nobel Peace Prize winners and other historical figures for whom there is some consensus of wisdom. I believe that we should notice and pay attention to specific people to see how they actually manifest wisdom. Few researchers do this.

Thus, how we see wisdom depends upon which wave lengths our eyes pick up and what we are attuned to – is it religious texts, research studies, Shakespeare, or actual people who seem

wise? Different people will see different parts of the spectrum while other parts of it will remain opaque or invisible to them.

In this article, I will be focusing on the analytical approach, although the quote above by Emily Dickinson captures what wisdom looks like better than any definition I know. It gives us the flavor of it, the taste of it, the zing of it, what we experience when we encounter wisdom – and also the threat of it to the status quo (think of Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr.). We should not forget this aspect of wisdom.

To be able to focus better, we will look at wisdom through several different lenses. I begin with the lens of definitions of wisdom and the Emergent Wisdom Model which expands upon my definition. Next we look at some ways of measuring wisdom and the findings of neuroscience and the brain, then move on to integral theory and post-conventional development. We will also explore everyday wisdom as well as wisdom seen through my own lens, that is, what I have learned about it in my years of studying it.

Wisdom through the Lens of Some Definitions of Wisdom and a Model of Wisdom

Wisdom, such a complex, abstract, and elusive construct! So many definitions for it, so many more ideas about it, so many associations with it – aphorisms, sayings, words/concepts that seem to exemplify wisdom. They sound good, so they must be true. Here are some:

> "The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing."
> Socrates, *Apology*

> "Zi Gong [a disciple] asked: 'Is there any one word that could guide a person throughout life?' The Master replied: 'How about "reciprocity"'! Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself."
> Confucius, *Analects* XV.24, tr. David Hinton

> "Winners never quit and quitters never win."
> Vince Lombardi (Lombardi, 2002)

> "Awe of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."
> *Proverbs, 1:7*

But let's turn to scholars who study wisdom and who try to capture its allure and power in a sentence or two. Founded by the late Paul Baltes, the Berlin School, as it is known, is an organization with a well-known and robust research agenda for wisdom. These researchers use this definition, orienting towards wisdom as expert knowledge: "expert knowledge in the fundamental pragmatics of life permitting exceptional insight, judgment, and advice involving complex and uncertain matters of the human condition" (Baltes & Staudinger, 1993, p. 76). (What I find missing in this definition is reference to what most consider a key aspect of wisdom which is mention of the common good, that is, good results not only for self but also for others).

Robert Sternberg's complicated definition is quite inclusive: "Wisdom is defined as the application of intelligence, creativity, and knowledge as mediated by values toward the achievement of a common good through a *balance* among (a) intrapersonal, b) interpersonal, and (c) extrapersonal interests, over the (a) short- and (b) long-terms, in order to achieve a balance among (a) adaptation to existing environments, (b) shaping of existing environments, and (c) selection of new environments" (2007, p. 145). Thus, here we find wisdom as the application, the use of, not only intelligence and knowledge but also creativity to find a balance among these many elements: inside oneself (the intrapersonal), with others (interpersonal: people one knows, community, workplace), and in society at large including institutions, country, God (extrapersonal). It is important to note that, as he says, they are *mediated by values*, that is, by what is considered important and ethical. And, wisdom looks at both the short-term and the long-term so that a person can adapt if that is the best route to take and/or change the existing environment and/or choose a different environment if the existing one does not work/will not change. And it is all to move towards a common good.

A third major wisdom researcher, Monika Ardelt, has contributed her three-dimensional wisdom scale built from her definition of wisdom. (In the section on measures of wisdom I will discuss her three dimensional wisdom scale). For now, we can say that her definition includes three elements: the cognitive, the affective, and the reflective (Ardelt, 2003). Of these, the last, the reflective, is the most fundamental component as it informs the others because it encourages cognitive development through the ability to take multiple perspectives – to see things from different points of view. Further, through reflection, wiser people have learned how not to be so reactive in unpleasant situations, to accept the reality of the present moment, and to cope better (Ardelt, 2003). (Like the Berlin School's definition, this one lacks reference to a common good).

Walsh (2011) takes a different perspective, examining contemplative, cross-cultural, and integral contributions to concepts of wisdom. He distinguished between practical wisdom (*phronesis)* and *sophia*, where the former represents applied wisdom and the latter subjective or intuitive. In fact, he goes on to differentiate among different kinds of subjective wisdom, what he calls intuitive apprehension and conceptual understanding. The former is the kind of wisdom that can be gained intuitively, through observation of life, by people educated or not, intellectually developed or not. The latter, however, conceptual analysis, can enrich intuitions, he says, "by examining, extending, and articulating them, drawing out implications, and linking them into networks of insights and ideas" (Walsh, 2011, p. 123).

Yet, what *is* wisdom, according to Walsh? His definition of practical wisdom goes far: "practical wisdom is a function of skill in responding to the central existential issues of life in ways that enhance the deep well-being of all those that the responses affect" (Walsh, 2011, p. 122). According to his schema, what would a person with the conceptual understanding look like? How would her behavior differ from mine or anyone else's? Walsh could enhance his good work by selecting some specific individuals who have these qualities and describing how they manifest them.

Walsh's (2011) definition of practical wisdom resembles in many ways my own which reads like this: "Wisdom is having sufficient awareness in various situations and contexts to act in ways that enhance our common humanity" (Bassett, 2011a, p. 305). As I noted above, a person

cannot be considered wise unless he or she shows repeated instances of the kind of behavior that is associated with wisdom, over time and in different kinds of circumstances. Wisdom is not a one-shot deal; once is a lucky accident. This is the first key component of the definition.

The second key component is reference to enhancing our common humanity or striving for good results not only for ourselves but for many others as well. By the phrase "common good" or "common humanity" I mean general conditions that are to everyone's advantage. Granted, this "everyone" might not be every single person but it does suggest, I believe, that someone, Person A, for example, would prefer not to be in the place of someone else, Person B. What does this signify? Let's take a look at slavery in the United States. Abolition would be better for the slaves but not for the slave-owners. However, I can bet everything I own that not one of them would willingly change places from owner to slave. The "general conditions" to everyone's advantage are those that almost every single person would prefer.

However, it is the third component that is by far the most powerful and important – the two words "sufficient awareness." "Sufficient awareness" means paying attention to what's going on around oneself. It means seeing the environment and then seeing it again from several perspectives. Sufficient awareness is what leads us into the complexity of wisdom with various elements that each interact with any and all of the others. This is best shown by the Emergent Wisdom Model (Bassett, 2006, p. 295; Bassett, 2011a, p. 305) and reproduced below. In fact, the whole model *is* what sufficient awareness looks like – all of these elements working in concert with each other.

The model is based upon a grounded theory study that I did where I interviewed 24 individuals judged thoughtful and insightful in a modified snowball method. I call it "emergent" because, while the model cannot show it, the elements are in motion. They shift and change in relationship to each other with differing elements becoming more prominent at times, then fading into the background.

Interestingly, we can also see this model like a fractal: a scale-independent self-similarity. That is, no matter how large or how small the situation being contemplated is, the elements of wisdom will be present.

What is wisdom? All of this is wisdom, all of it combined and together. Each element is necessary but not sufficient. Each of the cells relates to, interacts with, influences, and is influenced by any and all of the others. Wisdom is both non-linear *and* dynamic**.** Thus, we can take any single cell and it will relate to any and all of the others. Just because Insight, for example, is listed in the first column does not mean that it has to do only with Discernment. It is also necessary for action and for self-knowledge. Embracing paradox relates to the Integration dimension, and it also is necessary to gain a deep understanding of patterns and to take multiple perspectives on a situation. At the same time, it is important to remember that this is just a model, that is, one person's understanding of wisdom. Because wisdom is so complex, in reality there is certainly some messiness here, with categories overlapping and sliding around a bit.

Table 1. Emergent Wisdom Model © 2005 Caroline Bassett

WISDOM				
Dimension	**Discernment**	**Respect**	**Engagement**	**Integration**
Chief Descriptor	Objectivity	Due regard for the right of others to be	Involvement	Recognition of the integration of self into the whole Knowing that the self is part of many systems
Proficiency	Insight Holistic thinking, systemic seeing into complexity Balanced interests	Acceptance Multiple perspective-taking Compassion & caring/ Generosity of spirit/ non-judgmental	Sound judgment & adept decision-making Actions based on determinations of fairness & justice Moral courage	Self-knowledge Self-acceptance Reflection – opening to cognitive and non-cognitive mental spaces
Manifesta-tion	Deep understanding of fundamental patterns and relationships, causes, and consequences	Sense of gratitude/ Expanded sphere of consideration	Committed action for the common good (general conditions that are to everyone's advantage)	Embracing of paradox & uncertainty Ability to see beyond the self Growing recognition of interdependence Integrity
Developmen tal Stimulus/ Queries	What's really going on? What are the facts? What's true? What's important? What's right?	Whose point of view am I taking? How does someone else understand reality? How can I relate to them with magnanimity?	What guides my actions? To what ends are my actions directed? What means do I use? What are the consequences of different decisions?	What are my values? How do I live them? Who or what is the "I" that I think I am? What am I part of? How can I get outside of myself so I can see more clearly?
WISDOM				

While I present my model as a chart, as stated previously, wisdom really is non-linear and three-dimensional. That is, each and every cell relates to any and all of the others. So, for example, holistic thinking and systems seeing into complexity in the first column informs and is informed by compassion and caring in the second. I can see a system more completely if I include not just the objective facts but also the emotions that are present in a situation. I can make sounder judgments (in column three) if I see things more in the round, more completely. And if I know that everything is related to everything else (the recognition of interdependence in column four), then my seeing will be even more complex – and hopefully more comprehensive –

leading to better decisions for action (if deemed necessary), which is what wisdom is about. Thus, a better way of regarding the model as shown in the table is as a spiral. Increasing integration, that is, recognition that the self is part of a much larger whole (a background-foreground shift of the ego with regards the rest of the world) allows for sharper discernment because one can see more clearly as there is less ego and fewer projections in the way. That in turn allows for a broadening of what one considers worth paying attention to. And then that creates a basis for appropriate engagement.

The model as shown in Figure 1 shows that wisdom is all of a whole, is one thing – but with different dimensions that we distinguish for the sake of understanding it better. This conceptualization shows the dynamic quality of wisdom, its continuous flow with each part connecting to the others. However, I do not speak quite accurately here, because wisdom does not have discrete parts that are separate and distinct from each other. When we talk about it and draw models of it, it looks as if it does. Instead, wisdom has variables, some more salient or important at one time than another. That's because wisdom is alive; it moves.

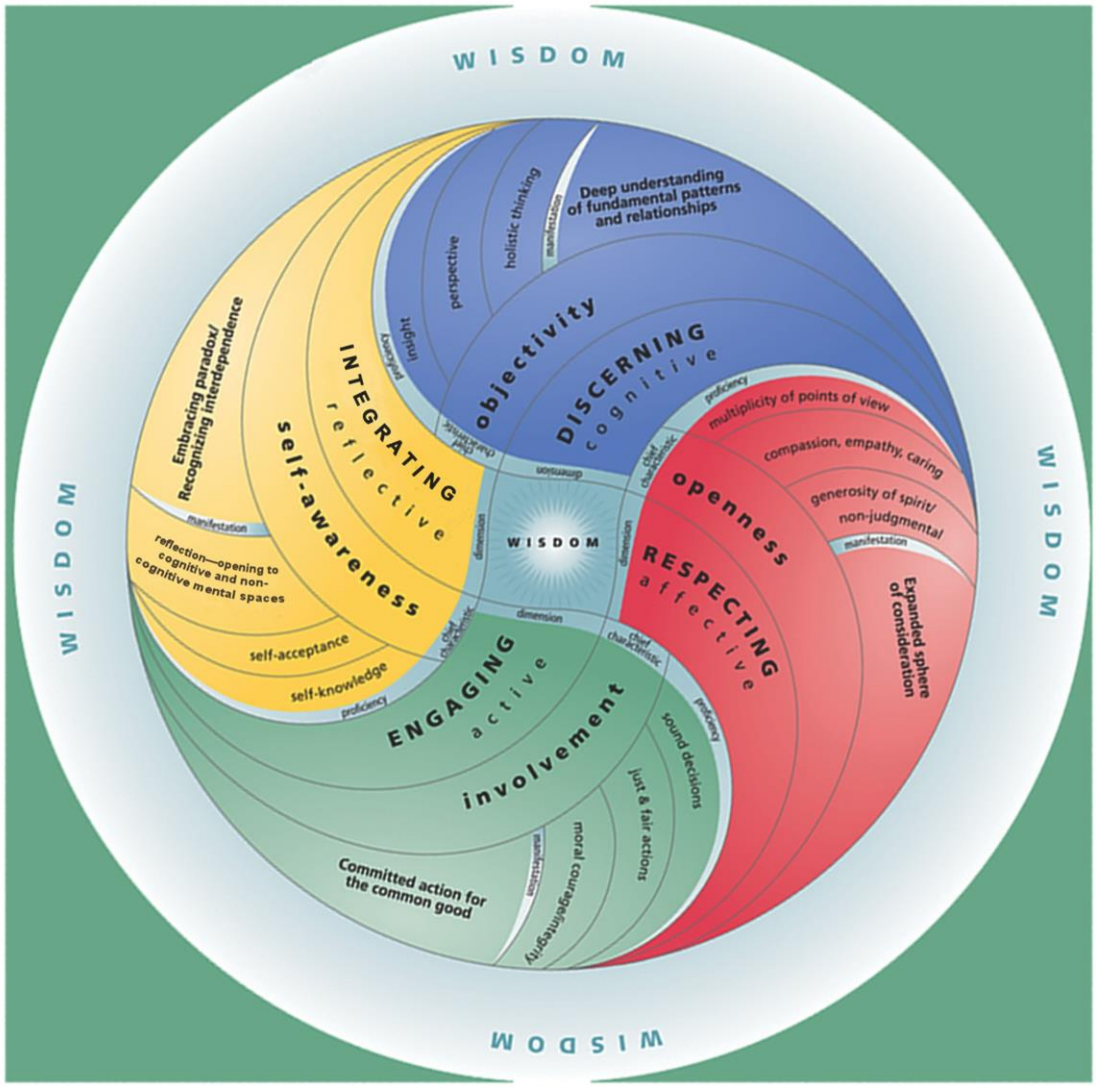

Figure 1. Emergent Wisdom Model © 2005 Caroline Bassett

Discernment is the dimension where one is detached and sees as objectively as possible what is going on, not according to what one would like the truth to be, but what is "really" there, as best one can tell. A caveat here: When I say, "to see as objectively as possible," I can run into a deconstructionist attitude, where we never know what is real or true because our own perspectives and assumptions color what we see, no matter how hard we try not to let them – or no matter how hard we deny them. I certainly can recognize and agree with this deconstructionist claim about objectivity. However, as I am talking about practical wisdom that real people can use, I need to speak a language that most will understand. Hence, I maintain my assertion that we can look at a situation *as objectively as possible*. To help people do this, myself included, I suggest this exercise: whenever a situation arises and you think you understand it, think this in the next second: *This is a story that I am telling myself*. This is how I see the situation. Other people may well see it quite differently. Here is an example from a friend of mine: "I was standing in a street in Fort Bragg, California, headed to my car, when, all of a sudden, I heard a child screaming bloody murder, 'No!! No!! No!!' I turned around and looked, and here was a little boy, at most 4 or 5, trying to escape from a woman who was dragging him toward a truck parked near my car. What did I think? Two immediate thoughts – was he being kidnapped, likely by a 'non-custodial parent'? Was this a truly terrible parent? What to do? Well, within a minute, along came another woman, likely the grandmother. Child is still shrieking and kicking. The new arrival says to me, 'Oh, my – he's having a meltdown. He's autistic.' That thought had not occurred to me at all. I'd only seen an autistic child 'in motion' once before; it wasn't a possibility in my frame of reference" (Thorpe, 2009).

Returning to the model, *Respect* must be added, because, as a State Supreme Court Justice that I interviewed said, "You have to care. You have to care about people. You can't just see clearly what's going on – you have to care." This, then, is the dimension where we give due regard for the right of others to be. Here we find heart, compassion, generosity of spirit. We also find another heart quality, gratitude, which represents a deep spiritual connection to the whole world and a sense of appreciation for all that is.

This dimension can manifest as what Wilber calls an expanded sphere of consideration or a more world-centric perspective (Wilber, 2006). As my heart grows larger, I consider the well-being of more and more people – not just my family or my relatives or my kind, but also increasing spheres that include people not like me and even the creatures of the earth. I can do this partly by taking the perspective or point of view of other people – what does the situation look like from their side of the street? Thus, I will have achieved a more complete view of the situation – and I will, perhaps, have stepped aside from my own subjectivity and assumptions – so that I can act in ways that enhance our common humanity.

Yet, seeing clearly and caring is not enough either. You have to act, which does not necessarily mean running for public office. It can mean writing letters to the editor or talking to others about what you see and know. Finally, the *Integration* dimension brings us inside ourselves – it is the center of our self and of our values. Its chief descriptor is recognition that the self is part of a much larger whole. A main proficiency is "Integrity," which means that your outside (your behaviors) and your inside (your professed beliefs) match up pretty well. I say "pretty well" because no one is totally consistent.

In this dimension, we must know ourselves *and* we must accept ourselves. These are sometimes, alas, quite different. Further, this is where we can transform and grow in cognitive complexity, where we can move into higher stages of development (Walsh, 2011). As we become more objective in our perceptions, as we also expand our sphere of consideration, as we make good decisions, we can become more and more able to see beyond our own narrow self-interest and transcend our projections, moving beyond "individualistic concerns to more collective or universal ones" (Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990, p. 162). We can become wiser because we have done the work on ourselves and gained a certain amount of cognitive maturity.

This is all fine and good – and pretty abstract. Can we pin wisdom down a bit? Can wisdom, no matter the definition, be measured? Is this something that is possible to do? Some of the researchers discussed above have developed their own measures of wisdom, which are presented in the next section.

Seeing Wisdom through the Lens of Measures of Wisdom

A recent article by psychologists Glück, König, Naschenweng, Redzanowski, Dorner, Strasser, and Wiedemann (2013) provides an excellent overview of four measures of wisdom. Recognizing that interest in the study of wisdom is growing both inside and outside of psychology, the authors state that the concept of wisdom is being applied in a number of fields besides psychology and psychotherapy, such as leadership (Kilburg, 2012) and education (Sternberg, 2010), to which I add my own work (Bassett, 2011a). Which measure to use for which field of endeavor may be the question.

These authors present two ways of grouping measures of wisdom. In the first group we find self-report measures (Ardelt's Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale (3D-WS), 2003; Webster's Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS), 2003; and Levenson and colleagues' Adult Self-Transcendence Inventory (ASTI), 2005). In the second group are performance-based measures (the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm, (Baltes and Staudinger), 2000). In the self-reporting scales, individuals respond as they believe that they behave. In the other, participants give responses to wisdom-requiring problems.

Altogether, these scales measure both distinct and overlapping dimensions of wisdom, depending upon the author's definition of wisdom. It is interesting to take a look at these dimensions from four of the measures, which I am deriving from Glück and colleagues' (2013, p. 4) article. From Webster's SAWS we find *openness* to alternate views and explanations, *emotional regulation* ("an exquisite sensitivity to the gross distinctions, subtle nuances, and complex blends of the full range of human affect" (Webster, 2007, p. 166)), *humor*, *critical life experience* (life experiences that are ambiguous and have unknown outcomes), and *reminiscence and reflection* (reflecting on past and present experiences to help deal with future difficulties).

Ardelt in her 3D-WS includes three major components of wisdom: a reflective dimension that is necessary to the development of the other two, which are cognitive (competence to think deeply) and affective (compassion for others' difficulties). Unlike the others, the ASTI scale, which focuses on self-transcendence (and might be of interest to those with a background in integral studies) is partly based upon European and Asian wisdom literatures, from which four

general principles of wisdom derive: self-knowledge, detachment, integration, and self-transcendence. In what sounds like Buddhist language to me, self-knowledge refers to knowing the sources of one's sense of self; detachment directs our attention to the transience of things; integration means accepting all parts of one's self; and self-transcendence means "independence from external self-definitions and the dissolution of rigid boundaries between the self and others" (Glück et al, 2013, p. 5).

As another way of typing wisdom measures, the authors (Glück et al, 2013) distinguish between *personal wisdom* and *general wisdom*. Personal wisdom derives from personal experiences and insights from a person's own life; general wisdom is concerned with human life in general and is not necessarily related to personal wisdom. As examples, I would assume that in the first group we would find wise grandmothers, in the latter, people who have gained knowledge about life in general from reading. To me, however, I cannot think of an example of a person who has gained general wisdom third-hand without at least some engagement in the world. Abraham Lincoln, I would assert, had general wisdom in his insistence that the union hold, but where that knowledge came from, besides both personal observation and interactions as well as, perhaps reading, I do not know. The authors also add what they call *other-related wisdom* which can be translated as compassion, or as they put it, "empathy-based concern for both concrete other people and humankind at large" (Glück et al, p. 5). As compassion matures, it becomes what Wilber calls expanding realms of consideration (2006).

Regarding the relationship to age, the authors (Glück et al, 2013) found that wisdom does not generally increase with age (Glück and Bluck, 2011). However, most researchers expect that most demonstrations of wisdom will not come until people are generally in their 60's.

In summary, the authors (Glück et al, 2013) conclude that different kinds of instruments measure different aspects of wisdom. A person might choose one for one kind of activity or research purpose, another for a different one. All of these studies come from the social sciences. A different kind of research is also being done on wisdom and the brain.

Seeing Wisdom through the Lens of Neuroscience

Because of the overlap in assumptions with regards to what wisdom is and how it differs from intelligence and spirituality, a group of neuroscientists, psychiatrists, and wisdom researchers designed an expert consensus, two-phase Delphi study to do just that (Jeste, D. V., Ardelt, M., Blazer, D., Kraemer, H. C., Vaillant, G., & Meeks, T. W. (2010).

The authors contacted 57 international wisdom experts (of whom this writer was one) with a Delphi instrument. Phase 2 resulted in significant agreement on nine of the 12 main characteristics of wisdom. The authors say,

> …wisdom is a uniquely human but rare personal quality, which can be learned and measured, and increases with age through advanced cognitive and emotional development that is experience driven. At the same time, wisdom is not expected to increase by taking medication. (2010, p. 678)

The consensus found a slight overlap between wisdom and intelligence, with most, if not all researchers, agreeing that a basic level of intelligence is necessary. But, more than intelligence itself, the critical element of wisdom is the desire for learning and in-depth knowledge. Does this concept fit with the three types of wisdom that Glück and colleagues (2013) in the section above distinguish among (personal, general, and other-related wisdom)? It seems to me that it would fit with personal wisdom because an individual needs some level of intelligence, whether educated or even literate or not) and perhaps with general wisdom relates to human life in general. Again, it seems to me that illiterate shamans who are considered wise might have to have some knowledge of human life in general through their observations of life and human interactions around them.

As for the connection between wisdom and spirituality (the former often subsumed under the other in New Age thinking and in those sections of a bookstore), the authors (Jeste et. al, 2010) found that the two share pro-social attitudes such as compassion and other-centeredness. But, religion and religious practices are unrelated to wisdom, which suggests that wisdom does not require religious faith. At the same time, it seems that the respondents did not separate out religion from a broader sense of spirituality. The experts did agree that resilience and successful coping strategies were significantly more important components of wisdom than either intelligence or spirituality.

In a study of the neurobiology of wisdom, psychiatrists Meeks & Jeste (2009) used six of the sub-components of wisdom that researchers had identified: "pro-social attitudes / behaviors, … social decision-making/pragmatic knowledge of life, … emotional homeostasis, … reflection / self-understanding, … value relativism/tolerance, … and acknowledgment of and dealing with uncertainty/ambiguity" (p. 356). The authors focused on the possible anatomical locations of these components in the brain determined through neuroimaging (p. 357) which showed how specific brain regions may interact to contribute to the performance of these subcomponents of wisdom. They summarized their findings by noting the "interplay and balance between older brain regions (e.g., limbic cortex) and the more recently evolved PRC (prefrontal cortex) in the putative neurobiology of wisdom" (p. 362). Also, they found that several characteristics associated with wisdom, such as the use of knowledge for the common good and the integration of affect and knowledge, show up in different parts of the brain from those used for intelligence and reasoning.

Having looked at analytical approaches to the study of wisdom, including different definitions of wisdom and measures of it as well as what brain scientists have to say about the subject, we wonder what other lenses can tell us. What would a focus on integral theory and post-conventional development show us about wisdom?

Wisdom through the Lens of Integral Theory

I cannot begin to synthesize the complexity of integral theory except to point out some of its most salient and useful features and refer people to Roger Walsh's (2011) excellent article that explains it far better than I can. Most useful, perhaps, is the domains of reality (the four quadrants) and concepts of levels and lines of development. In *Integral Spirituality* Wilber (2006) presents the clearest and most complete discussion of his theories.

In the idea of the four quadrants – the interior I and We and the exterior It and Its, each on an individual and a collective level – yields a 2x2 table (see Walsh, 2011, p. 112). Walsh says that "understanding any phenomenon adequately requires investigating all of its four quadrants, and using methods appropriate to each quadrant" (p. 112). Further, he suggests that wisdom can be found in all four quadrants: in individuals as insight, in collectives in the cultural ethos (the interior half), and in the exterior side, in social constructions that embody individual and collective wisdom, such as legal and educational systems as well as contemplative institutions.

In terms of development, many psychologists describe people as maturing from pre-conventional to conventional to post-conventional levels. (See the following section on post-formal thought for a discussion on this topic.) In terms of integral theory, Wilber postulates post-post-conventional levels or transpersonal ones, as Walsh (2011) calls them.

Another useful concept is the one of developmental lines. It seems to me patently obvious that these exist – one has only to look around to see people who are extremely intelligent but morally stunted, who are exceptionally mature but seem not to have an esthetic bone in their bodies, and so on. (This reminds me of Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences where people present with different abilities. Intelligence can no longer be considered as logical-mathematical and verbal aptitudes only. Other intelligences include kinesthetic, spatial, and musical, for example (Gardner, 1993/2004)). Wilber (2006) suggests many lines: cognitive, moral, emotional, interpersonal, self-identity, esthetic, psychosexual, spiritual, and values (pp. 23-24). Perhaps there is also a wisdom line of development. To explore this idea further, in the next section we will continue our examination of a related aspect of integral studies, that is, post-conventional development.

Wisdom through the Lens of Post-Conventional Development

Like the phrase "post-modern," "post-conventional" or "post-formal" tells us what it comes after, but not what it itself is. Perhaps it means exceptional maturity or uncommonly well-developed cognitive complexity or perspicacious post-formal thinking (or logic). Indeed, there is no common language to express a qualitative difference in thinking about self and world. Nevertheless, I want to take a little time to discuss the movement from conventional to post-conventional thought because it can provide insights into where we can find wisdom, how we can develop it, and how we can get into trouble with it, too. "What passes for morality or spirituality in the vast majority of people's lives is the way everybody they grew up with thinks." So says Father Richard Rohr who writes about spirituality in the two halves of life and how we can deepen our experience in the second (2011, p. 83). His statement exemplifies the conventional level of development mentioned in the section above. And, don't forget Emily Dickinson who tells us that the majority prevails and if you are deemed different, watch out!

But why is it important to turn our attention to the movement to post-conventional thinking? Why does it matter? It does matter. It matters because newly emergent capacities such as making decisions undistorted (relatively speaking) by personal agendas, suspending what is already known, and being open to new ways of seeing and understanding things, can lead to more accurate meaning-making. Or, as educator Jack Mezirow (1990) puts it,

> perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about the world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. *More inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspectives are superior perspectives* that adults choose if they can because they are motivated to better understand the meaning of their experience. (p. 14. italics in original)

Or, we can look to Kegan's (1994) orders of consciousness to help us comprehend the differences in the thought processes. The top three orders are of interest to us. In the third, which is congruent with conventional levels of development, people think what they *should* think. They believe that what they *should* feel is what they *do* feel and what they *should* value is what they *do* value. You can see that here, as Emily Dickinson says, the majority prevails. The predominant way of understanding the world and one's place in it does not just guide our thinking – it determines it. In the fourth order, however, a person becomes what Kegan calls self-authoring. That is, she determines for herself what she thinks, feels, values, even if it conflicts with or subverts prevalent ideas and standards. This is a self-determining level. She knows her own mind independent of cultural expectations or assumed truths. She sets limits and maintains boundaries, thus gaining her own sense of authority or voice. While someone at the third order could be torn apart by competing roles or expectations from external persons – for example, how to be a good worker and a good parent – at the fourth order a person has more options. This person will have a larger perspective from which to make sense of expectations, thus allowing her to independently figure out for herself what will work in this situation or context.

Here is an example. One day when I was teaching a class on Kegan's work, a student suddenly sprang up from his chair. "I get it!" he shouted. "I get it!" Then he explained to us what he meant. He worked at the post office. A recent order had been received from management for people to organize and work in teams, which he and his co-workers did, discovering that this was a good way to get their work done and even experiment with innovations. But their supervisor kept on finding fault with their work and giving them a hard time. Nothing they did was right, despite the fact that they were following top management's orders. What the student suddenly understood what that he and his co-workers were pursuing their tasks in a more independent way than they had been – in short, in a fourth order way. But the supervisor was a third order man for whom independent actions smacked of insubordination and disobedience. He was used to things working in a certain "right" way and felt insecure and challenged when those who reported to him acted in more self-determining ways.

In the fifth order, at which few people arrive, individuals begin to see how their own personal system (that, in the fourth order, has become independent of externally imposed societal expectations and assumptions through critical reflection of what works and what doesn't) is mediated by historical, cultural, psychological, and other forces. In the fourth order, you <u>are</u> the system that you have created. But in the fifth, a person comes to a realization of the constructed nature of his or her meaning-making system. She understands that who she is, is simply one system among many. This means that rampant individualism, which is a downside of fourth order consciousness ("this works for me, and I am going to do it this way"), becomes tempered by understanding that I, like you, am part of larger systems. There is a foreground/background

shift (like Kohlberg's (1981) seventh stage). "I am not very important after all." It is a humbling stance.

What does all of this have to do with wisdom? Is someone at the fourth order wiser than someone at the third? Or is fifth order thinking better than fourth? I cannot but think that in some ways this is the case, especially if we look back at Mezirow's words on more inclusive, permeable, and integrating perspectives as being superior because they lead to more accurate meaning-making. Or, in terms of wisdom, perhaps, this perspective offers more accurate ways of seeing – of discerning, respecting and caring, acting fairly, and integrating various elements of self with the rest of the world, deepening the ability to see beyond the self, to deal with the paradoxes that life presents, and to recognize more and more deeply the interdependence of all things. But, do we really know if such recognition makes a substantive, permanent difference?

So far, we have been looking through various lenses mostly at one end of the spectrum, the analytical side, except for some examples from the arts. Let us now turn to looking at wisdom in action, in real people's lives. This is the subject of the next section.

Seeing Wisdom through the Lens of Everyday Life

We fret a lot these days about the apparent surfeit of information, coming at us from all directions. Information can be a good thing – it can be helpful to us, amusing and entertaining; it can make us more effective in our jobs. But it can distract us, fracturing our concentration. Too much information is un-wisdom because wisdom is about knowing what is important and what to do about it. Wisdom can help us to discern what information is important and what, if anything, to do about it. Wisdom is about taking the time to reflect, sort, distinguish, triage, hierarchize. What is important in this situation? How can I tell? What should I do? What's right? These are the questions to ask, which an unimpeded flow of information can continually interrupt until we find ourselves flattened under a heap of data and ideas, some conflicting, all demanding to be paid attention to. Wisdom requires a different kind of mindset – unless a more modern brain than mine can sort and prioritize and make decisions in a different way than mine does – and given technology and how it seems to be changing brains, this may yet be possible.

Yang (2008) offers us a way that might help us handle this information overflow. She argued that wisdom is a real-life process. This means that in an everyday difficult situation a person makes an unusual integration, embodies his or her ideas through action, and brings forth good results. Thus, the steps are the sorting and prioritizing of what is important, arriving at an integration of ideas that could work in a problematic situation, acting upon this integration, and achieving positive effects. She says, "People may accomplish all kinds of good work, but unless the consequences of their actions bettered their own lives and those of others, their actions cannot be deemed as being related to wisdom" (p. 73). This view and that of most other wisdom researchers in one form or another, including mine, reflects the philosophy called pragmatism where the focus lies not in a description of "reality" or of the concept of reality but rather what is useful, what succeeds, what works. If wisdom isn't practical and useful, what do you want it for? How does anyone know you have some wisdom if you don't use it?

Besides other examples that I have given, such as my student (and Evelyn in the next section), here is one from ordinary life. Note that I say "wisdom" or perhaps it should read "wise behavior." In South Sudan a group of American doctors intentionally brought warring factions together. As a condition of free cataract surgery the ophthalmologists insisted that people from rival ethnic groups sit together and talk. One patient said, "I always thought in many ways that the Dinka were devils and had horns, but they're just like us" (Straziuso, 2014, p. A7).

So far, we have looked at wisdom through a number of lenses. Now I will turn to show you what I see through my own.

Seeing Wisdom through My Own Lens: What I've Learned about Wisdom

I have read the literature. I have interviewed people deemed wise by others. I have been a keen observer of both events and environments, and I have settled upon the following four essential propositions about wisdom**.**

Here are the four propositions:

1. Wisdom is complex, just like the world we live in. It is not one thing but rather results from the interaction of an indefinite number of elements (because we cannot identify all of them, though I believe that I have a handle of some of them in the model).
2. Wisdom is useful to us in our daily lives. It is available to all of us.
3. Wisdom lies on a continuum; it is not as rare as we think.
4. We can enhance our own wisdom and encourage it in others.

Wisdom is Complex

This is the first proposition, and I have explained the relationships and interactions of the various elements of wisdom above in the Emergent Wisdom Model. They include Discernment, Respect, Engagement, and Integration. Note that the model is neither static nor linear; rather it is dynamic and builds on constant interaction of all the elements.

Is it possible that wisdom is, after all, simple because oftentimes we recognize it when we see it? It is true that we recognize it when we see it because we see it as a whole, not as a collection of parts. However, it is also complex because to produce it you need the interaction of an indefinite number of variables. That blend forms a pattern, so that when we see it in action, we see it as wisdom. For example, I could give you a list of parts and most likely you would not know what they were for: "*drafthood, reducer ring, baffle assembly, heat trap, cold water dip tube, anode rod, temperature and pressure relief valve, drain valve, thermostat, manifold, orifice, main burner, pilot assembly, pilot tube, thermocouple, screw 10-32 x .312 PH RD MACH, pilot shield, inner door, outer door, palnut, air shutter.*

"Here is a picture of the *relationships* among these items assembled into a whole:

However, if I had told you that they represented all the parts of a water heater, you would immediately recognize it as such" (Thorpe, 2009). Thus, wisdom may look simple but is complex in the integration of all of the relationships that comprise it. We need to remember, looking back at the wisdom model, that embracing paradox is part of wisdom.

Wisdom is useful to us in our daily lives; it is available to all of us

The second proposition states that wisdom is useful to us in our daily lives. Wisdom lies in the stratosphere, but it also in the air around us all the time, if we can recognize it in its more humble aspects.

Just because a decision is not changing the course of human history or forwarding a movement as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, did, does not mean that wisdom is not occurring. Here is a simple example that one could claim is "just" common sense. Perhaps it is common sense. At the same time, it does what wisdom does: it focuses on what is important and what to do about it. It demonstrates sufficient awareness of a number of the aspects of wisdom and uses them in a way that makes the situation better for all involved.

Evelyn, a student in a class of mine, told us about a predicament that she had been in until she figured out a solution that worked for everyone, even if her daughter was not entirely happy with it. Evelyn had recently retired from a busy job as an attorney in a law firm and was enjoying her freedom for the first time in her adult life. She took short or long trips; she joined two book clubs; she took up photography with regular classes from a master photographer. So, when her daughter, who had just given birth to twins, wanted Evelyn to spend nights at her house to care for the babies, Evelyn was understandably reluctant. At the same time, she felt an obligation to help her daughter out, and she wanted to too. How could she do both?

In class she had learned about stepping outside of herself and looking at the whole picture, from a third person point of view. Here was a mother of just-born twins who needed help and wanted it from her own mother. Here was a woman of just-gained freedom in retirement who wanted to enjoy life. In this situation, what actions would satisfy both parties?

Evelyn realized that she could not give up all of her freedom, nor could she ignore her daughter's needs. So she decided to spend two nights a week at the twins' home and then give her daughter some money to hire someone for other nights. Was the daughter altogether happy

because it would be "just for a few months"? No. But her mother stood firm with her decision. Six months later Evelyn told me that it had all worked out just fine.

Here is another example. One day in the summer of 2010 at a baseball game (Detroit Tigers-Cleveland Indians), a pitcher was throwing a perfect no-hitter, but at the bottom of the ninth inning, the umpire called the batter safe at first base, when replays showed that, in fact, the batter was out. Did the pitcher stomp over to the umpire, yell in his face, throw his glove on the ground, swear, and turn red with fury? No. Instead, the umpire, Jim Joyce, personally apologized to the pitcher Armando Galarraga saying that he was wrong (Kepner, 2010). Further, in a number of interviews, Joyce publicly acknowledged his mistake. Galarraga said that he told the umpire, "Nobody's perfect." What a way to defuse a situation.

In both stories, the people involved ended up feeling better about the situation at the end than at the beginning. They show us examples of relatively wise behavior on a small, often personal, scale. These are examples of little wisdoms, rather than big wisdom. Little wisdoms and big wisdom both involve complex, dynamic elements. (Recall the concept that wisdom is a fractal, a scale-independent self-similarity. That is, no matter the size or scale – scale independence – wisdom looks the same – self-similarity. All of the parts are replicated, though on different scales.) What makes the wisdoms different – and are they? Next, we'll look at the continuum of wisdom.

Wisdom lies on a continuum; it is not as rare as we think

Most researchers believe that wisdom is rare, that along with being the "pinnacle or hallmark of adult thinking" (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 351), it is not achieved very often. The neuroscientists that I cited above in the section on neuroscience (Jeste, Ardelt, Blazer, Kraemer, Vaillant, & Meeks, 2010) believe, paradoxically, that wisdom is both a rare quality and one that is distributed across the population. When they speak of wisdom, they are seeing it as a trait that manifests at the far end of what I am calling the wisdom continuum. That is, for me, wisdom is not an either-or, you-have-it-or-you-don't, you-are-wise-or-you-are-not-wise proposition. Rather, it is something that lies on a continuum. If we look only at the far end of the continuum, then all we find is that rare wisdom that lies several standard deviations from the mean. Does this mean that there is no wisdom other than that at the extreme? What about the little wisdoms I mentioned above? For this reason, I believe that we can understand wisdom better if we see it on this continuum.

Actually, a better image is three continua. The first is a continuum of wise people; the second is on the impact of a person's wisdom; and the third has to do with the nature of the wise decision itself. The first continuum extends from you and me to people like Nelson Mandela who united a whole country that could easily have been torn apart by racial violence after apartheid ended.

Within this continuum it is likely, as Bluck and Glück suggest, that wisdom will manifest differently in different phases of life and that the "full use of one's wisdom appears to be a developmental achievement" (2004, p. 569). How is it that some people have more wisdom than others? Some individuals simply come into the world with a greater propensity for wisdom than

others do, just as some people are naturally gifted as tennis players or sculptors or mathematicians. The wise ones would grow in cognitive and emotional complexity as they mature, increasing in wisdom as they move through life, just as we can on a smaller scale.

The second, and closely related, is the continuum of the impact of the person's wisdom, in which Nelson Mandela's would have far greater repercussions than anything I would ever do. Those we look to as wise are usually leaders or major public figures, such as Abraham Lincoln and Nelson Mandela – and this is one way that we know about them and their wisdom. For the less visible among us, our wisdom is little known. In classes that I teach or talks that I give, I ask the participants to identify a wise person that they know personally. Many name a grandfather or aunt or friend of the family, someone with no public sway at all. When pressed, the participants give examples of activities that correspond with the definition of wisdom on a small personal level with little if any public impact.

The third continuum is about the nature of the wise decision in and of itself, some decisions requiring more insight and depth of understanding of patterns and relationships (the Discernment dimension of the Emergent Wisdom Model) as well as more toleration for paradox and ambiguity (the Integration dimension) than others do. For example, Abraham Lincoln's decision to go to war with the seceding South in order to keep together the union of the people, by the people, and for the people – this first-time experiment in governance that the world had ever seen – certainly was a more difficult and nuanced one than Evelyn's on how to balance her needs with her daughter's.

What about the rest of us without a strong inborn propensity for wisdom? Is there any way that we can increase our own wisdom intentionally, or is it a matter of luck? In the next section, I discuss some ways that we can develop our wisdom.

We can enhance our own wisdom and encourage it in others

The fourth proposition asserts that we can intentionally enhance our own wisdom and encourage it in others. The latter first: an easy way to do this is to point out to your friend, neighbor, or colleague when he or she is acting wisely. Comment on it. Acknowledge it. This way, two things happen. First, the person realizes that she has done something wise and, because of this realization, may be more likely to do so again in the future. Second, the very fact of publicly acknowledging something as wise brings it more to our awareness and thus we may notice it around us more.

As for the former, enhancing our own wisdom, I have recently written several chapters that include a number of strategies for doing just this (Bassett, 2006; Bassett. 2011a; Bassett, 2011b). Here I will discuss three.

First, there is the technique of looking at yourself in the third person. Tell a story about yourself with you as one character among many, perhaps not the main one. Tell the story from the point of view of another character, and see what happens. Insights may arise as you probe other psyches and points of view.

Second, refer to the Emergent Wisdom Model and at the bottom in the section called "Queries," you will see a number of questions to ask yourself when you are in a difficult situation that requires wisdom to get out of. These queries should become second nature to you and ring in your mind like a beloved melody. Ask yourself what is really going on, not what you would like. There can be a big difference. Ask yourself how someone else would view the same situation. Ask yourself what you want to accomplish with a decision and how it will affect not only yourself, but also others. Who might these others be? What might happen? Finally, ask yourself if your decisions are bettering not only yourself but also the lives of others.

Third, and an assignment that I give students or workshop participants for life, is what I call Wisdom Watch. It means looking for wisdom around you, in the street, on the job, on television or in movies, anywhere. Wisdom is out there and the more we acknowledge it, the more we will recognize it in the future.

Wisdom Emerges; It Does Not Conclude

We have looked at wisdom through various lenses, including definitions of wisdom, different measures of wisdom, neuroscience, integral theory, post-conventional development, everyday life, my own lens, and we have looked directly at it, in the lives of people. We will all continue to look for – and at – real wisdom in real lives. Here is one more look, at a man who practiced wisdom all his life and who sang of it, using the words of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 – Pete Seeger:

> To everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)
> There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)
> And a time for every purpose, under Heaven.
>
> A time to be born, a time to die
> A time to plant, a time to reap
> A time to kill, a time to heal
> A time to laugh, a time to weep
> …
> A time to build up, a time to break down
> A time to dance, a time to mourn
> A time to cast away stones, a time to gather stones together.
> …
> A time of love, a time of hate
> A time of war, a time of peace
> A time you may embrace, a time to refrain from embracing
>
> To everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)
> There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)
> And a time for every purpose, under Heaven.

Anyone who speaks (or sings) these words knows a thing or two about wisdom – that it is not one thing and that it contains contradictions and paradox, that it contains multitudes. At the same time, knowing every purpose is just one part of wisdom. The other is knowing when it is time to

build up and, when the time comes to break down, *how* to do it. This is the other part of wisdom – having sufficient awareness to know not only the *what* of a thing but also the *when* and the *how*. It is a lifelong practice, a never-ending song.

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Wise Ways of Seeing: Wisdom and Perspectives

Roger Walsh[1]

Abstract: The capacity for perspective taking is thought to be linked to psychological development and to wisdom. This article draws from psychological, contemplative, cross-cultural, and philosophical disciplines to create an inventory of perspectival skills and their possible relationships to wisdom. The nature of perspectives is explored, as are the characteristics of healthy perspectives, and the factors—such as developmental stage, assumptions, and state of mind—that determine the number and kinds of available perspectives. The article then examines rare postconventional perspectival capacities such as the ability to integrate multiple perspectives, to adopt higher order metaperspectives, and to experience transperspectival "pure awareness." Fifteen kinds of wise perspectives and perspectival skills are suggested. Finally, the article reviews psychological, relational, contemplative, philosophical, and educational methods thought to foster perspectival skills and wisdom.

Keywords: Assumption, development, perspective, perspectivism, transformational learning, wisdom.

Introduction

> *Wise individuals are aware of the fact that there are multiple perspectives on every phenomenon and they are interested in learning from new perspectives and from other people*. (Glück & Bluck, 2014, p. 75)

Wisdom is many things. Yet it certainly includes one thing: the capacity to see in new, beneficial, and benevolent ways. What kinds of ways? Well, at least twelve ways that can be clustered into four groups. In general, wise ways of seeing will tend to be:

1. Nonconventional.
   - Novel: new, fresh, and often unexpected.

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- Insightful: productive of new insights and understandings.
- Unconventional: beyond conventional assumptions, out of the box.
- Postconventional: expressing exceptionally mature levels of development beyond the conventional.

2. Wise people will likely use and integrate multiple perspectives.
   - Multiple perspectives: Able to look at things from multiple angles or points of view. Not limited to one perspective, but employing multiple perspectives.
   - Flexible and agile: able to move easily and quickly between multiple perspectives
   - Metaperspectival: able to adopt higher order perspectives.
   - Integrative: able to not only adopt multiple perspectives, but also to recognize relationships between these perspectives, and integrate them into a higher order synthesis.
   - Big picture: able to encompass large complex systems or communities, to encompass long time spans, and consider multiple factors. Also able to adopt both big picture and close up perspectives, to zoom in and zoom out.

3. Wise people will tend to recognize the limits of perspectives.
   - All perception depends on perspective (perspectivism.)
   - Any (single) perspective is partial and limited.

4. Beneficial: Wise people will recognize ways of seeing that are helpful to both themselves and others.

A Central Hypothesis

The central hypothesis of this article is this: *Wisdom is a function of the capacity for taking skillful perspectives.* Of course, wisdom is also much more than this capacity but will certainly include this capacity.

I define a perspective or action as *skillful* to the extent that it minimizes suffering and enhances wellbeing for everyone involved, including oneself. So the hypothesis that wisdom is a function of the capacity for taking skillful perspectives implies that wisdom involves the capacity for looking at things in ways that lead to reduced suffering and enhanced wellbeing.

What evidence is there for a relationship between wisdom and skillful perspective taking? As yet, there is little, but growing, research on either wisdom or perspectives, so experimental research on their relationship is very limited. However, there is evidence that perspectival skills are related to psychological development, and there are suggestions that these skills are related to wisdom. For example:

- A close relationship between psychological development and perspective taking skills has been demonstrated in studies of child and adolescent development (e.g., Lapsley, 2006). Likewise, integral theorists often posit a close relationship between adult development and

perspective taking skills, although there is little actual evidence for this relationship (Fuhs, 2013; Martin, Sobel, and Elfers, 2008).

- Multiple fields that recognize the need for greater individual and collective wisdom in order to solve our social and global problems, also emphasize the need for broader integrative perspectives (Esbjörn-Hargens & Zimmerman, 2009).
- Researchers often suggest that wisdom is associated with maturation to postconventional stages and to greater integrative perspectival capacities (e.g., Kramer, 2003). For an analysis of the possible relationship between wisdom and development see Walsh (2011, 2012)
- The most prolific wisdom researchers, the Berlin School, emphasize two criteria of wisdom that seem closely related to perspectival skills. The first, *life span contextualism*, "considers the many themes and contexts of life and in addition, incorporates a lifetime temporal perspective" (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000, p. 125-6). The second factor, "*relativism of values and life priorities"* recognizes the relativity of what is appropriate for different people and situations.
- Monika Ardelt's Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale (3D-WS) measures reflective skills which she defines as "a perception of phenomena and events from multiple perspectives" (Ardelt, 2004, p. 275).

The Relationship between Wisdom and Perspectives: Key Questions

These ideas lead to four key questions:

1. What is a perspective?
2. What factors determine the number and types of perspectives available to an individual (and society)?
3. What are the characteristics of skillful perspectives?
4. How do we foster the capacity for skillful perspective taking?

These may be crucial questions for wisdom studies and also for integral theory (Cook-Greuter, 2010; Fuhs, 2010; Wilber, 2013). Unfortunately, there is little research on adult perspective taking and skills. Consequently what follows are largely hypotheses. These hypotheses are based on my reading in related literatures, clinical observations of psychologically disturbed patients, personal observations of psychologically mature and wise people; the practice and teaching of psychotherapy, meditation, and other contemplative disciplines; and considerable reflection on these issues. All the ideas in this article are presented, not as beliefs to be accepted, but as hypotheses to be tested. If they foster thinking and research about wisdom, perspectival skills, and their interrelationships, they will have served their functions well.

What is a Perspective?

The term perspective is used in psychological literature in several ways. Interpersonally or socially, it implies the capacity to see things from another's point of view. Generically, it refers to points of view in general.

In this article I will mainly be using the term generically. In this generic sense, we need to consider two types of perspectives: physical/spatial and psychological/cognitive.

- A physical/spatial perspective is determined by the spatial location of the viewing point relative to the physical object observed.
- Within mental space, a psychological perspective is determined by the viewing location or vantage point with regard to a mental object.

I presume that psychological perspectives are largely determined by operative schemas and modes.

Schemas are mental models: conceptual networks and frameworks that serve to identify, categorize, frame, and interpret specific types of stimuli. As such, they determine the meaning and significance of stimuli, and the responses to them.

For example, Neo-Kohlbergian researchers see moral development as maturing, not from one stage to another, but from one schema to another. Each successive schema enacts an increasingly encompassing and nuanced metaperspective, worldview, and morality (Thoma, 2006).

"Modes are networks of cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral schemas" (Beck & Weishaar, 2014, p. 232). The schemas of a mode operate together to interpret stimuli, and then create emotional, motivational, and behavioral responses to these interpretations of them. Modes are presumably related to states of mind or states of consciousness (Tart, 2001) and to the ego states described by transactional analysis (Berne, 1964), ego state therapy (Watkins and Watkins, 1997), and by Genpo Roshi's Big Mind process.

It is important to note that we respond, not to objects themselves, but to our interpretations of them. This is an ancient idea, and some 2,000 years ago the Stoic philosopher Epictetus (1899) warned that "Men are disturbed not by things, but the view which they take of them." Or as Shakespeare put it, "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" (Hamlet, II, 2).

A perspective is a selective perceptual stance which results when awareness is filtered through and constrained by mental schemas and modes. A perspective therefore functions as a perceptual and interpretive framework which biases and limits perception (as well as subsequent interpretation, understanding, and responses). For example, when anxiety schemas are operating, these schemas produce cognitive and perceptual biases that view experiences largely in terms of their threat potential. The anxiety modes then generate corresponding anxiety based emotional, motivational, and behavioral responses to threat. Very importantly, perspectives tend to be self-fulfilling. That is, we tend to find what we look for.

What Factors Determine Available Perspectives?

One important question is: What are the factors which determine the number and kinds of available perspectives? Three of the most important factors may be:

1. A person's developmental stage,
2. Their state of mind, and
3. Their assumptions or presuppositions.

Because the number and types of available perspectives are so important to perspectival skills and wisdom, let's examine these three determining factors more closely.

Development

> *We have seen in the description of peoples' development from one stage to another that each new stage brings a qualitative expansion in perspective taking.* (James Fowler, 2000, p. 85)

A person's developmental stage may determine and limit the number, scope, and levels of available perspectives. This is a central tenet of a child and adolescent developmental psychology, and of integral theory. "From cognitive to interpersonal and affective to self-sense, development in many domains progresses in accordance with an individual's ability to take perspectives" (Fuhs, 2010, p. 273). For example, in childhood, when the capacity for taking other peoples' perspectives comes on line, this new capacity allows a shift from egocentricity to mutuality and ethnocentricity.

In adulthood, these capacities can expand further. For example, one's perspective can expand from identifying with, and thus being concerned for one's community (ethnocentrism—"my country right or wrong") to a perspective identified with, and thus concerned for, all people and all life (worldcentric). Temporally, one's perspective can expand from one's own short term benefits to a concern for the needs of future generations. This perspectival expansion is related to "the expanding circle" of care which is a central feature of ethical maturity (Singer, 2011), and has long been a central goal of Confucianism. "Learning to be human" for Confucians "is to learn to be sensitive to an ever-expanding network of relationships" (Wei-Ming, 1985, p. 175).

Postconventional developmental levels of perspective taking

Postconventional levels of development appear to offer four major advances in perspectival capacities:

1. An increase in the number of available perspectives,
2. Increased integration of perspectives
3. Adoption of metaperspectives
4. Breakthroughs into transperspectival pure awareness

1. Number of Available Perspectives

From childhood on, psychological development is often associated with a growing capacity to take a greater number of perspectives. This growth is thought to continue into and through postconventional, post-formal operational stages.

2. Integration of Perspectives

Development is associated, not only with a growing number of perspectives, but also with a growing ability to integrate these perspectives (Fuhs, 2010; Kramer, 2003). Likewise, some theorists such as Jean Gebser and Ken Wilber suggest that cultural evolution also involves a growing number and integrative capacity of perspectives. For Gebser, cultural evolution culminates in the "integral aperspectival mind" which is able to integrate multiple individual perspectives, evaluate their perceptions as a whole, and therefore hold no individual perspective as final (Feuerstein, 1987; Wilber, 1995).

Ken Wilber suggests that recognition of multiple perspectives can outpace the growth of integrative capacity. The result is two distinct early post-conventional stages.

The first stage is recognition of the multiplicity of possible perspectives. This results in pluralism but can also lead to relativism—a stance that there are no grounds for privileging one perspective over others. At its extreme, Wilber (2000) suggests this can devolve into "aperspectival madness" in which no perspectives or values are seen as better as or worse than any others (p. 170).

For Wilber (2006), relativism and aperspectival madness occur at the pluralistic-relativistic (green) stage of cognitive development which is the first post-formal operational stage (p. 68). This aperspectival madness underlies the excesses of deconstructive postmodernism and may also play a role, I would suggest, in existentialism's groundlessness and the angst that it generates.

At the next developmental levels of low and high vision logic (Wilber's teal and turquoise which correspond to Kegan's Fifth Order consciousness), integrative capacities mature further. This allows not only a recognition of multiple perspectives, but also a meaningful integration and comparison of them.

Stages beyond these are rarely described. However, the Indian philosopher-sage Aurobindo (1970) mapped several rare postconventional stages beginning with what he called the Higher Mind, which Wilber (2000) categorizes as a form of vision-logic. According to Aurobindo (1970), the higher mind:

> can freely express itself in single ideas but its most characteristic movement is a mass ideation, a system of totality of truth, seeing at a single view; the relations of idea with idea, of truth with truth are not established by logic but pre-exist and emerge already self-seen in the integral whole…. In the end there is a great totality of truth known and experienced but still a totality capable of infinite enlargement because there is no end to the aspects…. This is the Higher Mind. (pg. 940, 941)

3. Capacity to Adopt Metaperspectives

A third postconventional perspectival capacity is the growing ability to consciously adopt metaperspectives. This is a process where one disidentifies or disembeds from a previous

perspective and adopts a new perspective that is transcendent or *meta* to the previous one. One can then look back at the previous perspective, and thereby examine, assess, and relativize it.

As an example, consider people who mature from conventional to postconventional morality: from what neoKohlbergians call the conventional "maintaining norms" schema to the postconventional schema. At the maintaining norms level, people unreflectively accept conventional social norms, morals, and laws, and strive to maintain them. These norms are unquestioned assumptions through which, and from which, conventional people view the world. "For this schema, no further rationale for defining morality is necessary beyond simply asserting that an act is prescribed by the law, is the established way of doing things, or is the established will of God" (Thoma, 2006, p. 79).

However, when people mature to the postconventional schema, then they are able to look at, rather than only look from, the conventional moral assumptions, and are therefore able to evaluate them. That is, they can now adopt a metaperspective relative to the conventional cultural perspectives. They have moved from a first order to a second order (meta) perspective. The capacity for adopting metaperspectives is one aspect of metacognition which is the capacity for knowing, and sometimes regulating, one's cognitive processes.

Now suppose that some of these people learn about developmental research. Using this research, they then look at their new moral perspective and the developmental jump they made. Now they may see "Oh, I was locked in a conventional schema and perspective, but then I matured to a postconventional perspective. However, that postconventional perspective is itself just one way of looking at moral issues." These people have now moved to a third order or meta-metaperspective.

Perhaps a few of these individuals will even move to a still higher order perspective in which they recognize that all living creatures develop and all phenomena continuously change. Now they may recognize their own moral maturation as only one kind of development and as one expression of a universal law of change as described, for example, by Heraclitus, Whitehead, and the Buddha. These people have now moved to a fourth order or meta-meta-metaperspective from which they can view, situate, and interpret their earlier perspectives. Note that the adoption of higher order metaperspectives may not necessarily require or lead to higher order developmental stages (Fuhs, 2013).

The growth of metaperspectival skills may confer multiple benefits. First, each higher order perspective seems to provide a wider vision and a bigger picture. But it may also provide greater depth, a greater appreciation of complexity and interdependence, more psychological flexibility and freedom, and more opportunities for choice.

4. Transperspectival Awareness

There is a fourth, final, and radically different postconventional (or better, transconventional) perspectival potential. This is the ability to disidentify from all mental phenomena, processes, and perspectives, and to rest in pure awareness as the equanimous witness of all phenomena, processes, and perspectives. This is a transconceptual, transpersonal, and transperspectival state

which allows transconceptual intuitive apprehension and insight. The result is a *transconceptual wisdom* that is highly valued across multiple traditions as, for example, Hinduism's *jnana*, Buddhism's *prajna*, Christianity's *gnosis*, and Islam's *ma'rifa* (Walsh, 2012, 2014).

States of Mind

Less complex than development, yet still a major determinant of the number of available perspectives is a person's state of mind. The terms "state of consciousness" and "state of mind" are sometimes used synonymously. However, "state of consciousness" is less accurate since what changes is not pure consciousness—which is unqualifiable, transtemporal, and unchangeable—but rather mental contents and processes (Rock and Krippner, 2007).

Specific modes or states of mind are associated with specific dominant perspectives that determine one's way of looking at oneself and the world. For example, anxiety states result in fear of, and hypervigilance for, threats. Paranoid states view the self as special and under attack, while depression channels perception and interpretation of both oneself and the world in negative pessimistic ways. Conversely, healthy and higher states of mind are probably associated with more positive, healthy perspectives, with access to larger numbers of perspectives, and with a greater flexibility and fluidity in moving between them.

Assumptions

Assumptions constitute the third major factor determining the number and kinds of perspectives available to a person. Assumptions are beliefs or presuppositions that are accepted as true. Assumptions often operate unconsciously to produce specific biases of both perception (looking at things in specific biased ways) and cognition (processing information in specific biased ways).

When assumptions are unskillful they produce, not just biases, but also specific cognitive and perceptual vulnerabilities which can result in significant psychopathology. For example, a depressed person's perceptual bias and vulnerability is to look for the worst interpretations of themselves and life. This bias is rooted in three destructive assumptions which together constitute the so-called "cognitive triad of depression." This triad consists of the beliefs that "I'm bad" (resulting in unworthiness), "life is overwhelming" (resulting in overwhelm and despair), and "it's always going to be that way (resulting in hopelessness) (Beck & Weishaar, 2014).

Assumptions tend to operate as self-fulfilling prophecies both personally and interpersonally. What we assume to be true tends to become true. As Henry Ford said "whether you think you can or think you can't – you're right."

A similar principle operates interpersonally. Our positive assumptions about other people tend to elicit improved performance, a phenomenon known as *the Pygmalion* effect (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1992). Conversely, negative assumptions about people tend to impair their performance (the *Golem effect*). These effects may play a role in class and racial performance differences, and they also operate in conflicts where, in worst case scenarios, "Enemies finally

become what they imagined each other to be" (Frank, 1982, p. 146), a tragic result that is played out in war after war.

In short, assumptions mold perspectives, perceptions, and behavior, and create worldviews (Hedlund-deWitt, 2013). Consequently, recognizing assumptions—a process which might be called *preduction* (Wilber, 2011), and may be as important as deduction and induction—is vitally important. Recognizing assumptions, assessing their value and validity, and modifying them as appropriate is essential for fostering skillful perspectives, as well as for psychological wellbeing and wisdom.

What are Wise Perspectives and Perspectival Skills?

We have already foreshadowed these wise perspectives and skills in the article's opening section. There I suggested that wisdom includes the capacity to see in a variety of novel and beneficial ways. We can now describe these ways more precisely in perspectival terms. Specifically, I suggest that wisdom may be associated with at least fifteen beneficial perspectives and perspectival skills:

1. Novel perspectives: A wise person may be able to look at things in new, fresh ways that are unexpected and surprising.

2. Unconventional perspectives: Wise people will be able to disidentify from and grow free of conventional assumptions and perspectives. This will allow them to adopt unconventional perspectives and to think outside the box.

3. Postconventional perspectives: Wise people may adopt, not only unconventional perspectives, but also more developmentally mature postconventional (or even transconventional) perspectives. It is not only that wise people see things in new ways, but that these new ways may be unconventional, postconventional, and transconventional.

However, so far there is little research on relationships of wisdom to developmental stages. In fact, a study of ego development using the Washington University Sentence Completion Test found that the scores of wisdom nominees averaged only slightly above the highest conventional (Achiever) stage (Krafcik, 2011).

4. Insightful: novel perspectives will allow the recognition of novel insights, understanding, and solutions.

5. Perspectivism: A wise understanding of perspectives will recognize perspectivism and the limited and limiting nature of perception and perspectives. All perceptions reflect perspectives, and all perspectives are limited and limiting in that they are partial and selective in what they reveal. This is a venerable idea which was strongly argued by Nietzsche as perspectivism, and has long been a central tenet of Jainism.

In Jainism, the term *syādvāda* implies that all perspectives or viewpoints are conditioned, while the term *nayavāda* implies that they are partial. These ideas are integrated into the "one of

the most important and fundamental doctrines of Jainism," *anekāntavāda,* which holds that there are always diverse viewpoints on any phenomenon. *Anekāntavāda* acknowledges that some viewpoints are more valid than others while simultaneously recognizing "that no single point of view is the complete truth" (Wikipedia). *Anekāntavāda* encourages tolerance, pluralism, and the search for common elements and integrations. These important Jain ideas may be insights which wise people of diverse cultures intuit to some degree. Perspectivism and *anekāntavāda* would presumably help in "seeing through illusion" which is one (limited) definition of wisdom (McKee & Barber, 1999).

Half a continent away, perspectivism found another early champion in one of the earliest and greatest of Taoist sages, Zhuangzi (also known as Chung Tzu, c. 369-286 BCE). Zhuangzi lived during a time of violent political conflict which was mirrored by vehement philosophical debates between philosophical schools, especially the Confucian and Mohists, each sure that they alone possessed the truth. Zhuangzi was not so sure.

In fact, he was not so sure of anything, because he saw that all perspectives and arguments derive from perspectives, and that "each perspective is trapped in its own standpoint" (Lai, 2006, p. 370). In short, Zhuangzi recognized perspectivism some 2,200 years before Nietzsche. Zhuangzi was a master of stories and parables and made his point with the following story:

> You can't tell a frog at the bottom of the well about the sea because he is stuck in his little space. You can't tell a summer insect about ice because it is confined by its season. You can't tell a scholar of distorted views about the Way because he is bound by his doctrine…. (Mair, 1994, p. 153)

Zhuangzi and many Taoists distinguish between small knowledge (xiaozhi) and great knowledge (*dazhi.*). Whereas small knowledge asserts and argues, "Great Knowledge, by contrast transcends assertions of truth. Its wisdom lies in knowing the limits of small knowledge" (Lai, 2006, p. 373).

For Zhuangzi, wisdom requires the realization of perspectivism, and his philosophy aims "not to search for truth but to question its limits" (Lai, 2006, p. 371). Rather, "wisdom consists in *understanding* that individual perspectives are limited….For Zhuangzi wisdom lies in the realization that one's individual insights and grand theories—however sweeping and inclusive they may seem—are ultimately perspectival" (Lai, 2006, p. 373, 371). This realization allows us to hold perspectives lightly.

When perspectivism goes unrecognized problems ensue. For example, to the extent that any perception is not recognized as perspectival—and therefore as partial, selective, and relative—it will tend to produce a corresponding experience, worldview, and self-sense that will be assumed to be accurate and correct. As such, this perception will likely:

- Go unquestioned
- Result in self-deception and delusion
- Reinforce one's current belief system and worldview
- Foster dogmatism

- Serve a defensive "legitimizing" function (Wilber, 2005), i.e., defend and preserve the current self-sense and developmental level, rather than fostering further development
- Create suffering. Once one appreciates the power of perspective, one also recognizes just how many of our individual, social, and global problems are caused by the failure to recognize perspectivism (Walsh, 2009).

The challenge for all of us, and something that wise people may do exceptionally well and often, is therefore to continuously attempt to:

- Recognize unhelpful, partial perspectives, in both ourselves and others.
- Release and integrate these limited, harmful perspectives into more encompassing (contextually wider and developmentally deeper) metaperspectives.

Of course, recognizing, releasing, and growing beyond our current perspectives is not always easy. Yet it is rewarding, and Sri Aurobindo's biographer gave a beautiful account of perspectival maturation as follows:

> And yet we only knew how each loss of one's viewpoint is a progress and how life changes when one passes from the stage of the closed truth to the stage of the open truth—a truth like life itself, too great to be trapped by points of view, because it embraces every point of view…a truth great enough to deny itself and pass endlessly into a higher truth. (Satprem, 1968, p. 84)

6. Multiperspectival: When people are locked into a single perspective they suffer from the pathology of *perspectival fixation*, and the painful results include close-mindedness, rigidity and dogmatism. In contrast, wise people will probably recognize and adopt multiple perspectives. Their multiperspectivalism, prospectival fluidity, and greater perspectival range will presumably be associated with qualities of greater open-mindedness and tolerance of ambiguity, and both these qualities have been found to correlate with wisdom scores (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Helson & Srivastava, 2002).

7. *Perspectival fluidity* is the ability to move easily and quickly between perspectives. This ability is probably related to the Buddhist psychology (*abhidharma*) qualities of mental pliancy and agility which are healthy qualities that are fostered by contemplative practices (Nyanaponika Thera, 1998).

8. Coordinating perspectives: Once people have grown beyond perspectival fixation and are able to fluidly move between perspectives, then they are likely to begin coordinating them. "Coordinating perspectives refers to the simultaneous consideration of two or more perspectives…" (Martin, Sohol, & Elfers, 2008, p. 294).

9. Metaperspectival capacities: Wise people may be able to adopt higher order metaperspectives. By being able to disidentify from earlier perspectives, and to then look back at, and evaluate them from a higher metaperspective, wise people will be better able to more accurately assess and integrate lower order perspectives.

10. Integration of multiple perspectives: A further developmental skill beyond simply recognizing, comparing, and coordinating perspectives is integrating them. With their capacity for adopting metaperspectives, wise people will be better able to recognize relationships between, and forge integrations of, individual points of view, including ones that previously seemed unrelated, incompatible, or conflictual.

Metaperspectives and perspectival integration have been recognized for millennia, and used to produce profound contemplative practices and philosophical syntheses. For example, Hua Yan Buddhism recognizes several perspectival levels described as the *dharmadatus* or worlds revealed by successively deeper perspectives on and insight into reality. Very simply, the first *dharmadatu* is our ordinary perceptual world of form, while the second is the meditative recognition that all phenomena are *sunyata* or empty. The third *dharmadatu* is the recognition of "nonobstruction," meaning that form and emptiness are not conflictual or even different. As the Heart Sutra, which is chanted daily in most Zen monasteries, says "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form."

With the aid of these recognitions, Hua Yan philosophy and practice aim at recognizing and integrating multiple perspectivism. "The goal seems to be a type of perspectival flexibility, which corrects the obsessive—compulsive tendency to identify with a single perspective by acknowledging the multiplicity of perspectives available and by adopting higher-order perspectives that reconcile the inconsistencies present between lower order perspectives" (Fox, 2006, p. 738).

11. Big picture perspectives: The ability to recognize, adopt, and integrate multiple perspectives may allow wise people to recognize big pictures. They may be better able to see and think systemically and metasystemically, and to recognize and work with greater complexity (Commons & Richards, 2003).

These big pictures may be big both spatially and temporarily. That is, they may have both greater spatial scope and time span. This is one reason why wisdom may correlate with greater awareness of, and care for, larger communities such as all humankind and all life (a worldcentric perspective), as well as larger time frames such as a concern for future generations.

This principle is expressed exquisitely in the Native American emphasis on considering the welfare of "the seventh generation." "One of the first mandates given us as Chiefs" wrote a Native American leader is to, "make every decision that we make relate to the welfare and wellbeing of the seventh generation to come….where are you taking them? What will they have?" (Lyons, 1994, p. 173).

12. Big picture and fine detail: When a capacity for seeing big pictures is merged with perspectival fluidity and perspectival integration, it yields the ability to zoom in and out. This is the ability to move fluidly between close up, fine detail perspectives and big picture metaperspectives, and to then integrate them.

Zoom skills have long been recognized as valuable by ancient philosophers such as Plato and the Stoics, by contemplative practitioners, and now by business leaders.

> Some people prefer to see things up close, others from afar. Both perspectives—worm's eye and bird's eye—have virtues and pathologies. But they should be vantage points, not fixed positions. Leaders need multiple perspectives to get a complete picture. Effective leaders zoom in and zoom…. A failure to zoom can spell doom. As we have seen, problems arise when people get stuck at one end of the scale and are unable to move to the other for a different perspective. (Kanter, 2013, p. 99, 103)

Tibetan Buddhism recommends "a view as vast as the sky, but an analysis as fine as barley flour" (Surya Das, 2012). Clearly, zoom skills have been valued for thousands of years.

13. Beneficial perspectives: Since benevolence is a core characteristic of wisdom (Jeste, Ardelt, Blazer et al, 2010; Walsh, 2014a), wise people will seek perspectives and consequent actions to enhance the wellbeing of everyone, including themselves. To focus only on themselves would be selfishness; to focus only on others would be sacrifice. Wisdom seeks a balance and win-win situation (Sternberg, 1998). This specific ability—indeed, all these perspectival abilities—will likely tend to make wise people exceptionally benevolent, helpful, effective, and skillful.

14. Reframing is the conscious choice of an alternate perspective. This shift—which is also known as cognitive reappraisal or reattribution—can sometimes produce remarkably rapid benefits, and is a central therapeutic technique in cognitive therapy and neurolinguistic programming. Several studies suggest that wise people are able to reframe challenging life events so as to eventually see them as valuable learning opportunities (Glück & Bluck, 2014, p. 90).

15. Metaframing is the conscious choice of a metaperspective. Metareframing offers the benefits of reframing plus the ability to look back, assess, and situate previous perspectives from a higher order perspective.

The Farther Reaches of Perspectival Maturity: Is there a Final Perspective?

So where does perspectival maturity culminate? There are three answers.

One answer is in a fluid openness to all perspectives: a capacity for adopting any and all perspectives that are helpful for experiencing, understanding, and responding to life. This is a way of seeing and being that is no longer limited to any one view but rather is open to all views. It is an ability to appreciate the boundless perspectival possibilities of life, and yet to spontaneously select those appropriate to the moment. We might call it panpersectival or omniperspectival. The American teacher Almaas (2014) describes this beautifully:

> The view of totality is an understanding that allows and holds multiple views at once: the ego view, the essential view, the boundless view, the view of one or another realization, the Christian view, the Buddhist view, the view of nonduality, the dual view, the view of being an individual, the view of not being an individual, and infinite other views…So this view is totally open and open-ended. The importance of such a view is that when we fully understand the view of totality, we don't need to stick to any one particular view. We can

> acknowledge and include many different views and, at the same time, the perspective of totality gives us the freedom to take any one view at any particular time without having to adhere to that view as our ideology or as the final word on reality. (p. 92)

This understanding recognizes that there is no final experience or way of looking at it. As the quotation by Satprem described, there are always more possibilities, more perspectives, and more metaperspectives, and the result is, as Almaas (2014) subtitled his book, "a life of ceaseless discovery."

A closely related potential is a higher order integration of perspectives. Almaas pointed to this. So did Aurobindo (1970) who claimed that in the higher reaches of postconventional development, the Higher Mind may be able to recognize and integrate all relevant perspectives, "seeing at a single view" and "capable of infinite enlargement" (p. 940).

And finally, all perspectives may dissolve into transperspectival awareness. From this awareness, perspectives can then be allowed to reemerge, beneficial perspectives can be selected, with their partial selective nature recognized, and their transperspectival, transpersonal ground remembered.

Fostering Perspectival Capacities and Wisdom

Can these perspectival capacities be fostered—and with them, wisdom—and if so how? Again there is very little research. However, two families of approaches may be helpful: general and specific practices.

General practices enhance overall psychological health and maturity, and thus facilitate multiple capacities, presumably including sapiential and perspectival capacities. These practices include a wide array of lifestyle, psychotherapeutic, and contemplative disciplines (for reviews see Walsh, 1999, 2011; Yalom, 2003). Specific practices or disciplines aim at fostering specific skills, in this case perspectival skills.

Specific Practices for Cultivating Perspectival Skills

At least seven kinds of specific practices may be helpful.

1. Learning about perspectives and perspectival skills. Learning about potentials, such as perspectival skills, as well as their benefits and the possibility of developing them, may inspire some people to begin doing so.

2. Social contact with, modeling by, and transmission from wise people who are perspectivally skillful. This is a specific example of the social learning theory principle that many skills are learned by observation and imitation of skilled exemplars.

3. Instruction: Active instruction in perspectival skills — such as recognizing, assessing, and consciously choosing perspectives—is a common element of coaching and psychotherapy.

It is especially common in cognitive therapy and neurolinguistic programming which emphasize reframing (Beck & Weishaar, 2014).

4. Reflective dialogue aimed at mutual learning, growth, and emancipation is a venerable and powerful technique. Varieties that have flourished for millennia include Socratic dialogue, Tibetan Buddhist debate, as well as Jewish Torah study where "one works in a dyad called a *chavruta*. The two partners learn together, challenging one another lovingly, sharpening one another, working toward truthful understanding…" (Boettiger, 2014, p. 18).

Dialogue can unveil the limitations of individual assumptions, such as those that fuel psychopathology, as well as of collective assumptions, such as those that support cultural hegemony, inequality, and injustice. Reflective dialogue is therefore a central element of several therapies, educational systems, and social movements. These include group psychotherapy, "consciousness raising circles" such as those of the women's movement, "transformative learning" for adult education, and Paolo Freire's "culture circles" aimed at cultural and social emancipation of the poor. Considerable research evidence supports the effectiveness of such groups and dialogue (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2006; Mezirow, 1990; Yalom & Leczsz, 2005).

5. Novel experiences: Exposure to novel experiences has long been known to offer mental stimulation and foster creativity. Historically, regions of intercultural mixing have been notably creative, and travel was said to broaden the mind. The value of novelty is borne out by research suggesting that transformative learning is enhanced by "putting participants in unfamiliar and new situations, ... maximizing the diversity mix of participants, ... and repeated team opportunities balancing action and reflection" (Lamb, 2003, pp. 266-267). Presumably, novel experiences, ideas, and cultures call unrecognized personal and cultural assumptions into question, and promote the exploration of new perspectives.

6. Education: The proper goal of education is perennially disputed. At one extreme is the technical–economic goal of providing students with the information and skills to find jobs and fuel the economy. Very different is the developmental–cultural goal of fostering questioning and growth for individual and cultural maturation. Both goals are obviously necessary, though it is a perennial struggle to preserve the developmental–cultural goal against economic forces.

Adult education which aims for developmental goals is often called "transformational learning" because it aims, not just to fill learners with facts, but to transform how learners view themselves and their society. It does this in significant part by encouraging students to question their assumptions and broaden their perspectives. A central technique is "critical reflection" to question the validity of assumptions, and then "reformulating the assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective.... *More inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspectives are superior perspectives*" (Mezirow, 1990, p.14). Hopefully, this kind of assumptive and perspectival transformation leads to greater maturity and wisdom since "although wisdom cannot be taught in the same way as intellectual

knowledge and technical expertise, it can be taught indirectly by helping students to view and experience the world from many different angles..." (Ardelt, Ackenbaum & Oh, 2014, p. 288).

Three transformational learning programs have been especially influential. These are the German *Bildung* tradition of personal and cultural maturation, Paolo Freire's social emancipatory education, and Jack Mezirow's transformative learning.

A core goal of transformative learning is recognizing and growing beyond limiting assumptions and perspectives. Learning is thought to occur via four main processes: experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse, and then action to express one's new perspective (Mezirow, 2000; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). "Probably more than any other approach, this [transformational learning] theory has captured the attention of educators over the last fifteen years" (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2006, p. 157).

7. Deliberately adopting other people's perspectives may be beneficial (Bassett, in press). Clint Fuhs (2010) and his colleagues have developed a group exercise "The Meta-Practice" where members practice adopting each other's perspectives and metaperspectives.

8. Adopting novel spatial or imaginal perspectives is a time honored philosophical and contemplative practice. Many traditions recommend reevaluating one's life and priorities from a larger perspective, such as the infinity of space or the eternity of time (Hadot, 2002; Walsh, 1999). In *The Republic* (486A), Plato urged us to develop "a mind habituated to…the contemplation of all time and all existence," a cosmic perspective which disentangles us from mundane obsessions. As the Stoic philosopher Seneca put it picturesquely, such a mind "casting a contemptuous glance at the narrow globe of the earth from above, says to itself: 'so this is the pin-point which so many nations divide among themselves with fire and sword? How ridiculous are the boundaries of men!'" (cited in Hadot, 1995, pp. 98-99). Metaperspectives can be revealing and freeing.

9. Meditation has long been the cornerstone of advanced contemplative practice and is now the most researched of all contemplative and psychotherapeutic disciplines (Walsh, 2014a, b). It is widely held to foster wisdom, and the famed Rabbi Nachman claimed "One who does not meditate cannot have wisdom" (Buber, 1970, p. 37). As yet, there is no contemporary research on its effects on wisdom or perspectives.

However, certain meditation practices, especially mindfulness and analytic practices, may be helpful, both generally in catalyzing psychological growth, and specifically in enhancing perspectival skills. Mindfulness and analytic practices foster careful observation of experience and disidentification from mental processes, which are both probably central processes in perspectival and metaperspectival skills.

Conclusion

This article offers multiple varieties of evidence and lines of reasoning suggesting that perspectival skills may be central elements of wisdom and essential ways to foster it. As yet there is little research on either wisdom or adult perspectival capacities, and so the suggestions

presented here are initial forays into the relationship between these two important skills. These suggestions are hypotheses that will hopefully in time be tested, and thereby enhance both wisdom and perspectival capacities.

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