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Editorial

Jonathan Reams¹

Welcome to this issue of Integral Review (IR)! We are pleased to welcome you to a new regular issue, which brings together a rich set of interesting articles, essays and reviews.

In the year since our last regular issue, we have gathered a diverse range of articles, essays and reviews that touch on a range of relevant and topical societal issues. This is just the kind of discourse Integral Review was designed to foster, so we are pleased to see this range of articles in the current issue.

In particular, we see the engagement of reviews related to topical issues in public policy broadly in relation health care (COVID-19 and interventions for psychiatric issues) that can inform further research and decision making. We also see the topic of relating moral development with business, which also has significant potential to influence thought and practice in these areas. We also have a look at the transformational power of action research inquiry methods that can inform not only formal research, but also personal practice.

From there, we have a rich discussion of JEDI (no, not Star Wars JEDI) issues from a developmental perspective – the discussion originating in a submission and continuing in an extensive response. We hope this stimulates more such rich discussion in this field and helps inform discourse in that timely public field that is much needed.

An update on work published in the last issue keeps us abreast of progress on an ambitious project worthy of the integral aims. Two essays bring personal insights into weaving together different domains and practices, and a transcript of a conference session from a decade ago offers a rich example of transcultural work. As well, as per usual, we close with a couple of extensive book reviews.

It has been my pleasure as always to be a small part of the process of this collection of works coming to the light of day. I would also note our ongoing commitment, taking at the beginning of our journey with Integral Review, to the open access process. We have undergone a thorough process of updating how we meet the criterion for being registered with the Directory of Open Access Journals, which has been rewarding to be listed there. As well, I recently was reminded that we are listed by EBSCO in the Social Sciences category, giving our authors’ work broad accessibility. I have also noted the significant extent to which our publications show up in google scholar. All of this, on top of the continuing robust numbers of visits to our website and downloads of articles, keeps us grateful that this body of work is able to be available to our community.

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Our peer reviewed section for this issue contains four articles. We begin with Oliver Robinson’s *COVID-19 Lockdown Policies: An Interdisciplinary Review*. This timely article takes a deep dive into four sets of research; biomedical, economic, psychological, and ethical. Each is addressed extensively, covering a wide range of complex analyses done in each field. Combining these and showing the importance of considerations in each domain for policy makers can help them make better informed decisions. As well, a postscript notes that the conclusions of this article are supported with a recent review of the cost-benefit analysis of lockdown measures.

Next, we have *A Relational Approach to Moral Development in Societies, Organizations and Individuals* from Michael F. Mascolo, Allison DiBianca Fasoli and David Greenway. This article brings together research in moral development and applies it to three cases in the field of business, using a relational based approach. The authors lay out the case for how relations between people continuously evolve a set of moral goods that then inform actions. This integration also includes how all of this arises in socially embedded contexts. This extensive elaboration of this perspective is then applied to the domain of business and how moral thinking is inherently integrated rather than separate. This is then illustrated through describing how three business cases integrate morality as an evolving relational process.

Then we have *A Systematic Review of HeartMath© Interventions to Improve Psychological Outcomes in Individuals with Psychiatric Conditions* from Lucy Field, Mark Forshaw and Helen Poole. This article examines research done using HeartMath tools, (see McCratty et al., 2009 in IR for an extensive background to the research behind these tools), with a very specific focus on how they have been able to contribute to addressing psychiatric conditions. The implications of this are significant, in terms taking a proactive, non-invasive approach that does not come with the same costs of traditional interventions, both for individuals and society. This systematic review can provide support and justification for further research in this area.

Our final peer reviewed article is from Hilary Bradbury and Lara Catone: *Cultivating Developmental Reflexivity: ART of Relational Inquiry Methodology for Self and Community Transformation*. This multi-layered article addresses multiple facets of our lives. It engages in the concept and process of inquiry, deepening our appreciation for the transformative depths that are possible. The core focus on action research transformations (ART) focuses this powerfully and elaborates the possibilities present. Two developmental case studies richly illustrate the power of this kind of inquiry. The article closes with a list of key points to consider in assessing quality in utilizing this method in research and in life.

We begin our editorially reviewed section of this issue with an engaging essay from Aftab Erfan, *The Many Faces of JEDI: A Developmental Exploration*. This article shines a developmental lens on the growing body of work on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. Erfan outlines her own position and journey in relation to both sets of work before presenting a rich overview of how each stage of action logic approaches the JEDI issues. Her first-person narrative takes us inside the thinking and motivations of people at each stage and illustrates the developmental journey as it applies to these societal issues. Erfan closes with a set of implications for practice that illuminates the complexity of working with JEDI issues and gives names to aspects of people’s experience that can help move the discourse forward.
Efran’s essay was circulated to various people to get feedback along the way and it stimulated a substantial Response to Erfan from Amiel Handelsman. Handelsman has been active on his own in relation to these issues (this knowledge is from personal correspondence with him over the past couple of years). His substantial response to Erfan’s article elaborates six points about what makes her work important, adding important perspectives that enrich her article. He then goes beyond directly responding to Erfan and outlines his own view, and then contributes three aims that can enlarge the discourse in this field.

In our most recent regular issue (Vol. 16 No. 2, August 2020) we published The Prometheus Leadership Commons: A Meta-Framework for Leadership and Leadership Development. In this issue, Tom Bohinc follows this up with A Promethean Mission – an Update on the Prometheus’ Leadership Framework. Bohinc describes the evolution of the framework to its current 2.0 status. The article begins by covering how various principles have been applied, tensions navigated, and processes engaged. It then describes the actual changes to the framework in version 2.0 how a variety of choices were made in this journey. There is then a section relating results from some focus groups that were run to examine how the framework might be applied for selecting early career leaders. The article closes with a list of future interests and open cautions.

We are pleased to present another essay from Marilyn Monk, Psychosynthesis and the Alexander Technique. This essay brings together her rich experience in both the Alexander Technique and Psychosynthesis. Coming from her practicing profession as a molecular biologist, in this essay she demonstrates other facets of her lived experience in the area of personal growth. Monk’s own training in these methods allows her to show the complementarity of these approaches. Her descriptions integrate historical development of the two approaches with thorough reflects on their application in various life circumstances.

Huw Lloyd has contributed an introduction to some of his work with Relations Between Cognitive Development and Spiritual Practice (Yoga). This essay introduces us to his particular constellation of perspectives on these two areas, integrating a wide range of conceptual frameworks. His conception of ‘the active orientation’ is central to how he weaves together personal experience with discourse on spiritual practices and aspects of cognitive psychology to illustrate what he sees as complementarity between these fields.

Back in 2013, we published a special issue on the Luxembourg Symposium Research Across Boundaries (link). An item that has remained unpublished from this event was a presentation from Enrique Dussel on Transmodernity. In this issue, I have dug up the transcription I made from a video recording from the event that I was able to access and made it as presentable as I could. It was a memorable presentation and gives a truly transcultural insight into the topic of transmodernity. I hope you enjoy it.

We complete this issue with two book reviews. One by Roland Slot and Sveinn Hrobjartsson on Marianne Bozesan’s Integral Investing: From Profit to Prosperity. Bozesan’s work in this area has garnered wide ranging attention for its depth and thoroughness in how she covers the topic and brings her knowledge of Wilber’s integral approach and her personal experience to the topic. Slot and Hrobjartsson provide us an overview of the main text of the book and then provide us with three thoughts for further considerations.
The second review is by Heikki Jyväsjärvi on Eeva Kallio’s anthology *Development of adult thinking: Interdisciplinary perspectives on cognitive development and adult learning*. Jyväsjärvi gives us an extensive summary of the arguments Kallio makes for the need for this anthology. He then presents a summary of each of the book chapters, enabling us to have a good feel for the value of this rich presentation of thinking in the field.

Enjoy this issue!
COVID-19 Lockdown Policies: An Interdisciplinary Review

Dr Oliver C. Robinson

Abstract: Lockdown interventions employed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have been evaluated via research at biomedical, economic, psychological, and ethical levels of analysis. The aim of this article is to evaluate arguments from these four perspectives simultaneously within an interdisciplinary biopsychosocial review to help inform the political and scientific debate surrounding them. Biomedical evidence from the early months of the pandemic suggests that lockdowns were associated with a reduced viral reproductive rate, but that less restrictive measures also had a similar effect. Lockdowns are associated with reduced COVID-19 mortality in epidemiological modelling studies but not in studies based on empirical data from the COVID-19 pandemic. Psychological research supports the proposition that lockdowns may exacerbate stressors such as social isolation and unemployment that have been shown to be strong predictors of falling ill if exposed to a respiratory virus. Studies at the economic level of analysis points to the possibility that deaths associated with economic harms or underfunding of other health issues may outweigh the deaths that lockdowns save, and that the extremely high financial cost of lockdowns may have negative implications for overall population health in terms of diminished resources for treating other conditions. Research on ethics in relation to lockdowns points to the inevitability of value judgements in balancing different kinds of harms and benefits than lockdowns cause. Suggestions for future research are provided to promote an increasingly fine-grained and nuanced evaluation of these policies.

Keywords: COVID-19, ethics, government interventions, health policy, health psychology, interdisciplinary, lockdown.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a dilemma for governments across the world: whether to enforce lockdown interventions to reduce the spread of COVID-19, in the knowledge that such policies contain the potential for harms as well as benefits in managing the pandemic. The academic purpose of this paper is to present a multi-layered interdisciplinary analysis of lockdown measures, via a review of the biomedical, economic, psychological, and ethical arguments for and against them. The practical aim of the review is to act as a resource to help inform future decisions about whether lockdown measures are empirically and ethically justifiable given the complex and varied costs and benefits attached to them.

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Lockdown measures are interventions enacted by governments in response to a pandemic that have all of the following three features (OECD, 2020): (a) A stay-at-home order and/or the requirement to not socialise with other households; (b) the forced temporary closure of businesses, schools and hospitality venues within a region, state or nation; and (c) legal statutes to ensure that violation of these restrictions is a criminal offence punishable by arrest, fine and in some countries such as India, up to two years in prison (Times of India, 2020).

Within these common parameters, lockdown interventions show considerable variety. They vary in duration, relation to the timeframe of a pandemic, severity of measures imposed, and penalties applied for not complying with measures. In terms of the variability in severity of measures, several governments have applied restrictive measures that have been called a lockdown in the media but do not qualify as one by the standard definition presented above. For example, Norway and Finland implemented restrictive measures early in the pandemic such as school closures, limits on the size of gatherings and guidance to work from home, but neither country implemented a stay-at-home order or restrictions on household mixing.

Lockdown measures are a 2020 innovation in pandemic response measures. They have no prior precedent apart from city-wide measures taken in the 1600s to manage plague outbreaks and a lockdown-type intervention involving the complete sealing off of Hoping hospital in Taiwan during the SARS outbreak (Cheung, 2020). The World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines to handling pandemics published in 2019 does not refer to them. Business and school closures are mentioned in that document as measures of last resort, but there is no mention of stay-at-home orders or restrictions on household-mixing or gatherings (World Health Organisation, 2019). Similarly, lockdown measures are not mentioned in the UK Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Strategy (Department of Health, 2011).

Given the lack of precedent for lockdown policies in pandemic response literature, their mass adoption this year requires explaining. One reason is that China was the first to get the virus and the first to respond with lockdowns and the World Health Organisation then supported their approach, encouraging other countries to follow. China’s enforced mass quarantine response was in line with its authoritarian approach to governance (Ma, 2018). China enforced a stay-at-home order in the Wuhan province for two months, with punishments for those who disobeyed. The World Health Organisation then wrote a report in February 2020 in which it appraised these measures in broadly positive terms: “China’s uncompromising and rigorous use of non-pharmaceutical measures to contain transmission of the COVID-19 virus in multiple settings provides vital lessons for the global response.” (WHO, 2020, p.19)

The next country to experience a major outbreak of COVID-19 was Italy, and the government decided to copy China and implement a stay-at-home lockdown across its northern region. Soon after, Spain and Peru implemented lockdowns, then dozens of other countries followed within a matter of several weeks. Lockdowns had suddenly become the de-facto pandemic response strategy, as countries followed China’s lead (Whipple, 2020). Despite previous conclusions in pandemic science that keeping society functioning as normally as possible was the best way of
maintaining population health during a pandemic (Inglesby et al., 2006), the world was launched into a social-political-scientific experiment that continued for the whole of 2020 and into 2021.²

There is an important difference between lockdowns used within countries employing ‘suppression strategies’ and those employing ‘elimination strategies’ in response to COVID-19 (Baker, Wilson & Blakely, 2020). Of the 180+ countries that have reported COVID-19 cases, as of January 2021, four are currently pursuing an elimination strategy. These are China, Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand. In these countries, the aim is to maintain cases of COVID-19 close to zero. The fundamentals of this approach are: (1) complete border closures to foreign nationals until herd immunity is achieved via vaccine, (2) strict quarantine for nationals returning from overseas, (3) highly developed test-and-trace systems, and (4) strict local lockdowns to contain outbreaks. In China, another mechanism at the centre of their elimination approach is mass surveillance via a governmental tracking app (Mozur, Zhong & Krolik, 2020; Zhouziang, 2020). It is expected that the borders of these four countries may remain closed until 2022, with possible exceptions of travel corridors between the countries (Mazzoni, 2020). An elimination strategy requires a number of features: (a) implementation early in the pandemic, (b) a highly developed public health system and IT infrastructure, (c) sufficient affluence to afford the absence of tourist and business travel for up to two years, (d) the capacity to totally close borders. In relation to this last point, three of the four countries are island nations with no land borders, and China, the exception to this, is using military force to maintain fully closed land borders.

The elimination strategy is not available as an option for emerging economies that have neither the infrastructure for such a policy nor the economic resilience to afford a full border closure for up to several years. It is also problematic for many wealthy countries for a variety of reasons. For European Union countries, closing themselves from the rest of the EU for several years is not viable given that the EU is premised on freedom of movement between member states. In the UK, closing the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland for a matter of years is not possible given the Good Friday Agreement. In the USA, states rather than the federal government set COVID-19 policy and there is no way of closing a state off from the rest of the USA. In sum, the elimination strategy remains an option for only a select number of countries.

The potential costs of the elimination approach will be known after the pandemic is over. For example, as of July 2021, much of Australia is currently having to go into another strict lockdown due to rising cases and its adherence to a zero COVID-19 ethos, while much of the rest of the world, including the USA and UK, is opening up. For a comprehensive review of the costs and benefits of it, see Baker, Wilson and Blakely (2020). Crucially, the elimination strategy requires local lockdowns to contain outbreaks. It cannot work without them. Suppression strategies, in which the virus circulates but government measures are taken to manage and slow it, do not inherently require lockdowns. Some countries and states that are employing suppression strategies have implemented lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic, but some

²Inglesby et al. (2006, p.373) concluded “An overriding principle. Experience has shown that communities faced with epidemics or other adverse events respond best and with the least anxiety when the normal social functioning of the community is least disrupted. Strong political and public health leadership to provide reassurance and to ensure that needed medical care services are provided are critical elements. If either is seen to be less than optimal, a manageable epidemic could move toward catastrophe.”
have not. The review of the evidence presented below pertains to those countries and states employing suppression strategies.

**Moral Reasoning and Complexity in the Context of COVID-19 Lockdowns**

A moral dilemma is a decision-making scenario that has a range of possible outcomes that *all* lead to some amount of harm and/or distress. The issue of lockdown as a pandemic response is an example of a moral dilemma: both enacting and not enacting the intervention leads to negative consequences for some. It is a particularly complex moral dilemma for several reasons. Firstly, the construct of lockdown itself is complex and multifaceted. A lockdown is in fact a composite of various non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), which are combined by governments in different ways. Instead of seeing lockdown as an either-or matter, Altman (2020) argues that they can be conceived in more pluralistic and nuanced way. The range of policies classified together as lockdowns, and the different effects of short-term and long-term ones, means that simply being ‘for’ or ‘against’ will miss a range of intermediary positions. For example, many health professionals in the UK who supported the March-June lockdown did not support lockdown measures applied from September onwards. A good example of this is an open letter from 77 primary care physicians to the British government written in September 2020, which argued that despite their support for the first lockdown, further lockdowns would cause more harm than benefit and so should be avoided (Haynes, 2020).

A popular but artificially simplistic portrayal in the media or in debate is of the lockdown advocate pitted against the lockdown sceptic (e.g. Melnick & Ioannidis, 2020). This is perhaps helpful for debate purposes, but it tends to drive an over-simplistic dualism in media arguments that the only alternative to lockdown measures is letting the virus ‘rip’ through a population uninhibited (Hamzelou, 2020). This is a complete misunderstanding of the range of non-pharmaceutical interventions available during a pandemic, most of which, unlike lockdowns, have a heritage of published research prior to 2020. Haug et al. (2020), whose work is discussed earlier in this article, list dozens of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) and their relative effectiveness that are not lockdowns, such as border restrictions, banning small gatherings or mass gatherings, quarantining cases, tracking and tracing, public transport restrictions, shielding vulnerable individuals, mask mandates and strategies for communicating information to the public.

A second source of complexity in the lockdown dilemma is the fact that effects of lockdown policies are varied in timing and duration, while spanning biomedical, economic, developmental and psychological outcomes. Altman (2020, p.31) argues that politicians have been focused on COVID-19 statistics to the detriment of considering other effects, due to employing “very narrow and simplistic mental models” and “poor heuristics” to direct policy. Effects of lockdowns include changes to the number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations and mortality, but also changing rates of other physical and mental illnesses, plus levels of unemployment, business closures, poverty, and child development. Some of these effects are immediate and short-lived, some are delayed and may last years. Balancing the varied costs of these outcomes requires value judgements, hence a purely objective approach to the dilemma is impossible. For example, what is worse, the death of an 82-year old or a 13-year old who develops a serious
mental health problem that lasts for the rest of his life? The answer to that question is an ethical, not a scientific, matter.

As moral reasoning develops with age and experience, the complexity of moral dilemmas that can be meaningfully engaged with increases. At the heart of moral reasoning theory is how people respond to moral dilemmas (Robinson, 2020). The psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) theorised that there are predictable, sequential stages of moral reasoning that develop with age, which can be grouped into three main levels; pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. Pre-conventional moral reasoning (typical of young children) is founded on self-centred concerns about whether or not rewards or punishments will be received for a particular action. Here, the basis for morality is not within the self, but rather is an authority such as parents or teacher. Conventional moral reasoning (typical of adolescence onwards) is based on internalising societal conventions of what is right or wrong, and acting morally at this level is seen as integral to citizenship within a society. Post-conventional moral reasoning is based on principled reasoning about situations, based on a weighing-up of evidence and risk, while considering ethical principles such as honesty, wellbeing, liberty and justice. This capacity is typically developed in adulthood, but not all individuals reach a post-conventional level (Colby et al., 1983). This stage-based sequence of moral reasoning has been supported in a variety of studies (e.g. Armon & Dawson, 1997).

My aim with the interdisciplinary analysis presented below is to provide a post-conventional consideration of the dilemma of lockdown, which represents the full complexity of the issue, by looking at the problem from biomedical, economic, psychological and ethical levels. All these levels are important in informing a holistic and nuanced conclusion about whether lockdowns are efficacious and ethically acceptable. All these levels of analysis come to bear on a question that is ultimately moral in nature; can the harms caused by lockdown measures be justified by the extent to which they lessen illness and mortality?

The Biomedical Level of Analysis: Effects of Lockdowns on Cases and Mortality

Research on lockdowns at the biomedical level of analysis focuses on the relationship of governmental pandemic interventions to numbers of positive tests, case growth over time, and mortality. The principle argument for enacting lockdowns at this level of analysis is that they temporally reduced hospital admissions and deaths, via reducing the transmission of viruses between individuals for the period over which the intervention is applied. There is a fast-growing body of evidence that can be used to evaluate whether lockdowns achieve this objective.

Studies that qualified for inclusion in this section on biomedical outcomes were published peer-reviewed articles from March 2020 to January 2021, via the databases MEDLINE and EBSCO Health Sciences database, via one of the following search terms “Government interventions, Distancing interventions, Lockdown” and one of the following search terms: “COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, coronavirus”. Studies were included that contained empirical data on the association between NPIs and cases or NPIs and mortality, either as part of a natural experiment study or a modelling study.
Research Comparing Countries and States

One of the main methods that has been employed to ascertain if lockdowns are associated with reduced cases and deaths has been the comparison of mortality and cases across countries or states that have applied different levels of governmental response. The following country-comparison studies have studied case numbers in relation to government interventions including lockdowns, and the growing consensus is that lockdowns do reduce the case growth (termed the reproductive number or $R$), for COVID-19.

Haug et al. (2020) used data on interventions and cases in 226 countries up to 17th August 2020 to run an analysis of the relationship between different government interventions and growth in cases over time. It was found that the most effective method for reducing the rate of growth in cases was small gathering cancellation, followed by school closures and border restrictions. They found that lockdowns do reduce the rate of case growth, but they conclude that “a suitable combination (sequence and time of implementation) of a smaller package of such measures can substitute for a full lockdown in terms of effectiveness, while reducing adverse impacts on society, the economy, the humanitarian response system and the environment.” (Haug et al., 2020, p.1309).

Li et al. (2020) studied data from 131 countries up to June 2020 and found that a decreasing case growth rate over a period of 28 days was associated with school closures, workplace closures, banning public events and a regulation to stay at home where possible. The study also found that while introducing restrictions generally led to a reduction in case growth of 3-24% after 28 days, lifting them led to increases of 11-25%.

Brauner et al. (2020) analysed effects of seven interventions (gatherings limited to 1000 people or less, gatherings limited to 100 people or less, gatherings limited to 10 people or less, some businesses closed, non-essential businesses closed, educational establishments closed, and stay-at-home orders) between 22nd of January and the 30th of May 2020, across 34 European countries and 7 non-European countries. They found that closing educational institutions, limiting gatherings to 10 people or less, and closing face-to-face businesses reduced transmission considerably. However, they found that the benefit of stay-at-home orders, which is the core of a lockdown intervention, was lower in effect than all six other interventions and they describe it as a small effect compared with the large or moderate effects of the other 6 interventions.

Bendavid et al. (2021) studied COVID-19 case growth over time in subnational regions of 10 Northern Hemisphere countries between February and April 2020: England, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, South Korea, Sweden and the US. They found that implementing non-pharmaceutical interventions was associated with significant reductions in case growth in 9 out of 10 study countries, including South Korea and Sweden (only Spain had a non-significant effect). The study found no benefit of restrictive lockdown interventions compared with the less restrictive interventions applied in Sweden and South Korea. In France, the application of lockdown was associated with higher levels of case growth rates compared with Sweden and South Korea. The study concludes that less restrictive measures generally lead to the same case growth rates as lockdowns.


Islam et al. (2020) looked at government interventions across 149 countries. All the countries in the analysis had implemented at least one physical distancing intervention (closures of schools, workplaces, and public transport, restrictions on mass gatherings and public events, and restrictions on movement (lockdowns)) between 1st January and 30th May 2020. They found that implementing measures without lockdowns led to a greater reduction in cases than those with a lockdown. Overall, they found that the implementation of all these measures reduced the incidence of COVID-19 by a modest 13%. There was a 4% difference in incidence between countries who implemented a lockdown earlier (14% reduction) compared with ones that implemented later (10% reduction).

In summary, the current research suggests that lockdowns do bring down case growth rates but no more so than more moderate and less restrictive interventions. Now I move onto summarising studies on lockdowns and mortality. Firstly, Chaudhry et al. (2020) compared COVID-19 case numbers and mortality data across 50 countries, based on data up to 1st May 2020. They also assessed these countries for the implementation of travel restrictions and containment measures including partial and full lockdown. They found that, in these early months of the pandemic, mortality rates were associated with higher obesity, higher GDP-per-capita, and higher income inequality, but there was no association found between mortality and the use of full lockdown measures.

Secondly, Bjørnskov (2021) investigated the association between severity of lockdown policies in 24 European countries in the first six months of 2020 and excess mortality (all-cause mortality, so not specific to COVID-19). No association between lockdown and mortality was found. Indeed, countries that applied a relatively severe lockdown experienced 372 excess deaths per million, while countries with relatively light restrictions only experienced excess mortality of 123 excess deaths per million.

Thirdly, De Larochelambert et al. (2020) in an analysis of 188 countries, using data up to August 31st 2020, found that high COVID-19 mortality was predicted by a country having higher life-expectancy, higher prevalence of chronic diseases such as cancer and heart disease, along with a high level of metabolic risk factors such as an inactive lifestyle and obesity. The stringency of government lockdown response was not associated with mortality.

Fourthly, Meo et al. (2020) compared lockdown measures across 27 randomly selected countries. Prevalence and mortality were measured 15 days before, 15 days during, and 15 days after the lockdown. There was no significant decline found in prevalence or mortality at the 15 day after measurement, when compared with 15 days before or 15 days during the lockdown.

Fifthly, Savaris et al. (2021) conducted an analysis of 87 regions of the world between February and August 2020, focusing on the relationship between deaths and stay-at-home orders. They used a time-series analysis to compare countries that had steady or declining death rates with similar countries were deaths were increasing. Google COVID-19 Community Mobility Reports were used an indicator of stay-at-home orders. They found “no evidence that the number of deaths/million is reduced by staying at home” (Savaris et al., 2021, p.8).
In contrast, one study by Sornette et al. (2020) that looked at 35 countries (European and North American) found an inverse association between the number of deaths during the 20 days following the date at which cases passed 1 per million within a country and the stringency of government measures 20 days before that date (to allow for the delay between infection and death). Almost all the countries on the intervention census date were still in the first half of March and so had not yet implemented a lockdown. For example, Italy, which had the earliest lockdown on March 9th, but this study looked at their interventions on March 2nd. Thus, this analysis is principally about the effect of interventions enacted prior to lockdowns.

The evidence from cross-country and cross-state comparison studies reviewed above is that lockdowns contribute to lowering the reproduction rate of the virus but that some other more moderate policies such as small gathering cancellation may be more effective than blanket lockdowns (Haug et al., 2020). Such evidence is further supported by within-country analyses that have looked at changes following interventions, such as Dehning et al.’s (2020) analysis of German interventions and found that banning small gatherings was particularly effective, and that a combination of interventions in April 2020 helped to reduce the $R$ rate. The association between lockdowns and mortality shown by these cross-country and cross-state studies is very limited. The provisional conclusion is that there is no link between lockdown and mortality over the period of the pandemic that has elapsed to the end of 2020.

A caution with all the above research is that the studies are correlational, and there are a range of extraneous variables that can influence how a country or state fares in terms of case and mortality numbers, including population density, ethnic composition, COVID-19 testing capacity/methods, and the way that such data are reported. For example on the latter point, COVID-19 deaths are not defined in the same way across all countries (Sornette et al., 2020). Many of the studies described above do attempt to control for confounding variables, for example obesity and climate, but that does not preclude the possibility of others. Thus, the literature should, despite becoming increasingly consistent and clear, be treated with continued caution.

Computer Modelling Research

A different approach to analysing the effect of government interventions is via computer simulation of the no-intervention scenario. Flaxman et al. (2020) used this approach, looking at deaths attributable to COVID-19 across 11 European countries between February and early May. They modelled the combined effect of social distancing, self-isolation of infected individuals, banning of public events, school closure and stay-at-home orders, and so was not specific to lockdown. The researchers compared the actual mortality in these countries over February-May with a computer simulation of the scenario where no actions had been taken at all. Based on that, the article concluded that the interventions taken by these nations may have reduced COVID-19 deaths by 3 million.

Several commentaries have been critical of Flaxman’s study. Soltesz et al. (2020) take issue with Flaxman et al. using their findings to argue that lockdown is effective, as according to the same modelling approach, the public events ban in Sweden was as effective as lockdowns in 10 other countries at driving down infection rates. Kuhbandner and Homburg (2020) in a
commentary on the article presented evidence that the lockdown in the UK (one of the countries in Flaxman et al.’s study) had no effect on deaths at all, given the typical 23-day delay from infection to death. They show that growth was already declining by the time the lockdown would have influenced death rates and there was no shift at all in the downward trajectory of deaths when the lockdown would have potentially come into an effect. Wood (2021) reached the same conclusion in his analysis; infections were in decline before the implementation of lockdowns in the UK.

An epidemiological simulation study by Hsiang et al. (2020) modelled changes in case numbers over time between February and May 2020 across six countries (China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, France and USA) and concluded that, when compared with the computer scenario of no interventions taken, government containment interventions as a whole had reduced the growth rate of infections by a substantial and statistically significant amount. Their conclusion was that these public health policies had slowed the COVID-19 pandemic, and that, up to May, the number of cases and deaths had been reduced.

A limitation of all the aforementioned simulation studies is that they assume a continued exponential rise of virus cases means a doubling every two days in the absence of interventions indefinitely, but research has shown that virus case growth does not continue on a path of exponential growth; infection rates slow and decline of their own accord without any government intervention over a period of approximately 8 weeks (Ben-Israel, 2020). This hypothesis was put to the test when South Dakota had a high surge of COVID-19 infections in October 2020 and subsequently implemented no lockdown or business closures. The surge peaked in mid-October and cases returned close to normal seasonal levels in December, suggesting that 2 months is an appropriate estimate of the timeframe for a virus surge to decline without the use of restrictive interventions. This fact that there is natural remission from exponential growth without intervention means that Hsiang et al. (2020) computer simulations of the no policy scenario were likely overestimations.

In summary, the computer simulation research on combined government interventions has modelled the effect of all public health interventions versus a hypothetical scenario of no interventions taken at all and has concluded that the interventions have been instrumental in slowing the growth of the pandemic over the early months of February to May. What they don’t show is the relative merits of lockdowns versus other measures. These models have also been based on parameters about virus growth, population susceptibility and lockdown effectiveness that have been questioned by critics. For example, Chin et al. (2021) describe these models as non-robust and highly sensitive to model specification and parameter selection. The models have also assumed that lowering infection rates also lowers deaths in proportion. However, the cross-country studies suggest that this assumption is unfounded. This may be because the varied collateral damages of lockdowns mean that while case numbers are lowered, susceptibility to serious illness and hence death is increased. I flesh out that claim over the course of the article.

The Biomedical Costs of Lockdown

A limitation with all the research studies discussed above is that they give no or minimal attention to the negative effects of lockdown in their evaluations of whether they work or not.
(VanderWeele, 2020). This is equivalent to assessing the efficacy of a drug that has potentially deadly side-effects without any mention of the side-effects.

A key concern about lockdown policies, particularly stay-at-home policies, is that they lead to a decline in uptake of other important health services (Bodilsen et al., 2021). For example, lockdown in the UK led to a 70% decline in cancer referrals (Miles et al, 2020). The drop in cancer diagnosis and treatment has led some cancer specialists to suggest that a cancer pandemic may follow the COVID-19 pandemic (Hanna et al., 2020). An analysis of excess deaths in the UK from delay in cancer treatment during the March-June lockdown suggests that from breast cancer, lung cancer, colorectal cancer, and oesophageal cancer, over a period of 5 years following the pandemic there will be approximately 3300 to 3600 additional deaths. In light of the young age of many of these individuals, the total years lost to life from this cancer surge is calculated at approximately 59,000–63,000 (Maringe et al., 2020).

The challenge with interpreting reduced uptake of other health services during lockdowns is that the extent of such reduction in the event of no lockdown is unclear. People are likely to avoid hospital and medical appointments due to fear of a pandemic virus anyway, irrespective of lockdown injunctions. Future country comparison research on this will help to resolve this question, but until then the matter remains ambiguous.

A final issue in terms of negative effects of extended lockdowns on physical health is the drop in exercise and activity that is evidenced in a proportion of the population (Sport England, 2020). Exercise has been shown to enhance immunity to disease, so when a higher proportion of the population become inactive during lockdown, it is plausible that more individuals will become susceptible to illness when exposed to COVID-19 (Valenzuela et al. 2020).

The Economic Level of Analysis: Cost-benefit Calculations of the Effects of Lockdown

Financial resources for funding medical treatments and interventions are finite. Trade-offs must be made, as money used to fight one disease means funds being unavailable to treat or prevent others (Thomas & Stupples, 2006). A concept that is used by many countries to justify whether a treatment or intervention is worth the cost, in an environment of finite resources, is the “Quality adjusted year of life” or QALY (NICE, 2013; Bertram et al., 2016). One quality-adjusted life year (QALY) is one year of life in good health. Hence, when a young person dies, there is a greater loss of QALYs than when an older person dies. In the UK, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence has a metric to determine whether a treatment is cost-effective and thus should be adopted (i.e. that money is not better spent to save lives and alleviate suffering elsewhere). This metric is £20,000 to £30,000 per QALY saved (NICE, 2013). Other countries set the bar at different levels, but all health services require some kind of quantification in this regard.

Miles et al. (2020) conducted an economic analysis of the costs and benefits of the March-June 2020 lockdown in the UK. They analysed the potential lives saved by the March-June lockdown, on the premise that lockdowns do indeed save lives, then considered the costs of the lockdown in terms of reduced GDP. They found that in all their various calculations, the costs
outweigh the benefits by at least £59 billion (2 million QALYs), and up to £547 billion (approx. 20 million QALYs). The authors concluded, “This suggests that the costs of continuing severe restrictions are so great relative to likely benefits in lives saved that a rapid easing in restrictions is now warranted” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 1).

One other cost-benefit analysis conducted by Israeli researchers found that a lockdown for 200 days would cost $45,000,000 per saved death, and as such governments should consider this very high economic price when deciding on how long to implement national lockdown interventions, given the inevitable toll on other public services and health services that are affected by reduced funds available (Shlomai et al., 2020).

A multi-faceted analysis of the economic and ethical implications of measures taken by governments conducted by Reddy (2020) expresses concerns that the expenditure and resources invested in lockdowns and other non-pharmaceutical interventions are not proportionate and will, overall, decrease the aggregate population health over time. For example, he makes the point that a 4.9% reduction in world GDP is predicted this year as a result of lockdowns, which is approximately US$4 trillion. If a world GDP growth of 2% is assumed as the counterfactual for 2020 (lower than recent years), then the cost of non-pharmaceutical interventions taken to combat COVID-19 would exceed US$5 trillion, which is greater than the total global annual expenditure on all other health issues prior to the crisis.

Reddy (2020) says serious questions must be raised whether lockdowns will, in fact, lower, rather than increase, overall population health over time, due to other health objectives that have lower cost and higher benefit being deprioritised. Consider the following figures as an example: The UK has spent £280 billion on fighting COVID-19, which is considerably higher than the total spending on health and social care in a typical year in the UK, while $2.6 trillion has been spent in response to COVID-19 in the USA. Meanwhile, the Gates Foundation has estimated that global eradication of malaria by the year 2040 would cost approximately $120 billion. Such an initiative would potentially save 11 million lives (Savulescu et al., 2020).

A further key issue at the economic level of analysis pertains to the number of individuals being pushed into poverty and/or unemployment during the pandemic. The World Bank has estimated that 150 million people may be pushed into extreme poverty during the pandemic (World Bank, 2020). The Charity UNICEF have explicitly linked this increase in poverty to the negative effects of lockdown policies (UNICEF, 2020), as have other researchers (Broadbent et al., 2020). There is a moderate correlation between GDP-per-capita and life expectancy (0.31 in developed countries, 0.47 in emerging/developing countries), and also between total health expenditure per capita and life expectancy (0.23 in developed countries and 0.51 in developing countries) (Biciunaite, 2014). Thus, we should expect to see a lowering of average life expectancy associated with the declining GDP due to the COVID-19 recessions across the world, and that this will hit emerging economies hardest.

Another form of economic cost-benefit analysis conducted by Thomas (2020a, 2020b and 2020c) has focused on the effect of lockdowns on decreased GDP and hence on mortality. This was established methodology based on a calculation called the J-value, which considers the trade-off between safety-increasing effects and loss of income due to the costs of
implementation. The essence of this approach is to look at the change to years of life expectancy (which is very like the QALY concept) that a particular safety intervention brings. In relation to COVID-19 lockdowns, the cost is modelled as the effect on GDP. GDP is a very strong predictor of life expectancy; Thomas’ J-value, based on GDP, explains 80 per cent of the variation in life expectancy across 162 nations (Thomas, 2020c). In other words, on average, the wealthier a country is, the longer its people live.

Thomas calculated that a 13% reduction in GDP for the UK was probable, along with an estimate based on previous recessions that the country does not return to pre-pandemic levels until 2022. The increased impoverishment that this economic shrinkage causes will lead to the loss of 34.9 million years of life expectancy, which is the equivalent loss of 830,000 lives, given the life expectancy of the average UK citizen (Thomas, 2020). Even a scenario in which the pandemic is not controlled by any lockdown, the number of lives lost to the pandemic is a small fraction of the total lost to economic decline and increased poverty. Thomas thus concludes that lockdowns are remedies that may well have costs far worse than the pandemic (Thomas, 2020c).

A potential criticism of this cost-benefit approach is that GDP will be depressed in a pandemic anyway, so it is uncertain how much of GDP reduction is due to the lockdown. Sweden, with no lockdowns implemented, is a useful comparison in this regard; its economy is predicted to shrink by 2.9% during 2020, which is one of the lowest GDP declines in Europe despite mortality rates that are about average across European states (Reuters, 2020). Therefore, we have reasons to believe that lockdowns contribute to the majority of GDP losses.

Closely related to the issue of poverty is the increase in unemployment due to business closures and stay-at-home orders that have been implemented by countries around the world. For example, 400,000 more people in the UK were unemployed in December 2020 than in December 2019 (ONS, 2020). Approximately 5 million more people in the USA were unemployed in November 2020 than in February 2020 (Duffin, 2020), while more than 97,000 businesses had permanently shut across the US during the pandemic up to September 2020 (Sraders & Lambert, 2020). Unemployment is a high-risk factor for mortality. A meta-analysis of the relationship between unemployment and mortality found that the risk of death for unemployed persons was 63% higher than the risk of death for employed persons (Roelfs et al., 2011). While this can be partly explained by chronically ill individuals being more likely to be unemployed, another explanation for this link is that the stress of unemployment has been found to lead to markers of accelerated physical ageing at the genetic level (Ala-Mursala et al., 2013). A further concern is that unemployment rate has a close relationship with suicide rate; Canadian data shows that a 1% increase in unemployment leads to 1% increase in suicide (McIntyre & Lee, 2020), or as much as 2% (Samson & Sherry, 2020). Although suicide numbers overall are small compared with pandemic deaths, they tend to occur in younger adults and so equate to more quality-adjusted years of life (i.e. QALYs) lost.

There is evidence to support the proposition that economic problems driven by lockdowns are associated with mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hasell (2020) has found a strong positive relationship between economic downturns caused by heavy lockdown measures and

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3 GPD UK loss from February to October 2020 was 8% according to the Office of National Statistics, thus 13% this is likely to be accurate when the November and January lockdowns are also factored in.
COVID-19 mortality. Peru is a case study in this regard. It implemented one of the toughest and earliest lockdowns in the world (Hannan, 2020). On March 16 2020, when there were only 28 confirmed cases, Peru closed its borders and imposed extreme limitations on freedom of movement. Public transport and cars were banned. Men and women were only allowed to leave their home on alternate days for essential purposes. The restrictions were enforced by the army. This cut down movement and mobility within the country by 89% - more than any other Latin American country (Jaramillo, 2020). Peru has remained in various levels of lockdown for much of the year since then. The effect on the economy of these measures has been stark; the percentage decline in GDP has been the highest of any country in the world, at over 30% (Hasell, 2020). Despite the severe lockdown, as of December 2020 Peru had the fifth worst fatality rate in the world out of 218 countries (Worldometer, 2020). Peru has similar demographics to its neighbours in South America and its health system has similar capacity, so this cannot account for its outlier status in terms of the high numbers of deaths. While there may be an as-yet-unexplained differentiating factor to explain its high mortality rate, one factor that makes Peru unusual relative to neighbouring countries is the extremity and duration of the lockdown measures it employed. Most people in Peru are in the informal economy and work in agriculture, mining and fishing. Most are paid in cash and have little or no savings (ILO, 2018), meaning that Peruvians need money weekly to feed their family. Therefore, for some it may have been a matter of stay in lockdown and starve, or break quarantine to feed your family (Piper, 2020). There is of course also little opportunity for working-from-home compared with developed countries that implemented similar lockdowns and there was no salary furlough scheme as there was in more affluent countries that enacted lockdowns. The sudden poverty, stress and malnutrition that this kind of extreme lockdown drives up in countries like Peru may drive up susceptibility to illness in ways that outweigh the benefits of reduced transmission of the virus. This would at least explain Peru’s contradiction between early and extreme lockdown and very high COVID-19 mortality.

One final consideration at the economic level of analysis is whether the approach to the pandemic taken this year is sustainable as an approach to pandemics going forward. If there were another pandemic in 5 years’ time, could countries afford to take this same approach again? Many countries will likely still be dealing with the effects of the post-COVID recession, the weight of their increased national debt, and the deleterious effects on social cohesion and mortality that high unemployment brings (World Bank, 2020). It is therefore doubtful that this year’s response represents an economically sustainable solution to global pandemics (Farsalinos et al., 2020; Gurdasani et al., 2020).

The Psychological Level of Analysis: The Desire for Paternalism vs Effects of Lockdowns on Loneliness, Anxiety and Behaviour

The psychological level of analysis considers the effects of lockdowns on thinking, emotion and behaviour, along with how these may have impacts on health outcomes. This level of understanding, so often omitted from media coverage, may be key to understanding the reasons why lockdowns do not have notable efficacy over more moderate or voluntary measures.

The first argument in favour of lockdown measures is that it may be what most people want, hence they have a democratic mandate. Polls in the UK showing high support for lockdown
attest to this (Ibbetson, 2020; Smith, 2020). The psychologist Erich Fromm, in his famous book *Escape from Freedom* (1941), theorised that when people perceive an increase in disorder and danger within their community or environment, they feel an existential anxiety that breeds a desire for safety and security via paternalistic and authoritarian forms of governance. An example of this is seen in the actions and rising popularity of Markus Söder, Minister President of the German state of Bavaria. He intentionally implemented more draconian restrictions than other German states, such as a stay-at-home order (only one other state implemented this, while other states did not), and fines of up to €25,000 for non-compliance compared with no fines in some other states (Chae & Park, 2020). Söder was explicit about this approach being paternalistic – he said "in a crisis, people often want Father to come and sort it out." (Rujevic, 2020). Söder’s popularity increased exponentially as a result of his firm approach in the early months of the pandemic (Hockenos, 2020). However, the strict measures applied in Bavaria have not worked. They appear to have been less effective than the more moderate measures taken in other states; Bavaria has had the second highest COVID-19 mortality per capita of 16 German states, as of December 20th 2020. It has over double the mortality rate of seven of these states (Statista.com, 2020).

Another psychological argument presented to support lockdown is that lockdowns reduce the amount of post-traumatic stress disorder associated with bereavement and illness. For example, the UK government has justified its tiered system of mandatory enforcements by arguing that it is likely to lessen the burden from post-traumatic stress disorder, by limiting the number of those infected and who go on to suffer from severe illness (HM Government, 2020). The assumption here is that lockdown measures reduce symptomatic infection more than other non-pharmaceutical measures. The biomedical research reviewed earlier in the article does not provide clear support for this assumption currently.

Contrary to the claims of the UK government that lockdowns reduce anxiety, researchers have found that anxiety and depression both increase with the duration of lockdowns and that lockdowns are a serious threat to mental health (Fiorillo et al., 2020). Research in China also found that anxiety levels in a population go down when lockdowns are eased from 30% to 21% (Lu et al., 2020).

Another study using data from China in February and March found that depression was higher in the lockdown group but fear was not (Gan et al., 2020). In support of this, previous research on the effects of quarantines in prior pandemics suggest that they are related to depression (Brooks et al., 2020).

A recent review study by Cohen (2020) presents the compelling evidence from several decades of studies to show that psychological stress is a robust predictor of whether a person gets ill when exposed to a coronavirus or influenza virus, along with smoking and inadequate Vitamin C intake. The stressful events that were most predictive of coronavirus symptoms were interpersonal stressors and being unemployed. On the other hand, strong predictors of not getting ill when exposed to such viruses included social support and physical activity. Cohen concludes that lockdown interventions may increase susceptibility to COVID-19 due to their potential for stressors such as unemployment and social isolation, and the closing of environments where individuals retain physical fitness.
Loneliness and Lockdown

The effects of extended lockdown measures in 2020 on loneliness has been researched, and the most recent conclusion is that loneliness may itself be a silent epidemic running alongside the pandemic (Sharpe, 2021). A longitudinal study of 1545 US adults found that from January to April 2020 there was no mean-level increase in loneliness (Luchetti et al., 2020). But as 2020 progressed, the statistics showed growing levels of loneliness. A more recent survey published in December 2020 found that 65% of US adults living under lockdown measures expressed high levels of loneliness, compared with 48% of those living without such restrictions (Killgore et al., 2020). A study from the UK found that loneliness rates in the UK increased from 10% before lockdown to 24% in lockdown (Mental Health Foundation, 2020). As of February 2021, the Office of National Statistics found that levels of loneliness had increased from Spring 2020, up to almost double the national average (Moss & England, 2021).

In the UK, some parts of the country have been under policies that ban almost all social interaction with people outside of one’s own household for over four months in total since the start of the pandemic. Correspondingly, a recent report from the Office of National Statistics suggests that loneliness levels in the UK continued to rise all the way from March 2020 to November 2020 (Coughlan, 2020). A study that compared loneliness levels across Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the UK found that the UK’s level of loneliness was significantly higher than the other three countries, particularly in individuals with previous chronic illness or mental health problems (Varga et al., 2021).

A major concern with high levels of loneliness during lockdowns is that there is an established body of research showing social isolation to be a very high-risk factor for mortality, comparable to the mortality risk of heavy smoking or obesity (NHS, 2015). A meta-analysis of studies found that social isolation, measured objectively or subjectively, increases the risk of premature death (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015). After accounting for covariates, the increased risk of death was 26% for reported loneliness, 29% for social isolation, and 32% for living alone. Other studies have found that increasing the amount of social activity experienced by individuals in nursing homes predicts a decrease in mortality (e.g. Hjaltadóttir et al., 2011). One reason that loneliness leads to high mortality is that it brings about an endocrine stress response that impairs immune functioning and thus makes people more susceptible to disease (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008). For example, one study found that loneliness is associated with poorer antibody responses to the flu virus (Pressman et al., 2005). Another study provided further explanation as to why loneliness affects immune function (Cole et al., 2020). They found that in isolated or lonely participants, leukocytes, white blood cells that are key to the immune system’s response to infection, showed an increased expression of genes involved in inflammation and a decreased expression of genes involved in antiviral responses. Further effects of loneliness and social isolation are their impairment of restorative sleep, which leads to greater susceptibility to disease (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2003). Furthermore, as with unemployment, loneliness brings about a higher risk of suicide, adding to the elevated mortality risk associated with the mass isolation that lockdown policies bring (McClelland et al., 2020).
A marker of those who develop severe symptoms of the COVID-19 disease is impaired immune functioning, specifically interferon deficiency in the blood (Hadjadj, 2020). Given that loneliness and social isolation are recognised to be as dangerous as smoking when it comes to risk of premature death, extended lockdown policies that prohibit face-to-face social interaction over many months may increase mortality due to immunosuppressive effects, even if they alleviate some mortality via reduced transmission. Thus, what may appear as a COVID-19 death statistic may be partly precipitated by the effects of the social isolation that is inherent in lengthy lockdown interventions, particularly in older adults who are more likely to live alone (VanderWeele, 2020).

As well as impairing immune functioning, the loneliness and social isolation induced by lockdowns may influence behaviour after restrictions are lifted. The argument for this is that human connection is a fundamental need much like thirst or hunger (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008), that the pent-up need for social contact after a lockdown will mean that many people may compensate for the weeks or months of isolation with a subsequent period of increased social activity (Spector, 2020b). This is what one finds with other unmet needs, for example, if someone is starved of food for days and then allowed to eat, they will gorge themselves as their brain seeks to compensate for the period of lack and scarcity, to bring nutrients back to required levels.

There is some research to suggest that people do indeed respond to the lifting of lockdowns by increasing the amount of social contact to an unusually high level, in ways that not only cancel out the benefits of lockdown but actually make the situation worse than before the lockdown. For example, an analysis of introducing and lifting restrictions across multiple countries found that introducing restrictions led to a reduction in case growth of 3-24% after 28 days, while lifting them led to increases of 11-25% (Li et al. 2020). In other words, after a temporary restriction of social activity is lifted, growth rates tend to increase to a higher level than they were before the lockdown.

More recently, Spector (2020a) has observed this rebound effect in the longitudinal data from the COVID Symptom Study, based on over 4.4 million British participants. He states that there is evidence of a rebound effect after severe short lockdowns, which may cancel out any temporary benefits. More anecdotal evidence from the UK is from media reports of unprecedented crowds in commercial environments directly after the lifting of the recent lockdown on December 2nd. One such report was of ‘mayhem’ as a ‘sea of people’ congregated outside of the Harrods department store on the first weekend after lockdown (Press Association, 2020).

There may be a deeper reason for irresponsible behaviour observed after lockdowns are lifted. Lockdowns work on the basis that a pre-conventional morality, based on the threat of punishment, must be used to enforce correct behaviour during a pandemic. Pre-conventional morality is what one applies to young children; moral guidance is dictated externally by parents, guardians or teachers, and is enforced through rewards and punishments. Young children’s behaviour is managed in this way because they have not developed an internalised ethic of civic responsibility, which is the foundation of conventional morality (Armon & Dawson, 1997). To apply a pre-conventional approach to managing the pandemic therefore means treating adults

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4 Interferons are signaling proteins released by cells in response to the presence of viruses.
like children. The danger of such an approach is that by engendering a parent-child arrangement of external controls and punishments, lockdowns may actively undermine the tendency of people to behave like adults and to use their own good sense. This has been discussed in relation to environmental ethical issues; Brisman and South (2015) argue that infantilization leads to irresponsible behaviour in relation to the environment. Evidence also suggests that the imposition of authoritarian policies can quickly reverse a sense of individual responsibility (Douglas Grant, 2019).

A topic that I have not covered systematically within this review is the effect of school closures on children’s learning and social development. Many countries and states closed school for months during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a range of issues included slowed educational development, stunted social development, and mental health issues in children caused by isolation from their peers (Donnelly, 2021). The omission from this review is because the closure of schools is a pandemic response that may be used as part of a general lockdown or separate from a lockdown, and it has a recognised heritage of use prior to 2020. For a comprehensive review of the harms caused by school closures, the reader is directed to Ballan (2021).

The Ethical Level of Analysis: Evaluating Competing Ethics in Relation to Lockdowns

Scientific and public health advisors help to inform lockdown decision, but the value-neutral data and analyses of science can only be part of the matter when handling a complex moral dilemma such as a lockdown at a governmental level. Politicians must also navigate social, economic, psychological, moral and political trade-offs and competing concerns. Trade-off decisions inherently entail the consideration of values and principles as well as facts (Pardy, 2020). Ethics, as the study of such values and principles, must therefore play a part in selecting between competing policy options when considering government interventions for a pandemic (Patton, 2020).

Lockdowns lead to potential harms and benefits to a population, and this is at the crux of the ethical dilemma. The justification of harming some to help others stems from the moral philosophy of utilitarianism. Utilitarian reasoning is based on a consequentialist logic, which justifies an intervention or policy based on whether it leads to more lives saved than lives lost (Reddy, 2020). This is the saving the greatest number principle (Otsuka, 2006). Many who warn against lockdowns do so from the same utilitarian ethics, and suggest that lockdowns will likely lead to more death and suffering than they alleviate (Miles et al., 2020; Reddy, 2020).

Consider the following hypothetical scenario: You are a rescuer and there are two boats sinking; one has ten people in it and one has five people in it, but you can only rescue one boat.

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5 A number of legal and political commentators have picked up on this in relation to COVID-19, for example Heffer (2020) wrote: “The Government has infantilized the country by denying people the right to choose what risks to take with their own health; it has taken to itself the duty of personal responsibility, which in a free and properly-run society must reside with the individual.” Ridley (2020) has written similarly.
The utilitarian argument is that one should save the boat with ten people in it. Utilitarianism states that by saving the greater number from death, you will maximize the aggregate sum of welfare (Otsuka, 2006). Enacting a lockdown is a scaled-up version of this kind of dilemma; which proverbial boat – the boat containing people saved by lockdown, or the boat containing people that die as a result of lockdown – has more people in? Resolving this utilitarian puzzle requires very clear evidence on the effects of lockdowns on saving deaths and collateral deaths (Reddy, 2020).

Furthermore, given that those impacted negatively by lockdown, for example via unemployment or mental illness, tend to be younger than those impacted by COVID-19, should that matter? Generally, the utilitarian consensus is that the age of the people on the two sides of the dilemma should matter (Savalescu & Cameron, 2020). The concept of the QALY (quality-adjusted life year) discussed earlier in the article is an example of utilitarian reasoning that takes age into account. More QALYs are saved when the death of a child is avoided than when an elderly adult is saved from death, and that is then factored into the decision to employ a treatment (Reddy, 2020). So, the issue of relative age of those lost to COVID-19 and those who die due to lockdown collateral damage should be considered in the ethical debate.

While some broadly utilitarian cost-benefit analyses have been conducted on mortality caused by COVID-19 versus lockdowns, for example Thomas (2020a), substantive problems remain in using this information to inform political decisions from an ethical perspective, as the more intangible matter of happiness is also central to utilitarian moral reasoning. Utilitarian ethics is traditionally about maximising happiness for the greatest number (Stuart Mill, 1879). This of course means saving lives in a pandemic, but is not confined to that. Balancing happiness of the greatest number against saving lives requires subjective judgements of value. For example, the recent decision by many European governments to make social contact with other households at Christmas in 2020 a criminal offence, in order to help keep COVID-19 infection rates down and prevent hospitals from being exceeded in capacity, is an example of balancing happiness against saving lives. The standard ethical judgement for a normal year is that the joys of Christmas outweigh the dangers. Yet, every year across the Northern Hemisphere, hundreds of thousands of elderly adults die from influenza during January and February and hospitals are usually challenged by the numbers who are admitted with infection diseases in those months. Such illnesses will be partly contracted from social gatherings at Christmas. It is therefore likely that hundreds of thousands of lives would be extended if we banned Christmas every year. Critics of consequentialist moral reasoning argue that such deliberations cannot lead to meaningful conclusions (Shermer, 2018). The decision to allow people to gather in groups at Christmas in normal years, such critics say, is more aptly based on deontological reasoning about the right way to govern, rather than consequentialist calculations.

Deontological moral reasoning argues that certain kinds of actions are right or wrong no matter what their consequences (Waller, 2005). For example, considering the ethic of consent, consensual sex is right and non-consensual sex is wrong, no matter what the outcome. The philosopher Kant argued that honesty is an ethical principle that should be upheld no matter what the perceived consequences (Shermer, 2018). Critics of lockdown have based their concerns on the fact that lockdowns override the ethical principle of liberty. This ethic is founded on the premise that allowing mentally competent adults the freedom to choose between different
actions, rather than being legally mandated or externally coerced to behave a certain way, supports flourishing societies and human dignity (Tucker, 2020). The principle manifests in a whole range of ways in liberal democracies: freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of protest, and the freedom to refuse medical treatment (Beauchamp & Childress, 2008; Mandal et al., 2016).

The libertarian ethical argument against lockdowns states that allowing people to take responsibility for their lives and for each other, and so to make their own decisions based on clear information, elicits the best results in the long-term (Sumption, 2020). Most would agree that no-one would accept the kind of authoritarian policies that have been implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic on a permanent basis. Why not, if they would continue to save lives and drive mortality graphs downwards? Because it is human nature to value liberty and the freedom to live as we wish (Tucker, 2020). Some ethicists who combine libertarian and utilitarian arguments propose that quarantine or lockdown should be applied to the smallest number possible via targeted interventions, for example quarantining the elderly only, given the low risk that COVID-19 means to the under-60s. This is in itself a moral dilemma; I direct the reader to Savulescu & Cameron (2020) for an evaluation of it.

Applying the liberty ethic to public health matters such as lockdowns is based on three arguments that are worth making explicit with examples; (1) belief in the long-term benefits that liberty and autonomy bring despite the short-term risks, (2) the cultivation of trust between government and people and (3) that liberty is a way of ensuring positive community-mindedness. I will briefly review the these prior to considering the criticisms of lockdown from a libertarian perspective.

Firstly, the matter of accepting risk. Upholding the political principle of liberty, or the parallel principle of autonomy in medical ethics, means that individuals will take risks and may be harmed or die as a result of them (Beauchamp & Childress, 2008). Despite this, Western medicine and governance are founded on the premise that giving mentally competent adults autonomy in their decisions is worth that risk (O’Neill, 2002; Savulescu, 2017). Take drinking alcohol as an example: It leads to a considerable burden of illness – the World Health Organisation estimates 3 million people die every year around the world as a result of the harmful use of alcohol, which is greater than the COVID-19 death toll for 2020 (WHO, 2018). Despite the clear benefits to public health outcomes of banning alcohol, the decision is left up to the individual.

There is no doubt that legal prohibition of alcohol beverages brings lower numbers of alcohol-related illness, for example in Saudi Arabia where alcohol is banned, alcohol-related deaths are close to zero (World Health Rankings, 2018). And yet democratic societies continue to allow people to have the choice. This is part of a general commitment to the benefits of informed choice. In totalitarian societies, the general population may be safer in some ways, but the requirement to follow strict rules for day-to-day behaviour is known to stifle innovation, happiness and change. It creates stasis and fear while liberal policies allow for flourishing, experimentation and innovation (Kasparov & Halvorssen, 2017).
The second key rationale for the ethic of liberty is that it is central to cultivating trust between government and people, or between doctor and patient. When politicians and doctors uphold the right of a citizen to choose their own path, this conveys that they trust those individuals to take their own decisions, and to look after themselves and each other (Warren, 2017). Enforcing compulsory lockdowns via the threat of punishment conveys the message that people can’t be trusted to behave well. While there is no doubt that some people would not act in a responsible or trustworthy way during a pandemic, a policy that assumes as much across a whole society is likely to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, for the reasons discussed earlier in the psychological analysis section: If you treat people like children, they will behave like children. Conversely, advisory policies that are based on informed consent, such as those used in Sweden and Japan, assume that people can be trusted. We could hypothesise, based on this, that in countries where authoritarian lockdown measures have been implemented, trust in government will have been eroded during 2020. This has indeed been found in a poll conducted in the UK in October 2020; trust in the British government has dropped to the lowest point in decades (Sugue, 2020). A recent peer-reviewed study has also found a drop in political trust in the UK during the pandemic (Davies et al., 2021). However, it is not clear how much of that is the pandemic response and how much of that is other matters such as Brexit. Future studies comparing trust in government across countries that implemented measures voluntarily or forcibly will be an important area of research in this regard. The potential effects of lockdown on the erosion of societal trust and on a decline in prosocial civic behaviour should not go overlooked.

The third argument for maintain the liberty of citizens in a pandemic is that it has a legacy of promoting positive community-mindedness. Philosophers who have promoted the societal benefits of liberty, such as John Stuart Mill (1860), have emphasised that giving individuals such responsibility and freedom allows for the cultivation of self-control, discipline, restraint, and community-mindedness. These can’t be meaningfully cultivated in an environment of coercion and constraint. In support of this assertion that freedom of action actually enhances prosocial behaviour, a recent study found that voluntary social distance measures in the USA were more effective than enforced lockdowns in reducing mortality (Seegert, Yang, Gaulin & Looney, 2020). Another US-based study found that mandatory stay-at-home orders were ineffective because people were modifying their behaviour voluntarily before the mandates were put in place, again supporting the view that prosocial changes are taken volitionally in socially liberal countries (Berry et al., 2021).

Counterarguments to the libertarian critique of lockdowns point out that if a person with a virus is given the autonomy to behave as they want but then does so irresponsibly, they could put other people’s lives and health at risk, and that this violates the libertarian ethic of doing what you want as long as it does not harm others (Compton, 2020). However, critics say that risk to others can be managed by more moderate laws and measures that do not require people to stay at home and businesses to close, but instead allow those who choose to congregate in a social environment to do so while mitigating the risk, such as via distancing and masks, much as they do when they drive to work every day or when they drink alcohol.

Another counterargument to the libertarian issue of trust is the argument that if a government failed to control a pandemic, this may lead to a greater loss of trust than that which is compromised by mandatory lockdowns (Spitale, 2020). Given that the current weight of
In conclusion, a number of ethical principles come to bear on the lockdown dilemma, and some of these are in dialectical tension. All modern liberal democracies combine liberty with some degree of paternalism (Wiley et al., 2013). For example, alcohol and cigarettes are allowed, but most countries ban other drugs. Freedom of speech is allowed, but defamation and slander laws put boundaries around this. Driving cars is allowed despite the high risk of harm, but seatbelts are legally obligated and driving when over the alcohol limit is banned. None of these standard legal restrictions remove civil liberties – they simply put some boundaries on relevant activities. Lockdown interventions, in contrast, temporarily remove some civil liberties completely. The matter of lockdown duration is key. If lockdown is for a short-time frame, for example a month or less, and is implemented at the start of a pandemic only to bide time to understand the disease and develop more targeted measures, this is less ethically problematic than keeping measures in place for many months. If another pandemic arrived soon, and lockdowns were again implemented in extended form, it would arguably start to set a problematic precedent. Ignoring the importance of liberty is, some argue, the slow path towards authoritarian governance (Kasparov & Halvorssen, 2017). Politicians and citizens alike must evaluate how much authoritarianism they consider to be acceptable in the name of saving lives during a pandemic (Wolff, 2020).

As a final point for ethical consideration, given the uncertainty in the current evidence-base for lockdowns, the medical ethic of non-maleficence is important to consider. It states that a medical practitioner has a duty to not cause pain or suffering (Beauchamp & Childress, 2008). Thus, in a situation where it is unclear if a new drug will harm more than it helps, the medical establishment would not approve it. If lockdown were therefore a drug, on ethical grounds we would not yet prescribe it, irrespective of the cost, until we have clearer information. However, a pandemic undoubtedly brings a range of ethical issues and challenges that are not pertinent to normal treatment approval, so whether or not this ethic is applicable to the lockdown dilemma is one that requires continued consideration.

Conclusions and Future Research Directions

The evidence base about lockdowns is still in a provisional state, as there was no precedent for these interventions prior to 2020. Currently, there is no way of saying with certainty whether lockdown damages will be greater than benefits or vice versa. Overall, the current evidence base leans towards harms outweighing benefits, but this may change if further evidence of a highly significant effect of lockdowns on mortality emerges with a longer timeframe of study across the pandemic that includes the second wave.

Based on the biomedical evidence as it stands at the time of writing, the provisional conclusion is that a combination of moderate measures, such as limiting gatherings to 10 people or less and social distancing, work as effectively as lockdowns to reduce growth in case numbers, without the damages inflicted by the latter. The stay-at-home order appears to be less efficacious than expected. Furthermore, currently, there is little substantive empirical evidence that lockdowns reduce mortality despite lowering case growth rates. This may be due to
immunosuppressant economic and psychological stressors that increase the risk of death in ways that offset the reduced risk of mortality brought by temporarily lower infection rates (Cohen, 2020). This issue should be factored into the continued policy decision-making.

Economic harms of lockdowns have been calculated via modelling the effects of depressed GDP on potential loss of life years, and through calculating the effects on lost resourcing for health more generally. These studies, focused mainly on UK data, have mainly concluded that lockdowns will likely lead to more life lost than life saved.

From an ethical perspective, in addition to the utilitarian ethic of whether lockdowns increase or reduce suffering for the greater number, the matter of liberty must be included in the discussion, just as it has always been part of the discourse on ethics and epidemics (Ries, 2006). In countries that treat people as rational agents, capable of taking care of themselves and others, we know that medicine thrives, the economy thrives, education thrives, the arts thrive and society thrives, when compared with countries that do not allow comparable freedoms (Tucker, 2020). Overriding the liberal ethic of civic responsibility by mandating people to behave in a certain way through threat of punishment may get short-term results, but it may also set a paternalistic precedent of delegating power to authorities and away from the individual. In an international environment where there is already growing authoritarianism (Kasparov & Halvorsen, 2017), that path of social development is unpredictable. Yet there is nothing absolute about liberty; the matter of liberty set against legally mandated constraints is a trade-off balancing act in all areas of governance, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no exception.

All conclusions on lockdowns are provisional given that the literature on lockdown mortality effects will continue to develop across 2021 and there is little published research on the second wave of the virus yet. Furthermore, little is known about the effects of the timing, strictness, and duration of a lockdown. Short lockdowns will have fewer detrimental effects on unemployment and social isolation than longer ones, so the variable of duration must be considered in future studies that have access to data over a longer period of time than currently published studies.

In terms of future research, studies need to investigate how cases and deaths relate to: (a) the timing of the lockdown relative to the course of the pandemic, (b) the duration and severity of the lockdown measures, and (c) whether the lockdown is implemented in an emerging economy with high levels of absolute poverty, or a developed economy where there is a relatively high level of affluence and an employment market based around service and media industries where a large proportion of individuals can work from home. Importantly, the medium-term to long-term effects of lockdown policies must be examined as well as the short-term effects, considering the potential for rebound effects after lockdown, which are likely to be exacerbated by suppressed immunity from lockdown loneliness and inactivity that will likely extend to some degree past the ending of any restrictions.

The collateral damages caused by lockdowns should also be the focus of further study over the coming years. The issues include social isolation, unemployment and depression, poverty and its varied negative effects on health including impaired immune functioning, as well as depleted funds for other forms of healthcare, and issues that relate to communities and families that have been damaged: domestic violence, suicide, crime and more. Future research should aim to
estimate how much more of these problems lockdowns bring compared with more moderate non-lockdown interventions, rather than just compared to a no-intervention scenario, and also how much the potential damage will differentially affect high income countries and middle-to-low income countries.

An evidence-based take on lockdowns is unlikely to reach a categorical conclusion that they do or do not work. A more likely conclusion, given the complexity of the dilemma, is that they may be beneficial at certain points in the pandemic, for example early in the process, but damaging if maintained as a policy over months or years, or that specific interventions within a lockdown may have an acceptable cost-benefit ratio while others do not. The current review has moved the debate forward by being the first to present four levels of analysis – medical, economic, psychological and ethical - that are essential for a full consideration of the pros and cons of lockdowns. The next step is to develop a conceptual integration of these four levels to provide a more unified rubric for political decision-making.

**Important Postscript**

This manuscript was completed in July 2021. At the time of going to press in December 2021, an up-to-date review of cost-benefit analyses of lockdown measures has just been published that broadly supports the conclusions of this review. It concludes that in all of the 11 cost-benefit analyses published, costs are shown to substantively outweigh benefits (Joffe & Redman, 2021). The authors conclude that lockdowns have “terrible cost-benefit trade-offs” (p.1) and that the continued COVID-19 pandemic response should recognise this and avoid them going forward.

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A Relational Approach to Moral Development in Societies, Organizations and Individuals

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Abstract: Discussions of morality in businesses and organization tend to center around the rights and freedoms of organizations and/or customers, or around the importance of socially responsible business practice. Rights-based deliberations are often invoked to justify the pursuit of self-interest, either by the business or customer. Calls for socially responsible practices function to constrain the self-interest of organizations, or otherwise prompt businesses to “give back” to the communities they serve. In either case, genuinely moral motives are often seen as secondary to what is assumed to be the primary goal of business – the pursuit of profit. We reject the common sense view that business and moral practice operate as separate spheres of activity. In so doing, we offer a relationalist conception of morality and moral development in everyday life. From a relationalist view, moral standards arise not from nature, God, the mind, or society. They emerge in embodied relational activity that occurs between people. Moral relationalism embraces neither moral universalism nor relativism, but instead views moral standards as a continuously emergent but constrained properties of discursive action that occurs between people as they negotiate and negotiate questions of “what ought to be” in physical and socio-cultural contexts. In this paper, we first show how the full range of moral standards arise in different forms of social relations between people. We then apply the moral relationalist framework to an analysis of the inescapable role of moral judgment in all business practices. In so doing, we suggest that business decision-making should be continuously informed by the tensions that arise between and among at least three moral frameworks: rights, virtue and care. We illustrate the moral relationalist approach to business through in-depth analyses of the moral mindsets of three entrepreneurs who integrate moral concerns into their business practices in different ways.

Keywords: Care, moral development, moral relationalism, rights, virtue.

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Introduction

In what follows, we elaborate a relationalist approach to morality and moral development. From a relational perspective, moral values are neither universal properties of a fixed biological, social or spiritual world (O’Manique, 1990; Porter, 2014), nor are they relativistic constructions that are local to particular individuals, cultures, social groups, or historical epochs (Lukes, 2008). Instead, moral values, norms and frameworks are emergent products of relations between people that evolve historically within socio-cultural contexts; morality consists of fidelity to the demands of human relationships. Moral values and systems emerge as social agents identify, consolidate and promulgate moral goods that have their evaluative bases in human relational experience. From this view, morality is not simply something that arises in response to extraordinary life issues (e.g., life and death), but is instead a continuously emergent property of everyday social engagement. In what follows, we first elaborate upon the moral relational perspective. In so doing, we show how different moral categories emerge within different modes of relational activity between and among humans. We then elaborate the approach through analyses of how moral systems mediate social relations among adults in business and organizational contexts. In so doing, we describe how the moral relationalist framework provides a window into understanding how moral categories emerge and function in everyday life – and particularly in a domain of activity (business) often viewed as lacking a central moral dimension.

The Road to Relationalism

Despite the vast literature on moral development that has grown in the past fifty years, much of this work fails to consider the relational origins and development of morality. First, although moral life involves the rich interpenetration of judgment, emotions, experience, and values as they are organized within socio-cultural contexts, much of the literature has focused on moral reasoning and moral decisions – the cognitive aspects of morality (Kohlberg, 1969; Turiel, 2002). Second, much thinking on the nature of morality development tends to treat morality as a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary life. In this regard, morality operates as a domain of functioning that is separate and distinct from everyday thinking, feeling and action. Third, moral principles and values are often seen as universal rules or standards that transcend time and place. Such a view runs the risk of viewing moral values as fixed and unchanging evaluative principles. From a moral relationalist view, moral values emerge through the very process of human relating over time. They are systems of strong evaluation (Taylor, 1989) that arise as humans seek answers to questions about the proper ways we should respond to the demands of social relationships (Donahue, 1977). If this so, the search for universal moral principles is likely to obscure the formation of an understanding the very process by which moral values are created. Below we examine these issues, and link them to specific research traditions in moral psychology. In so doing, we highlight problems in much existing theory that create a need for a theory of morality grounded in human relationships.

From Moral Cognition to Moral Integration

Much research in moral psychology addresses questions related to moral judgment or moral thinking. This focus traces to the cognitive-developmental tradition of Piaget (1932), Kohlberg (1969) and the suite of social domain theorists who have reacted to and built upon their work.
(Nucci, 2014; Turiel, 2010, 2015, 2018; Smetana, Jambon & Ball, 2014). In his seminal *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (1932), Piaget focused on children’s conceptions of the nature of morality. He produced evidence suggesting that the structure of children’s moral thinking moves from heteronomous conception of morality (i.e., morality consists of fixed, external rules, handed down) to autonomous conception of morality (i.e., rules are seen as changeable subject to the mutual agreement of those involved in a given social encounter).

Kohlberg’s (1981, 1984) constructivist model of moral development built on Piaget’s insight that moral development could be understood in terms of structural changes in an individual’s thinking about moral issues. Kohlberg argued that children initially confuse morality with authority and with social conventions and norms. Children move from incomplete and confused conceptions of morality to progressively more integrated and differentiated (and hence more mature) conceptions. These changes are reflected in the ways that children and adolescents justify and reason about their stances on moral dilemmas. Subsequent scholars challenged the claim that children’s initial conceptions are mistaken and undifferentiated. Forming what would eventually be known as the Social Domain Approach, these scholars produced evidence demonstrating that children as young as 2 ½ could discriminate between moral violations and violations of social conventions (Turiel & Nucci, 1979). Nonetheless, the Social Domain theorists maintained a focus on moral reasoning.

This focus on moral thinking makes sense, as moral concerns are matters of evaluative judgment. However, thinking about moral life as primarily a matter of moral judgment runs the risk of understanding moral life as something that is encapsulated within the cognitive sphere of functioning. As such, the focus on moral reasoning was noteworthy for what it left out of the study of moral functioning. In particular, traditional concerns about moral character (Hartshorne & May, 1928), virtue (Hamm, 1977) and conscience (Kochanska, Koenig, Kim & Yoon, 2010) were ignored and even disparaged (e.g., Kohlberg, 1981). The focus on moral reasoning raised difficult questions about the gap between moral thinking and moral action (Blasi, 1980). Still further, the study of moral development neglected the role of emotion in the organization of moral thinking and action – a process long viewed as central in the genesis of moral systems (Hume, 1751). In the past decades, these neglected issues have resurfaced as central aspects of moral development research (Miller, 2014; Nucci, 2018; Prinz, 2007; Svetlova, Nichols & Brownell, 2010; Tangney, 1987; Thompson, 2014; Walker, 2014). Developmental scholars have worked to develop increasingly integrative accounts of moral functioning and its development (Blasi, 2004; Cushman, Young & Green, 2010; Haidt & Kesebir, 2010; Kaplan 2017; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2005; Walker). Moral life is increasingly understood not merely as a matter of cognition, but in terms of the ways in which action is mediated by evaluative systems that arise at the intersection of bodily (Decety & Cowell, 2018; Liao, 2016), cognitive (Baird, 2018), motivational (Kaplan, 2017; Walker, 2014), emotional (Malti & Dys, 2015), experiential (Sherblom, 2015), linguistic (Tappan, 1997), identity-related (Stets & Carter, 2012) and socio-cultural (Ichiyanagi 2014; Miller, 2015) processes.

**From Separable Domains to Socially Embedded Activity**

Much of the cognitive-developmental tradition, reviewed above, aims to constitute morality as a distinct sphere of psychological functioning, in that the nature of moral evaluation is unique and hence qualitatively different from non-moral evaluations. In this way, morality can be fixed,
defined by a set of features that is stable and constant, and would hold, for example, across cultures, contexts, and relationships. Nowhere is this aim more apparent than in the Social Domain Approach (Turiel, 2002). The Social Domain Approach proposes that there are different domains of social functioning – the moral, social conventional, and the personal (Smetana, Jambon, Ball, 2014) – distinguishable on the basis of unique formal criteria. The three domains differ formally, for example, on the source of legitimate regulation of actions. A distinctive feature of the moral domain is that it encompasses social actions that are perceived as “intrinsically” or “naturally” right or wrong. While these actions may be legitimately regulated by rules, laws, punishments, or social sanctions, the obligation to perform or to avoid performing such actions exists independently of these social regulations. By contrast, the social conventional domain includes social actions that are deemed obligatory precisely because they are regulated by rules, laws, or social norms. Social conventions include forms of address, uniforms, and other rules and norms designed to promote the smooth functioning and coordination of social groups and institutions. The personal domain encompasses social actions that are regulated by the individual actor, rather than intrinsically or socially (Nucci, 1981, p. 115; Nucci & Weber, 1995). These actions are taken to be up to individual discretion (Nucci & Smetana 1996, 2014).

For example, moral rules identify prescriptions against the theft of personal property. Social conventions identify more-or-less arbitrary agreements about where one typically stores one’s personal possessions (e.g., clothing is typically placed in a dresser or closet; dishes in a kitchen cabinet). Beyond these spheres lies a personal sphere action of autonomy and personal choice. In one’s own room, one is free to place one’s dresser, desk, and lamp anywhere one pleases. From the standpoint of domain theory, these domains of thought have their own structure and, while they can overlap in any given act, develop in ways that are largely distinct from one another. Additionally, the use of these issues that we presented in order to exemplify and contrast each domain should be taken as only examples. The specific issues that comprise any given domain might vary (e.g., across cultures, contexts). It is the form of the domain that remains fixed, with its own internally complete and discrete structure.

Thus, according to the social domain approach, moral rules are those that are taken to be (a) universalizable in the sense that they are binding for people in other cultures; (b) unalterable in the sense that if there were no rule against the infraction it would still be wrong; (c) non-contingent in the sense that if an authority were to indicate that an infraction were acceptable it would still be wrong; and (d) serious, in the sense that someone engaging in the infraction would be subject to sanction even if the infraction did not violate existing conventional rules. Finally, moral rules are those that involve matters of justice, welfare, and rights.

In recent years, scholars have questioned the merits of the moral/conventional distinction (Kelly & Stich, 2007; Lourenço, 2014; Machery, 2012). They have argued and empirically demonstrated that the formal criteria do not always cohere in ways predicted by social domain theory (Shweder, Much, Mahapatra & Park, 1987; cf. Jensen, 2008). For example, some researchers (Kelly et al., 2007; Stich, Fessler & Kelly, 2009) have observed that participants across studies sometimes regard norms involving rights, justice and welfare as local rather than generalizable and as dependent upon authority. Additionally, beyond these conceptual and empirical questions, researchers have also suggested that there are social groups in which people do not make a moral/conventional distinction at all (Levine, Rottman, Davis, O'Neill, Stich & Machery, in press),
and that the distinction is itself a product of a particular conception of morality and moral worldview (Shweder et al., 1987).

A related issue concerns the types of evaluative content that can be seen as definitive of a moral judgment. Haidt & Kesibir (2010) have described what they gave called the “great narrowing” of the concept of morality in Western psychology. In the past fifty or so years, psychologists have tended to limit the class of moral concerns to those organized around rights, justice and welfare (Kohlberg, 1980; Turiel, 2015). Such concerns, of course, are largely reflective of the individualist frameworks within which psychological scientists have typically operated. In recent years, this situation has begun to change. Psychologists have begun to expand their conceptions of morality. Psychologists have resurrected an interest in traditional categories of morality, which include issues related to virtue and character; the good and the worthy; compassion and care; in- and out-group loyalty; authority and duty; higher and lower; the sacred and divine; the pure and the polluted (Berniūnas, Dranseika & Sousa, 2016; Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Ier, Koleva & Ditto, 2013). While the debate over whether these concerns can be considered “truly moral” continues, we argue below why they should be, from a moral relationalist perspective. More broadly, below we outline our theory of moral relationalism, showing how moral concerns are not fixed but relative to relational experience, which in turn provides the grounding for a diverse and broad range of potential moral concerns. Before doing so, we trace the intellectual roots of moral relationalism.

Moral Relationalism

Moral relationalism holds that moral concerns emerge from and are legitimized in terms of the goods that arise from human relational experience. In this regard, perhaps paradoxically, moral relationalism harks back to Piaget’s (1928/1965) relationalist conception of human development. Piaget’s (1965) relationalist approach has its origins in the classic debate between individualist and holistic conceptions of sociological facts. The individualist approach maintains that society is merely an aggregate of individual persons. From this view, social knowledge is the result of the mere summation of the knowledge across individuals (i.e., “the whole is equal to the sum of its parts”). In contrast, Durkheim championed the holistic conception of emergent sociologism. From this view, social facts are irreducible wholes in the sense that they exhibit properties that do not exist in their base constituents (individual persons). Further, in his version of emergence, novel sociological wholes exist “exclusively in the very society itself” and thus are “external to individual consciousness” (p. xx, cited in Kitchener, 1991); they exist, for example, at the level of collective rather than individual consciousness.

Piaget rejected both extremes of the individualism-holism debate. For Piaget, social knowledge can neither be reduced to the activity of individual minds nor does it correspond to novel sociological wholes that operate somehow independent of their constituents (see Mascolo & Kallio, 2019). Instead, social knowledge (e.g., rationality, reason, social and moral norms) are products of relations between individuals. Piaget called this approach sociological relativism or relationalism. For Piaget, social wholes indeed show emergent properties, they do not form novel entities that are in some way independent of or “hover over” their parts. Instead, “social facts” arise from interactions (relations) between individuals which are consolidated into rules, values and shared signs. For Piaget, shared values have their origins in the personal desires (and values) of individual actors. When people interact, they exchange values, which then become consolidated
into larger and more equilibrated systems of rules and meanings. In this way, the norm of reciprocity arises in social interaction as (a) the action of one person results in some (b) satisfaction of desire in another. As a result, a (c) debt or obligation to repay is incurred by the second person as a result of the action of her partner; this debt or obligation can be (d) repaid at some other time. The consolidation of the emergent meanings created by this pattern of interaction forms the basis of reciprocity norms.

Piaget’s example of reciprocity illustrates the ways in which evaluative and moral concerns emerge from the structure of social relations. However, the example of reciprocity runs the risk of under-representing the full extent of the intersubjective nature of human interaction (Mascolo & Kallio, 2020). In the example of reciprocity, it is easy to think of interacting individuals as self-encased actors whose experiential worlds operate largely independent of one another. From this view, humans begin life as separate and independent individuals who become social only when they come into contact with other individuals. While novel forms of social knowledge may arise from relational activity, individual persons precede social relations. From a relational point of view, persons are relational rather than merely individual beings. Persons are both separate and connected, individual and social, distinct but nonetheless mutually-constituting (Gergen, 2009; Mascolo, 2013; Raeff, 2006, Shotter, 2017). Humans are not self-encased beings who come into the world cut off from the experience of others. Instead, humans enter the world with a primordial capacity for intersubjectivity – that is, an ability to share, coordinate and mutually incorporate experience between self and other (Di Paolo & De Jaegher, 2015). The development of a moral sense builds upon the primacy of intersubjective experience (Bråten & Trevarthen, 2007; Trevarthen, 1993) and the demands of relationships (Donahue, 1977).

This relational view of moral development is reflected in the seminal work of Emmanuel Levinas (1961/1987), a French philosophy of Lithuanian heritage who, as a Jew, spent time in concentration camp during World War II. Levinas’ conception of moral action has its origins in his experiences in the Nazi death camps in World War II. The need to treat humans with moral dignity is often justified on the basis of appeals to a common sense of humanity. He noted that any attempt to include individuals under a common conception of humanity was limited by the nature of one’s conception of the human itself. Levinas (1961/1987) warned against the dangers of totalization – the tendency to assimilate the Other to one’s own conception of what it means to be human. Noting the ease with which some groups of people can be defined as other than human, Levinas turned this conception on its head. Instead of anchoring morality in a totalizing conception of humanity, Levinas grounds moral life in terms of one’s open-ended relation to the other – a spontaneous agent who is a continuous source of novelty. For Levinas, there is an infinity of meaning that lines behind and shines through “the face of the other” (Hendley, 2000; Waldenfels, 2002). My encounter with the other always brings forth the possibility of novel forms of meaning. The other is a constant source of potential novelty, always calling upon me to reconsider or revise my existing understandings of the world. I am thus never complete; the other always provides the possibility of novelty that calls for new forms of responsiveness from me to the other. I act as a moral agent each time I accept to the call to be responsive to the other and to the infinity that the other provides.

For Levinas, morality thus emerges from the very structure of relational life (Hendley, 2000). One’s sense of responsibility to the other operates at a pre-reflective level within the very structure
of interpersonal relating itself. In any social encounter, the other speaks to me and calls out a response from me. I am called upon not simply to respond to the other, but to be responsive to the plea of the other. It is in my very responsiveness that my responsibility toward the other emerges and evolves. It is my responsivity to the other that provides the grounding for ethical or moral life. Morality is defined in terms of the proper demands of being in relation to others. From a moral relationalist perspective, a moral framework is a symbolic system of strong evaluation that has its origins in relations between people and is justified with reference to diverse goods that arise within intersubjective experience. In what follows, we elaborate upon the meaning and implications of each element of this definition.

Symbolism and the Construction of “Not”, “Oughts” and “Ought Nots”

In his famous Definition of Man [sic], Kenneth Burke (1969) defines the human as a symbol-using animal. Symbols are representational vehicles through which persons can make one thing (e.g., a word, symbol, image) stand for something else (e.g., a meaning, object or sentiment.). The importance of this capacity cannot be overstated. According to Burke (1966), persons are not typically aware of “just how overwhelmingly much of what we mean by ‘reality’ has been built up for us through nothing but our symbol-systems” (p. 5). It is through the symbol that humans are able to extend awareness “beyond the information given” in direct sensorimotor experience (Bruner, 1972). We look and “see” a button affixed to a shirt. While the button appears on the retina in the shape of an ellipse, we are nonetheless aware that it is round. In this way, our representation of the object as a button bestows meaning beyond the registration of sensory patterns. Our knowledge of that which is “not there” structures our perception of present experience. Our expectations of what is typically “there” orients our attention to deviations from those expectations. For example, we might observe a person’s shirt and notice the absence of a button. Our sense of the button’s absence is noticed rather than seen, as we cannot see absence; we cannot see what is not there.

Humans live in the world of the negative. Our worlds are mediated by the not there whenever we notice a missing button; imagine what we will have for lunch; seek to live up to standards of worth defined by our communities, or long for a peaceful world. Of course, while we live in the world of the negative, “there are no negatives in nature” (Burke, 1969, p. 498). All that exists in the “natural world” is the positive – that which is there. Our sense of the negative is a produce of our capacity for symbolic representation. It is only a few short steps from the capacity to represent the not there to the capacity to represent what is typically “there” and, still further, to represent what ought to be there. When we enter the world of the “ought,” we enter the world of moral judgment (Burke, 1966; de Waal, 2014; Tse, 2008). Moral judgments are judgments of what ought or ought not to be. It is but a few steps from the capacity to represent what is not present to the capacity to construct representations of what could be to the representation of shared standards for what should and should not be. The concept of ought implies the capacity to compare the present state and some absent, imagined or idealized state. To say, “Don’t steal the cookies!” involves an act of comparing some possible state of affairs (e.g., Madge hitting her sister) to some representation of a more valued state – a state that is seen as right, good, worthy or otherwise valued (e.g., inhibiting the impulse to take what is wanted). When we act on the basis of what ought to be, we act within a word mediated by symbolically represented systems of right and wrong, good and bad, or worthy and unworthy.
Moral Judgment as Strong Evaluation

People are evaluating beings. Persons act on the basis of the evaluative significance of their circumstances. Moral judgments are forms of what Charles Taylor (1985, 1998) calls strong evaluation. Distinguishing between strong and weak forms of evaluation, Taylor (1989) defines weak evaluations are those directly involved in a person’s pre-reflective wants, desires and interests. In contrast, strong evaluations emerge as people reflect upon the worth of one’s wants, desires and interests. In weak evaluation, a person directly experiences the sweetness of the candy bar or the strain of physical exertion. In strong evaluation, one reflects upon the worthiness of sweets and exercise. Is it good that I eat so much candy? Is it good that I avoid the pain of exercise? Weak evaluations are direct and pre-reflective first-order evaluations. Strong evaluations are second-order reflections upon first-order evaluations. In strong evaluation, I reflect upon the worthiness of my first-order wants, desires, interests and actions. From this perspective, a wanton is an individual whose psychological processes are mediated by weak evaluation; a person is one who is able to make choices mediated by systems of strong evaluation.

The Relational Development of Moral Values and Frameworks

Drawing on these ideas, we elaborate upon five interconnected processes in the historical-relational construction of moral values in both societies and individuals.

1. First-order evaluations emerge within different forms of human relational experience. Social relations occur when at least two people come into contact with each other. Table 1 provides a description of the relational origins of different moral values as they arise with 10 basic forms of human relational engagement. For each of these 10 forms, Table 1 describes (a) the structure form of relating; (b) socio-moral questions raised by the form of social relating in question; (c) the basic modes of evaluative experience (i.e., “goods” and “harms”) that emerge within each mode of relating, and (d) moral values, rules and emotions that that have their emergent basis in these various modes of relating. Moral values and systems arise as ways of resolving the problems that arise within different forms of relating. The forms of relating that motivate and constrain the construction of moral values are emergent processes. While some forms of relating are likely to arise in virtually all cultures and all times (e.g., care and protection), other forms of relating can arise only within particular social and cultural circumstances (e.g., concerns about property rights require the emergence of societies that raise questions about the control over land and resources).
Table 1. The Emergence of Moral Values in Diverse Forms of Relating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Form</th>
<th>Form of Social Interaction</th>
<th>Basic Experience of Good and Bad</th>
<th>Emergent Moral Values and Emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Basic Verbal and Nonverbal Communication</td>
<td>Communicative</td>
<td>Contingent responsivity vs. distress over non-responsive, non-contingent.</td>
<td>Responsiveness (Satisfaction vs. Frustration, Anger)</td>
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<td>Responsivy</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Boundaries vs. Intrusion</td>
<td>Satisfaction of intimacy vs. pain, distress and anger over unwanted intrusion.</td>
<td>Respect for Boundaries and Personal Identity; Mine versus Yours; Ownership (Anger, Morality)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom and joy of agency vs. pain, distress, anger and frustration of restriction.</td>
<td>Autonomy/Rights vs. Oppression (Anger, Moral Outrage)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Acting and Restricting</td>
<td>Satisfaction of want/need in context of scarce resources; pain of inequity or lack of access to resource</td>
<td>Justice, Fairness, Equality, Merit (Anger, Envy, Jealousy, Pride)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Freedon and joy of agency vs. pain, distress, anger and frustration of restriction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Distributing Resources</td>
<td>Satisfaction of want/need in context of scarce resources; pain of inequity or lack of access to resource</td>
<td>Reciprocity, Duty/Obligation (Gratitude, Entitlement, Anger, Vengeance)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathic pain for the other; joy in advancing well-being of other</td>
<td>Morality of Care (Compassion, Empathy, Love, Sympathy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Giving and Receiving</td>
<td>Satisfaction and joy of giving and receiving; pain of lacking goods, debt or failure of reciprocation.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathic pain for the other; joy in advancing well-being of other</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Responding to Need</td>
<td>Enjoyment in recognition of value of self; pain of social devaluation</td>
<td>Vice and Virtue; Good vs. Bad Character; Honor (Pride, Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment, Humiliation)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment in recognition of value of self; pain of social devaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Social Evaluation Relative to the Good</td>
<td>Satisfaction of order and beneficial leadership vs. distress of uncertainty and disorder</td>
<td>Authority, Hierarchy, Piety, Obedience vs. Subversion, Disobedience and Chaos (Fear, Respect, Security)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Safety and security of group belonging vs. fear and isolation</td>
<td>Group Loyalty vs. Betrayal; Group Identity (Loyalty, Patriotism, Affiliation vs. Fear, Shame)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Group Decision Making</td>
<td>Safety and security of group belonging vs. fear and isolation</td>
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<td>Fear and awe in the order, power and beauty of the world; satisfaction of understanding, safety, certainty, guidance</td>
<td>Sanctity vs. Blasphemy</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Group Integrity</td>
<td>Safety and security of group belonging vs. fear and isolation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fear and awe in the order, power and beauty of the world; satisfaction of understanding, safety, certainty, guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Relating to the Divine</td>
<td>Safety and security of group belonging vs. fear and isolation</td>
<td>Group Loyalty vs. Betrayal; Group Identity (Loyalty, Patriotism, Affiliation vs. Fear, Shame)</td>
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<td>Fear and awe in the order, power and beauty of the world; satisfaction of understanding, safety, certainty, guidance</td>
<td>Sanctity vs. Blasphemy</td>
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All forms of social relation are organized around some form of interpersonal responsiveness. There can be no social interaction unless social partners are responsive to each other’s actions. Being responsive means more than simply responding to another person. Responsivity requires that social partners act with reference to the meaning of each other’s actions and states. In development, perhaps the most basic form of responsivity consists of the relationship between the developing infant and a caregiver (Meltzoff & Brooks, 2007; Scholl 2013; Trevarthen, 1993). The infant comes into the world fully dependent upon the care of others. An infant who cries “calls out” some sort of response from her caregivers (Shotter, 2017). The infant’s cries are immediately recognized as a signal of some form of need. The failure to meet the needs of the infant would bring about harm and pain; being responsive to those needs is thus good – not only for the infant but also the caregiver and the community at large. In this way, first-order goods and harms emerge in the very structure of infant-caregiver interaction.

2. First-order evaluations are intersubjectively identified, corroborated and verified within symbolic exchanges that occur between people. First-order goods and harms are experienced directly within the emergent flow of social relations. However, even though they are experienced directly, as pre-reflective aspects of experience, they are not necessarily intelligible to either self or other. The most obvious case of the unintelligibility of direct experience occurs in infancy. While young infants experience states such as hunger, fatigue and distress directly, they do not know that it is “hunger,” “fatigue” or “distress” that are experiencing. While infants may be able to experience another person’s expressions of care, anger or love, they are not necessarily aware that it is “care,” “anger” or “love” that the other person is expressing. The capacity to make experience intelligible to both self and other develop over time through the capacity for intersubjective engagement with others (Bratæn & Trevarthen, 2007). Within social interaction, infants and caregivers adjust their actions and experiences to the ongoing and anticipated actions of their social partners (Fogel, 1993). In so doing, infants and caregiver create and express novel forms of experience in relation to each other. In those interactions, caregivers use words to identify the experiences expressed by their infants, by other people and by caregivers themselves. Words are the repositories of already-existing meanings that have their origins in long histories of social relations. When a child learns to use the psychological lexicon of her community, she becomes able to represent experience – both her own and that of others – in socially sharable ways (Carpendale & Racine, 2011; Moore & Barresi, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978). As such, although children experience their psychological states directly, it is only through the use of language that they make those experiences into intelligible objects of shared social reflection (Cippolletti, Mascolo & Procter, in press; Martin, Sokol & Elfers 2008; Moore & Barresi, 2010).

It is thus through discursive interactions that first-order goods and harms are identified and made intelligible for objects of public reflection (McNamee, 2015). In infant-caregiver interaction, this occurs when a caregiver uses words to identify valenced aspects of an infant’s experience-in-action. In everyday practical activity, when socialization agents use phrases like, “Are you hungry?” “Is it the teddy bear you want?” “Does that taste yukky?” “You don’t like it when Daddy takes your bottle?” “Did that hurt?” “You love mommy,” their words function as symbolic vehicles that parse the flow an infant’s personal and relational experience (Carpendale & Racine, 2011; Rochat, 2015). In so doing, caregivers draw on culturally-shared symbolic meanings to provide the child with symbolic means for representing the goods and harms that emerge in everyday experience (Bråten & Trevarthen 2007; Carpendale & Racine, 2011; Moore, C., & Barresi, 2010).
Interpersonally, the capacity to use symbol systems to make relational experience intelligible provides caregivers with the means not only to identify goods and harms that exist in ongoing relational experience, it also allows parents and children to reflect upon and discuss goods and harms that are not currently present, but which could, should or should not exist (Martin, Sokol & Elfers 2008). At the social level of the community or society, the capacity to identify and reflect upon first-order goods and harms is necessary in order to identify second-order moral goods and harms – that is, shared strong evaluations of what should or should not exist in social relationships.

3. Moral values, rules and norms are intersubjectively created within symbolic exchanges in which people reflect upon first-order evaluations and coordinate them into shared, second-order strong evaluations. Moral evaluations are types of strong evaluation – second-order evaluations of first-order evaluative states (Rochat, 2015). Strong evaluations are reflections on first-order goods and harms. In a community, moral values, rules and norms emerge as cultural agents reflect upon, coordinate and consolidate representations of first-order goods and harms into shared (and contested) second-order representations of what ought and ought not to be (Tappan, 1997; Tomasello, 2011; Tse, 2008). The relationship between first- and second-order evaluations is neither obvious nor direct. First-order goods often come to be understood as second-order harms (Agonito, 1976). For example, while experiences such as sweetness and relaxation may function as first-order pleasures, we quickly become aware that too much of either can produce obesity. While physical pain and effort may be experienced as first-order pains, when they accompany physical exercise, pain and effort function as often experienced as second-order goods. It is in this sense that moral character can be understood as the cultivation of a proper attitude toward pleasure and pain (Aristotle, 1999; Cain, 2005; Wielenberg, 2002). If pleasure and pain consist of first-order evaluations, moral character emerges as the stable capacity to bring action into correspondence with second-order strong evaluations of first-order experiences.

Questions about the proper status of first-order goods and harms are ubiquitous. To the extent that different first-order goods and harms arise within different form of relational experience, questions about their proper status and roles in social life are ubiquitous. Each form of relational experience identified in Table 1 yields questions about the proper status and relations among different first-order goods and harms. Within any given form of relating, there are multiple possible answers to these questions. For example, social interactions naturally raise questions about boundaries and intrusion (relational form 2 in Table 1). It is likely that the differentiation of the physical body from its surrounds provides the experiential basis for higher-order conceptions of self and other. At a basic level, the boundaries of an individual person might be understood in terms of what can be considered within or outside of the skin. When a pinprick intrudes upon the skin, it causes pain – a first-order harm. The experience of such pains raises questions about the legitimacy of forms of intrusion on the self. While a pinprick may be seen to bring about first-order pain, the meaning of pain becomes transformed when the physical intrusion takes the form of a physician’s needle. A strong evaluation such as “infants should be inoculated” arises as communities reflect upon, identify and seek to reconcile diverse goods and harms. Because it functions in the service of a larger good, the intrusion of the needle into the body takes precedence over the pain of the needle. However, this is but one way to resolve questions about the nature and legitimacy of boundaries between self and other. Circumcision is a practice the produces pain. How does the pain and removal of a body part comport with the cultural and spiritual meanings in which such acts are played out? There is no single answer to these questions. Instead, the moral
status of these acts is established as communities seek to represent and reconcile diverse goods and harms in relation to each other.

4. Moral rules and values are legitimized (grounded) with reference to the first-order goods on which they are based and the extent to which they function to meet other higher-order moral goods. In the absence of any single standard against which to judge the moral correctness of a given action, it might be tempting to classify moral relationalism as a form of relativism. A common use of the concept of relativism states that, in the absence any objectively identifiable system of universal moral rules, moral values, rules and norms are relative in the sense that they are only valid under particular contextualized frameworks (Lukes, 2008; Slife & Richardson, 2011). Relativism is often justified on the basis of different moral or conceptual systems are based on qualitatively different presuppositions and thus are often incommensurable with each other. The validity of moral rules can thus be seen as relative to particular individuals, social groups or cultures as they function within particular times, places and social contexts. Moral relationalism rejects this view. While moral systems embraced by different individuals and cultures are often based on vastly different axiological foundations, relativistic views often fail to appreciate the diversity and conflict among moral values that exist within particular individuals, cultures and time periods (Wainryb, 2006; Wong, 2009). Neither cultures, individuals or time periods are monolithic structures (Hermans, 2001). The idea that moral beliefs are relative to culture implies a monolithic or homogeneous conception of culture. However, cultures are not singular unified entities. They are always organized with reference to multiple forms of both shared and contested values (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Jensen, 2011; Wainryb, 2006). Moral values conflict both within and between cultures. As a result, cultures are not separate and discrete entities in relation to which moral values can be relative.

There is one sense, however, in which moral relationalism embraces a form of relativism. If moral values, rules and norms are relative, they are relative to human relational experience. Moral values and norms not only emerge within diverse forms of social relations, their legitimacy is grounded with reference to (a) the seriousness of those goods and harms, (b) the mutual constraints that emergent goods and harms place on each other, and (c) the extent to which such goods and harms lend themselves to intersubjective verification as good or bad. For example, perhaps the most salient moral good is the value of life itself. As a second-order moral good, the sanctity of life has its origins in a suite of embodied first-order experiences. These include experiences of the goodness of breathing, of maintaining bodily integrity, of satisfying bodily needs, of being free of pain and so forth. The fear of pain, of suffocation, of starvation and death are palpable ones. The value of life as a moral good arises from and is justified in terms of (a) the experiential seriousness and salience of these first-order goods and harms; (b) the ways in which patterns of these goods and harms – experiences like breathing, pain and the anticipation of death – cohere together and thus constrain the construction of representations of moral value, (c) and the extent to which the value of such experiences lend themselves to intersubjective corroboration between and among people. The capacity to corroborate experiences of the goodness of life, the harm of pain and the fear of death between provides the first-order foundation for the creating and justifying shared higher-order values such as the sanctity of life. The capacity to establish (and re-establish) intersubjectivity about the ubiquity and seriousness of such first-order goods and harms provides the foundation for the construction and justification of moral norms. To the extent experiences of good and harm can be intersubjectively corroborated as goods and harms, they are more likely to
be generalized or universalized as moral norms – that is, norms that hold not just for me and you, but for increasingly encompassing groups of “us.”

5. Moral systems develop in within and between both individuals and societies. Moral universalism maintains that a common framework of morality exists that has universal applicability across time and place. In refuting the existence of any form of universalizing standards, moral relativism maintains that moral values are relative to particular times, contexts and cultures. Both views are largely non-developmental. In understanding morality as an emergent product of lived relational experience, moral relationalism offers an alternative – namely that, moral systems themselves develop as humans grapple with enduring and emergent evaluative questions in real, developmental and historical time (Schinkel & Ruyter, 2017); moral progress (Hermann, 2019; Moody-Adams, 1999) is possible. Moral relationalism differs from relativism in the importance it places on the other in the dialectical development of moral systems. As expressed by Levinas (Waldenfels, 2002), encounters with the other offer the continuous possibility of novelty. Our engagements with others introduce us to novel ways of knowing, feeling, evaluating and being – ways that often conflict with or contradict those embraced by the self (Turiel, 2002).

There are, of course, many ways to respond to the experience of relational conflict. One could close off the self from conflict, thus preserving the current integrity of self the while rejecting the contradiction of the other. Alternatively, one could give oneself over to the other, and act that would eliminate the conflict but destroy the integrity of the self. A third option is to approach conflict as an opportunity to resolve conflict dialectically – that is, to develop novel and more powerful shared beliefs through the integration of opposites.

Frimer and Walker’s (2012) reconciliation model of moral developmental show how moral identities develop in individuals through the dialectical integration of opposites. As shown in the left panel of Figure 1, in their model, children enter the world capable of acting on both on the basis of self-interest and concern for others. Early in development, self-interest and concern for others develop along separate and largely independent lines. Self-interest is evident whenever a child seeks to satisfy personal need or desire; concern for others can identified in the empathic responses of young infants, and in the desire for older infants to assist other in the context of clearly expressed needs. Young children tend to exhibit self-interest and concern for others in different contexts. Over the course of development, the motives for self-interest and concern for others inevitably come into conflict. A child may want a toy for herself, but nonetheless notice (or have her attention called to) her playmate’s distress upon not having access to the toy. In mid-childhood, children tend to have difficulty resolving such socio-affective conflicts. For Frimer and Walker, adolescence provides a choice point in the development of moral identity. During his period, adolescents seek novel ways to reconcile the conflict between self-interest and concern for others. In addressing this conflict, a developing individual may address the conflict by privileging self-interest over concern for others, or vice-versa. A genuinely moral identity develops when individual reconcile self-interest with concern for others. In so doing, they can begin to forge a moral identity around the idea that “it is in my self-interest to meet your needs” – or – at a perhaps higher level, “I will make the goal of meeting your needs part of that which defines my self-interest”. While unmitigated self-interest is incompatible with care for the other, Frimer and Walker’s model show how self-interest and concern for the other are transformed through the developmental integration of opposites.
Frimer and Walker’s (2012) reconciliation model illustrates several features of moral development. First, it shows how higher-order moral identifications develop through the constructive integration of self-interest and care for the other. In so doing, it shows how moral selves develop through relations that occur between people. Third, it shows how self-interest can be transformed through the process of relating to the other. The moral adult is not selfless. However, what it means to be a self becomes defined with reference to the moral demands of being in relation to others. Fourth, the model shows how different values – in this case, self-interest and concern for the other – become organized within a broader socio-moral system of beliefs over the course of development. A person’s moral beliefs are not defined by any single moral orientation or domain, but instead by the dynamic coordination of multiple moral values in relation to each other. Each moral value constrains the other in the dynamic process of moral development. Still further, while Frimer and Walker’s (2012) model was conceived with the development of individuals in mind, it is easily extended to understand the development of morality and moral beliefs beyond the individual. Moral beliefs develop as social agents – whether they be individuals or larger collectives – seek to adapt their actions and beliefs to the moral demands of relating to others. To the extent that individuals and groups are genuinely willing to engage rather than dismiss the concerns of the moral Other – it is possible to construct novel moral systems through the process of integrating opposing beliefs. Such a process would require the cultivation of a mutual willingness to identify “kernels of truth” in the opposing beliefs of the other. A relational approach holds out the hope that novel, higher-order and hybrid systems of shared moral belief can develop as people(s) seek to create novel forms of shared belief through the successive differentiation and integration of opposing systems of value. We have examined the dialectical construction of novel forms of individual and shared belief is discussed in several recent papers (Basseches & Mascolo, 2010; Mascolo, 2017, in press; Mascolo & DiBianca Fasoli, in press; and Marginean, LaTorre, Derien & Mascolo, 2019). The discussion now turns to an analysis of the ways in which adults construct moral frameworks for reconciling self-interest and concern for others in the context of a mode of interaction that is often seen to lack a moral dimension – owning or running a business.
Beyond Self-Interest: The Relational Construction of Morality in Business

If there is an arena that lends itself to an analysis of moral functioning in adulthood, it is the realm of business and economic life. The question of whether business and organizational activity can move beyond the monolithic and unquestioned principles of self-interest, individual rights, and the freedom of markets is hardly new. However, the search for a new social and economic framework that includes care for the other, society, and our natural resources has never been more relevant or urgent.

Evolutionary scholars have acknowledged that our species has flourished largely based upon our ability to collaborate and form communities for our mutual benefit and survival (Pirson, 2017). Indeed, organizations are “social structures created by individuals to support the collaborative pursuit of specified goals” (Scott & Davis, 2007, p. 11). But the modern day corporation is far from Smith’s (1776) view of human beings as rational and self-interested but moderated by prudent evaluation. Friedman’s (1970) assertion that profit is the singular purpose of corporations ignited an unbridled self-interest in contemporary economic life. The combustible combination of individualism – with a focus in economic gain, and market principles – within a culture that promotes growth without limits or harm (Boulding, 1966) brought on a half-century of shareholder primacy in the growth of business organizations.

A consequence of the growth, power and influence of organizations was the separation of the decision-makers and from those which are materially affected by the organizations (Beets, 2011). Before the mid-1800’s, economic and social ‘rules’ were the province of individuals, families, or communities. With the advent of the industrial revolution, economic organizations grew to become the predominant canvas on which our ways of relating and being played out (Boulding, 1953; Stern & Barley, 1996). In the last half-century, however, membership in social, religious, and labor organizations has decreased sharply. It is against the backdrop of a ‘go it alone’ ethos of self-sufficiency that Putnam (2001) invoked metaphor of “bowling alone” to illuminate the collapse of community in contemporary American culture. This shift elevated the formal economic organization (i.e., corporations) as the dominate feature of our interpersonal relationships, our moral behavior, and in our relation to the natural world (Davis, 2006). However, these changes are far from a recent phenomenon, rather, they have “crept upon us silently. It is something we accept as natural almost without thinking. And yet, the whole movement raises problems with which we are ill equipped to deal” (Boulding, 1953, p. 4).

The ‘winner’ in this evolutionary race was the modern-day corporation, with “features that make it larger, more powerful, and more permanent than any individual human being” (Carroll, et.al. 2012, p. 11). Scott and Davis (2007) observe that even though these legal entities represent a small portion of the economic system in terms of number of entities, they have a disproportionate amount of social influence and economic power. This power is in part attributable to the corporation’s rights as an artificial person which have continued to increase – rivaling those of the human person. Corporations as “artificial legal person” has enabled the accumulation of “previously unimaginable sums of money” (Carroll, et.al. 2012. p. 11). With this economic and legal power, Stoll (2005, p. 261) argued that corporate rights and free speech would “undermine the moral rationale and practical feasibility of guaranteeing rights of civil free speech to
individuals.” The imbalance of power and extended legal reach would likely lead to the “privatization of functions that have historically been the mandate of local, state, and federal governments” (Barley, 2007, p. 204).

A primary casualty of this imbalance of power is the what Becker & Ostrom (2003) refer to as the Tragedy of the Commons. The Commons, as proposed by Hardin (1968), includes ecological resources such as air, water, minerals, and other inputs into the economic systems that are available and equally entitled to all members of society. The Commons cannot be excluded nor can they be subtracted from the costs and impact of the organization’s activity (Becker & Ostrom, 2003). For organizations, these resources are necessary means of production, however their extraction, usage, and disposal has far-reaching consequences on the environment as well as the dignity and well-being of the individual. The Commons have been disproportionately under the care and at the disposal of the largest economic entities.

How we care for and protect the Commons, as well as how we establish priorities and make decisions regarding social, economic, and natural resources extends beyond logic of free market principles. Market principles fail to live up to their promise when stakeholders are excluded from the evaluation of the exchange. The 1984 Union Carbide gas leak in Bhopal India is an example where the basic human right to safety was exchanged for a promise of future economic development (Jennings, 2012). Sandel (2012) speaks of the current tendency to view social problems as little more than a market inefficiency that can be solved with robust economic analysis and an appeal to the profit motive. He writes: “We have fallen in love with the idea of free market solutions to all manner of societal ills. And in doing so, it seems we have handed much of this judgment back to the markets, and by extension to corporations” (Sandel, 2012). He goes on to say: “The most fateful change that unfolded during the past three decades was not an increase in greed. It was the reach of markets, and of market values, into spheres of life traditionally governed by nonmarket norms” (Sandel, 2012).

**Contemporary Movement Toward a Moral Marketplace**

The ubiquity of these large formal and powerful organizations (corporations) has arguably improved the quality of life for large portions of the global population. However, economic inequality and the readily observable diminished living standards of much of the world’s population stands in sharp contrast to record-breaking corporate profits and the increase in wealth of the top 1% of the populations (Adler, 2019). As the rights and influence of corporations have grown, the need for corresponding responsibilities has been brought into sharp review. As the rights of corporations have led to increasing power and influence, the need for corresponding responsibilities has been brought into sharp review.

The practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has emerged in part to counter the excess of corporate power and influence by shifting existing business practices toward more sustainable ways of working. However, as Adler (1999) points out, many CSR-related efforts serve only to reduce the rate and magnitude of harms to social and environmental resources but often fall short of wholly sustainable practices. Newer innovative business forms such as Benefit Corporations (BCorps) acknowledge the tensions between rights and responsibilities and are chartered with social and moral imperatives. BCorps fill a needed void by working to solve “society’s most
challenging problems cannot be solved by government and nonprofits alone” (About B Corps | Certified B Corporation, n.d.). These organizations eschew Friedman’s profit imperative and are “obligated to pursue public benefit in addition to the responsibility to return profits to shareholders” (Hiller, 2013, p. 287). Noteworthy BCorps such as Patagonia, Greystone Bakery, and New Belgium Brewing operate in a sustainable manner both responding to and helping shape stakeholder values “toward more sustainable forms of consumption” (Painter et al., 2018, p. 88) and acknowledging the responsibilities borne by all stakeholders.

Moral Thinking in the Organization of Business

Business is often juxtaposed to morality. It is common to hear people contrast “from a business perspective…” with “from a moral perspective.” From a moral relational approach, all human action takes place against the backdrop of inescapable moral frameworks. This includes business activity as well. To speak from “a business perspective” is not to adopt a non-moral stance; it is to act from the standpoint of “what is good for the business” – where “the business” refers typically to the survival and economic well-being of the organization. To invoke what is “good for a business is to adopt a moral stance – a stance that maintains that survival and the making of a profit is in some sense a good thing. The moment we do this, we have entered into a moral discussion. The moment we are aware that we are acting out of some form of self-interest (either at the level of the individual self or the business as a whole), there is no exit from the moral implications of our actions. While we may ignore the moral implications of our actions, they are nonetheless there. This is not to say that there are no moral justifications for acting on the basis of the interest of the business or the interest of the self. Would anyone suggest that individuals are not morally justified to act in ways that support their individual or group survival? There are thus justifications for acting in the interest of the self or business. However, if there are reasons that justify self-interest, there are also reasons that limit it and that direct us to attend to other moral implications of our actions in relation to others. It becomes necessary to understand self-interest as it functions within the broader context of human relationships. In business, as in life, we must act with fidelity to the proper demands of relationships (Donahue, 1977).

In what follows, we illustrate the ways in which business operations are and can be organized around moral values that extend far the principle of self-interest. In so doing, we describe the structure of moral thinking as by a series of business owners or managers in the context of open-ended interviews. Three individuals are described here. The first is the owner and operator of a successful dentist office in a small town in New England (USA). The second is senior chef employed by a major hotel in a major American city. The third is the owner of a marketing firm that represents select clients in major industries judged to make important contributions to the public good. The two business owners are responsible for all aspects of the operation of their business; the chef is responsible for all local matters involving in the running of the hotel.

4 Interviews were conducted to identify and elaborate upon moral principles and values (see Table 1) that structured the ways in which owners and managers conducted their business. Sample questions used to guide the interviews are provided in Appendix A. These questions served merely as guides to initiate discussion which move in different directions depending upon the particular issues raised.

5 Details about the particular businesses in question are omitted to protect the identity of the participants.
restaurant. This includes ordering food, setting prices, training, hiring and firing, and managing expenses.

We analyzed the interviews by constructing interpretive themes suggested by the content of the interviewee’s statements as they may or may not have related to the moral themes described in Table 1. We organized interpreted themes and verbatim statements into a two-dimensional socio-moral space. Drawing on MacMurray (1962), the horizontal dimension spans meanings from fear/concern for the self on the left and concern for the other on the right. The vertical dimension distinguishes between the extent to which statements refer to groups (top) or to individual persons (bottom). Each owner or managers’ statements were organized within the resulting socio-moral space; relations among the various statements were identified wherever they could be grounded in the expressed content of their interview. Each socio-moral space displays the structure of the moral thinking that organizes the owner/manager’s expressed approach to running the business.

The moral thinking expressed by each manager was both rich and variegated. The structure of each manager’s thinking was organized around complex relations among multiple moral values that were tied to different forms of relationships involved in the running of the business. While the types of moral values expressed by the three managers revealed some similarities, they were organized around different moral principles. The dentist’s moral thinking was organized around the idea of business as instrument for sustaining livelihoods; the chef’s thinking was organized around the principle of virtuous personhood and ethical exchange; the marketing professional’s thinking was organized around the idea of business as a collaborative social project rather than a means for making profit. In what follows, we describe the structure of each individual’s thinking in more detail.

The Dentist: Business as a Means for Creating Livelihoods

I am using helping people with their teeth as a conduit to operate a business that gives people a livelihood. However, just because I take a fee for something doesn’t mean I don’t care for that person. The desire to help people with their health is a motivating force behind my business.

At the center of the dentist’s moral structure is the notion that his business, like any business, exists to “give people a livelihood.” First and foremost, businesses help people by providing them with jobs. Jobs help families because they pay well and also because they initiate a relationship between employee and employer that is ongoing, where the employer is sensitive and responsive to individual employee needs. In this context, familial needs of employees can be met through additional exchange relationships. For example, paying for child-care for an employee also helps that employee return to work, which helps the business. As shown in Figure 2, the bottom line is maintaining the business so that it can continue to provide this kind of livelihood for its employees. Hence, (1) “profit is a 100% necessity” Ultimately, it is (9) the responsibility of the owners to ensure that there is a profit, so that the business can continue to achieve these ends. Profit is imagined not only in terms of the survival of the business as a means to livelihood. It is also imagined as a motivating force. Profit as motivating applies to each individual within the company. As a business owner, the dentist is motivated by profit (2) and for employees, bonus systems incentivize employees (11), while salaries – where the “profit” is fixed – disincentivizes employees (10).
At the same time, profit is motivating not only on account of having additional money. Profit is also motivating, the dentist says, because it is an index of “how much I am helping people.” He continues, “When I look at how much dentistry came through my office last year, I am not thinking, man I made a lot of money, but rather man we did a lot of work. That’s a lot of people we helped.” Profit is a concrete symbol of the care for customers (13). In this sense, care for customers is a central motivating force that is not “mutually exclusive” with profit. As the dentist urges, “just because I take a fee for something, doesn’t mean I don’t care for that person.” Finally, profit indexes not only help for customers, but also help for employees. The dentist concludes this thought saying that profit means a successful business, which is one “that people really like working for.” For the dentist, then, considerations of the business and care for individuals involved in and with the business are all wrapped into one.

Fairness is conceptualized as exchange that is freely entered into. When the dentist speaks of discounts, these discounts are not determined on the basis of the moral qualities of the customer’s character, but rather on the qualities of the work that constitutes the exchange. When the amount of work – in terms of quality or quantity – does not represent the agreed-upon fee, the dentist will discount that fee, either “not charg[ing] or charg[ing] less.” Prices are fair when they are willingly agreed upon and when they are proportional to the work conducted.

What underlies this conception is a deep notion of individual freedom that involves agency and personal choice. It comes into play when determining when and which customers to discount (12), it comes into play when determining whether and to which organizations to donate goods, services, and time (3), and it comes into play when determining when to give employees additional benefits. In all cases, there is a wide sphere where owners can decide how to relate to others in the context...
of their activities. This is perhaps most apparent when it comes to donating time and services to organizations and to individuals served by those organizations, such as the free clinic that the dentist is involved in each week. This involvement involves virtues that are tied to the business. These involve gratitude, in acknowledging the role of the community in the success of the business (5) and having a good reputation that will bring more people to the business (6 and 7). As such, these activities can be indirectly linked to the success of the business and to the livelihood it creates.

The Chef: Virtuous Personhood and Ethical Exchange

I would rather hire a good person who can learn how to cook than hire a good cook and try to teach him how to be a good person.

In his interview, the chef described his approach to managing his kitchen around concerns for care, virtue and what might be called and ethos of ethical exchange. Throughout the discussion, the chef made repeated reference to the concept of “a good person” – that is, the need for the manager to act a good person, to hire “good people” – in the moral sense, and for the company itself to act as if it were a “good person.” From the chef’s standpoint, a “good company” is one that is:

- transparent in their cost. They [are] easy to deal with – purposefully – not just easy because it’s an easy thing but purposes. Let’s let me go out of my way to make your life easier. You’re spending money. I’m going to give you that service – that’s part of my service. Fair to their employees and workers. Fair and responsible to environment. Fair and responsible to their neighborhood area. All of those would speak to me saying this is a good company

As shown in Figure 3, in elaborating this conception, the chef described his approach to managing his kitchen in terms of the need to create a (1) “good place” where “people like working” in order to support “longevity” among employees (“not a revolving door”). In so doing, the chef contrasted his orientation to that of a co-worker who, expecting workers to be motivated for continuous advancement, expressed criticism that some workers had been working the same position for over 30 years (i.e., “Why are they still doing the same job?). The chef identified the goal of fostering an environment to create “stable, happy people” as an important objective – one in which “some people move up quickly, some people move up slowly”, but also with “people [who] are taking care of their families, doing what they need to do.” In this regard, the chef talked at considerable length about his attempts to (2) nurture the development of employees. For the chef, nurturing employees was not simply a matter of teaching them kitchen skills. Instead, the chef spontaneously described several examples of his willingness to “find somebody who has the ability to get out of [bad life situations] and succeed”, indicating that, “if I can help them with that I would.” In this regard, the chef continuously invoked the moral value of care for his employees, not simply to as employees of a business, but as people with needs and concerns of their own.
At the same time, while care figured prominently in the chef’s discourse, he also pointed out the ways in which care for his employees helped the business itself. This is indicated at point (3) in a structure we have called the virtue triad. Here, invoking some standard for being a virtuous person or business, chef explained how invoking some standard of virtue motivates acts of care which also function to support the economic interests of the business. For example, the chef (3) described that “I take care of my team and my staff (virtue) in a way that helps them (act of care) as much as it helps me in the business (self-interest). This type of triadic structure occurred several times in the chef’s narrative (see below). In this regard, the chef also made reference to the desire to care for employees out of (4) a need to attract and retain skilled workers (self-interest). He observed, “the lower unemployment rate is not wonderful for employers. It makes it difficult to find people.” The chef also invoked “self-interest” in explaining the role of (5) profit in his approach to management. He said, “ultimately a business exists to make profit. The rest of that stuff [moral values such as virtue, care, etc.] falls under that or in between that, because if we make, if we're making money and have the ability to pay our people better and maybe put more people so they don’t have to work so hard.” Note here, however, that as soon as the chef invokes the concept of profit, he links it explicitly to his sense of the purpose of profit: that is, profit is needed to pursue some sort of good – in this case, the pay employees more or make their jobs easier. These sentiments show how, as implied in the structure of the (3) virtue triad, the chef organizes his thinking around different moral values that interpenetrate each other. The chef refers to this directly in his statement that “in my mind all of that rolls into the same. I think that's something that's not at all exclusive of the other definition.”

The chef is charged with establishing pricing for large banquets housed at the hotel. In response to the question, “how do you price? Do you price for different people?”, the chef replied “I don't. I don't price higher for certain people. Ever.” So, mom and pop, an HVAC company comes for a...
party, their price is the same.” In expressing this sentiment, the chef expressed his concern for (7) fairness in the treatment of different groups. At the same time, he acknowledged that (8) pricing differentials were fair in some situations. For example, in setting rates for hotel rooms, he suggested that it was acceptable to modify rates for rooms as a function of when reservations were made. Rooms rented well in advance could be charged at a lower rate than rooms rented within weeks of intended occupancy; rooms rented on the day of occupancy could be lower still, in order to ensure the room does not remain vacant. At the same time, the chef expressed distaste with the practice of taking advantage of customers during in the context of a seller’s market, that is, the “attitude of ‘they’re coming anyway, let’s squeeze them for all we can.’” In so doing, he expressed a desire for fairness both the customers and to the self-interest of the company. Further, the chef noted his willingness to give discounts for banquets for groups finances was demonstrably limited. However, he expressed a deep unwillingness to provide discounts to companies that he perceived had the means to pay listed prices. He explains his distaste, however, not simply in terms of fairness but instead in terms of the ethics of relationship. In responding to companies of means that ask for deep discounts, the chef explains, “[We have] published pricing. And you want to come to business with us and you have shit tons of money. What makes you think or who do you think you are to then squeeze us?... you may only want to spend that [amount], but I’m almost like ‘how dare you ask me for that kind of discount consideration?’” Here, the chef appears to experience the aggressive actions of a company of means not in terms of an abstract concept of fairness, but in terms of a lack of care or consideration in the relationship between the chef (and his company) and the client.

A final issue involves the chef’s spontaneously expressed commitment to community issues as part of his conception of a virtuous business. Invoking (8) a sense of responsibility to the environment, the chef made reference to his rigorous desire to limit waste in the kitchen, for the purpose of ensuring “clean water, clean air and healthy people.” When asked, “why should you care about that as a business? [Isn’t that] kind of something ‘over there’?” the chef responded, “No I think more business owners and business managers need to. You cannot ‘if it doesn’t bother me because I live in this part of town away from the dump.’ It still bothers my town or my state, my country or my world.”

The Marketer: Collaborative Social Purpose

*Morality in business is the same as morality in social interaction - full stop.*

While consumers tend to believe that marketing plays a positive role in making people aware of products, they also believe that marketing serves the interests of business at the expense of those of consumers (Barksdale & Darden, 1972; Heath & Heath, 2008; Kashif, Fernando, Altaf & Walsh, 2018). The owner of the marketing firm was adamant that while mistrust toward marketers exists, moral marketing is not a contradiction in terms. Unlike both the dentist (and to a lesser extent, the chef), the marketer does not identify profit as the primary motive for a business. As shown in Figure 4, for the marketer, (1) while profit is necessary, but it is not the purpose of the business. The purpose of a business is to form a collaborative unit for the purpose of advancing some valued purpose:
[The purpose of my business has] always been a **collaborative environment** and it's never been **money**. When I talk to staff about that, they're inspired by that to a degree, but they want more money as an incentive... But I'm not motivated by that. I need a certain amount of money to have my satisfactory life, but I don't need to travel by helicopter and private car. So to me, it's always been about going to work and having fun each day.... And fun to me is having challenging work.... And if I have to sacrifice revenue for that, I'm cool with that.

Operating from this point of view, the marketer was explicit that (2) “morality in business is the same as morality in social interaction.” Profit is necessary in the sense that the operation “has to be profitable for it to keep going.” However, the profit exists so that the business can “have the client coming with a particular challenging situation that we’re trying to fix or answer.” At the same time, (3) the companies that he works for must be those that “add to society.” The marketer indicated that he explicitly chose to work in particular industries because “these are services that I highly respect and think people need,” and that he would not represent clients – such as the alcohol industry – which he felt do not “add to society.” In this way, he is in the business of (4) providing “information that really helps [people] make good decisions.”

![Figure 4: The Marketer: Collaboration for Shared Purpose](image)

This statement is consistent with (5) the marketer’s conception of the nature of marketing “as a form of communication.” In elaborating this statement, the marketer noted the difference between this idea and the common notion that marketers are untrustworthy conduits of information. The interview asked whether “there are ways to market ... without duping people.” The marketer replied:
the premise of that question is … of course, you are gonna lie as a marketer, but you don't have to. It’s this whole [assumption] that marketing is inherently a lie. I think of marketing as communication. I'm communicating with you now. As an academic, you [will] communicate to your audience through this journal. [Are the] words you choose to communicate your findings [a] lie? How do you describe me? … You're making a judgment on how you articulate. That’s what marketing is – we're making a judgment about how to articulate. We could be authentic; but [6] we also want to create excitement. You do [that] too when you write that article. [If you] use the most boring terms possible, nobody's going to read your article.

The marketer indicated that he could accept the proposition that “all communication is selling” in the sense that communication requires “getting someone to pay attention.” However, to make the “selling” morally legitimate, a company must be prepared to (7) “deliver on … the brand promise.” Brand promise is the image that the company puts forth to define what it is able to deliver to the customer. If, in the context of a given transaction, a business is able to deliver on the promise made in the process of selling, then the marketing of that product has been morally legitimate. The business has made an honest promise, and has kept it. It is thus (7) delivering on brand promise and (2) invoking the ethos of everyday social interaction that (8) a business can forge a reputation as an “upstanding player” who is “really really good at what you do you.” This reputation not only functions as a reflection of the character of the company, but also (9) gives clients a reason to do business with the company, as opposed to the other companies with which the business is in competition.

Conclusion: Morality and Moral Action as Evolving Relational Processes

We sometimes think of human psychological activity action as first behavior and then moral evaluation. Moral frameworks are often experienced as occupying a realm that is in some sense separate from everyday behavior – something related to extraordinary rather than ordinary human relations. As such, it is often seen as something that is “added onto” what we do rather than something that is part of the very process of what we do. Nowhere do we see this view more clearly than in the domain of business. Here, people often think that self-interest (e.g., the pursuit of profit; the preservation of the business itself) is the business of business, and that morality or ethics is something that is relevant after a stable profit structure has been established.

Moral relationalism maintains that moral values are properties not of some secondary or other worldly sphere of functioning, but instead are embedded and emergent outcomes of social relations themselves. The moment we enter symbolically-mediated social relations, our actions raise inescapably moral questions and function against the backdrop of already existing albeit constantly evolving moral frameworks. Contrary to what one might think if one were to examine the history of moral psychology in the latter part of the 20th century, the moral frameworks that frame human action are highly variegated – even within particular cultures. Among Western cultures that identify themselves as democracies, the ethos of rights, freedom and equality is dominant. However, while these moral values are foundational to democracy, they neither exhaust the range of moral values that mediate social life nor are they sufficient to sustain structures that promote human flourishing.
Moral selves are mediated by the capacity to engage in strong evaluation – higher-order evaluations of what we might pre-reflectively experience as first order goods. Self-interest is a first-order good that becomes transformed through the process of relating to others. Through our social relations, we can the capacity to use the meanings represented in socially-shared symbol systems to create higher-order moral representation of who we are and who we believe we should become. In this way, our selves become transformed and continue to become transformed as long as we find ourselves immersed in novel forms of experience made possible by our relations to the social and moral other. In this way, adult development occurs within the arena of socio-moral relations to others. It is mediated in large part by the construction of increasingly powerful, integrated systems of moral belief and action that are founded in relations between and among both individuals and social groups.

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A Systematic Review of HeartMath© Interventions to Improve Psychological Outcomes in Individuals with Psychiatric Conditions

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Abstract: Background and objectives: A systematic review was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of HeartMath, heart rate variability biofeedback (HRVB) intervention studies within a variety of psychiatric conditions. Design and methods: Seven databases, including Web of Knowledge, Medline, Psych Info, Cinahl, Psych articles, Web of Science, the Cochrane Library and grey literature, were searched for suitable articles. Of the 1,701 citations identified, eight studies that utilised HeartMath HRVB interventions with psychiatric patients were included in the final analysis. A total of 64 patients aged 12-96 across a range of psychiatric conditions were examined in the systematic review. Results: The review cautiously indicates that some groups of patients with psychiatric conditions report psychological improvement following HRVB HeartMath training. Conclusions: These studies provide some evidence that HeartMath, HRVB interventions are promising in supporting beneficial outcomes for individuals with psychiatric conditions. The review points to future directions for HRVB interventions using the HeartMath technology.

Keywords: Coherence, HeartMath, heart rate variability, heart rhythms, psychiatric disorders.

Declarations

The main author completed this work as part of a Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology and no funding was obtained. The researcher is a qualified HeartMath coach but there were no conflicts of interest or competing benefits throughout any of the research.

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Introduction

The structure of the National Health System (NHS) mental health service in the UK is changing, pushed to capacity and under-resourced. The Global Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2020) has called for improved access to innovative and cost-effective interventions for treating psychiatric conditions (Avey et al., 2003; Lancet Global Mental Health Group, 2007; Saxena, Funk, & Chisholm, 2013).

Current interventions for treating psychiatric conditions are typically pharmacological including anxiolytics (e.g., pregabalin), anti-depressants (e.g., Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and antipsychotics (e.g., olanzapine) which manage and reduce the intensity of symptoms (Predictable, 2006). Some of these medications aim to target and relax the nervous system (e.g., benzodiazepines), but due to some severe side effects and addictive properties, they are not advised long-term (Baldwin et al., 2013). Individuals can become reliant on these medications which can impact on their levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy which may lead to poorer health outcomes (Austin-Ketch et al., 2012; Zimmermann et al., 2012).

More recently, primary and secondary care providers are actively encouraged to promote an individual’s control, choice and responsibility in managing their health (Leng, Baillie, & Raj, 2008). Hence, patient interest in alternative and complementary interventions has increased dramatically, one of which is Heart Rate Variability Biofeedback (HRVB) (for further information on other mind-body interventions, please refer to Park, 2013).

Heart Rate Variability (HRV) has been suggested to be an indicator of physiological stress and functioning of the nervous system and is measured by examining the beat-to-beat variation in the heart rhythm patterns (Edwards, 2020; McCraty, 2017). Research has revealed that low HRV levels are associated with psychopathological states such as anxiety (Thayer, Friedman, & Borkovec, 1996), depression (Beegers, Ellis, & Reid, 2011) and rumination (Brosschot, Van Dijk, & Thayer, 2007). In comparison, high HRV readings have been indicative of improved physical and mental health (Lehrer et al., 2006; Henriques et al., 2011; Ratanasiripong et al., 2015; Zucker et al., 2009; Kotozaki et al., 2014).

The use of HRVB interventions has expanded in popularity in more recent years for implementation in psychiatric conditions (Kapitza et al., 2010). Thus, interventions which target dysfunctional physiology from a ‘bottom-up’ perspective have demonstrated that patients are more able to identify and self-regulate their nervous systems, to calm challenging physical and mental symptoms, and increase physiological coherence (Leyro 2019; Pal Singh & Kaur, 2007; Kemp et al., 2012; McCraty et al., 2012). Coherence arises during positive emotional states when breath, heart and blood pressure become entrained. It is distinguished by a heart rhythm pattern of raised amplitude in low frequency heart rate variability of around 0.1 Hz, demonstrating synchronisation between the parasympathetic and sympathetic divisions of the autonomic nervous system (McCraty & Shaffer, 2015).

Due to the upsurge of interest in HRVB interventions and psychiatric conditions, there have been several reviews. Schoenberg & David (2014) examined 63 biofeedback intervention articles for use with psychiatric disorders. They revealed that 80.9% reported some clinical improvement,
of which 65.0% were statistically significant (p<.05), concluding that biofeedback may be useful for psychiatric use. However, they examined a range of different biofeedback interventions (e.g. electroencephalography, electromyography, HRV and electrocardiography) and therefore, it is unclear if some types of biofeedback are more effective than others.

A recent meta-analysis also found a significant reduction in subjective reports of levels of anxiety and stress associated with HRV biofeedback training with substantial effect sizes evident in both within and between-group designs (Goessl, Curtiss, & Hofmann, 2017). The findings from the meta-analysis suggest that HRV-BF interventions are effective at reducing psychological measures of stress. However, the outcomes are sensitive to social desirability and methodological variance, therefore, there is a need to provide more objective measures such as physiological HRV improvements to validate the treatment effectiveness of biofeedback interventions (Van der swan et al., 2015).

Very recently, Poleszak et al. (2019) conducted a review examining the psychological and psychiatric benefits of biofeedback interventions in 23 articles. They concluded that HRVB is an effective therapy for use in depressive disorders, insomnia, ADHD and anxiety disorders. However, there was limited information available about the breakdown and quality of each study, research design and type of HRVB implemented. Therefore, drawing conclusions and evaluating the more detailed aspects of the systematic review is limited.

Collectively, these previous systematic reviews have demonstrated that HRVB interventions can be applicable in improving psychiatric outcomes; however, as already mentioned, there are different methods to measure HRV biofeedback. Of particular interest for this review is examining heart rate variability coherence as measured by HeartMath technology.

The Institute of HeartMath is non-profit organisation that has a mission and vision of promoting education, health, personal, social and global coherence research (Edwards, 2020). There have been no systematic reviews that have examined this type of HRVB only. HeartMath HRVB interventions employ a combination of psychological, physiological, behavioural and cognitive strategies to empower and educate individuals about the workings of their autonomic nervous system (Institute of HeartMath, 2014). Using technology such as the emWave®Pro Plus and the Inner Balance™, the individual receives immediate feedback via a sensor attached to the ear which displays their physiology via a visual format (e.g., on their mobile phone) and enables self-regulation in the moment initiated by changes in breathing or mood (Institute of HeartMath, 2014, Ratanasiripong et al., 2010).

This systematic review aims to build on, and advance knowledge of HRVB interventions using HeartMath technology and bring innovation and new direction into the psychiatric system.

Objectives

Review Questions

1. Are HeartMath interventions effective at improving psychological outcomes in patients with psychiatric conditions?
2. Do research studies report HRV coherence pre-post intervention?

Study Design

In order to gain clarity for the search terms, the acronym PICO was implemented for the review, see below for the breakdown (Higgins & Green, 2011).

\[ \text{PICO} \]
\[ \text{Population: Psychiatric} \]
\[ \text{Intervention: HeartMath HRV} \]
\[ \text{Control: Control, comparison or none} \]

Outcomes

1. Change in psychiatric outcome measures.
2. To identify whether changes in HRV coherence values are reported

Methods

Protocol

This review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement guidelines (Liberati et al., 2009).

Eligibility Criteria

Following PICO, eligibility for inclusion in the systematic review consisted of any HeartMath intervention with individuals who have a psychiatric condition. All English language databases from years 1971- to present-day were searched that included published, unpublished and literature.

Inclusion Criteria

1. English published work
2. Any age from 12 years old
3. Psychiatric disorder
4. HeartMath HRV intervention
5. HRV coherence as measured by a phonograph, ear or fingertip measurement

Exclusion

1. Any other HRV biofeedback measurement that is not HRV coherence as measured by HeartMath technology.
2. Any conditions which are known to affect cognitive abilities to some degree, e.g., dementia, autism and Asperger’s syndrome were excluded.
Information Sources

Seven different electronic databases including Web of Knowledge, Medline, Psych Info, Cinahl, Psych Articles, Web of Science, the Cochrane Library and grey literature were searched for English articles between the dates 01/08/19 and 12/02/20. A backward search was also completed by examining the suitable articles’ reference list and further, recognised authors were contacted to gain access to potentially relevant articles for more information. These search strategies are in line with best practice to gain a robust search strategy for the systematic review (Forshaw, Tod & Eubank, 2018; Liberati et al., 2009).

Search

The following search terms were used for all databases:

“Heart rate variability biofeedback” OR “heart coherence” OR “Respiratory sinus arrhythmia” OR “HRV” OR “RSA” OR “resonance frequency biofeedback “AND anxiety OR “anorexia nervosa” OR “bipolar affective disorder*” OR “depersonalisation disorder*” OR “personality disorder*” OR depression OR “eating disorder*” OR “bulimia nervosa” OR “binge eating disorder” OR “psych* disorder*” OR “psych* condition*” OR “obsessive-compulsive disorder*” OR “OCD” OR “MDD” OR “panic disorder*” OR “post-traumatic stress disorder*” OR “PTSD” OR “psychiatric disorder*” OR “psychological disorder*” OR “psychopathology” OR “psychosis” OR “schizophrenia” OR “borderline personality disorder*” OR addiction AND HeartMath Intervention

Study Selection

The search strategy initially produced 1,701 articles, 304 of which were duplicates leaving 1,397 to be reviewed by title and abstract. 1,372 were excluded, the primary reason for exclusion was that HeartMath technology was not used in the study, leaving 25 full-text studies assessed for eligibility. Seventeen studies were excluded during data extraction as either the population group was not appropriate, or the study was not using a HeartMath protocol leaving a total of eight studies included in the review, see Figure 1 for the PRISMA flow diagram.

Eligibility for inclusion was rated by the first author and then moderated blindly by the second and third authors. Disagreements were negligible and were discussed leading to minor re-ratings due to emerging novel interpretations of the criteria in relation to the papers being considered. None of the small amendments led to a change in the inclusion/exclusion status of a paper.
Quality and risk of bias in the studies were measured using The Effective Public Health Practice Project (EPHHP) tool, which was developed explicitly for use within public health professions and therefore, appropriate for this review. All of the studies were scored using a ‘yes’, no’ or ‘can’t tell’ response system for the six component ratings on selection bias, study design, confounders, blinding, data collection measures, withdrawal and dropouts. A global rating for each paper was then decided and classified as strong (if no weak ratings in any of the components), moderate (if...
there were one or more weak ratings) and weak (if there were two or more weak ratings). This tool has been used effectively in a substantial number of similar reviews (EPHPP, 1998).

**Data Collection Process**

A data extraction sheet was employed to record specific information on each study including; (1) first author and year of publication, (2) country, (3) characteristics of participants (category of the psychiatric condition, sample size and gender), (4) type of design, (5) intervention condition (including frequency and length of HRVB sessions), (5) primary outcome measures (psychological or psychiatric measures and physiological HRV coherence data if provided), (6) results following intervention (psychological and physiological if reported).

**Results**

**Study Selection**

Eight studies met all the inclusion criteria for the systematic review, see Table 1 for a detailed breakdown of the study characteristics, design and specific outcomes.

**Characteristics of Included Studies**

**Countries**

Out of the eight studies, five were published in the USA (Lande et al., 2010; Ginsberg, Berry, & Powell, 2010; Beckham, Greene, & Meltzer-Brody, 2013; Reyes, 2014; Jester, Rozek, & McKelley, 2019), the remaining in different countries including France (Trousselard et al., 2016), Netherlands (Hartogs, Bartels-Velthuis, Van der Ploeg, & Bos, 2017) and Canada (McAusland, & Addington, 2018).

**Study design**

Amongst the eight included studies, the methodological study design varied. The most common research design was a within group with five studies employing this approach (Beckham, Greene, & Meltzer-Brody, 2013; Reyes, 2014; Trousselard et al., 2016; McAusland, & Addington, 2018; Jester, Rozek, & McKelley, 2019). There were two quasi-experimental designs (Ginsberg, Berry, & Powell, 2010; Lande et al., 2010) and one cohort study (Hartogs, Bartels-Velthuis, Van der Ploeg, & Bos, 2017).

Of the eight studies, five were pilot studies (McAusland, & Addington, 2018; Trousselard et al., 2016; Beckham, Greene, & Meltzer-Brody, 2013; Lande et al., 2010; Ginsberg, Berry, & Powell, 2010)

**Participant Characteristics**

Sixty-four psychiatric patients in total were recruited across the eight reviewed studies, age range 12-96 years old. Three studies included patients with PTSD (Ginsberg, Berry, & Powell,
2010; Lande et al., 2010; Reyes, 2014) and three different studies included patients with a range of psychiatric conditions (Beckham, Greene, & Meltzer-Brody, 2013; McAusland, & Addington, 2018; Jester, Rozek, & McKelley, 2019). The remaining studies included specific psychiatric conditions; schizophrenia (Trousselard et al., 2016) and major depression (Hartogs, Bartels-Velthuis, Van der Ploeg, & Bos, 2017).

**Sample Sizes**

There was a range of sample sizes in the research design ranging from the highest, 38 participants (Lande, 2010) to the least which was seven (Hartogs, Bartels-Velthuis, Van der Ploeg, & Bos, 2017).

Three of the studies contained 100% male patients (Ginsberg, Berry, & Powell, 2010; Lande et al., 2010; Reyes, 2014), one study used 100% female patients (Beckham, Greene, & Meltzer-Brody, 2013) and the rest were mixed-gender (Trousselard et al., 2016; Hartogs, Bartels-Velthuis, Van der Ploeg, & Bos, 2017; McAusland, & Addington, 2018; Jester, Rozek, & McKelley, 2019).

**Intervention**

The intervention lengths and training protocols varied in each research design. As displayed in Table 1, the number of intervention minutes that participants completed with a researcher/psychologist or biofeedback therapist ranged from 20 minutes (McAusland, & Addington, 2018) to the highest training of HRVB up to 720 minutes (Trousselard et al., 2016). The number of sessions ranged from one (McAusland, & Addington, 2018) to the most, 12 sessions (Trousselard et al., 2016) with the majority ranging between 6-12 sessions (Lande et al., 2010; Reyes, 2014; Jester, Rozek, & McKelley, 2019; Hartogs, Bartels-Velthuis, Van der Ploeg, & Bos, 2017).

**Outcome Measures**

Across the eight selected papers, studies varied greatly regarding the measures used as there was a range of different psychiatric conditions. The outcome measure used included; The PTSD Checklist (PCL) (Ventureyra et al., 2002), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults (STAI-AD) (Spielberger, 1983), Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI) (Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996), Scale of Prodromal Symptoms (SOPS) (McGlashan et al., 2001), Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) (Kessler et al., 2002), Information Processing test battery (ATTN/IM) (Vasterling et al., 2002), Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS) (Zung, 1971), Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS) (Zung, 1965), the Positive Outcome list (POL) (Appelo, 2005), Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety (STAI) (Spielberger et al., 1983), Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) (Tennant et al., 2007), Linear Analog Self-Assessment (LASA) (Locke et al., 2007), The Positive And Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS) (Guelfi, 1997; Kay et al., 1987), Freibury Mindfulness Inventory-14 (FMI) (Walach et al., 2006), Trail Making Test – Part A (TMT-A) (Reitan, 1995) and The Derogatis Stress Profile (DSP) (Derogatis, 1987).
Effectiveness of HRVB interventions

Primary Outcome

The primary outcomes of the systematic review were to examine the psychological benefits of HRVB on individuals with psychiatric conditions. Overall, of the eight studies, seven reported some level of psychological benefit following the intervention; more details per psychiatric condition are reviewed herewith.

For individuals with PTSD the findings were mixed; the study by Reyes (2014) found significant reductions in PTSD severity (p<.001) in contrast to Lande et al. (2010) who found no significant differences in levels of PTSD symptoms (as measured by PCL) or depression (as measured by SDS) post-intervention. A critical methodological difference exists between these studies; for the Lande et al. (2010) study, participants received a maximum of 120 minutes of HRVB training. However, the session protocol is not clear, compared to that of Reyes (2014) who completed the sessions over eight weeks and asked individuals to engage in daily practice. The third study with a PTSD population by Ginsberg, Berry, & Powell, (2010) did find significant improvements in the information processing (ATTN/IM) markers p<.05, but they did not include post measures on PTSD symptoms; therefore, it is hard to remark on PTSD symptomatology.

Three different studies recruited patients with a range of psychiatric conditions which examined collectively reveal some psychological improvements following HRVB but will be discussed separately in more detail. Beckham, Greene, & Meltzer-Brody (2013) recruited female patients who were suffering from severe perinatal anxiety and depression and found significant reductions on levels of anxiety (STAI), improvements in mental wellbeing (WEMWBS) and quality of life (LASA) (p<0.05) following the HRVB intervention. The study by McAusland, & Addington (2018) recruited patients with anxiety and who were high risk for psychosis, and results were a little less clear. They found clinically significant psychological reductions but only in some aspects of dysphoric mood and stress responses (as measures by SOPS) p <.01 but not for anxiety (SAS) or distress (K10). However, the individuals in this study only received 20 minutes of HRVB with a researcher and instead completed the rest of the training alone at home. The most recent study by Jester, Rozen, & McKelley (2019) recruited older adults with a range of psychiatric conditions and found clinically significant reductions in anxiety (BDI) p<.001 and anxiety (STAI-AD) p<.05. There was also a significant increase in attentional skills as measured by the TMT-A (p=.001), which is strong evidence for the effectiveness of HRVB interventions on psychiatric symptomology.

The remaining two studies were focused on one psychiatric condition only. The study by Hartogs, Bartels-Velthuis, Van der Ploeg & Bos (2017) recruited patients with major depression and reported that 71% of patients reported a reduction in depression levels. However, no value of statistical significance or valid psychometric measures were employed and findings were based on a single item. The final study by Trousselard et al. (2016) recruited schizophrenic patients and following an HRVB intervention found significant improvements in anxiety (STAI) and mindfulness (FMI) (p<.05). However, no significant differences in all other measures of stress and wellbeing were found (as measured by PANSS, WEMWBS and DSP).
Secondary Outcome

The secondary outcome of the review was to examine if HRV coherence levels were reported. Out of the eight studies, only one study provided statistical analysis of HRV coherence; Ginsberg, Berry, & Powell (2010) found HRV coherence was achieved by all participants with PTSD post-HRVB training which was significant at the <5% level.

Two studies reported an improvement of HRV coherence levels following the intervention but did not conduct an in-depth statistical analysis (Reyes, 2014; Beckham, Greene, & Meltzer-Brody, 2013). Further, five studies did not refer to HRV coherence as an outcome measure at all (Lande et al., 2010; McAusland, & Addington, 2018; Jester, Rozek, & McKelley, 2019; Trousselard et al., 2016; Hartogs, Bartels-Velthuis, Van der Ploeg, & Bos, 2017).

Risk of Bias

The EPHHP risk of bias measure emphasized several weaknesses within some of the review papers. The main weakness was in study design and blinding which is expected due to five out of the eight studies being pilot studies (McAusland, & Addington, 2018; Trousselard et al., 2016; Beckham, Greene, & Meltzer-Brody, 2013; Lande et al., 2010; Ginsberg, Berry, & Powell, 2010). Regarding selection bias, all studies were classified as medium or strong as they were likely to be somewhat representative of the target population. Six of the eight studies were rated moderate for data collection measures as most of the tools were reliable and valid.

Overall, seven out of the eight studies were given a global rating of ‘weak’ mainly due to research design. The most common research approach involved a within-groups design with five studies employing this approach (Beckham, Greene, & Meltzer-Brody, 2013; Reyes, 2014; Trousselard et al., 2016; McAusland, & Addington, 2018; Jester, Rozek, & McKelley, 2019). There were two quasi-experimental designs (Ginsberg, Berry, & Powell, 2010; Lande et al., 2010) and one cohort study (Hartogs, Bartels-Velthuis, Van der Ploeg, & Bos, 2017) which are often subject to reliability and validity issues. However, all eight selected studies in this review demonstrated clear aims and research questions, utilised appropriate population groups, and had moderate levels of data collection and minimum attrition rate, (see Table 2 for more information).
Table 1. Study characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study (first author, year)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>a) Population</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>b) Sample size</td>
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<td>c) % female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ginsberg (2010)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>a) PTSD</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>b) 10 (5 in the treatment group, 5 in the compare group)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>c) 0%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot Quasi-experiment</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention condition(s)</td>
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<td>Number of sessions</td>
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<td>HeartMath</td>
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<td>1 x 4 weekly sessions</td>
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<td>(not stated how many minutes)</td>
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<td>Control conditions</td>
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<td>usual care</td>
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<td>Primary Measures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a) Psychological</td>
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<td>b) Physiological</td>
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<td>(HRV coherence)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a) ATTN/IM</td>
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<td>b) emWave®Pro Plus hardware and Stress reliever for home use</td>
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<td>Outcome</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>a) Significant improvements in the information processing (ATTN/IM) markers p&lt;0.05</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) HRV coherence was achieved by all participants post HRVB training significant at p&lt;0.05 level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lande (2010)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>a) PTSD</td>
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<td>b) 39 (22 in the intervention group, 17 in control group)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>c) 13.6% in research group, 17.6% in control group</td>
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<td>Pilot Quasi-experiment</td>
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<td>Intervention condition(s)</td>
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<td>Number of sessions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HeartMath six sessions in total</td>
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<td>2 x 20-minute sessions over three weeks (120 mins in total)</td>
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<td>Control conditions</td>
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<td>usual care</td>
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<td>Primary Measures</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a) SDS, PCL</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>b) HeartMath, freeze frame fingertip pulse</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a) No significant differences in levels of depression (SDS) or PTSD symptoms (PCL) post intervention</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) No statistics calculated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beckham (2013)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>a) Severe perinatal depression and anxiety</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>b) 15</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) 100%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot Within design</td>
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<td>Intervention condition(s)</td>
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<td>Number of sessions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HeartMath HRV-BF</td>
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<td>2 sessions in total ranging from 30-60 mins (120 minutes max 1-1 sessions)</td>
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<td>Control conditions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>none</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary Measures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a) STAI, WEMWBS, LASA</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>b) HeartMath emWave software infrared ear-clip</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a) Significant reductions on levels of anxiety (STAI), improvements in mental wellbeing (WEMWBS) and quality of life (LASA) p &lt;0.001</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Improvements HRV coherence scores; however, no statistical analyses were conducted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study (first author, year)</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>a) Population</td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reyes (2014)</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>a) PTSD</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trousselard (2016)</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>a) Schizophrenia</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hartogs (2017)</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>a) Major depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study (first author, year)</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>a) Population</td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAusland (2018)</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>a) Anxiety and clinical high risk for Psychosis b) 20 c) 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jester (2019)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>a) Older adults with psychiatric diagnosis either anxiety, depression or bipolar b) 20 c) 70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The PTSD Checklist (PCL), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults (STAI-AD), Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI), Scale of Prodromal Symptoms (SOPS), Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS), Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS), the Positive Outcome list (POL), Information Processing test battery (ATTN/IM), Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety (STAI), Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS), Linear Analog Self-Assessment (LASA), The Positive And Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS), Freibury Mindfulness Inventory-14 (FMI), The Derogatis Stress Profile (DSP), Trail Making Test – Part A (TMT-A)
### Table 2. Assessment of risk of bias using the EPHHP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study (first author, year)</th>
<th>Selection bias</th>
<th>Study design</th>
<th>Confounders</th>
<th>Blinding</th>
<th>Data Collection measures</th>
<th>Withdrawal &amp; dropouts</th>
<th>Global rating for paper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ginsberg (2010)</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lande (2010)</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
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<td>MODERATE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beckham (2013)</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
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<td>MODERATE</td>
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<td>Reyes (2014)</td>
<td>STRONG</td>
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<td>WEAK</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
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<td>Trousselard (2016)</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
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<td>Hartogs (2017)</td>
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<td>McAusland (2018)</td>
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<td>Jester (2019)</td>
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<td>MODERATE</td>
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</table>
Discussion

This systematic review examined the effectiveness of HeartMath interventions on psychological and physiological outcomes in individuals with psychiatric conditions. Previous reviews have identified the effectiveness of HRVB interventions within various psychiatric conditions (Schoenberg & David, 2014; Poleszak et al., 2019; Goessl et al., 2017). A systematic review by Schoenberg & David (2014) analysed 63 biofeedback intervention articles for use with various psychiatric disorders and found that 80.9% reported some clinical improvement, of which 65.0% were statistically significant (p<.05). The articles examined in the review included a range of biofeedback interventions (including electrocardiography, electroencephalography, electromyography and HRV) and therefore, it was undistinguishable if certain types of biofeedback are more effective than others.

A further meta-analysis by Goessl, Curtiss, & Hofmann (2017) reported significant reductions in subjective reports of levels of stress and anxiety associated with HRV biofeedback training. In addition, substantial effect sizes were evident in both between and within group designs with the authors concluding that HRV-BF interventions are effective at reducing psychological measures of stress. More recently, Poleszak et al. (2019) conducted a review examining the psychological and psychiatric benefits of biofeedback interventions in 23 articles. They concluded that HRVB is a successful therapy for use in anxiety disorders, insomnia, ADHD and depressive disorders.

Collectively, these previous systematic reviews have demonstrated that HRVB interventions can be applicable in improving psychiatric outcomes as a whole. The systematic review presented in this paper extends these findings of previous reviews and demonstrates that some groups of patients with psychiatric conditions report psychological improvement following HRVB HeartMath training. More specifically, HeartMath interventions appear to beneficial for a range of conditions including, PTDS, anxiety, stress, depression, and schizophrenia in a wide age range. More poignantly, Ginsberg, Berry & Powell (2010) report that the results from their pilot study for individuals with PTSD are promising in that although sample sizes were small, the effect size was large enough to produce statistical significance for some of the observed outcomes. In fact, they indicate that the statistically significant improvement in HRVB outcome measures is comparable to effect sizes produced by standard treatments for PTSD. This is in line with the study by Jester (2019), who also reports that HeartMath interventions were a significant predictor of changes in psychiatric symptoms and cognition and revealed large effect size decreases in depression, state anxiety, and trait anxiety.

In contrast, some of the studies reviewed do not show improvement in psychiatric outcomes following HeartMath interventions; one of the reasons for the discrepancy may be methodological. The length of the training protocol and the amount of personal practice in HRVB interventions could be one factor influencing clinical outcomes; for example, the study with the longest standardized training time was 720 min by Trousselard et al. (2016) compared to 20 minutes in the study by McAusland & Addington (2018). As discussed in the review by Schoenberg & David (2014), the HRVB literature lacks standardization, and although templates and protocols do exist (e.g., Lehrer et al., 2013), not all studies follow the guidelines or report HRV data. Further, a problem with the studies used in this review, and other HRVB studies generally, is that there is often no randomization or controlling for medication which has been found to affect HRV levels (Leyro, 2019).
The broader findings of HRVB interventions have been found to improve levels of HRV in respect of many physical health problems such as heart disease, hypertension, emphysema, insomnia, asthma, fibromyalgia, back pain and chronic fatigue (Paine et al., 2009; Lehrer et al., 2006; Hassett et al., 2007; Windhurst et al., 2017). Considerable improvements are also reported in objective health-related measures following HRVB training such as improved ANS function and balance (Tiller et al., 1996), and the cortisol/DHEA ratio (McCraty et al., 1998), immune system function (McCraty et al., 1996) and improved glycaemic regulation and cholesterol levels (McCraty, Atkinson, Lipsenthal, et al., 2003).

HRVB interventions may be effective to use alongside additional medical care and other psychological interventions such as CBT and therefore treat aim to treat mind-body health (Rusch et al., 2011). Practically, HRV biofeedback is comparatively easy to use, learn and teach. It is low cost and, the Inner Balance™ app recently developed by HeartMath can be used on smartphones, further reducing implementation barriers as it can be used in and out of the research and/or clinical setting. This type of stress management intervention may be effective in preventing high attrition due to being non-invasive, non-threatening and very person-centered (Van der Zwan et al., 2015).

**Limitations**

A criticism of this review is that five out of the eight studies were pilot studies, and further, seven out of the eight studies were classified as ‘weak’ concerning the risk of bias following assessment with the EPHPP scale. However, with the rise of interest in HRVB interventions, conducting preliminary analyses with pilot studies before proceeding to more costly and time-consuming interventions is not only essential but cost-effective. Some of the studies used in this review have highlighted that it is not always logistically feasible to conduct RCTs in inpatient or outpatient settings due to sampling size, duration of hospital stays, and acuity of illness (Eliopoulos et al., 2004). Although some of the studies are rated as weak they are endorsed as being suitable for review as the majority of the studies are pragmatic and realistic, for example that of Beckham, Greene & Meltzer-Brody (2013) who conducted their research in hospital settings with patients with severe psychiatric conditions which by the very nature of the design brings ecological validity to the research. However, without control groups, it is difficult to say with certainty that the improvements in psychological outcome measures are attributable to the usage of HRVB rather than regression to the mean, effects of time, social desirability and therapist bias.

All the eight studies endorsed the premise that HRVB is an alternative, non-pharmacologic, safe, therapeutic intervention ideal for patients who are more vulnerable or at risk of pharmaceutical complications. For example, the study by Beckham, Greene, & Meltzer-Brody (2013) recognized the use of HeartMath technology and the HRVB intervention for use with anxiety and depression given the increased fear about harmful side effects of pharmacologic treatments on a developing foetus. As recommended by Leyro (2019), HRVB interventions have strong potential that endorses future research and clinical dissemination.

**Implications**

With the structure of the NHS changing, it being seen as over-burdened, under resourced and pushed to capacity, there is a drive for individuals to improve their self-management and accordingly, primary care providers could actively promote self-regulation skills and include a system wide initiative to be proactive and promote individual wellness (Lemaire et al., 2011).
It is clear that coherence can affect our physiological, emotional, mental and physical health and these benefits extend further to improved cognitive functioning and enhanced optimal performance, perceptual processing and intentional behaviour (McCraty, Atkinson, Tomasino, & Bradley, 2009).

**Future Directions**

A significant finding in this review is to provide more structure and direction to future HRV coherence research using HeartMath technology. Designs should follow guidelines concerning psychophysiological research for use in experiment planning, data analysis and data reporting (Laborde et al., 2017; McCraty et al., 2015). The guidelines highlight the importance of using an instrument specific to measure physiological changes in HRV. The latest HeartMath technology, emWavePro Plus is a valid and reliable measurement tool to identify changes in HRV coherence pre-post intervention (Institute of HeartMath, 2014). The benefit of using the emWave®Pro Plus HeartMath technology is that detailed analysis of additional components in HRV, for example, low, very low and high-frequency measures are available (Institute of HeartMath, 2014). Furthermore, the utilisation of emWave®Pro Plus technology is specifically for healthcare professionals and is an easy way to inexpensively add standardized HRV coherence measures and assessment for research and clinical practice. Such assessments are available for use in a wide range of applications. These include quantifying HRV levels in relation to autonomic nervous system activity as well as identifying changes in HRV or coherence levels, and documenting any physiological baseline shifting over time (Institute of HeartMath, 2014). The review highlights the lack of HRV coherence data reported from researchers using the HeartMath technology and encourages a standardised format that would include three HRV coherence measures pre- and post-intervention. These include; resting HRV assessment (minimum five minutes) in which an individual is asked to sit quietly without talking; this provides a baseline HRV. The second assessment is the ‘stress preparation’, participants are invited to sit for three minutes as if they were preparing emotionally for an important upcoming event or activity and to focus their attention in the centre of their chest and experience a positive feeling such as care or appreciation for someone or some special place. The final assessment consists of a one-minute deep breathing assessment where the participant is encouraged to breathe as deeply and comfortably at the pace shown on a computer screen. By utilising this protocol, as recommended by McCraty, Atkinson, & Dispenza (2018), researchers could generate HRV coherence data that could be reviewed more accurately within and between research studies.

**Conclusions**

Overall, this systematic review provides reasonable evidence that HeartMath, HRVB interventions are promising for use in psychiatric conditions. Further randomised controlled trials are needed since the available evidence is notably lacking in these despite their gold standard status.

**References**


Cultivating Developmental Reflexivity: ART of Relational Inquiry Methodology for Self and Community Transformation

Hilary Bradbury¹ and Lara Catone²

Abstract: We introduce the paradigm of Action Research for Transformations (ART) as a methodology for developmental reflection and practice within the framework of constructivist adult developmental theory. We illustrate a relational methodology that inquires how to cultivate self and community so that more of us may live our aspirations for love and power in relationship — including with Earth. This means taking intellectual insight into the realm of practice together. The relational inquiry of ART invites us to consider the nature of inquiry itself and the need to not just understand but coproduce the kinds of transformations we understand to be necessary for a more sustainable, life enhancing world. Though it has many applications, it is offered here in the context of the cultural struggle to grapple with the transformation of power, especially among women and men, people of color and dominant minorities.

Keywords: Action research for transformation (ART), constructivist adult developmental theory, transformative learning praxis, reflexivity, relational power, gender, mutuality, post conventional science.

Genuine power can only be grown, it will slip from every arbitrary hand that grasps for it; for genuine power is not coercive control, but coactive control. Coercive power is the curse of the universe, coactive power, the enrichment and advancement of every human soul.

Mary Parker Follett, 1924

The Purpose of Inquiry

This paper argues that the call of our times, with its multiple interwoven social and ecological crises, demands more emphasis on how to coproduce participative change on our way toward a more sustainable, or life enhancing, world. Scholarly descriptions of our problems, abstract and depersonalized, while often helpful for understanding, are not enough to support tangible change in our personal and shared practice. We therefore introduce an orientation to fuller spectrum

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knowledge in the form of an action-oriented methodology for knowledge co-creation and social change. We present it here as working hand in hand with constructivist adult developmental theories. Its goal is to liberate more of us to respond to the call of our social-ecological challenges by practicing more collaboration despite our differences.

Action research is the umbrella term that describes a variety of scholarly practice with a participative orientation to knowledge creation (Bradbury 2015). It contrasts with conventional objectivist scholarship. It is research conducted in the midst of practice with ongoing feedback loops between researcher-participants that foster mutual understanding, design improvement and tangible innovation. As a form of participative constructivism (Gustavsen, 2014), action research brings together action and reflection, theory and practice, with stakeholders to issues of pressing concern (Reason and Bradbury, 2000). Action research contrasts with conventional social research which offers primarily objective descriptions of outer reality and focuses on our problems (Fazey et al, 2018) for which solutions are rarely described.

Action researchers do not bring pre-packaged solutions. They, do however, bring catalytic diagnostic and facilitative tools as they also distill and document notable results. Convening community – relational spaces – is prerequisite. Stakeholders can then articulate their own answers and experiment with providing better outcomes in their own contexts. The repertoire of participative action methods is lengthy and diverse with many known in their own right as popular approaches, e.g., U-labs of Otto Scharmer (2007), appreciative inquiry methodology of David Cooperrider (Cooperrider and Whitney, 1999), the World Café process of Juanita Brown (Brown and Isaacs, 2005). Beneath the variety of form, we see across the methodologies that there is a relational, wholistic, and practical approach to knowledge creation (Bradbury, 2015). Further, the knowledge products developed from these methods call for and experiment with a wider variety of data than conventional research methods (Chandler and Torbert, 2003). Through individual and/or group action in the present, action research constructs a richer understanding of the past to help shape the desired future of stakeholders (Gergen, 2015).

Though objectivism is a hallmark of modernist science–with its many enlightened advances over theocratic forces of old–an elemental pitfall of distanced/objectivizing research is that its solutions to problems are prescribed without feedback from the very people involved with, or affected by, the change efforts. Turning the buzz of experience into objects of thought is what conceptual work is all about. Therefore, the turn to practice is post-conceptual, through and beyond it. Action research, anchored in a more relational perspective, includes two critical perspectives that help here. The first acknowledges and integrates subjective awareness of the self in relationship to the research. An action researcher might therefore inquire, What assumptions or biases (some felt but not well worded) am I bringing that might influence this research? The second perspective is an interpersonal inquiry that invites feedback from, and with, research participants and stakeholders as an intrinsic part of the process. The inquiry might include some version of How do we embrace the value of our differences; how can our partial truths and gift accomplish more together? Action research may be deemed successful to the degree that an inquiry itself is owned and proliferated by more stakeholders.
Action Research Transformations

Given our interest in transformation, we’re also interested in power dynamics, especially those that hold the status quo in place. The inclusion of subjective and interpersonal perspectives in action research allows for a methodology in which power is not only described at a distance, but rather becomes a process in which to engage transformation processes.

Transformation addresses the very values and logics that perpetuate problematic aspects that inhibit well-being among stakeholders to an issue. ART encourages the spirit of the call to “future forming” beyond qualitative description of our problems (Gergen, 2015). It is offered as a timely updating of our notions of knowledge and learning by redirecting the purpose of knowledge toward cocreating a life enhancing world.

ART, as a contemporary form of action research, integrates early insights about power available from the earliest articulation of pragmatism (Addams, 1902; Dewey, 1903; James, 1907), as seen in the opening quote from Mary Parker Follet. Follet understands power also as a creative, not just domineering, capacity that is generated through relationship among integrated, sovereign wholes. Her notion of “power-with” described a conjoining in mutuality. This formulation stands in contrast to ongoing notions of power simplified as coercive “power-over” which assumes either I, or you, have power but not both. The cultivation of “power-with” appears consequential for efforts to transform toward a more sustainable world.

Nearly 100 years later, the need for knowledge forms that are sensitive to understanding and coproducing “power-with” have only increased as society grapples with, and appears often stymied by, inherited coercive power. In the winter of 2017 and the summer of 2020, the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements each reached boiling points. A reckoning with how social power is exercised rang across the globe. We found ourselves seeing more clearly how gender, race, (and poverty, mental health, and environmental issues) interweave with inherited (power-over) power structures. The social change movements insist on new standards of behavior to reduce from predatory behaviors. This has also produced confusion, and not a little sanctimony and shunning in the rush to enforce what amounts to a significant interpersonal shift, dare we say, cultural revolution replete with denunciation.

What lies beyond unilateral power wielded through manipulation and force? ART offers a response that can harness post-conventional research minds toward the realization and practice of transformative mutuality. It is a practice that calls for reflexivity—asking us to turn the camera on ourselves as we gather data about our world. Leaders in the Black Lives Matter movement call out attention to the depersonalization by law enforcement of the communities they serve and show that it leads to problematic policing that criminalizes poverty and lack of community resources. Historically law enforcement acts on, rather than with. More generally we might say that knowledge creation anchored in reflexivity is best when integrating personal/reflexive and interpersonal/relational, and impersonal, often anonymous/objective information. The interweaving of first (me; subjective), second (us, inter-subjective), and third person (all of us, objective) perspectives thereby has the potential to grow those involved and empower participants in social change to shape the world of their aspirations (Bradbury & Reason, 2000). Our difficulty is often in weaving the feelings (of discomfort etc) from the subjective realm to the clarity of the
objective. Next, we situate ART as a vehicle for adult constructivist developmental theory. In cultivating our capacity to uncover and work with our own subjectivity, we can access new clarity about the shared inquiry context, and clarity about our own involvement in the research.

**Inquiry Itself is Developing**

Constructivist adult developmental theory illuminates how we see and make sense of the world and therefore, inter alia, how we approach research. The basic proposition, elaborated by scholars such as Michael Commons, Susanne Cook-Greuter, Robert Kegan, Jane Loevinger, Jean Piaget, William R. Torbert and Ken Wilber, is that there is an invariant sequence of stages through which humans’ meaning making of experience develops. The developmental stages of meaning making describe a primary worldview, or a center of gravity, from which a person makes sense of, and responds to, the challenges that life brings. Generally, the theory suggests an arc of unimpeded development of increasing flexibility, complexity, self-expression, tolerance, differentiation, and integration between the inner and outer worlds (Cook-Greuter, 2013). Less spoken of, but critical to working with our subjectivity, is that development fosters not new content (say blistering clarity and wisdom), but deepening capacity to confront our earlier, buried or shadow material, located in our own earlier developmental stages. Shadow is Jung’s word for the unconscious aspects of the self that, when brought to conscious awareness, may be feared or denied, because they are counter to one’s ethics, values, or intentions. Murray (2021) explains that cultural shadow resides in lower strata of the psyche "forgotten" by consciousness, but also connected with our own lifeforce – say capacity to play together and celebrate life, live sustainably within an ecosystem. Inquiry into our own shadow is necessary for living more fully amid deep pluralism. Personal and relational development becomes more tolerably with reach when we can hold perspective about a fuller me and us. Such inquiry can be deeply productive. And there will be inevitable fallback, especially under conditions that threaten our security.

In models of constructivist adult development, it appears that the transformational process of development does not occur by logic or cognitive reflection alone (Torbert et al., 2004), but rather as each person faces conundrums in everyday life that their current approach does not resolve. In this sense, constructivist adult development theories are integrative; people develop in dynamic relationship to self, other, language, culture, and external contexts (Cook-Greuter, 2013). As a person accesses new and more complex inquiries – often with the support of a learning community or guide – it is possible for a new worldview to emerge that interweaves thought, feeling, and action as they never before imagined. At early stages the individual tends to be self-protective whereas at later stages they become quite inclusive and multi perspectival. Each subsequent action-logic (Torbert’s term for developmental stage) is gradually discovered–if at all–through a process of seeing through and thus questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in that action-logic and partially–but not totally–leaving it behind. Thus, each later action-logic includes, but is not limited to, the entire domain of the previous action-logics. As a person progresses through this kind of vertical development the transformation of their worldview reaches a higher vista offering an aerial view of their previous action-logics. Thus, at each new stage, or vista, gaining capacities and choice in the process.

Correspondingly, the types of research, enactments of power, and how we approach others are, to some large extent, shaped by our developmental stage. Torbert explains that earlier action-logics
have us feeling compelled rather than liberated. In Torbert’s work in the field of executive management it is shown that the assessment of developmental stages correlates with success for those executives who operate with later developmental stages (Rooke & Torbert, 2005). Their success is explained as an outcome of their capacity to exercise qualities of power that become increasingly mutual in nature, in turn associated with the capacity of the later action-logics to inquire beyond their ego-limits and thus to be able to exercise power on behalf of values beyond their own self-interest. Torbert explains that at later stages, the exercise of mutual power invites both oneself and others to transform. Consider creative industries in which innovation develops as a result of people finding solutions together. This happens not by superiors compelling subordinates to be creative but rather through something more akin to play. With regards to power, the fundamental move is from unilateral, power-over, to mutual, power-with; from hard power to soft power.

Key also in the literature of leadership development is the importance of reflection on experience as a prime route to growing ourselves, an insight that harkens back to the Socratic admonition to live an examined life. Reflection is a process of learning from by being with experience. In this the individual considers, thinks, and responds to a specific problem situation. In retrieving Mary Parker Follett and being intrigued by Torbert’s work with executives, we suggest that reflexivity, is a type of conscious self-development that may be particularly enriched by inquiry into conflictual relationship. Reflexivity is a more ambitious and challenging process than cognitive reflecting as it becomes new patterns of relational practice. Reflexivity includes examination of one’s own way of thinking, assumptions, and underlying patterns of values and worldviews, that results in new action together. It lies at the heart of the work we present that is experiential and experimental – making real life, beyond lab studies and executive suites, the arena for transformative learning.

**Reflexivity in Mutual Inquiry**

If knowledge is power, any transformative attempt must recognize the politics of reflexivity in knowledge creation processes. Culture is arguably enriched when reflexivity complements empirical-analytic, denotive knowledge. Our efforts with reflexivity are therefore also subjective, sometimes intuitive – thus bringing our own biases into awareness in a way that gives voice to more intuitive processes. Freinacht (2018) is useful here, suggesting three steps to reflexivity that require clarity about: 1) one’s intention - articulated as something I am drawn to, passionate about (e.g., I am a vegan), 2) naming the positive halo of this intention (e.g., because I don’t wish to perpetrate violence) 3) and also naming a potential shadow (e.g., because I have been treated as an object myself and don’t wish to be complicit in doing this to any sentient beings). Jung, who originally defined and worked with shadow in his psychoanalysis practice, cautions us that unexamined, repressed parts of the psyche limit our capabilities and forge a gap between how we think of ourselves and what we enact (Jung & Hull, 1991). In developmental terms the shadow forms in our early years when, by necessity, we learned to be self-protective. As we develop, we can bring these shadows to the light. Otherwise, we bypass and become complicit in the ego protective nature of the shadow. As scholars, engaged in questions of what constitutes reality, perhaps we must look at shadow. And our turning the camera around on ourselves can continue through our life. Awareness of shadow may be supported by accessing non-conventional ways of knowing, (i.e., intuitive, more creative forms) to enrich our repertoire of rationally accessible
knowledge. This type of knowledge integration may have an added benefit of acknowledging the value of heretofore marginalized forms of knowledge, such as women’s ways of knowing, (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 2008), and power of sacred plant medicine (Nicolaides, 2021).

**Developmental Case Studies**

The following cases illustrate key issues of reflexivity that concern power. We will assess the quality of knowledge creation using seven quality choice points that conceptualize quality in action research as an appropriate combination of (1) **Articulation of purpose and objectives** which refers to the clarity of purpose with regard to intended knowledge creation through, and for, action in support of our collective thriving; (2) **Partnership and participation** which refers to the extent to and means by which participative values are evident in the relational component of research; (3) **Contribution to action research theory/practice** which refers to the extent to which the work builds on, and/or creates explicit links with extant knowledge; (4) **Methods and process** which refers to the extent to which the action research process and related methods are clearly articulated; (5) **Actionability** which refers to the extent to which the action research conveyed through the paper provides new ideas that guide action in response to need; (6) **Developmental Reflexivity** which refers to the extent to which self-location is acknowledged and brought to the inquiry; (7). **Significance** refers to the extent to which the insights have meaning and relevance beyond their immediate context in support of the flourishing of persons, communities, and the wider ecology.

Before introducing the ART cases, Table 1 simplifies and presents three developmental stages of relational power we use to analyze the cases. The first is unilateral in which relationship is self-centered and self-protective, an orientation developed in our earliest years and to which we may fall back under stress; the second is independent, more associated with the stages of early adult life. The third later interdependent, and rarer, stages—defined here as collaborative—and which allow for authentic co-creativity. Each stage corresponds with a capacity for a particular level of inquiry. The simplest is single-loop inquiry, which occurs at the level of action, a type of “fix it” mode that we use most of the time throughout life. Single loop inquiry is most available in the earliest stage of development and works on externally oriented changes in behavior. As we tend to be fused with our identities when operating from earliest stage (e.g., wife, mother, accountant) inquiry does not turn inward to disrupt these identities but stays external. Double-loop inquiry can occur at the later stages of action-logic, when one’s identities, and the strategies that keep them intact, are able to be questioned and experimented. Double-loop inquiry is at play when questioning what needs to be fixed and why. In the formulations of action researcher Chris Argyris, single loop inquiry is like setting the thermometer to fix a room at a comfortable temperature, whereas double loop is asking what the best temperature is. Triple-loop inquiry is the most complex. It includes the first two levels, our behavior, and questions about best practice, and adds to the inquiry the awareness of cultural narratives, the larger context. Torbert et al, (2004) see it as the most reflexive level of inquiry because it involves attending to own attention and becoming able to see thoughts, behaviors, and intentions in the present moment and to experiment with changes as needed. To complete the metaphor of the thermometer, triple loop inquiry may involve enacting concern for climate change by accepting a less than comfortable temperature or deciding to devote a next stage of life to supporting a development of an entirely different form of energy. Working with these broad-brush outlines of developmental movements of power and relational
wholeness we now offer illustrations of ART in the context of power dynamics in work contexts with an eye toward gender relations. Three cases follow, each serving to illustrate the complex implications for methodology as issues of reflexivity become salient.

**Table 1: Developmental Levels of Inquiry and Power**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Power</th>
<th>Stage of Development</th>
<th>Inquiry</th>
<th>Power orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral</td>
<td>Self (as separate and self-protective)</td>
<td>Zero inquiry</td>
<td>“It’s all about my power over you or yours over me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Fix it, transactional, single loop opening to double loop.</td>
<td>How do we help/mutually exploit each other? “It’s all about each of us living up to our side of our (implicit or explicit) contract.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Curious, Creative. Double loop inquiry opening to triple loop.</td>
<td>How do we collaboratively envision and manifest something truly creative together?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Case I: From Unilateral (non) Inquiry to Independent Relational Inquiry**

Research suggests that in the earliest stages of development women’s self-protection is expressed more often as silence (Belenky et al. 2008), while men’s is expressed as aggressive, what Cook-Greuter and Torbert (2004) labeled “opportunistic.” A self-protective ego renders inquiry invisible and unnecessary to its aims. Key to note from a relational reflexivity lens then is that at the earliest stages of development, there is simply no inquiry. In the human sphere this means that there is very little possibility for meeting among people as “subjects,” but rather as self-protective objects.

The second author first documents her own journey from self-protective in the context of reflexive developmental inquiry. She then offers an illustration of how reflexivity can become a useful foundation for subsequent work with other stakeholders in the inquiry/practice of transforming how she relates with power.

**Lara writes:** On my professional journey I have seen that there are ways in which gender plays into particular power dynamics. With women that I admire I can project my disowned (golden) shadow in the forms of embodied confidence and intelligence. While evoking a feeling of admiration, this particular projection can create feelings of competition and distrust, while activating shame. I will contrast an early example with a later one to indicate how this has played out at different times along my developmental journey.
At the start of my professional life in my mid-twenties, I had a female colleague that I both loved and respected and yet also felt triggered by. I perceived that when we were facilitating together, she tried to outshine me and did not give me as much opportunity to contribute. In response, I would enter a space of silent frustration, either shrinking away into the background or making efforts to assert myself that felt untimely and inauthentic. Aware enough of what I was struggling with, I suggested that we find a way to have a regular debrief together, as I knew that I needed a structure to be able to address and unpack what had come up in our class. However, my colleague never seemed to remember this agreement and, feeling defeated, I never reminded her, much less insisted. Even though I didn’t think any of this was necessarily conscious on the part of my colleague, I started to build up resentment. I never overtly addressed the feelings that I was having and it fed into a diminished sense of self. While this dynamic did not present obvious rifts in our relationship, I believe that it affected our synergy on a subtle level and eventually our work together waned. We drifted apart.

I continued to inquire into this dynamic – also present with other colleagues. I saw that one of my primary shame triggers is being perceived as unintelligent, or as if I do not have anything of value to offer. (Isn’t life interesting – I have been, in the role of educator, easily exposed to this trigger. We teach what we need to learn!)

Fast forward 10 years, and I find myself co-facilitating with another female colleague and this time working with a group of professional educators, all of whom I had great respect for. At one point one of the student educators voiced a feeling of not being comfortable with some of the group dynamics at a time when I was the lead facilitator. While on an intellectual level I was grateful for this student’s feedback, my shame trigger got activated. I was aware of many layers of shame and of being triggered, and my inner dialogue went something like this: “Wow, she just revealed something very important about our container. I see other students responding/reacting to this. I feel heat rising from my solar plexus – shame is here. I feel concern for this student. I have an impulse to try to fix something but also an awareness that things are unfolding in an essential way that does not need to be interrupted. We are a group that can tolerate the heat of discomfort and even benefit from it.” Aware of many contributing factors and being kind to myself (after all, what educator has not had negative feedback?), I still felt the discomfort of shame and questioned what I could have done better.

When my co-facilitator found the opportunity to debrief with me, she listened compassionately, mirroring me and sharing her own (more positive) experience of what had happened. Talking through it and sharing the insecurity and shame I was feeling helped me to digest the strong emotional aspects. From here we moved forward in our planning and facilitation from a clear and integrated place. My vulnerability created more trust and strength in our collaboration. We drifted together rather than apart.

**Developmental Reflection (both authors reflect together):** In the first example, Lara was exercising unilateral power, but in the guise of silent self-protection (which is an inverted form of power at the earliest stage of development). It is unilateral in that neither Lara nor her colleague could dialogue, much less share power. Lara has since realized she had an either/or orientation: If her colleague was shining, she was not. Her strategy was to avoid conflict which prevented
learning. As is natural when younger – and a key obstacle to growth if we remain immersed in early action-logics – Lara did not have enough perspective to see her projection. She was subconsciously comparing herself with her colleague, projecting discomfort outward making it mostly about her colleague’s behavior.

In continuing over a decade and more in the practice of relational reflexivity, Lara has gained the ability to see herself in action and thus more capacity for relational reflexivity. This perseverance in inquiry, with self and others, is a key developmental move. It brings the capacity to engage with others as human beings (rather than as fantasy objects who are better or worse than the fantasy of the isolated me). We get to see she’s now able, in the moment, to “make object” (we use Kegan’s term for developing awareness of key developmental experiences) both the emotions at play and her own thoughts and feelings in the space between self and other. This is holding me and us together, while embracing single and double loop inquiry, leaning into triple loop. More critical than rational insight is the ability to make space for the ego’s self-protection which is anchored in undiscussable emotions, such as shame. Lara was aware that she felt shame yet was not entirely shut down by the experience. Instead, she was able to have perspective on the somatic sensations of shame and the way that thoughts can “spin” themselves to stay comfortable. This capacity for stepping into discomfort – something that is helped by meditation and self-inquiry practices – allowed Lara to remain rooted in her center and present as a facilitator. Lara moved from repressing what was upsetting her to creating conditions for co-creativity. Shame may be one of the greatest teachers of all, but only if we can turn to it for its wisdom.

**Independent Relational Practice:** Relational research is first a process of noticing and transforming inner experience. It is the act of applying reflexive practice to oneself. In the developmental reflection above, we see how first-person reflexive practice can be developed to the extent that it is applied in the moment as a way to assess if one is congruent in their stated values, intentions, and actions (Chandler & Torbert 2003). The point of reflexivity is not to decide what’s right and wrong, but to notice the degree of distance and closeness available, by choice, to the one in inquiry. We might say that this accordion capacity is a prerequisite for becoming a practitioner of ARTful developmental inquiry.

**Case II: Relational Developmental Inquiry Across Genders.**

Interpersonal ART may be defined as the ability to know ourselves in and through relationship, as opposed to personal inquiry, in such a way that degrees of distance and closeness can become more available, by choice, to the ones in explicit inquiry together. From an evolutionary perspective, our conditioning as primates is to remain deeply concerned about remaining part of our troupe. Thus, the relational and gendered aspects of life, experienced up close in work situations for example, can be profoundly anxiety inducing. From a gender perspective we might say the troupe (or today’s workspace) remains insistently patriarchal. The legacy of invisible male domination serves neither women nor men in our increasingly complex, knowledge-based democracies. In this power is taken for granted without being consensually chosen or consciously wielded. It is in this territory that Hilary engaged her mentor. What follows is a relational reflexive inquiry with all the parties involved. The case is excerpted from a longer, published transformative dialogue (Bradbury & Torbert, 2015) which seeks a restorative outcome through mutual exploration between a woman and a man working together in a research context. She as the
assistant, he as the research director, in a pattern of power distance that is typical of many modernist institutions.

Hilary writes: I arrived to work one humid summer’s day wearing a favorite skirt. Quickly I became aware of how he was not listening to my words but was only noticing the way my skirt had fallen open to reveal my legs. Instead of feeling beautiful in a beautiful skirt, as I had started out on my day, I now felt awkward. I tried to “cover up.” I kept my hands on my covered knees as though auditioning for guidance in an Amish community. I had a feeling I had done something wrong but what, I was just not sure.

Another day, soon after, I felt awkward. And, again, I said nothing – this time, as I left our meeting the research leader licked me from the V of my t-shirt along the face to the side of my forehead. A great lick. Yikes. As I disengaged, I was a bit shell shocked. What had just happened. Some 20 years later I returned to invite the research leader, Bill, to talk (and then write together) about what had happened between us. The intention was to restore our capacity to work together with someone I respected but whose behavior confused me. At first, we sought the help of a mutual friend.

Bill writes: When we first exchanged our (different!) written stories about our early relationship, we both gave “OUCH” cries by e-mail and Skype, and asked to have a face-to-face talk, including a third person we both trusted to facilitate our listening, our hearing, the clarity of our speaking, and our self-questioning of our own premises. What I did not yet understand, in spite of our writing to one another, were two facts: first, the simple fact of your not being at all physically attracted to me in spite of your ostensibly flirtatious actions; and second, the more complicated fact that my being physically attracted to you, as a minor aspect of my overall attraction and assessment, had made you feel so awkward, unconsciously self-protective and, then, (this refers to a part of the story omitted from this retelling) destructive in our shared classroom.

Gradually, though, I have digested the notion that I tend to develop a generalized crush on some women who, like my mother, I find delightful intellectual companions and conversationalists. In such cases, I presume the generalized erotic attraction between us to naturally include a sexual element, when that aspect may very well be only an aspect of my own “crush,” yet whose potential for ‘disappearing’ the feminine voice, especially when I hold greater institutional power, had not been so apparent to me as it has now become. Or at the least it’s all a much more complex experience for a young woman juggling historic powerlessness and newfound freedoms for which she has not received mentorship.

Hilary responds: I am deeply touched by this truth speaking between us. You were an older, more powerful man whom I wanted to flatter. At the same time, I deeply desired to be seen by you, without realizing that it was in the eyes of teachers that I could best intuit my own capacities. Now I see my access to power in our relationship originated with a mix of flirtation and self-protection. These interactions were themselves to a large degree shaped by the powerful social structuration of patriarchy in which junior women accommodate senior men. The difficult work of noticing, exploring and changing these norms falls on the one least empowered to change them. This difficulty is exacerbated when I notice that any
exploration risks embracing a paradox: I don’t want to lose good mentorship/friendship and I do wish to emancipate myself from patriarchal structures while simultaneously protecting you (or any man) from the consequences of your own behavior, which I (and most women) learn because we are socialized in patriarchy. Most difficult then is displacing male discomfort onto a self-forgetting feminine self. This is hard!

The intervening years have allowed me to make an invitation to you, which I believed would land well because of your own deep commitment to self-inquiry. The idea is that both of us might notice and distance ourselves from all-too-common norms of non-inquiry. The invitation is motivated by a growing awareness that men too suffer inside patriarchy. And more importantly, that democracy itself will be enhanced, a bit when women and men work better together. There’s opportunity here for the previously unempowered to learn how to enter into co-creative structures that work better for all. There’s even opportunity here for the previously powerful.

**Developmental Reflection:** Something innovative, and in this case, restorative happens when two persons can discuss a shared problematic experience. Later stages – supported by the privilege of good education, time to reflect – do not mean that there are no problems, merely that problems are more likely to become mutual, trust-building inquiries about what has happened. It is important to mention, at least as an aside, that there is obviously more to a relational context than can be mentioned in a short case. The simpler narrative of transformation here is that together they made space for relational inquiry. At first it allowed for simply “managing to get along.” Later, building on sage experiments and small successes, it allowed for the eventual and deeper reconciliation sketched here. What had been initially unilateral power gone awry in a dyad was “composted” toward a profound healing experience. And importantly it may illustrate a dialogue practice useful for others stuck in mutual criticism with its implications for co-creating better forms of democracy.

**Inter-independent Collaborative Practice:** In the case above, we see a move – over a decade – from independent, individualistic to more mutual relational practice as Hilary and Bill dialogue through writing inquiring into the space between them. It interweaves single, double, and triple loop inquiries by necessity. The suffering is followed all the way down to how cultural and biological scripts (flirtation and seduction) must be looked at, made objects of inquiry until more ease is reached together. Transformation begins as they address the deeper values and action-logics that keep problematic gendered behaviors in place in the form of both cultural and personal scripts. The relational reflexivity of both parties together opened an inquiry into increased relational well-being. As a research methodology, such a relational approach between researchers and research participants (stakeholders) generates real-time data about the efficacy of our initiatives while tending to the often hidden and undiscussable conflicts that arise around interest and power (Chandler & Torbert, 2003). In this way, we develop our own escape route from the dungeon of self and community repression, a bit more liberated for creative expression and authentic connection. Benefit redounds to me, us and all of us as deep scripts are liberated from a unilateral stage of unknown, undiscussable to shared inquiry and more relational creativity together.

In the above cases we show the interplay of reflexivity with development through our own reflexive practice on our work as action researchers. Both cases demonstrate how without reflexive awareness, power is experienced as an external force. Enacting unilateral power is commonplace,
either in its expression of “say nothing” or mindlessly dominate. Although this power dynamic continues to show up in life, over time it can also be transformed through accessing power-within – a combination of self-regulation (within discomfort) and choice (of how to respond). When dependence and independence become integrated, we can move beyond the power struggle of he said/she said toward a mutual power that holds within its frame the needs and preferences of others (Commons and Ross 2008). Together the cases illustrate an arc from unilateral self-interested power to shared-power-to-do. In sharing them the cycle of learning may be shortened.

We now turn to complete the presentation of a relational transformative methodology with a discussion of validity – our preferred term is quality – appropriate to it.

Assessing Quality with Seven Choice Points

Validity measures in conventional science and inquiry relate only to internal and external validity. And, while that is always relevant in knowledge creation, from the point of view of ART it is rather too narrow a bandwidth of concern. Contemporary qualitative research began to offer new pathways to enrich our notions of what counts as valuable knowledge (e.g., Lather, 2008). These notions, briefly introduced earlier in the paper, have informed the seven choice points which originated with Bradbury and Reason (2000) and have since been developed over the past twenty years for use in evaluating and developing publications and research designs, now codified by the associate editors of the journal *Action Research* in Bradbury et al., (2020). In addition to assessing the quality of work, the choice points themselves serve as a tool to elicit reflexivity. The seven choice points follow, with discussion of their presence in the two cases presented. As “taking action” is a critical part of action research, we also include illustrations of how relational and collaborative practice has emerged from the work described earlier and which serves a next generation of efforts. The following examples expand on the above cases to include collaborative learning initiatives developed from the first author’s work within the Action Research Plus (AR+) Foundation and the second author’s work within The Artemis School for Women’s Sexual Sovereignty.

1. **Articulation of purpose and objectives** refers to the clarity of purpose with regard to intended knowledge creation through, and for, action in support of our collective thriving on this planet.

   In the first and second cases we see a conjoining of knowledge of mind and heart (Belenky et al., 2008) or heart, hand, and reason (Bradbury and Torbert, 2016) that describes a developmental shift in the direction of mutual power. Mutual power implies not only care for our own thriving but for that of our partners and communities.

2. **Partnership and participation** refers to the extent to and means by which participative values are evident in the relational component of research, on a continuum from consultation with stakeholders to stakeholders as full co-researchers, including multiple ways of knowing-for-action and room for explicit concern for questions of “whose knowledge counts?”
In both cases those involved are both participants and co-creators. The participants develop personal empowerment through the primacy of their first-person inquiry which leads to an expanded worldview alongside a deeper ability to recognize desires and feelings.

3. **Contribution to action research theory/practice** refers to the extent to which the work builds on, and/or creates explicit links with, and or contributes to a wider body of practice knowledge and or theory, that clearly contributes meaningful new action research knowledge and insights in the action research literature.

The type of relational inquiry described here has since been developed and implemented with others, in collaborative learning programs. The practice, called Relational Action Inquiry Research (RAIR), was developed as a way to teach/learn about how to better transfer the ownership of an inquiry from researcher to stakeholder in the field of action research. As a result, a dedicated program has since been developed by the ActionResearchPlus Foundation to support universities and think tanks who practice action research. One stakeholder-participant reflects, having learned about and begun to use some of the RAIR tools in her own endeavors:

I realize that in each of the two coLAB cohorts that I have joined, something big has happened for me. Each has led to something quite transformative. For example, my former [work] group has now been dissolved, helped a lot by coLAB conversations, and we are starting a renewed and refreshed artistic/social-justice exploration.

Another reflected also on the cultural diversity of global both and south practitioners working together amid their own power dynamics, a global south practitioner reflects:

I think that, coming from such diverse places, from such different contexts, naming issues of power and staying in conversation will allow us to complete a puzzle that never ends, but grows and expands. Understanding the role of shared facilitation and our concern for "caring" will allow for much more humane changes, also in policy making. What we learn in this coLAB will, yes or yes, generate a positive change in whatever we set out to do.

Additionally, the second author developed a program called The Artemis School for Women’s Sexual Sovereignty, a year-long practitioner training program for women. The action-oriented curriculum of The Artemis School strove to create a learner-centered and self-actualizing vessel that interwove first-, second-, and third-person inquiry-practice. Issues of power in sexuality education are fraught in a culture that has primarily dealt with sexuality through shame and repression. Therefore, to create an integrative, healing approach to sex education it becomes essential for practitioners to reflexively uncover their own internalized issues of sex and power. That is to say that the work of becoming a sexuality educator requires one’s ongoing development and reflexive participation (as shared in the illustrations above). The transformative nature of The Artemis School’s praxis was anchored in the premise that creative/erotic energy, can be engaged as a sacred, transformative agent. Thus, the curriculum was designed to support what we understood to be pre-requisites for becoming a sexuality educator namely: 1. Inquiring into one’s own sexual shadow and shame, 2. understanding one’s own erotic development as a line of adult development, and 3. embodied practice in a group learning field.
4. **Methods and process** refers to the extent to which the action research process and related methods are clearly articulated and illustrated “show,” and not just “tell,” by including analysis of data along with the voices of participants in the research. Knowledge creation includes and transcends rationalist empiricism to acknowledge whole persons as relational beings.

In the illustrations above, journaling, dialogue and reflection, including somatic focusing were the key methods. The participants were empowered to explore with different relational formats, including inviting a third mutual friend to facilitate. In this we can say that classic methods of qualitative research are refreshed in a more relational approach, so that field notes (journaling) and interviews (reflective dialogue) became more deeply interactive and transformative.

The relational pedagogy is practice based. It’s successful when ideas are embodied and come alive in practice. For The Artemis School and AR+ Foundation this means intentionally weaving theory with experiential practice such that participant inquiry is deepened, and mirrored through, attention to intersubjectivity. This learning evokes multiple ways of knowing in any subject area. The breadth of ways of knowing can be understood through The Artemis School’s general tapestry of practices: Embodiment, Contemplative, Narrative, Expressive, Relational, and Analytic/Dialogic. There is time for silent, contemplation, for example with paint as a way to further metabolize learning (expressive). When comes time to learn about challenges (analytic), each participant’s, first-person accounts as well as a socio-cultural backdrop from which to work toward solutions is happening within a holistic/integrative model of knowledge, that some call metamodernist (Andersen, 2017; Rowson and Pascal, 2021).

5. **Actionability** refers to the extent to which the action research conveyed through the paper provides new ideas clear enough to guide action in response to need.

Participants in all cases developed experiments that enriched their own professional context from which there is a ripple out effect both formal (as publications and workshops) and informal. For example, a stakeholder-practitioner of The Artemis School delivered her learning in a program for youth:

It's affected my teaching. For example, when I spoke to an intimate group of high school-aged females, I spoke with more authority and lived experience about body autonomy, knowing our anatomy, and claiming what is ours. This led to a discussion about why this is important and the implications of this in our current society. It felt like I could speak to it from a place of body knowing rather than mental knowing.

6. **Reflexivity** refers to the extent to which self-location is acknowledged. By self-location we mean that authors take a personal, involved, and self-critical stance as reflected in clarity about their role in the action research process, clarity about the context in which the research takes place, and clarity about what led to their involvement in this research. That the knowledge creation integrates personal/reflexive, interpersonal/relational and impersonal knowledge, thereby growing those involved and empowering participants in social change to shape the world of their aspirations.
While other ART might highlight different choice points, reflexivity is an especially key choice point in the cases presented. Two of its signatures are turning to power dynamics and making self-discovery a prerequisite. Power, in the form of ‘power-within,’ then becomes available as a conscious choice in the pursuit of a more embodied, developmental path which includes deeper shadow work and radical self-responsibility for enacting ‘power-with’.

As noted above, self-discovery involves shadow work, i.e., making not quite conscious aspects of the self, more explicit and seeing how they are culturally shaped not so personal at all. When brought to conscious awareness, what one fears or denies, may become available and integrated with our intentions. We thereby embody clearer expressions of thinking and action – albeit likely with hiccups along the way, which provide more grist for learning.

In the second case above we see how initial reflection on the past by Hilary and Bill could become an ongoing, emergent, reflexive relationship as each party reflects then intentionally practices a more generous way of relating. Reflexivity spurs development of the individuals, the relationship, and in the work that each do individually.

**7. Significance** refers to the extent to which the insights are significant in content and process. By significant content we mean having meaning and relevance beyond their immediate context in support of the flourishing of persons, communities, and the wider ecology (i.e., generates both local and public knowledge). By process we mean involvement of stakeholders through strategies and methods that connect people and knowledges in ways that help them develop a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their practices, their understandings of their practices, and the transformation of the situations in which they practice.

This may be best expressed not through the authors but the voice of a representative stakeholder to show rather than tell what significance was experienced. Artemis school participant, Delia, shares how her learning wove between herself, interpersonal relationships, and the culture of her work:

I developed the ability to talk about myself and the inner working of my mind/body and the world using real language that resonated. I was able to help others find this language for themselves and feel heard/seen . . . I was also able to hone the capability of holding space for others as a facilitator and mentor, which has positively impacted my professional and personal life.

**Limitations**

ARTful inquiry, as with any scientific and knowledge creating endeavor, concerns learning from and improving upon one’s experiments. Rather than providing a definitive expert answer to a manifest problem, action research as ART outlines a path of inquiry that connects outward work with inner work. ART also provides seven quality choice points by which to assess and reshape the value of the inquiry.

As action researchers for transformation (ARTists), we aim to work at our developmental edge and to discover what might be possible in our development together. In addition to highlighting
what is experienced by participants as valuable, these cases may also reveal what does not work or, at least, what can be improved upon in a next cycle of inquiry. From a conventional scientific standpoint, we recognize that replication or generalizations are not easy. But that is not the point of ART. The process is to be replicated, which means it will look different. An ongoing inquiry, and challenge, is how we might work more effectively across developmental difference to support every stakeholder to engage at their own developmental edge. Facilitating a context that is safe enough to allow discomfort is key and worth of its own lengthy treatise. We learn here that while development can be scaffolded, it cannot be forced. Development is a process with its own timing. Within a workshop setting participants might receive a conceptual map to help start the inquiry but the actual shift in action-logic may occur later after much personal experimentation. For this we need more learning spaces with sophistication about facilitation. This is not to suggest that relational action inquiry sometimes fails to go far enough and that some participants may become mired in reactivity (Bradbury, 2021), but that we work with an assumption – checked and reaffirmed – that consensual agreement is better than violent disagreement; and that mutual power-with creates more generative outcomes than unilateral power-over.

We recognize that we have offered a primarily binary formulation (unilateral egotistical versus relational collaborative) that deserves nuance. Here the work of Frimer and Walker’s (2009) account of the development of moral character may help. They suggest a three-step sequence in which (1) early in development, in different contexts, children can be either self-interested or concerned with others; (2) over time, self-interest comes into conflict with concern for others; over time, the individual’s moral self can develop in the direction of self-interest, concern for others, or it can undergo a transformation in which (c) self-interest and concern for other are coordinated and reconciled – I make it part of my interest to be concerned for you. The point here is at the early levels, the child is not entirely self-interested in the sense that there is access to (separate) care for others. One might suggest that something similar goes on in the development of power relations. One might seek dominance and power in some contexts but act out of care in others. Such a notion however complexifies the developmental model of power relations. We are pointing to the type of power that is problematic, especially when practiced well beyond childhood. Nonetheless this nuance allows us to know that we have innate capacity from the start, which can be developed. And there is always a need to continue the inquiry.

We keep with a broadminded vision of science as an inquiring temperament animated by an appetite for self-correction and, personal development. As such we hope that the selected interactions will be useful, or at least not too scary, for others’ experiments in reflexivity and awareness of power relations. We even hope that the quoted material might have applicability beyond us. We have offered not a formula but a spirit of inquiry and some brushstrokes for how to proceed. The interested reader might consider their own engagement in the ageless work of cooperation, thus moving from a self-centered (either/or) worldview to a relational and, eventually, collaborative (both/and) worldview of relationship with others.

Conclusion: Developmental Relational Inquiry in Practicing as ARTists

We have illustrated a methodology that responds to the increasing complexity of our postmodern world without being mired in deconstructive criticism. It offers a way to listen in new
and exciting ways to self (as inquirer) and other (the stakeholders or co-researchers). In this period of postmodern inquiry, there is now a proliferation of qualitative (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018), and participative methods (Burns et al., 2021). Not all such approaches to methodology share the pragmatists’ concern with making the world better; not all enable collaborative action as does participative action research. Our choice of methodology is determined by the purpose of the work. In this case namely a commitment to share/transfer an inquiry so as to liberate new lived praxis among stakeholders, i.e., using methods that engage increasing choice and flexibility in responsiveness to the call of the times; to (re)make the relational world with one another.

Our relational methodology does not conform to the requirements of the Scientific Method, whose power aims to describe not change reality. Our work is in the tradition of Pragmatism (Dewey, 1929; Addams, [1902] 2002, Habermas, 1987), informed by social construction (Berger and Luckman, 1968; Gergen, 2015) and standing on the shoulders of action researchers (Lewin, 1947; Bradbury and associates 2015; 2019). Action researching brings dynamism to the task of knowledge creation because we work with the dialectical, or back and forth, movement between 1) individual change agents and stakeholders needs; 2) personal experience and concepts; 3) experiment and reflection, and 4) external world with the internal world of the learners’ emotions and intentions. This “both/and” dialectical learning scaffolds developmental growth for those involved. It invites us beyond the autonomous expert mind of “yes or no” thinking (what current school systems are designed to produce) to redefining; an embrace of complexity to collaboratively produce (yes and) a world worthy of our aspirations.

The power of action research transformations stems from its ability to bring the best of scientific temperament – a concern with self-correction and reflexivity – to intersubjective dialogue (and other sensemaking processes involving multiple perspectives). Its goal is creating and leveraging conditions for dialogue that increase consensual action for the collective good. We believe that the work can be replicated, albeit in different circumstances and with different actors, informed by the experiments illustrated above.

ARTists can transformatively grapple with the issues of power that keep the current unsustainable system in place. We have illustrated power dynamics among and between gender. The same dynamics are applicable when looking at power in ostensibly different contexts, e.g., in executive powers exercised in a democracy or within a household. Importantly, we suggest, the power between humans and the greater than human world of flora and fauna is also relevant. The latter is a world granted no power (with notable exceptions, such as in new laws of Ecuador and New Zealand that grant rights to nonhuman living systems such as rivers).

Regardless of where it’s exercised, practicing consciously with mutually transforming power involves a shift from zero inquiry unilaterality to collaborative creativity. The good news, even for an anxious ego, is that there is even more power (as collective empowerment) beyond unenlightened self-interest, beyond tribalism and specism. It’s a power that manifests the intention of co-creating a more beautiful world. It works by involving key stakeholders in linking our personal and interpersonal development to realize our intentions. As action researching ARTists, then, this kind of personal and interpersonal practice allows for development in inquiry so that transformation through big and small experiments can replace the structures that impede our better aspirations. Truth joins hands and hearts with beauty and goodness.
We find that few scholars practice with transparency around issues of reflexivity, beyond offering a litany of identities that labels the self who inquires. Knowing the labels does not, in itself, usher in transformative inquiry. In ART reflexivity is cultivated as a developmental praxis—helping to clarify where scholars/ARTists are with regard to our developmental reflexive edge. Knowledge co-created with stakeholders invites room at the table for other, typically silenced or marginalized, voices. Through our case studies we introduced how this kind of transformative, developmental praxis can support us in re-imagining relationships and social systems that hinge on unilateral power. Specifically, we suggest that ART offers a pathway forward for cultural creatives that is anchored in our day-to-day lived experiences (action) and forms a future with a new kind of relating and logic of power between us. An action orientation to knowledge creation, therefore, has major implications for how education and scholarship could be structured, and how communities learn together, whether about power or climate change, or within universities, or places of work. It echoes Kant’s Enlightenment call to “sapere aude” (‘dare to know’) and beckons a reweaving of humanities and natural sciences, on a journey that integrates development of self, relationship, and community.

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The Many Faces of JEDI: A Developmental Exploration

Aftab Erfan

Abstract: Many organizations and communities have grown initiatives dedicated to advancing justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) at a time when global and local inequities are front and center in the societal discourse. The movement towards JEDI is simultaneously full of positive transformative potential, and full of both ideological and interpersonal conflict. This paper explores the JEDI movement in organizational contexts using a developmental lens. It applies the structure of seven action-logics from adult development theory to describe how one’s orientation to JEDI issues may mature over time. It offers suggestions for how late action-logic actors can become more effective in the JEDI space by recognizing the dynamics at play and intentionally supporting and expediting vertical development of the actors involved.

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Introduction

A graduate student I work with has been painstakingly organizing a training on anti-Black racism for their entire department. The night before the training, the departmental director drops a casual note to say that they are tied up with some deadlines and cannot attend after all. The graduate student is rather upset, having counted on the director’s presence to legitimize the investment of everyone’s time to learn, and to communicate that this topic is everyone’s business. The next day the graduate student sends a note to the director, expressing understanding of the circumstances and a hint of disappointment. “I wonder what we can do about our departmental culture where deadlines always feel more important than learning in community?” the note asks. The director writes back defensively and at some length, listing all the books they have read on anti-Black racism, mentioning that their best friend growing up was Black. “I’m already woke and didn’t need the training”, is the subtext. The student comes to me for advice, baffled by the response. How could the director be making this about them?

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I have often observed this kind of phenomenon while working in organizations on issues of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (summarized by the acronym JEDI\(^2\)). So often it feels like people are ships passing each other in the night, ostensibly in the same conversation but actually talking about different things. In this case, the graduate student sees the need for the community to be learning together on JEDI topics, and takes issue with an outcome-driven system where meeting deadlines always trumps being in process together (Jones & Okun, 2004). The director is rather oblivious to the larger departmental system or their impact on it. They think they have made an individual choice about an individual learning opportunity. This disconnect is echoed in much of the discourse over systemic racism – a term that found currency over the summer of 2020 in unprecedented ways – where people in our systems (education, health, policing) took offense to the allegations of systemic racism. “But there is not a racist bone in my body” was a common sentiment (to which Vicky Mochama (as cited in Cole, 2020, p.34) clapped back on Twitter: “Maybe racism is a skin condition”). Radley Balko (2020), writing in the Washington Post, observed that systemic racism [is] often wrongly interpreted as an accusation that everyone in the system is racist. In fact, systemic racism means almost the opposite. It means that we have systems and institutions that produce racially disparate outcomes, regardless of the intentions of the people who work within them.

The confusion between systemic and individual impacts could be at play in the example of the director and graduate student. While it could be explained away as a misunderstanding, I tend to think that their disconnect runs deeper and has to do with the breadth, depth and complexity of their meaning making and subsequent engagement with the world. Since I have been exposed to the theories of adult development, I can’t help but think that there is a difference between the director and the graduate student in terms of their action-logics – that is, the way they each interpret their surroundings and react when their power or safety is challenged (Rooke & Torbert, 2005). In this paper, I wonder out loud: what if our orientation to JEDI topics is coloured, not only by our politics and ideologies, but also by our stages of development? I write out of a hunch that seeing the JEDI space through a developmental lens may benefit our ability to make sense of our interactions within this space and on its peripheries.

My Own Location

I explore these topics as a scholar-practitioner who has been immersed in JEDI over the last decade. I spent much of my twenties in environmental and social justice movement spaces, then played institutional JEDI leadership roles at a large university and a major city government. I have consulted at several other institutions. I’m writing primarily based on my engagement with the JEDI discourse in Canada, which is closely linked to the discourse in the United States, and may also have global resonance to some extent. As well, I write as a first generation immigrant from the Middle East, Muslim by birth, settler on Coast Salish lands. I identify as queer and as a woman of colour. I also carry a ton of privilege, including that of a PhD. I have a sense of belonging to the social justice movement. My professional roles have also taken me to the edges and outside of the bubble of JEDI advocates. I have acted at times as a mediator and bridge-builder with folks who

\(^2\) Some groups and organizations use the JEDI acronym where the letter D stands for decolonization.
are explicitly opposed to a social justice agenda, and have therefore got a view of the movement from outside. In short, the challenges of dealing with difference, power, and inequity are my challenges – important to me personally and professionally – and I write in pursuit of transformation towards a more just world.

I write also from the edges of the adult development community where I have many connections and have been both a skeptic and an observing participant in its communities of inquiry. What I present here is not based on an empirical study, but rather draws on my understanding of the action-logics as articulated by leadership scholar Bill Torbert. Over the years, Bill and I have mapped the development of the notions of power (Erfan & Torbert 2015), inquiry and mistakes (Torbert & Erfan, 2020) at various action-logics.3 The current exploration of orientation to JEDI at each action-logic arises from a conversation with Bill, for which I am very grateful. I am additionally influenced by the pioneering work of Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas, and by scholars Toni Gregory and Michael Raffanti who devoted much of their careers to growing the conversation on social justice beyond identity politics. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, they wrote on “diversity maturity” and offered some sketches of a developmental path towards it. While I am alert to the pitfalls of developmental thinking (see below) I find myself helped by the mapping projects that these scholars have undertaken. Their maps orient me and compel me to choose the version of myself that shows up for every interaction. At times they offer protection against simply being snatched by my fear responses, or by the dominant mindset of the environments or groups I find myself in. As I engage in this form of mapping below, I do so with a hope that it is similarly helpful to my colleagues in the JEDI movement.

Introduction to Adult Development

At the core of adult development theory is the idea that true grownups are rather rare. Most of us adults live in the constant possibility of growing up, and could make major cognitive, psychological, behavioural and spiritual step-changes in our adulthood as we do in our childhood. The basic idea is as old as the wisdom traditions, such as the work of the 12th century Sufi poet Attar of Nishapur, who articulated the path of the soul in a seven-stage spiritual journey. A secular variation of such a path has been researched and theorized by modern day psychologist and leadership scholars, and supported by advancements in the field of adult neurogenesis which documents appearance of new neurons in the adult brain. Adult development theory states that we can trace a line of development between an individual’s younger and older self, which goes through somewhat predictable territory with several plateaus. Several methodologies exist for estimating these plateaus (also known as action-logics) at any given time for any given individual.4 Like leveling up in a video game, each action-logic gives us new powers, new capacities to deal with complexity: not just new skills and tools (like a new weapon) but new mindsets and paradigms (like the ability to see the game in three dimensions, rewrite the plot, or change the definition of winning). Research has shown that leaders at later action-logics are more effective in complex organizational contexts. Subsequently, adult development theory, while acknowledging the gifts

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3 For a full exploration of a developmental trajectory spanning the action logics through a lifetime, see Bill Torbert’s 2021 autobiographical exploration, *Numbskull in the Theater of Inquiry: Transforming Self, Friends, Organizations, and Social Science*

4 See, for example, the Global Leadership Profile https://www.gla.global/the-glp-overview/
of each action-logic and its appropriateness in the right context, generally has a normative bias towards vertical development, which is to say that it advocates in favour of growth towards the later action-logics especially for those who aspire to higher leadership roles.\(^5\)

I pause here to acknowledge that adult development theory can be prone to elitism and exceptionalism, with its privileging of “more developed” ways of being, which could fly in the face of the basic JEDI commitment to equalizing. I have long been alive to this fear. At times I have indeed found the adult development field elitist: too focused on the top tiers of corporate entities, and less concerned with the pursuit of societal goals like justice. On a personal level, I have also witnessed developmental ideas weaponized and used in oppressive ways, sometimes by supposedly “developed” people to put others down or create separation between an “us” and a “them”. But more often I have experienced adult development ideas as status-quo challenging and liberatory. I have seen these ideas trouble hierarchies, patterns of domination and authoritarian uses of power. Importantly, developmental theory points to the shortcomings of unilateral power exercised by earlier action-logics, and advocates for development of a capacity to exercise mutual power, characteristic of later action-logics. Mutual forms of power have an orientation towards integrity, generosity, reciprocity, and the collective – which are well aligned with JEDI goals.

In organizational settings, a developmental analysis often turns our ideas of power and hierarchy upside down. It exposes, for example, the inefficacy and shortsightedness of the archetypal strongman leader who may be sitting at the helm. It daylights too, the key role – and key struggles – of informal leaders. In the case of the graduate student and the director introduced above, a developmental lens would illuminate that the person with the lower organization rank (the student) has the higher developmental rank. The student is seeing complexity, cultural and systemic patterns that the director doesn’t see. This is not uncommon. Your boss, teacher, or parent can well be acting from an action-logic you have transcended. This can make for a frustrating situation, but an awareness of their relative developmental rank can help the later action-logic actor bring the kind of patience and respect to their interaction with the earlier action-logic actor that one might bring into dealings with a younger sibling. It’s not that the director “doesn’t get it” because they are apathetic or not as smart or as well-read. It is that they don’t get it in the same way the student does, because they are elsewhere developmentally.

Development is not necessarily correlated with education (so many PhD holders are relatively early in their development, stuck at the Expert action-logic) or with conventional success (average CEOs rank only one step ahead of the PhDs, at the Achiever action-logic). On the other hand, going through adversity, including, for example, experiences of migration, ostracization, poverty, war, illness, or death of a loved one, can grow a person psychologically and spiritually and expedite vertical development.\(^6\) Many Black, Indigenous, refugee, disabled, trans and queer folks I know are among the most alert to the nuances of a situation, moment-by-moment unfolding of group dynamics, presence of multiple conflicting perspectives and visions, the influence of the rules of

\(^5\) There are some excellent primers on adult development theory that reference the relevant research and current state of knowledge and theorizing in this area. See, for example Petrie (2020).

\(^6\) This is by no means always the case. The literature on post-traumatic growth points to the tremendous role of context in determining whether we grow or shrink as a result of adversity. Understandably, some of us become closed off, guarded and simplistic in our meaning making in response to oppression, especially if we lack familial, community or professional support to process and recover from psychological hardship.
the game and their arbitrariness, and access to creative problem-solving and bold alternatives. They come by their later action-logic honestly. They have not gone to leadership development programs or personal development retreats. But they possess self-knowledge, systems knowledge, and a capacity for what the Mi’kmaq call “two-eyed seeing” (Bartlett et al., 2012), which comes from a daily need to survive in contexts where one doesn’t quite fit in. They possess what feminists have called epistemic advantage (Narayan, 2004). Since they are not shielded by the privilege of living in a world that is made in their own image, they need to integrate, negotiate, adapt, reject, or protect on a regular basis. They experience a level of complexity in daily life that necessitates more complex ways of sense-making and action, which they have no choice but to grow in order to get by.

In making these claims I have no intention of glorifying oppression or justifying inequity by reference to its positive developmental side effects. But part of the reason that the JEDI movement is exciting to me is that it recognizes the enormous gifts of the margins and the outsiders, and has the potential of lifting into positions of power, historically marginalized people whose lived experiences have actually prepared them to be the post-conventional leaders we need in this moment. As such there is alignment between the JEDI movement and the imperatives of vertical development. As a more fundamental level, the two also share a commitment to creating the conditions for human flourishing for all.

The Action-logics

Different schools of adult development theory describe the stages of development in somewhat different ways. Here, in its most condensed form, is Torbert’s articulation of the seven action-logics (as cited in Petrie, 2020).

1. Opportunist – Deeply concerned with their own needs. Tries to win any way possible.
2. Diplomat – Focuses on conforming with the rules and norms of the organization or peers.
3. Expert – Motivated to gain mastery and expertise. Values logic and respects other experts.
4. Achiever – Driven by goals, achievement, and meeting the standards they have set for themselves.
5. Redefining – Inspired by meaning and purpose. Challenges the status quo to find new ways.
6. Transforming – Generates organizational and personal transformations. Sees the system they are in.
7. Alchemist – Leads with fluidity, seeing the interdependent nature of things. Integrates wisdom and a global conscience.

The action-logics are often portrayed as steps, ascending towards Alchemist. Unlike various classifications of personality types (e.g., Myers Briggs), the basic notion here is not that one belongs in a certain category, more or less stable across one’s lifetime, but rather that one moves up the steps, traversing potentially all of the action-logics in a lifetime. The linear path is, of course, a simplification of the growth process itself. In reality, the steps are not orderly or evenly

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7 By “historic” I mean since the early days of colonization in this context, recognizing the term is problematic since history existed long before colonization.
distributed – one could live at an action-logic for decades (think Donald Trump, a septuagenarian Opportunist), or grow through multiple action-logics – maybe even skip one or two - over a short period of time (think Greta Thunberg, possibly a teenage Alchemist). Additionally, one’s growth may be uneven across various dimensions of life (think Pablo Picasso, Transforming as an artist, and an Opportunist in relation to the women in his life) so that each person is traversing multiple overlapping, in-synch and out-of-synch strands of development. Familiarity, substantive knowledge and practical skill in each dimension clearly impact the strand (so that if you are just picking up a basketball, you are likely focused on mastering Opportunist on the basketball court, even though you are functioning at Achiever in your day job as a lawyer --- and the fact that you are an Alchemist in the spiritual realm does not prevent you from struggling to become Expert when it comes to JEDI issues). I imagine these strands as multiple stems of beans growing together, distinguishable from each other, and each providing scaffolding for the next (which is to say that, eventually, you can leverage your capacity as Achiever in the court of justice to upgrade your basketball game). To the degree that we can categorize a person at a stage, we may do so by estimating their center of gravity action-logic, a kind of weighted average of their stage of development across multiple dimensions at a specific time. This is what the developmental instruments measure, usually through an in-depth questionnaire to sentence completion exercise.

_Figure 1:_ Dimensions of development are distinct from each other and provide scaffolding for one another like bean stems.  _Figure 2:_ Levels of development are like rings on a tree trunk, each later action-logic expanding beyond and encompassing the earlier action-logics.

Another depiction of the action-logics is as growth rings on a tree trunk, with Opportunist at the center and Alchemist on the outer edge. This metaphor suggests that each action-logic is more expansive and inclusive of the action-logics that come before it. This means that a person who has developed into the post-conventional action-logics (Redefining or later) has access to the
capacities available to someone at a conventional action-logic (Achiever or earlier), but not the other way around. We can build the skill to exercise range: the ability to draw on the capacities of multiple action-logics, based on what is needed in the moment or who we are dealing with. It has been suggested that the ability to exercise range is perhaps even more important to effectiveness than one’s stage of development (Petrie, 2020). By the time one arrives as Alchemist, the courageous and wise integration of earlier action-logics is perhaps the defining competency.

To complicate things, the description of linear or radial progression through the action-logics is challenged by the fact that people also have a tendency for “fallback” into earlier action-logics when they are triggered or under stress (Livesay, 2015). Many of us have a favourite or habitual fallback. For example, we can function as Achiever but become a super Diplomat, trying to please everyone, when we are not at our best. The difference between falling back and consciously exercising an earlier action-logic can be invisible to observers (if my typically trusting team leader suddenly pressures me to do thing her way, I may not know if she is choosing her Expert or falling into it) but an intentional exercise of an early action-logic can save a situation which a fallback into an early action-logic can break.

It has been said of the future that it is already here, it is just not very evenly distributed (Gibson, 1993). I feel similarly about the past. And I feel this way about the action-logics: they are already here, available to each of us. Those we have already spent a lot of time visiting are more available to us than those we haven’t yet unlocked. I imagine the latter lying dormant under the waters of the collective consciousness – sometimes we have access to them only momentarily, intuitively or through the body. Though we have a center of gravity action-logic, each of us may find ourselves thinking, feeling, behaving and meaning-making from the archetype of the others in different circumstances. Below, as I explore attitudes towards JEDI issues at each action-logic, I write in the first person to illustrate this fluidity. This exploration is not autobiographical per se - my actual examples are often inspired by observation of the archetypes in others around me - but the first-person voice feels appropriate because I recognize myself in all the action-logics. I write in this way as a way of minimizing mine and the field’s tendency towards hubris, to reduce judgement, and with the hope that you the reader can see yourself reflected in multiple action-logics as well.

**Opportunistic**

As Opportunist, I am intently focused on myself, my lot in life and my attempts to “win” in concrete ways: money, sex, cubicle by the window. I value freedom and generally dislike rules, especially rules that tell me not to joke or swear or say certain things because I can be offensive to other people. I like to be clever. Getting away with breaking the rules is both legitimate and satisfying to me, and I look up to people who do this well. Simultaneously I support punishment for the cheaters who get caught, especially if they are not me. A concern for equity or justice, in the sense of righting the wrongs of the past, is almost nonsensical to me because I have a very limited historical view. I feel that what happens to us in life is more or less random, people get ahead by luck and by the virtue of their street smarts. Yes, there are the “less fortunate,” but that doesn’t feel like something that needs to be corrected. Social hierarchy is natural and good. I’m good with pyramids – especially if I am located towards the top.
My support for the equal opportunity programs that claim they are leveling the playing field depends on whether they will benefit me or not. If I fall into one of the identity categories that will get ahead because of the program, then I am all for it. In fact, I deserve such a program. I’ll check the “Indigenous” box on the application form if I think I can get away with the claim that my great great grandmother was Native American, and I will lean into my minority race/gender/disability/sexual orientation if that can give me a leg up. If I happen to be an unmistakably straight, white, able-bodied man (or, say, a cisgender lesbian in a queer context where trans women are being prioritized), then I am opposed to these programs. They are unfair and tyrannical, too much like social engineering. I might be compelled to march on the street protesting them. You want me to sit down and talk with people who promote these ideas? Talking with the enemy is a waste of time and a sign of weakness. I am in the right! I’ll call the lawyers, the police, or take this into my own hands. If I sound full of double standards, that is because you don’t need to be principled when your primary motivation is your own ascent.

**Diplomat**

As Diplomat I have come to realize that my agenda to do well for myself is better served by getting along with other people. So I shift my focus from “winning” to “fitting in.” I become keenly aware of the social norms and protocols in my peer circles, and I do everything I can to conform. JEDI is fashionable right now? I’ll be all about it! I will look for and comply with the explicit rules and the unwritten ones. I’ll memorize the right things to say to be politically correct, not because I think they are right in an objective sense, but because I would hate to upset anybody. I am politically correct in the truest sense of the word. I am the master of virtue signaling on social media. I’ll take down the selfies of my privileged self next to children in a remote African village, and replace with selfies of me at the bookstore buying antiracist titles, because that’s fashionable now.

Much like Opportunist, I don’t have principles of my own. I am told I flip flop a lot, but that’s because I am trying to make everyone happy. I’m friendly and agreeable to anyone I happen to be with at the moment. If I am among people who think the political correctness of our times is bogus, I’ll likely go along with that too. I won’t challenge my sexist co-worker, or my bigoted uncle at the family dinner. I will sit and nod and laugh at the jokes because harmony feels good.

If I can confide in you for a moment, I will tell you that these times of political polarization around diversity issues have been really hard on me. I feel torn and confused when I go from one environment or group to another. The different groups at my work don’t get along with each other and I hate that. I hate conflict. First I try to fit in with all of the groups, but when they find out that I am playing all sides they will shred me to pieces. To make my life less complicated, I try to retreat into a bubble of people who are just like me. I hang out in cliques, have a whisper circle, or join affinity groups. But even this is little protection. My in-group shreds me to pieces sometimes because I am not totally up on what we are supposed to say now, and I accidentally said “blind spot”, not realizing I was being ableist. I worry that I am not “Black enough” or “queer enough” or “leaderly enough”. In order to belong, I participate in outing and shunning other people who say or do the wrong thing. I jump on the bandwagon because the bandwagon feels like the safest place to be. But I live in constant fear of being disposed of by my in-group.
Expert

Tired of the emotional mess of living as Diplomat, I advance myself to the land of objectivity. Here, in the Expert mindset, I am no longer at the whim of the different groups and what they feel is the right thing. Instead I rely on policies that are created and implemented by professionals, and use them as the arbitrator of social relations. The human rights code is a favourite of mine. It defines discrimination, the legitimate grounds for a violation, and it comes with a clear set of operational steps to follow when there is a complaint. At my workplace, we bring in trained and accredited professionals – lawyer, mediators, consultants – to settle a conflict with objectivity and reference to policy. They determine who is right and who needs to be corrected or punished.

To me, the conversation about justice, equity and inclusion has to be rooted in policy. The impetus for organizations to pay attention to these issues is compliance with government regulations, and the impetus for employee to pay attention to these issues is compliance with organizational rules. The rules are our problem solving tools. Everyone needs to be trained on them on their first day on the job. Training, training, training. Then, if people have a problem with each other they would know how to bring forward a complaint so that it can be dealt with fairly and efficiently, without gossip, and under conditions of confidentiality. The more our processes depersonalize conflicts and objectify the problem, the more comfortable I feel.

As Expert, I also have an immense interest in research and data. Everything should be evidence-based including diversity and inclusion efforts. Census, surveys, numbers tracked on dashboards, and solid evaluation data to show program effectiveness are crucial so that our efforts have credibility. If representational data tells me that diversity is not a problem, I will believe it. I generally don’t question the validity of the scientific method and believe that inquiry is objective if based on good technical practices. If I am a credentialed expert like a professor, I am also aware of the power of theory and will put out material to help settle some of these issues. It could be critical race theory I write about, or it could be eugenics. As long as there is evidence, it is valid science and my right to talk about it is protected by academic freedom. The suggestion that my research questions or conclusions are driven by my politics is ludicrous and you would know it if only you cared about evidence as much as I do.

Achiever

Not unlike Opportunist, as Achiever my attention is on success, but I have the advantage of the interpersonal skills of Diplomat and the technical skills of Expert to succeed with. Here, I want to win by the rules – more or less. I’m interested in more abstract forms of success like recognition and legacy, and often I want to expand the sense of achievement to a team or organization. My sense of myself is as an initiator and agent, not a pawn in the system, so much so that I am in denial of the weight of social barriers on myself or others. Although I look to society for values and definitions of success I am able to choose my direction for myself. Will my happiness consist of getting the top marks in the class or of snatching the handsome guy sitting in the third row? Will I move to New York to become a famous artist or stay in my small town and triple the size of the family business? The choice is mine.
In many ways, the world of the past 50 years has been constructed in the image of my ambitions. I live and breathe the American Dream (even if I live in Canada) and hold dear the meritocratic ideas that animate it. I believe that one falls or flies as a result of their own effort, so I take credit for my successes and feel responsible when I fail. If I am an immigrant or an outsider of some sort, I get really good at survival skills (Nieto & Boyer, 2006) and I work so hard that I sometimes perform the dominant culture even better than the people of the dominant culture. I have sympathy for the less fortunate. I give to charity if I have the means, and I believe in the possibility of people pulling themselves up by their boot straps. I am President Obama, telling Black kids to go to college because everyone knows that an education is the key to the dignified life, and if these kids could only believe that they are as good as anyone else they could make it too (Sandel, 2020).

As Achiever in an organization, I am conscientious and self-aware, attuned to feedback about my behaviour and happy to apologize if I offend someone. I go on retreats and work on myself. In the inside pocket of my suit jacket I carry some inspirational quotes: “The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener.” (O’Brien, n.d.), “If you are not aware of how you are part of the problem, you can’t be part of the solution.” (Torbert, n.d.), and “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” (Angelou, n.d.).

I choose an orientation towards JEDI that understands and frames it as a positive, benefiting both individuals and the bottom line. I am excited by the studies on how diverse teams make an organization more innovative and effective. I make presentations on the return on investment of inclusion measures to the board (Douglas, 2020), and I am motivated by being able to say “we’re a leader in inclusion”. I believe that justice can both feel good and be good for business, and I’m mostly interested in the kind of justice that is good for business. I want to decolonize bigger, better, faster (never mind that bigger, better, faster are colonial adjectives – I don’t get the irony) and I use a change management framework to do it right. My team gets trained in conflict resolution skills, communication strategies, and gratitude practices. We process group dynamics in meetings and believe that everything, including major wrong-doings like sexual abuse, can be worked through if we talk about them the right way and for long enough. We have self-generated group agreements, and will rely on them first, avoiding the laws and formal policies if we can. Ninety-nine percent of the time, whatever happened was just a misunderstanding. We actively build a positive, collaborative culture where differences are valued – but it is our commonalities we emphasize. Our diversity trainings begin and end with “at the end of the day, we all want the same things.” We are all one.

Redefining

“Can the Achiever be any more misguided!” I wonder in my bourgeoning Redefining voice. I watch how the independent, meritocratic, capitalist, neo-liberal Achiever mindset has created the world we live in, and I enumerate the costs. I point to environmental damage, exacerbations of inequalities and widening class and racial gaps, despite promises of “we’re all one” and “opportunity for all”. How could we pretend we are all in this together, when the differences are so stark? How can we pretend our diversity initiatives are working when it is evident that they only
really benefit White women (Smith, 2018)? As Redefining I am at the centre of a massive social reactions to what feels, to many, like the American Lie. I am the social justice warrior.⁸

My thinking is rooted in a postmodern view of the world: knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, and historical context, and are not absolute. I am alive to and appreciative of difference. I am fascinated by the cultures of others, and possibly by the cultures of my own people whom I left behind while I was assimilating (Nieto & Boyer, 2006). I have become aware of my identities – particularly my marginalized identities- and feel resentful of the ways society has scripted them for me. I may subscribe to an “aggressive victimology” (Cyril as cited in Brown, 2021), while simultaneously rejecting the label of “victim”. I see the waters I have been swimming in. I pick up a power analysis that is focused on systems of oppression. When I look at inequities around me, I don’t see personal gains and failures generated by luck or merit, rather, I see systems – sinister systems, rigged systems – with rules constructed by the powerful to produce and maintain inequalities. I see the forces of oppression everywhere, from the design of segregated schools and restrictive covenants that shaped our cities, to the construction of “professionalism” in organizational cultures: the expectation to show up on time and put in eight hours, to use polite language in meetings and leave the emotions out of the workplace are all ways of ensuring those in power are comfortable, so they can maintain social and economic control (Jones & Okun, 2004). I passionately recite historians and critical scholars who have written on colonization, slavery, white supremacy, and patriarchy. I despise everything that smells like the status-quo. The Achiever capitalist outlook on JEDI as “good for business” is repulsive to me. Justice is essential for our dignity as human-beings and it is distasteful to frame it otherwise.

Paradoxically, my thinking is characterized both by a humble awareness that all worldviews are constructed and therefore relative, and, by a clarity and certainty about this truth to the point of righteousness. My truth is subjective (I get that) but much like Expert I am confident that I have answers. Meanwhile, like Achiever, I feel agency to act. I am full of creative vision and conviction. I dream up and implement new institutional arrangements that upend traditional power dynamics (like the Youth Council that is in charge of making the final decisions on the adult-designed programs). There is a certain amount of chaos and excitement surrounding everything I do. I attract others who are keen to create new forms of organization and society.

Since I am aware of the existence of multiplicity of perspectives in connection with multiplicity of identities, I see collaboration as a pre-requisite to justice. Exercises of unilateral power feel wrong to me. I will share power and involve others in decision-making, sometimes to a fault (not recognizing that I myself am unilaterally insisting on collaboration). I myself will feel betrayed if excluded from decisions. “Nothing about us without us,” I insist, and I categorically reject the legitimacy of any initiative that doesn’t have justice-denied people sitting at the table. I invite conflict and have some ability to create shared vision across differences. Unfortunately, many of the groups I work with end up having an oppressor who recreates the very dynamics we are trying

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⁸ There has been some suggestion that the alt-right, white supremacist movements emerging in the 21st century are also a form of rejection of meritocracy and an alternative response to neoliberalist status-quo – See Sandel (2020). On the surface there are similarities between the alt-right movements and the social justice warriors. I do not have enough familiarity with the alt-right communities to responsibly speculate on them, but the question is worthy of our collective consideration.
to work against, and they destroy the group. The bitterness of these repeated experiences of betrayal feeds my disillusionment with the world and renewes my commitment to fight.

In the interpersonal space, I commit to the Platinum Rule (“treat others as they want to be treated”) and I will stand up for your self-expression - your right to be identified by a new name and pronoun every week if you want to. I have no trouble calling people out, I believe survivors as a matter of principle. I am done with oppressors getting away with their behavior and I am not interested in hearing their excuses. Despite my talk of oppressive systems, my rage is often directed at individuals embodying them, including whoever happens to be in charge in my organization. Sometimes the people I rile against are those I am raging on behalf of: the few “minorities” who have made it to leadership ranks – partially thanks to my own lobbying to put minorities into positions of power ten minutes ago. I am not aware of the irony that I quickly destruct the solutions I helped to construct, when they don’t match up exactly with my idealized vision for them.

In group and organizational settings, I am likely to read a situation exclusively in terms of the patterns of oppression, dismissing personal contributions almost entirely: If the person of colour doesn’t get the job, that is undisputable evidence of racism. If people disagree with the woman in the room, that’s because they are sexist. If a queer person is not excelling, that can’t possibly have anything to do with their competence and to suggest otherwise is homophobic. Even though on the face of it I am a fan of inquiry, I will shut it down if the oppressed are being questioned. Inquiry is violence when it discomforts the oppressed. Do I sound like I hold double standards in favour of the oppressed? That is because I do! The world has been made on double standards! The only way to correct for history is to turn the tables.

Transforming

Skillful negotiation of the polarities, contradictions, differences, and incongruities between people’s talk and their action is my main preoccupation as Transforming. I have strong views and politics, and have been steeped in deeply ideological waters – but somewhere along the way I burnt out as a JEDI warrior. I am aware of the dark side of movements, the impracticality of their critical approach, the brutality towards their own members. I am disillusioned by dogma and see purity claims as empty and antithetical to the project of making a better world. I am not interested in replacing one form of silencing with another, even if there is some resemblance of justice in that. I feel strongly that the liberation and transformative justice we are seeking to bring about needs to be embodied right now in all of our actions. It is sometimes observed that when people first grow into an action-logic they feel annoyed and impatient with the action-logic they have just transcended. Perhaps that explains my frustration with Redefining.

As Transforming in the JEDI space, I believe fiercely in justice, the manifestation of love in public, as Cornel West has said. I don’t dismiss critical analysis but I hold conviction at arm’s length to be examined. Part of being equitable means that I am as critical of my own frameworks as I am of others, and I am learning to do this with generosity and care. I agree with Redefining that the world orders are fundamentally unjust and we need to bring this house down. I also know that you can’t dismantle weight-bearing walls when there are no other supporting structures (R. Soutar, personal communication, Jan 15, 2021). If you demolish quickly and indiscriminately, you crush the inhabitants, and those who are already marginalized are likely to suffer most. I am
strategically focused on building new supporting walls in order that the old walls can be taken down. I stand for transformative change in vision, strategy and tactic, but am not ashamed to use conventional tools – diplomacy, data, incremental change tactics – in those moments when they are more effective than revolutionary tools in moving us along.

I am keenly aware of the influence of systems and individual agency when it comes to JEDI issues. In moments of conflict, I don’t assume that what is happening is strictly interpersonal, nor do I read it purely as systemic. The conflict between men and women in my department over who is doing more of the institutional housekeeping or emotional labour, is not only their fight. It sits against the backdrop of patriarchy and the unconscious expectations of gender roles that subtly colour our thinking and action. I recognize and make these patterns and histories explicit, but reserve enough of a beginner’s mind to then look at the specifics of the situation. The way we undo patriarchy- and other oppressive systems- is through how we handle specific situations like this. Engaging this conflict can lead to personal development (the parties cluing into how they are responsible for [co]-producing the situation), new local strategies (revise team arrangements and feedback mechanism) and systemic change (a reframing of what types of labour we value as an organization, and a tracking system to make workload distribution transparent and equitable). Systems and individuals are much more interdependent than typically acknowledged. Individuals – even those who have done harm – have the capacity to do better when we engage in “principled struggle” (Lee, 2020), and give them a chance for a do-over (T.M. Nahane, personal communication, Mar 15, 2021). And transformative change can happen when there is a critical mass of individuals brave enough to live in truth (Havel, 1978).

My worldview is shaped by an understanding of polarities – situations where there is truth and wisdom on more than one side of an issue (Johnson, 1992) – and I have practical skills in working with them. I lean in the direction of working with groups and I see the task of leadership as caring for the whole of the organization. I construct teams and decision-making tables that are inclusive of the “diversity tensions” we are navigating (Thomas, 1996). In my circle there are many unusual suspects and unlikely allies. I am as concerned with representation (which identities are present) as I am with the meeting of different paradigms and points of view. If we can’t have Indigenous youth in our meeting (they have better things to do, and we’re not yet decolonized enough for them) I at least introduce a reading or a song or a ritual that might bring their voice and presence into the space. I don’t simply give everyone equal opportunity to speak. Instead I use my power to create spaciousness and amplify the voices of those who have been on the margins – then create careful spaces for the voices of dominant groups too, because we won’t make any lasting transformation if they nod in agreement out of politeness or fear or numbness, and then go back to their desks wounded and un-transformed and continue to do what they have always done. I see the concept of diversity itself as being expansive – not only about identity markers, but about differences in action-logic, in feeling states and perspectives that are taken up – sometimes just momentarily – by different people at different times (Thomas, 1996).

I am quite adamant that we need to create spaces where people from different walks of life can enter the conversations on JEDI topics, even if it means some are going to be clumsy and say the wrong things (Joseph cited in Stayton, 2019). Sometimes I take on a third-party neutral role, in order that I can stand slightly outside of polarized situations and help with a genuine exploration of the views. I bring everything I have – theory, data, truth-telling, charm, humour – to this
collective meaning-making and attempt at co-creation. I have learned too that it is wrong to hide behind my “neutrality.” There are moments when I need to draw strong boundaries, protect a group from itself, practice generous exclusion (Parker, 2018), confront hypocrisy, raise a mirror up to a community, and make myself unpopular. In my best moments I have the feeling that I am lending my maturity – my ability to hold multiple truths and give people some grace – to the group or community I am working with.

**Alchemist**

As Alchemist, I stand a step back and look on. I see us – organizations, communities, families, societies, ecosystems - in this moment of struggle, real pain, real effort and real potential. I see us somewhere on the arc of history, which, as Martin Luther King says, is long and bends towards justice – but also looks a lot like a collection of spirals in its non-linearity. While I walk the path of transformative justice shoulder to shoulder with passionate colleagues, I feel less certain about our prospects and less attached to specific outcomes. Perhaps it is important that we win this election battle, pass this new policy, create this new practice, re-build the house so that the walls are not made of oppression, bring some light into the darkness. But also perhaps this is not what is important. Perhaps this is a time when we need to go into the darkness fully, perhaps the order needs to fall apart completely, perhaps our organization, our civilization is ready to die, and it is not for us to control or even envision what the next wave of existence might look like. I am so aware that sometimes when it looks like we’ve won, we have actually lost, and other times when it feels like we have fell on our faces, we have actually succeeded.

I feel sad for where the world is, and simultaneously touched by its beauty. I feel somewhat detached from the world-remaking effort, and at the same time very much in touch with its moment to moment struggle. I feel resigned to what there is and simultaneously committed to acting towards change with integrity each step of the way. Often I seek out intimate conversations with just one or two others, speaking my vulnerabilities, asking about their deepest truths, feeling the shakiness of the ground underneath us as we find no answers. Even more often I sit under a tree by myself, feeling these feelings, holding these contradictions inside me with tenderness, listening into the dark, wondering into the mystery of what is unfolding.

When I think about justice, I think about inter-species justice and the possibility of human societies [re-discovering relationships of reciprocity with other beings as well as each other (Kimmerer, 2015). My sphere of care extends far and wide. I love all the children or all species for all time (McDonough, 2002). When I think about myself, I am far more aware of my privilege than my victimhood. I feel so privileged to be getting such enjoyment out of the warm cup of tea in my hands right now.

In all honesty, I am no longer that invested in organizational life. I find it lonely, and it might be time for me to step off. But while I am here, I am here with an existential awareness and attendance to the present moment. I spend time preparing for collapse of organizations and societies, putting away valuables in a time capsule for future days, and attending to the grieving process of those around me. My role is really fluid and my time is structured by a clear sense of priorities that aren’t spelled out in my job description or work plan (did I even remember to make one of those this year?) Many people seek my council, and an equal number have written me off
as the half-mad fixture of the organization. I am equally happy to name the elephant in the room, play the peace-maker, break into tears in the middle of a meeting, or be the person everyone needs to blame to feel better. I show up the next day and see what is required then. And if I am fired, it doesn’t matter all that much. I am Opportunist, Diplomat, Expert, Achiever, Redefining, Transforming. I am Nelson Mandela in prison, seeking out and talking to the young radical prisoners, learning from them and drawing inspiration from their energy, not getting triggered by their militancy. I tease them and nudge them towards more inclusive visions of justice while they sharpen my own thinking (Raffanti & Gregory, 2012). I take delight in our mutuality: the significance of their impact on me and my impact on them.

Implications for Practice

The exploration of the action-logics and their differential capacities for engagement with the complexity of JEDI issues highlights, first of all, the difficulties of working in this space – but that’s not exactly a revelation. The question is “so what?” What does this exploration tell us in terms of what there is to do, or, how those of us who care about JEDI could become more effective actors in the middle of this space or on its peripheries? Here I articulate some observations that occur to me, particularly as I think about later action-logic actors (Redefining, Transforming, Alchemist) in organizational settings.

Redefining at center stage – What strikes me most, as I write this paper in early 2021, is that the Redefining action-logic is the most central character in the dramas of the JEDI movement in this moment in history. The power of Redefining comes from its access to fresh, highly relevant truths and a closeness to the reality of those who are suffering. Society is hungry to see the world anew, to reframe everything, to challenge the status-quo – evidenced by the fact that “everything you knew about X is wrong” is a most effective clickbait on social media. Drawing on decades of critical writing, community organizing and artistic practice, and with the help of the internet, Redefining has the means at their fingertips to create and grow social movements in unprecedented ways. Redefining energy can mobilize, in particular the survivalist instinct of Opportunist (thus the militancy and potential for violence), the tribal mentality of Diplomat (thus the enormous pressure to conform within the JEDI movement), and the need for precision of Expert (thus all the rules about right and wrong)– which is to say that the JEDI movement is also full of early action-logic actors. The status quo against which they stand up is characteristic of Achiever mentality. Achievers are for the most part pretty perplexed by the JEDI movement (“why are they so angry?”) and will try to co-opt its Redefining energy into their own lucrative fold (“here, have part of the throne”). Meanwhile, Transforming finds it hard to have patience for the purism of Redefining (“why can’t they grow up already?”) and is likely to dismiss it out of hand (“they are just playing identity politics”).

If this paper has done one thing, I hope that it has created some understanding and affection for the Redefining action-logic as it shows up in the JEDI space. Too often in organizations and communities, I see Redefining villainized, dismissed and disrespected. I am under no illusion that Redefining is perfect, and have hinted through this paper at its shortcomings: a propensity for righteousness, a dogmatic over-emphasis on inclusion, a counter-productive purism, a harshness
in dealing with anyone seen to be faltering, or not “woke enough.” Nevertheless, the vilification and straight-up dismissal makes me sad because Redefining is the carrier of uncomfortable truths we need to hear in organization – truths we are currently mostly shutting out. It also scares me because the more these truths are denied, the more extremist the Redefining among us will become, and that path is leading us to the edge of violence within JEDI spaces, and throughout our organizations and communities.

I tend to think that the likelihood of the JEDI movement succeeding in liberating us may depend on our collective finesse in working with the Redefining energy, both in ourselves and in others. Transforming and Alchemist: this is on us. First we need to pay attention to how much time we spend acting from Redefining, and how much of that is in fallback or out of a need for easy belonging. We need to exercise the responsibility of our developmental rank, which is to be patient with and respectful of people at other stages of development. We need to be alert to the hubris that can come with the latest action-logics. When we are attacked by Redefining, we need to put aside the fact that it feels harsh and unfair, and should instead look at it with honesty and ask ourselves: where is the grain of truth? We need to validate Redefining colleagues when they are correct, and be courageous in articulating why they are incorrect when that is in order. We could bring Redefining colleagues into the rooms where we grapple with the complexities of what we are facing and have them engage with us in figuring out how to manage various polarities responsibly – instead of locking them out of the room which sets them up for opposing whatever pragmatic solution we come up with. The most productive path out of the stand-off with Redefining is, ultimately, a developmental path in which our Redefining colleagues grow, and with any luck we do as well.

Potential for JEDI conversations as sites of development – One of the most useful things that leaders at the later action-logics could do is to do some horizontal development around JEDI issues. So far in this paper I have focused a lot on late action-logic actors who are already in the JEDI movement, but my observation is that most highly developed organizational leaders are pretty illiterate when it comes to JEDI. Make no mistake: just because you are a late-action logic leader that doesn’t mean you can be effective in interactions across difference at a time of such polarization. We cannot be effective in the JEDI space – and I would argue we cannot be effective as organizational or societal leaders at a time when these issues are front and center – if we don’t take an interest in the history of Asian Canadians (which is entirely different from the lived experience of Black or Indigenous folks), if we don’t make an attempt to understand the lived experience of colleagues with disabilities, if we don’t learn the current language for talking about trans folks or practice referring to non-binary friends with they/them pronouns. Sometimes I hear colleagues say: “but there is no way I am going to learn everything about everybody – that’s just postmodern foolishness.” I agree with the first part of this statement, but to make no attempt to learn because there is so much to learn seems even more foolish to me. Learning about the concerns

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9 There is a significant and powerful literature from within the social justice movement(s), by queer and racialized activists and writers that question the ways that the orthdoxies characteristic of a less mature Redefining culture are playing out, and propose transformative and alchemical alternatives. Of note among these texts are Frances Lee’s essay (2017) *Excommunicate me from the church of social justice*, Kai Cheng Thom’s book (2019) *I Hope We Choose Love*, and adrienne maree brown’s book (2021) *We Will Not Cancel Us*. These texts are essential reading for anyone concerned with the ethics and practicalities of supporting the maturation of JEDI efforts at this time in history.
of those around us is not unreasonable. We could add it to the list of impossible things we already strive do, without putting expectations of perfection on ourselves and others.

In a different vein, one of the best gifts of learning about JEDI issues may be that it acts as a kind of Trojan horse for vertical development. I think it is possible for us to start thinking of and designing our JEDI conversations, trainings, dialogues and conflict engagements as developmental opportunities – by which I don’t mean that we start talking about action-logics, but rather that we think of what we’re doing not only as teaching skills or concepts, but as enabling new and expansive mindsets – pursuing vertical development goals as we do horizontal development. The centrality of difference to the JEDI conversation, and its invitation to be self-reflective on our own complicity in injustice, could make it a potent space in which people can be compelled to grow. If the three conditions necessary for vertical growth are colliding perspectives, elevated sense-making, and heat experiences (Petrie, 2015), I can hardly think of a space where those three conditions are more present than in any good JEDI conversation. Ideally, our JEDI learning interventions would meet people where they are at (for example, the Experts would get PowerPoint slide start with) and then stretch them into future action-logics (for example, the Expert will then get a second set of information in tension with the first, plus a small peer group and a polarity mapping tool that would enable them to start making sense of the contradictions together). It excites me to think of the innovative designs this reframe of JEDI learning as vertical development can make possible.

Implications for the question of motivation – The exploration in this paper has made visible to me that there are multiple starting points in terms of why organizations and people within organizations are signing on and creating departments or initiatives to do JEDI work. For Diplomat and Expert, the motivation is to comply with regulations. For Achiever, it is the business advantage. For Redefining, the motivation is ethical and JEDI is a good in itself. For Transforming, JEDI is the instrument towards a goal of love and mutuality. I can say that in my workplaces all of these motives have existed at the same time and part of the battle around JEDI issues (what wording we should use, what initiatives we should prioritize, what story should we tell) is actually a conflict over which motivation should guide the effort. So often I witness people – who are all committed to JEDI – feel either perplexed or betrayed by each other because of their differences in how the understand “the cause.” But is it really such a game-stopper if we don’t all want what we want for the exact same reason? Could we see the strategic advantage in agreeing on the destination and the basic path to get there, even if we’re travelling for a variety of reasons? If we want expediency in JEDI initiatives, perhaps there are opportunities for alliances across the action-logics. Perhaps we need to make the conversation about motivation more explicit more often, and see if the clarity about the multiplicity of our purposes gives us the ability to consciously build these alliances.

When the JEDI movement looks in the mirror, it sees many faces reflected back. I can only hope that giving names and definitions to some of these faces enables all of us who see ourselves a part of this movement to take our next steps with more awareness and mutual responsibility to one another.
References

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Response to Erfan

Amiel Handelsman

In *The Many Faces of JEDI: A Developmental Exploration*, Aftab Erfan describes how each developmental action-logic makes sense of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) initiatives within organizations and suggests implications for later-stage people. In this response, I describe six ways her paper contributes to a better world and suggest three ways to make her vision even more expansive and enticing.

**Acknowledgements:** Big thanks to Hilary Bradbury and Mike Cohen for commenting on earlier versions of this.

**Editor’s note:** Amiel Handelsman’s response to Aftab Erfan’s article arrived just prior to publication of this issue. I sent Aftab Amiel’s response, and from her holiday retreat time, she sent the following note.

I could not be more delighted that my little “many-faces paper” has been met with such thoughtful engagement in anticipation of its publication. I wholeheartedly appreciate Handelsman’s response – his highlighting of key concepts which made me feel understood, and his colourful rephrasings that helped me see my own thoughts in a new light – even as I observe that Handelsman and I have a somewhat different sense of what is “timely” in terms of a vision and next steps for the JEDI movement. Admittedly, the Redefining within me had a small tantrum over the fact that my 19-page paper is appearing alongside a 16-page response by a [nominally] white man (will they ever just pass the mic?!). But I am excited for the dialogue that has been opened here, and I hope that the length of our contributions will provoke, rather than douse, more of this conversation in our communities.

**Introduction**

I am energized by Erfan’s “many faces” approach to JEDI, commitment to embracing every action-logic, and plea to later stages to cut Redefining some slack. This paper raises the bar for all of us engaging in JEDI work and should prompt thoughtful skeptics of it to pause before launching their next critique. It provides revisioning of the highest order.

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1 **Amiel Handelsman** helps executives and leadership teams navigate complex messes by expanding perspectives and test driving their best conversations. Over the past 25 years, his clients have included Fortune 100 companies, innovators in energy and high tech, and higher education. Amiel’s enduring commitment is making leadership wisdom actionable and customized for post-conventional leaders. A seasoned interviewer and semi-retired podcast host, Amiel is learning to be a compelling guest.

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If we are to succeed in this venture, it would be useful to build an even larger tent of intentionality for all those new JEDI faces, bodies, and hearts. This means drawing more people into the conversation and offering a sufficient variety of aims and experiences to keep them engaged. Exploring one’s complicity in injustice gets some people into the tent, but not everyone, and it certainly doesn’t keep them there for long. Such is the nature of projects conceived by the Redefining action-logic, however broadly imagined by later action-logics and however many perspectives they embrace. As I feel into the Redefining action-logic within me, I trust it to light a fire in my belly, awaken sensations in my heart, and prompt me to question what I’ve taken to be true. At this point, Redefining has done most of its job. To take the next steps – imagining a new future, holding it in tension with the brutal facts of today, and initiating effective action – I need a wider and more reconstructive approach.

**What Makes This Important**

1. **Explanatory Power**

   This paper is the first effort I’ve seen to make sense of the complexity of JEDI initiatives by walking through the developmental journey step by step (or, rather, stem by stem²). The feeling I had upon reading it was a mix of gratitude and astonishment. Neither JEDI nor vertical development were new to me, but the meshing of them together in such an elegant and generous manner struck me as novel and useful.

   When I say “useful” I am referring to the paper’s explanatory power. It helps us make sense of what is otherwise confounding. Take, for example, the opening anecdote about the graduate student and department director. I can imagine dozens of ways to interpret this story. Most of them don’t explain what’s going on in a way that produces timely action. Some interpretations would make things worse. It is into this scene that Erfan enters with a question: what if the student has a more complex system of meaning making than their boss?

   Boom. Flash of insight. Now I have a way of explaining the tension between these two individuals that opens vistas. As a reader, I feel compassion for both actors. There is nothing wrong with them. They are both in full integrity with their action-logic. Putting myself in the shoes of the student, I begin observing the relationship differently. I stop expecting the boss to respond like I would. I pause before taking actions that, due to the developmental gap, are likely futile. I start accepting my boss for who they are – like, Erfan says, a younger sibling. Or consider a second analogy: a short person playing basketball. If you throw an alley-oop pass above the rim to a 5 foot 6 player, it’s unlikely they will jump that high, much less dunk it in the basket. The first time you realize this, you stop getting angry when the play fails. The second time, you don’t throw the pass.

   *The Many Faces of JEDI* is filled with illuminating explanatory moments like this. I personally resonated with Erfan’s description of the Achiever. After graduate school, I spent a year helping a community foundation explore ways to support Black American entrepreneurs in the city of Detroit. Each day, I drove into the city to meet with pastors, directors of community development

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² Erfan writes, “Dimensions of development are distinct from each other and provide scaffolding for one another like bean stems.”
organizations, and bank officers. *There must be a way to align all these interests...but how?* Each evening, I drove back to my Ann Arbor apartment, the walls of which were filled with personal declarations, inspirational quotes, and professional goals. Achiever artifacts, to be sure. In the end, I left the project before it was off the ground. My public explanation was a desire to help a former professor of mine run for Governor. Privately, I felt myself floundering. Why had this happened? At the time, I didn’t have an explanation and felt ashamed. Nearly a quarter century later and prodded by Erfan’s descriptions, the explanation is clear: my Achiever action-logic was no match for the complexity of the undertaking. Writing these words produces the opposite of shame. It relaxes me, and I feel acceptance, because it would’ve been unrealistic to expect anything different from someone at that action-logic. Perhaps it’s time to update Thomas Harris’s classic book about transactional analysis, *I’m OK, You’re OK*, for a new era. The new title: *My Action-logic Is OK. Your Action-logic Is OK*. Beneath my flippancy is a serious insight: in today’s world, mutual acceptance across the developmental trajectory goes a long way.

A second example shows up in the section on the Expert. If you’ve ever felt puzzled by the propensity of JEDI professionals to count, count, count, this section provides a helpful explanation. Metrics and dashboards about hiring and retention aren’t signs of a pathology (what would we call it: *Numberitis*?). Nor does fervor for formal training classes represent stunted creativity or stubborn refusal to realize that people learn through experience. Instead, these habits are in full integrity with the Expert action-logic. Although we might not need as much formal training or as many bar graphs as Experts are wont to provide, we *do* need some, not only to satisfy Experts in the room, but also because human endeavors benefit from data, and the desire for data is part of who we are. Once again, describing how an action-logic approaches JEDI helps us understand why folks do what they do. This new interpretation evokes patience for behaviors that can frustrate later stage folks, reminds us of how that behavior tangibly benefits us (when supplemented by other perspectives and approaches), and invites us to embrace that very dimension (don’t you secretly love a good histogram?) within ourselves.

2. A Full Developmental View of JEDI

Anyone who hangs around so-called integral circles for more than a few minutes quickly encounters frustration with the Redefining action-logic, particularly its stance toward diversity, inclusion, and antiracism. This was true in the fall of 2000 when I joined the Ken Wilber Reading Group in San Francisco, and it is true today. My colleagues and I invest an extraordinary amount of attention in critiquing and lamenting this single action-logic. Sometimes I wonder if we’ve all had microchips with tiny speakers implanted in our ears that play the audio version of *Boomeritis* over and over again every night. One reason for the irritation, as Erfan points out, is that we are always fighting back against the action-logic we just transcended. It’s like high school students who are embarrassed by how ridiculous middle school was. (“I would never want to go back there!”).

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3 The classic 70/20/10 rule, a back-of-envelope summary of a two classic Center for Creative Leadership studies, says that 70 percent of learning comes from on-the-job experience, 20 percent from peers and mentors, and only 10 percent from formal training and books. Critics of formal training like to point out that in practice, the ratios are exactly the opposite.

4 A book written by Ken Wilber (his worst, in my assessment) that highlights the excesses and absurdities of extreme academic postmodernism.
Another reason is that many folks at the Transforming action-logic live, work, and play in the Redefining milieu. A close friend of mine does business with dozens of yoga teachers and spiritual practitioners. He frequently gets attacked for “appropriating” Hindu culture in his music even though he honors it with unflagging consistency. This is an example of what an old mentor of mine called “no good deed goes unpunished.” It is often the Transforming folks most committed to justice and diversity that get flogged because (a) they’re nearby and (b) they violate a sacred principle of deconstruction: thou shalt not reconstruct. Being on the receiving end of this is particularly painful when you’ve dedicated yourself to honoring diverse traditions. Unlike me, my friend doesn’t spend hours upon hours coaching managers in corporations and businesses, so he doesn’t frequently encounter the frustrating aspects of Expert and Achiever. Is it any wonder, then, that he gets exasperated by the poisonous dimensions of Redefining yet barely says a word about earlier action-logics?

There. I’ve now devoted a full paragraph to Redefining. That’s enough for now, and here’s why. An exclusive focus on this action-logic – as though it were the only game in town – may be understandable, even predictable, but it isn’t serving us very well. Conversely, we have much to gain in conversations about JEDI by examining the gifts and limitations of every action-logic. Erfan’s paper provides such a comprehensive treatment.

There are three reasons why I appreciate this “many faces” approach. First, it reminds us that there are legitimate motivations for participating in JEDI at (almost) every action-logic, and we could do worse than accepting them on their own terms. As Erfan writes, “Could we see the strategic advantage in agreeing on the destination and the basic path to get there, even if we’re travelling for a variety of reasons?” To me, this question offers a twin-challenge for people stepping up to JEDI leadership: one, design interventions in ways that honor all of these disparate motivations and meet the social needs (e.g., status, certainty, autonomy) underlying them; two, frame such interventions linguistically and emotionally in ways that resonate with each action-logic. This second point is a version of the old advice, “Don’t just do good things for people. Tell people what you are doing for them so they can recognize it.” Each action-logic responds to its own enticements.

Second, in later-stage circles, Redefining gets more than its share of not only vilification, but attention, period. Imagine a pie chart that shows how much time people spend discussing each action-logic’s strengths and foibles around JEDI. Redefining would fill up nearly the entire pie! Slices representing the other action-logics would be barely visible. This isn’t an argument for spreading criticisms more evenly (though that’s not a bad idea). By omitting exploration of other action-logics, we make it harder to design later stage interventions and less likely they will succeed. After all, how can you create practices and scaffoldings for action-logics you rarely discuss? On this note, Erfan’s analysis fills the void.

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5 I’m thinking here of David Rock’s SCARF model of social needs that comes out of neuroscience. SCARF stands for status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness. According to the research Rock cites, being denied these social needs shows up similarly in scans of the brain the brain as being physically threatened. In claiming that these social needs underlie the motivations of the action-logics, I’m making a large claim without providing any basis for it. A topic for another day…
A third reason to give due attention to earlier action-logics is that it reminds us (yet again!) that Redefining is itself an enormous evolutionary achievement. Just look at the limitations of what comes before (see, I told you this wasn’t a bad idea): As Opportunist, to quote Rodney Dangerfield, I look out for number one while trying to avoid stepping in number two. Useful at times, but not as a guiding motto! As Diplomat, I exert enormous energy trying to match the JEDI moves and outfits of people around me and “live in constant fear of being disposed of by my in-group.” Exhausting! As Expert, I “depersonalize conflicts and objectify the problem” and lean too heavily on data and metrics. Where’s the juice? As Achiever, I’m all about uplift, progress, ROI, and doing well by doing good – yet don’t have the stomach to deeply explore injustice, trauma, and inequity, much less consider how those affect me on an interior level. Too much sugar, not enough spice, and no medicine that tastes sour but heals the body!

The point, again, isn’t to spread vilification around evenly, but to remember that none of these earlier action-logics is up to the task that Redefining uniquely fills: looking candidly at the horrors, contradictions, and disparities that stain the past and contribute to suffering today and welcoming everyone who has been left behind. In this sense, Erfan fulfills her primary stated hope of building understanding for Redefining in the JEDI space. She does this not only by showing what I can see and do at Redefining, but also by demonstrating what other action-logics cannot see and do. Redefining means I’m only three-fourths of the way up the mountain, but that in itself is an impressive climb. I can see things from here not visible from below.

3. A Call to Embrace Redefining Within Ourselves

In a section directed to Transforming and beyond action-logics, Erfan writes, “We need to pay attention to how much time we spend acting from Redefining, and how much of that is in fallback or out of a need for easy belonging.” Her invitation here, I think, is to notice how and why such folks participate in the less healthy dimensions of Redefining – almost as a way of saying, “Watch out.” Yet, given her purpose of viewing “many faces” from both sides, I suggest we (anyone who identifies with this tiny slice of humanity at such later stages) interpret this invitation more broadly. What if we made it a practice to notice not only, as she puts it, when we fall back into Redefining, but also when we embody the best dimensions of Redefining? Think of this as appreciative inquiry applied to an action-logic that isn’t itself wired for appreciation.

Recently, while reading a book about mid-19th century United States (Eric Foner’s The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery) I was reminded that for years, much of the anti-slavery movement favored colonization – moving both “free” blacks and the would-be-emancipated to another country. This left me with a sick feeling in my stomach and the thought, So, even the good guys weren’t so good. Before long, I started feeling shame that I had forgotten this fact – that for years I had considered anti-slavery synonymous with recognizing the full humanity of Black Americans, which was not the case. Then, I noticed anger rise in my chest. My whole body felt hot. I wanted to do something, to right this wrong, to make this better, to shout at the sky, “Everything you told me about Abraham Lincoln is wrong!” This experience, which transpired over all of ninety seconds, was a form of contact with the Redefining action-logic within me. Things aren’t as they appear. Seemingly noble motives are impure. And behind it all is power, raw and unrelenting. Although these statements don’t summarize my view of the world, they cover
a lot of important ground. Acknowledging their validity, however partial, contacts me with a part of myself that I love and would not want to live without.

Experiences like this (and not all happen while reading history books!) have a second benefit. They help me feel more compassion for others’ Redefining expressions, however irritating, because these expressions live within me. You might describe this as wise. I think of it as pragmatic. When someone is accusing me of “white fragility,” for example, I need this reminder that Redefining lives in me (along with other inner and outer conversation microhabits⁶) in order to stay centered and grounded rather than fight, flee or freeze. In other words, it’s in my self-interest (both enlightened and narrow) to keep my Redefining parts nearby and ready for a spontaneous embrace.

The same, of course, is true for all of the action-logics. Although they might not all want hugs – Achiever might prefer a high five, Expert a star of distinction, and Diplomat a laminated membership card – each action-logic deserves to be embraced for what it is and what it offers. On this note, I was inspired by Erfan’s use of the first-person voice throughout the paper. I’ve seen this done with other development frameworks – most memorably for me with the Enneagram. Yet this is the first time – or, at least, most meaningful one – I’ve witnessed it in writing with action-logics. How refreshing and inspiring. May we all follow this positive example.

4. A Preview of Emergent Capacities

It’s often said that life at later action-logics can be a lonely place. I remember Susann Cook-Greuter writing something like this on the sentence completion test (as it was then called) she scored for me twenty years ago. I instantly felt less alone. A similar thing happened a decade later in a workshop I took with Terri O’Fallon. She described how often folks at Transforming and Alchemical stages are misunderstood and misinterpreted. I instantly felt better understood and more accurately interpreted.

Herein lies a deep gift in reading how the Transforming and Alchemist action-logics make sense of JEDI: Being pointed toward your current or potential capacities. With Transforming, I am reminded of what’s possible right now. To begin, there is “building new supporting walls in order that the old walls can be taken down,” and using whatever tool, practice, or approach meets the moment – including the act of creating create safe and brave spaces⁷ for folks to stumble around with JEDI. There is also embodying love and transformation in this moment, an aim I describe in my work as not just being the change but also, because humans live in conversation, as speaking and listening as the change.

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⁶ Conversation microhabit is my term for a tiny action we take while speaking or listening. Inner conversation microhabits include taking a four-six breath (inhale to a count of four, exhale to a count of six), doing a quick body scan, wiggling your toes, and silently saying a particular word like “patience” or “I got this.” Outer conversation microhabits including paraphrasing, gently probing, appealing to nobler intent, and redirecting the conversation. In collaboration with my colleague, Mike Cohen, I’ve created conversation skill drills to practice these microhabits in a high-rep, high-reflect fashion.

⁷ I use the term “safe and brave” to distinguish these spaces from others that are only safe (in that they don’t call upon courage or build resilience) or only brave (in that they don’t provide sufficient psychological safety).
An example of speaking as the change is framing a difficult conversation around, say, an organization’s hiring practices, as “my side of the story, your side of the story” and being aligned with this in my body. Such words don’t just describe a pre-existing reality. They bring a new reality – the possibility of holding your perspective and mine as equally worthy of consideration – into being. As you share your side of the story, I can sustain this respectful differentiation of perspectives by paraphrasing what I’ve heard and gently probing for clarification. Meanwhile, I can listen as the change by making my habitual interpretations (many of them filled with cognitive bias) objects of awareness. I name them in my mind just as, during meditation, I might name a thought passing through my mind. Similarly, if the other person expresses strong emotion, I can note the physical sensations this generates in my own body and feel how these are my sensations, not theirs. This, in turn, reminds me that they, not I, are generating the strong emotions they express. This is one example of how transformation happens in the moments of speaking and listening.

With Alchemist, I see what lies ahead. How often do I “hold contradictions inside me with tenderness?” Or “wonder into the mystery of what is unfolding?” Not so often, my friends. Not so often. These are potentials – enticing, even beguiling – but potentials nonetheless. When Erfan describes such ways of being, particularly in the context of JEDI, I feel called to embody them, almost as though being given pointing-out instructions for meditation. “Amiel,” the voice whispers, “This is who you are.”

5. Marginalization as Accelerator of Vertical Development

Erfan suggests that adversity is a powerful force in fostering psychological and spiritual development. Given the examples she provides – “Black, Indigenous, refugee, disabled, trans and queer folk” – I think that in the JEDI context she means a particular form of adversity: participation in marginalized groups. Although she mentions other adverse conditions like poverty, war, and illness, it’s hard to tell if the growth opportunities she connects to marginalized groups also are available to people who experience themselves as individually marginalized even if they don’t belong to a marginalized group or folks who’ve experienced adversity not related to marginalization. Would “two-eyed seeing8,” for example, be accessible to a straight white man who grew up poor in Appalachia, felt like an outcast around wealthier kids in college, was sexually abused by the football team doctor, and has now returned from Afghanistan with PTSD and a sense that nobody understands him? Perhaps someone has researched this.

Either way, Erfan’s core point here stands: The everyday lived experience of being different, outside, and overlooked creates as fruitful conditions for growth as a carefully designed 12-month training program (and, if you recall the CCL9 studies cited earlier, probably better). Confronted by

8 “Two-eyed” seeing is a capacity for navigating complexity that is associated with people from indigenous groups and that, Erfan writes, “comes from a daily need to survive in contexts where one doesn’t quite fit in.” As I understand it, this is a later stage capacity than “double consciousness” as W.E.B. DuBois defined it: “always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others,” which resembles Robert Kegan’s Socialized Mind. A closer analogy to “two-eyed” seeing is Ralph Ellison’s reinterpretation of “double consciousness” in his essays and the novel Invisible Man. For Ellison, double-consciousness is not merely a burden. It is also a useful capacity.

9 CCL is the Center for Creative Leadership
surplus complexity, marginalized folks learn “to be alert to the nuances of a situation, moment-by-moment unfolding of group dynamics, presence of multiple conflicting perspectives and visions, the influence of the rules of the game and their arbitrariness, and access to creative problem-solving and bold alternatives.” These are remarkable capacities that represent the very best of what adult development offers. If marginalization opens the door to such capacities, it is a door that is pivotal for the future of humanity (see: Climate change, pandemics, liberal democracies on the rocks, and gun violence). Having said that, I assume that the people she describes – primarily university students, perhaps – represent the leading edge – the exception rather than the norm – of their identity communities. (It would be interesting to study what combination of inner resources and outer support nurtured their growth beyond that of, say, elementary school classmates of theirs who didn’t develop such capacities.) If so, perhaps the takeaway here is that this leading edge of marginalized groups is larger, more agile, and less dependent on formal programs due to the life experiences of the people inhabiting it.

In making this point, Erfan takes pain to clarify that she isn’t glorifying oppression or injustice. I read this as a nod to the Redefining within us that might suspect otherwise. However, for anyone hanging out in Transforming or Alchemist, this disclaimer seems unnecessary. Acknowledging that your life conditions have helped you grow suggests nothing about the morality of those life conditions. It describes what has happened. It does not assess the goodness of those experiences. For example, one of the most profound growth experiences of my life happened after my wife and I lost our first child and only daughter shortly after her birth. (She was born just a wee bit too early). This loss and the trauma that accompanied it rocketed me off on two simultaneous journeys: One into grief, the other into positive psychology. I would not be the same person today without these experiences. Yet every time I learn that someone I know is pregnant, I pray for their baby’s good health, because I would not will on anyone the agony of losing a child. And I am mindful that the experience of infant loss is and has long been significantly more common in Black American neighborhoods and families. In fact, the very first paper I wrote as an undergraduate public policy student was about expanding prenatal care for low-income mothers. At the time, I associated infant loss with so-called “blacks” in the inner city. It had nothing to do with me. Today, I know otherwise. Somewhere in there is a lesson about paying attention to others’ suffering, not only as an act of love, but because “but for the grace of God, go I.”

6. A Trojan Horse for Vertical Development

Erfan writes that “the centrality of difference to the JEDI conversation, and its invitation to be self-reflective on our own complicity in injustice, could make it a potent space in which people can be compelled to grow.” Here she is writing not only about people who have been marginalized, but everyone, particularly folks centered at later action-logics.

I had a similar thought in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder. It seemed as though a window of opportunity had opened, not only to reduce police violence and other injustices “out there,” but also to spark profound individual and collective growth “in here.” In my writing I experimented with several different ways of articulating this. For example, it felt important to offer an alternative to the idea that antiracism is merely about being an “ally” to others’ projects. Claiming your own self-interest, as opposed to acting from altruism (a motivation that Ibram X. Kendi criticized in his first book, Stamped from The Beginning), struck me as more likely to evoke

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sustained commitment. It also seemed more in tune with honoring the full humanity of Black Americans (if I’m just doing this for you, what does this say about you?) as well as more likely to earn others’ trust (because it doesn’t take a cynic to hear declarations of pure altruism and wonder about the speaker’s sincerity).

Since then, I’ve met many later stage folks intrigued by the opportunity to grow through JEDI and antiracism work. Although most have limited appetites for “pure” Redefining approaches, they recognize the growth opportunities that Erfan describes. Some might not even see JEDI as a trojan horse. Once you’ve mined your life experience for twists, turns, and defining moments related to JEDI, the value of this exploration for development becomes apparent. With this in mind, it’s worth summarizing the stretch moves Erfan highlights: Illuminating the ways action-logics act on JEDI and on each other. Explaining why well-meaning people botch things up and get on each other’s backs for doing so – but aren’t destined to. Demonstrating how to simultaneously embrace a person or worldview and nudge it to stretch. And committing to the possibility that our actions, skillful and clumsy, resolute and restrained, virtuous and imperfect, might just bring more justice, equity, diversity and inclusion to the world within and around us.

Don’t Criticize. Supplement.

Having outlined the contributions this paper makes to both JEDI and adult development, I now offer what I call a “supplemental perspective.” This is based on the premise that if you want to expand a picture of reality to include more of what’s good, true, and beautiful, don’t criticize. Supplement. Don’t shout, Look at these imperfections! Ask, What if we were to supplement these ideas with others? Might we find new vistas in this integrated mesh?10

More JEDI Faces Require a Bigger Tent – A Supplemental Perspective

Erfan’s core premise is that we’re more likely to realize the aims of JEDI if we honor how every action-logic relates to these aims and can contribute to their fulfillment. This is the “many faces” vision. As I reflect on the specific aims she describes, I notice myself yearning to expand them. This expansion seems important because the existing aims, at least as described in this paper, seem primarily an expression of the Redefining action-logic. They are about including marginalized groups and reflecting on your own complicity in their exclusion (assuming you are not among the marginalized yourself). These are essential, yet I think we can aim more broadly. In particular, I wonder how the Transforming action-logic might approach this challenge. Not only by using its capacities to pursue what I’m calling Redefining goals, but to reimagine what the goals of JEDI might be. Given Transforming’s access to polarity thinking, a systems view, and many other dimensions of complexity, what aspirations for JEDI are possible and enlivening? Here I see an opportunity to expand beyond the picture Erfan paints.

10 For three other examples of this, see my two-part series on the book White Fragility, this effort to understand what makes Mr. Trump tick through both his Enneagram type and action-logic, and my prior article in this journal, Nine Paths of Growth: Integrating Immunity to Change with the Enneagram.
At Transforming, Erfan writes, “I use my power to create spaciousness and amplify the voices of those who have been on the margins – then create careful space for the voices of dominant groups, too.” This is wise and necessary. Yet does it represent the full potential of the JEDI project? Or even the most that Transforming could make of JEDI’s intentions? The central intent in this statement and, it seems, in Erfan’s overall conception of JEDI, is to help “marginalized” people gain more voice and help “dominant” groups reflect on how they might support this more effectively. Again, these are essential aims. What if we were to supplement them with others?

My engagement in the JEDI conversation, tracing back to my days as a college student, has largely been around “race,” specifically in the United States. It is in this arena and geographic focus that I have given JEDI the most thought and am most inclined to wrestle with the past and reimagine the future. In the past few years, my own stance on “race” in the United States has undergone a substantial revisioning and expansion. I feel just as strongly about including more voices in organizations, supporting Black American leaders, reforming criminal justice, reducing wealth inequality, and improving health and educational opportunities. It’s important to me that all of us have equal opportunities to prosper and, more foundationally, to live a minimally decent life. At the same time, I’ve observed that these aims, when not connected broader a humanizing vision, feel incomplete and are easily thwarted by other interpersonal and cultural dynamics.

How Big Aims Get Thwarted

Two such dynamics stand out: The inclination to define myself as a “rescuer” and the powerful pull of the antiracism discourse toward guilt and resentment. Let’s start with the rescuer. As long as I position myself as purely an advocate for others’ interests – whether by combating systemic racism or making myself trustable by coming clean with my complicity – and don’t stand in my own interests, I am at risk of becoming a rescuer. My job in this role is to protect “victims” from their “persecutors.” This has serious downsides: It is condescending. It dehumanizes the people I’m helping and the ones I’m protecting them from, because it’s hard to see them beyond these roles. And, most subtly, it dehumanizes myself. My virtues, flaws, yearnings, interests, and dreams get shrink-wrapped into a narrow motivation to be others’ ally. (Note: In case it’s not apparent, I’m not attributing any of this to Erfan, but instead to the way my sense of self shifts when adhering to specific aims without an aspirational vision).

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11 In the United States, we use the word “race” in many different ways. Here when I say “race,” I’m referring to what I call Race as Topic – a short-hand way of summarizing a variety of conversations related to what in the past went by other names like “the color line.” I’m not referring here to Race as Biological Classification, a concept that below I assess to be meaningless genetically and harmful. Nor to Race as Culture – like when the word “Black” means not a biological race but a cultural group with similar ancestry like Black Americans. I’m currently writing a paper that explores all of this in more detail.

12 In a minimally decent life, girls and boys go to school with food in their stomachs. When sick, they have access to a primary care doctor and a way to get there. This is not about economic equality. It’s about creating a “floor” of decency and dignity.

13 This is a reference to the drama triangle (victim/rescuer/persecutor) model of dysfunctional interpersonal dynamics described by Stephen Karpman.
Things become even stickier when pursuing my long-held aims in the midst of today’s discourse around antiracism. I’ve written at length about this elsewhere and am here to supplement, not critique. Suffice it to say that this discourse tends to evoke in me either guilt or resentment. Each of these is a mood, defined here as a persistent emotional state and assessment that creates a particular predisposition to action. This differs from the common conception of moods as short-lived, as in “I was feeling down, but then I found a twenty-dollar bill on the ground, and my mood improved.” In my definition, a mood has staying power. If emotions are like the weather, constantly changing, moods are like the climate (at least our experience of it prior to climate change), persistent over months and years. Within the family of moods, guilt is the assessment that “I’ve done something to harm you and can never make it better.” It predisposes me to apologize (important and useful when sincere, but harmful as a habit) and even self-flagellate. When stuck in a mood of guilt around racism, whether systemic or individual, exterior or interior, I may feel like a “good” person doing noble work. But my actions get distorted and my own sense of dignity shrinks. This is not an ingredient for constructive action. And, like every mood, guilt is contagious. Hence the shared mood of guilt that can arise in particular anti-racist forums.

The mood of resentment operates similarly but in the inverse. Here the assessments are “You’ve done something to harm me and can never make it better” and “If you’ve been harmed, it’s because you deserve it.” My instinct here is to punish others. I might react to the slightest remark by another person to accuse them of “ centering white people.” Or, to put myself in another perspective, of accusing everyone of being racist. The actions that resentment conditions me to take aren’t constructive. And, like guilt, resentment is contagious.

Why these dynamics matter is that they thwart me in pursuing heartfelt intentions like including marginalized voices, reducing police violence, and increasing Black American prosperity. It’s as though these intentions get gobbled up, distorted, or squeezed of juice (pick your metaphor) by the overpowering force of the rescuer role and these two de-energizing moods. It’s not an even fight. What’s missing are aspirational aims with the power to do two things: first, expand my role beyond that of the rescuer (if not beyond the very notion of roles), and, second, shift my mood to one more conducive than guilt and resentment to timely and effective action.

Moving Beyond the Rescuer Role

Let’s start again with the rescuer role. Growing beyond this is possible when I inhabit stories in which I am not a side player serving as an “ally” but a central protagonist. This does not refer to the classic individualistic (male) hero who battles dragons and returns home with a chalice (though that tale has its time and place). Instead, this is more akin to how my colleague, Jewel Kinch-Thomas, describes the heroine’s journey. It is a journey we take together. We are all protagonists with virtues, flaws, and aspirations. And we engage in it for a collective purpose larger than – but including! – ourselves. This is self-interest writ large. I am unabashed about my narrow interest, whether it’s to make friends, earn a living, or feel good about myself. (Long live the Opportunist and Diplomat and...). I also claim a broader interest – to support my community,

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14 See my two-parts series on White Fragility cited above.
15 Guilt and resentment also reinforce and are recapitulated by the drama triangle.
organization, family, and tribe. And an even broader interest, like serving humanity. The energetic force of being part of a story like this makes the rescuer role look modest indeed.

**Shifting from Guilt and Resentment to Energizing Moods**

A second attribute that makes an aspirational aim worth pursuing is that it shifts me out of guilt and resentment. Here we can choose from (not that this is all conscious choice!) several alternative moods that are more energizing. One is a mood of ambition, here defined not as the desire for success but the assessment that “We can do this.” Or perhaps it evokes in me a mood of wonder, where “The future is uncertain, and I’m curious how things will turn out.” Or acceptance, where, even as I long for a better future, I accept the brutal facts of today. Acceptance may sound passive, but it isn’t, particularly when coupled with ambition. The civil rights movement in the United States was arguably grounded in a combination of acceptance and ambition. Think of the restaurant sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, or the children who walked through mobs to integrate schools. We’re in the terrain of what Albert Murray called “stomping the blues.” We respond to misery and uncertainty not by fighting or collapsing but with “dance-beat elegance … which is to state with your total physical being an affirmative attitude toward the sheer fact of existence.” I’m also reminded of the “tragi-comic” attitude toward life that Ralph Ellison tied to the Black American experience. As Ellison wrote, “This has been the heritage of a people who for hundreds of years could not celebrate birth or dignify death, and whose need to live despite the dehumanizing pressures of slavery developed an endless capacity for laughing at their painful experiences.” In this sense, insisting on alternatives to guilt and resentment honors and is rooted in the Black American experience.

With these criteria for an effective aim in mind, let’s turn now to the task of creating a bigger tent for JEDI’s many faces. What might be aspirational aims for JEDI in the context of “race” that move us beyond the rescuer role and evoke affirmative moods? Here are three that in recent years I’ve learned to take seriously and now propose for your consideration.

**Aim #1: Embrace Each Other’s Humanity**

As a nominally “white” man, what if I were to focus my attention on appreciating the full humanity of Black Americans16 (and others – but let’s stick with this simplified picture)? This means not only how they’ve been excluded and injured, but also how they are as fully human and fully American as me, in all the complexity that these terms entail. Let’s say I focused like a laser beam on this challenge. What new conversations would I engage in? How would I listen differently in the conversations I’m already in? What new commitments would I make – and what old commitments would I sever? What new books would I read and podcasts would I listen to??

Humanizing someone is fundamentally different from the tracking all the ways they’ve been dehumanized (and excluded and harmed). It is a reconstructive project. As such, it’s more

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16 Here I use the term Black Americans to refer to a cultural group, not a racial category. The word “black” is too closely tied to the notion of “race.” Also, the cultural practices, vernacular speech, and physical movement of Black Americans is very different from those of people with similar amounts of melanin but from, say, Nigeria or Grenada.
intriguing to me and more likely to call on my deepest virtues and curiosities than the exploration of exclusion, which is often deconstructive in form and intent. In fact, what better way is there to truly include another person than to see them as fully human as myself? To clarify, this is not “we are all one.” This is “we are all human,” with all the difference and sameness conveyed by that term. As my colleague, Greg Thomas, has taught me, if you want to honor the full humanity of Black Americans, focusing exclusively on their marginalization and your contribution to that marginalization doesn’t accomplish the task. On the contrary, it can be demeaning, because it excludes most of what makes Black Americans human beings. This means their agency, personal virtues and capacities, and expression of the highest civic ideals. It also includes their dreams, curiosities, life experience, flaws, temptations, and foibles. When you take seriously someone’s full humanity, the idea that they are defined by their exclusion, however persistent and painful, seems inaccurate, if not patronizing.

A good example is how we talk about Black Americans’ place in the United States. The Redefining action-logic often speaks of Black Americans as being outside of and separate from “white” American history and culture. This assessment is well grounded with regards to political and economic exclusion but completely off base in terms of culture. From music and art to dress and language, there is no American culture without Black American culture. The latter has so deeply influenced the former that it’s simply inaccurate to speak of them as separate. From this vantage point, Aretha Franklin and Stevie Wonder aren’t just legendary Black American musical artists I admire. They’re human beings whose music, style, and creativity has infused my own. Cultural ancestors of mine, to be sure. You could call this antiracism, but it’s really more about E Pluribus Unum – out of many, one.

If you think about it, democracy in the United States also wouldn’t be what it is today without Black Americans. Just consider the subtitle of Martha Jones’s book Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All. This is the story of women who were marginalized three times over: by nominally “white” women in the suffragette movement, Black American men in the church, and millions of “white” Americans in the struggle for civil rights. And yet they persevered with courage and ingenuity — along with moods of acceptance and ambition — to advance the country closer to the ideals of its founding documents: the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. This interpretation of history neither sweeps suffering under the rug nor enshrines it as a defining trait of a people. Instead it’s a testament to the country’s contradictions and imperfections and capacity to wrestle with them.

We can also tap into the notion of “rooted cosmopolitanism.” As articulated by the philosophers, Anthony Appiah and Danielle Allen, this is the vision of being rooted in a local, vernacular culture while simultaneously identifying as a citizen of the world. It provides an alternative to the particularism of identity groups (whether marginalized or “blood and soil ethno-nationalists” and the universal sensibility of feeling equally comfortable everywhere. Rooted cosmopolitanism embraces the polarity between these interdependent opposites. In the realm of JEDI, it is unity within diversity. I see and appreciate your difference from me. I also am curious about what makes us similar. Making such declarations isn’t ignoring economic exclusion, police

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17 A sentiment, according to Erfan, that the Achiever action-logic often holds.
violence, or inequalities in the criminal justice system. It’s saying that I care about you because part of you is inside of me.

Embracing each other’s humanity through any of these paths feels more expansive and attractive to me than the aims of including marginalized groups or combating racism. You can be pro-inclusion and antiracism without necessarily humanizing folks. But it’s hard, I think, to see another’s full humanity and then not want to embrace their voices and create social and political structures that welcome them. In this aspiration, the rescuer doesn’t get much traction, and we experience moments of shame and anger rather than persistent moods of resentment and guilt.

**Aim #2: Deconstruct Race**

Perhaps it’s time to use our Redefining powers to deconstruct a concept that for centuries has remained untouched despite its destructive impact: Biological race as a category for classifying human groups. In writing these words, I’m crossing a line of taboo. Tracking people by racial categories allows us to quantify important data like who’s suffering disproportionately from Covid or sickle cell anemia or who’s more likely to be incarcerated for the same offense, like crack vs cocaine. Take away those Census Bureau classifications, and the antiracism project might as well be dead. Or so we assume. As importantly, many Black Americans and their allies are committed to reconstructing race. Instead of *we’re a different race that is inferior to you*, it becomes *we’re a different race that is equal to you and special in its own ways*.

In this context, deconstructing race can feel like going out on a limb. Yet it is a worthy aim. What we call “race” may sound innocuous (look at all the official institutions that ask me to check the box), but it has little to commend itself and is the cause of great harm. It is biologically and genetically meaningless, was invented to justify chattel (personal property for life) slavery and keep poor folks with different ancestral origins from rebelling, and is a driving force today in the “white power” movement. The concept of “race” doesn’t by itself produce racism, but it is central to the ideology of proud racists as well as the unconscious habits of everyone else. It even sneaks

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18 In the United States, the penalties for possessing crack cocaine, used more by Black Americans, have long been far more severe than the penalties for possessing powder cocaine, which is more tied with “whites”
19 In *The Arc of a Bad Idea*, a book about deracialization, Carlos Hoyt proposes an elegant solution: have the U.S. Census (and other institutions that collect such data) ask people not for their race (as objective fact) but instead as how other people identify them. In other words, to switch the language of these categories from race to racial identity, from fact to interpretation.
20 According to scientists, each of us shares 99.9 percent of our genetic material with every other human; the genes that code for skin color and facial features code for little to nothing else; and there is enormous variation in skin color on the African continent, including variants for light pigments also found in European ancestry.
21 In the 1670s, the colony of Virginia created laws that distinguished “white” people and “black” people, at a time when using “white” to describe skin color was only five years old. This happened after “white” indentured servants and “black” indentured servants and slaves united to rise up with arms against plantation owners, an event known as Bacon’s Rebellion.
22 A term that the historian, Kathleen Belew, among others, uses to describe the mix of white supremacist ideology and apocalyptic thinking. As evidenced in the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, this is a violent movement whose collective mood is at times both resentful and euphoric.
into our conversations as ways of rationalizing racism itself. Karen and Barbara Fields refer to this as “racecraft.” When we say, “A police officer shot an African American man because of his race” or “the company excluded people from hiring interviews because they are Black,” we are attributing these actions not to the habits of the offender but to the “race” of the target. As the Fields’s write, racecraft “highlights the ability of pre- or non-scientific modes of thought to hijack the minds of the scientifically literate.”

Deconstructing race, coupled with humanizing each other, meets our two criteria for aspirational aims. It is invites us into a heroine’s journey rather than into the role of rescuer. We are jointly unlearning habits that we jointly learned together without knowing it. When coupled with humanizing others, it steers us away from moods of guilt and resentment and toward acceptance and ambition.

If our reckoning with racism is long overdue, so too is our jettisoning of the ideology of “race” that buttresses it. Could this serve as an additional aim of JEDI and antiracism work? Even if we accept that this is a mighty undertaking that could take a generation or more to realize, consider how powerful and freeing it feels to stand for this vision of shared humanity.

The journey, of course, starts with each of us.

**Aim #3: Reclaim Our Humanity by Deracializing Ourselves**

In a related vein, I’d love to see later stage folks of every hue take on the following transformative JEDI project: Deracializing ourselves. This is the individual corollary to the collective project of deconstructing race. As envisioned by Carlos Hoyt in *The Arc of a Bad Idea*, deracialization means undoing a lifetime habit of calling myself “white,” my neighbor down the street “brown,” and my business colleagues “black.” I may be identified as “white.” My neighbor may be marked as “brown.” And my colleagues might be nominally “black.” But these are terms of interpretation rather than assertions of essential nature. They acknowledge racial identity, which is real (and will remain so as long as most of us reify race), while also granting people the complexity and individuality that is their due. Instead of just decrying racism and my own complicity in it (or privileging from it), this involves refashioning the very way I identify myself. For the Redefining action-logic within me, such attention to language and power dynamics is appealing. Yet it runs up against a more complex task: Reconciling deracialization with my own commitment to antiracism. How can I combat something that I claim does not exist?

The answer, of course, is that this is a false choice. Just because most people falsely believe in race, and some of these people use the ideology of race to justify racism, doesn’t mean I need to do the same. I can recognize and see the pitfalls of others’ habits without falling into them myself. In other words, there is nothing contradictory in the notion of an anti-race anti-racist. If this sounds complex, that’s because it requires me to take multiple perspectives at once: What’s objectively true, what I see about this, what others see about this, and what others see that I see about this. Not easy!

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23 I’m aware that this term is a doubling down on a deconstructive stance. Oops.
Fortunately, with a bit of reframing, this becomes an opportunity to call forth (or be pulled by) the Transforming action-logic. As an exercise, I might journal about early life experiences when I internalized my racial identity as objective fact – and how this identification with a particular race shifted as I grew through the action-logics. As an ongoing reflection, I might pay attention to all the ways I and others recapitulate racial essentialism in our words and actions. As a practice, I might introduce terms like *nominally* and *identified as* when referring to anyone’s (false albeit socially acceptable) racial category. Here, as with other JEDI endeavors, I can “bring everything I have – theory, data, truth-telling, charm, humour.”

As a growth challenge, deracialization carries two additional benefits. First, it is not intrinsically built to induce a mood of guilt. Learning how I’ve become identified as “white” carries less moral tone than learning how I’ve been complicit in systemic racism. Both projects are important. However, whereas the latter predisposes many action-logics to guilt, the former sparks curiosity and a mood of acceptance. Second, the language I practice and the reflections I undertake in deracializing myself are not about rescuing. They are about reclaiming my and others’ humanity. I have skin in the game.

**Conclusion**

I am inspired by Erfan’s “many faces” approach to JEDI and wish to see it succeed. Given the ways it can be thwarted, I propose we build an even larger tent of aspirational aims. Let’s remake JEDI as a transformational journey, and let’s do so by including a multitude of enticing motivations, practices, and paths. Come, if you must, to interrogate your complicity, but stay for the deracialization and humanization.
A Promethean Mission:  
An Update on the Prometheus Leadership Framework  

Thomas Bohinc¹

In August 2020, three researchers published our article on a leadership framework 1.0² for the purpose of opening more collaboration toward the objective of a framework to help navigate the complexity of leaders and leading.

Over the 16 months since Jonathan Reams, Richard Claydon and I published our opening paper, we have continued the very efforts that were intended as follow up.³

It is hard to overstate my appreciation for those that gave us their time and shared our curiosity. The opportunities we create to listen with an open mind and accept disconfirming and reforming experience are too rare. They take time. They take mindsets, hearts and purpose greater than building our academic credentials or our brand and followers.

What we have learned has evolved some of the framework content but has mostly provided refinements and clarifications. This article is an update on all of that.

Just an Organizing Principle

The 2020 paper noted the choice to organize around what we saw that as the highest purpose of the Prometheus Leadership Commons framework (the “framework”) and The Prometheus Project.

There were two complementary criteria. The first was supporting this generally approachable narrative: “a leader brings who they are and what they know to the action-choice of leading so that they can have what they want” (see figure 2). The second criteria was organizing the framework as learning objectives – or a system of capacities and capabilities that we have in mind for leaders.

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³ Since then, many hundreds of hours of conversations, forums, panels, and focus groups have been done around the topics in the framework. CEOs and Chief Learning Officers, mid-level executives, front-line leaders, community leaders, coaches, consultants and esteemed academics representing global megabrands, distinguished university faculty, small and start-ups, and NGOs have contributed from four continent, each with a part of the puzzle that tests the clarity and energy of who leaders are, what they know, and what leaders do.
The framework’s primary structures remain sets of affective, cognitive and behavioral objectives that make up who leaders are, what they know and what they do. However, in these months of engagement, we found the idea of learning objectives is not as familiar a concept as we assumed it would be. The short description of learning objectives is that they are the observable or measurable outcomes that are the goal of any of the learning methods (materials and activities) that are employed.

An example is an element in the framework’s objectives of self-awareness and empathetic awareness of emotions. The framework is not saying (with this element) that the method to build leadership is through doing self-reflection or empathy. The framework is listing those elements as outcomes that are part of the system or capacities of a leader. The method to build that emotional consciousness may include any creative mix of methods including knowledge of theory, experience, socialization, experiment, action and, yes, inner reflection.\(^4\)

**Learning and Development Structures**

Since we noticed this tension about objectives (outcomes) vs methods (actions), we also noticed the tension was nearly unavoidable. In retrospect, this is reasonable that raising one begs the question of the other. So, we chose a pivot. Better to show both dimensions (objectives and methods), so that both were available in context, than to present one and still have to clarify both.

Therefore, in the framework each of the meta-domains of Being, Knowing, and Doing now includes a “How To” meta-structure that supports good conversation around learning and developing for that set of learning objectives. Thus, in details of The Prometheus Leadership Commons 2.1 framework you will find a set of attributes organized for learning objectives AND sets of practices for how to develop those attributes.\(^5\)

For example, the cognitive meta-domain of Knowing has an advanced cognitive unconscious competence as a high objective. However, mastery is gained by learning opportunities that include experience, socialization, affect and psychological integration. The primary objective is cognitive, but the supporting objectives (or supporting key results\(^6\)) are a mix of cognitive, affective and behavioral.

Similarly, the affective meta-domain of Being has psychological and emotional integration as its advanced objective – but it is still gained by learning opportunities including cognitive models, concepts, experience, consciousness, action-learning, social sharing, and personal introspection.

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\(^5\) We could have abstracted one set of learning method attributes. After all, is learning and development materially different from one domain to the other? However, we found communication value in showing specific language and sequencing toward the primary objective for each meta-domain. One for Being, one for Knowing and one for Doing.

\(^6\) We humans have a habit of thinking objectives can be single dimensional but then we remember that the more systemic they are, the more often they are complicated or complex system of objectives. This is the idea behind “OKRs” – primary objectives are met through a series of supporting objectives.
The Challenges of Language

One of the biggest areas of our learning has been around language.

We strived to have simple language that avoids simplistic interpretations. We tested terms that were as free from bias and jargon as we can make them. We dream of language that suits the specificity of researchers, the ease of everyday front-line leaders, and manages to avoid the tropes of populist influencers. We want to be inspiring and coldly realistic. Empirical and theoretical. But we have a constraint of one or two words per meta-domain, domain or sub-area.

We naively assumed that the experience of applying the framework would, eventually, lead to ‘the right one word.’ Instead, we have found that the underlying meanings are rich enough that one word (or a few) are more the choice for a better fit – or a useful choice among imperfect options. Any words we use that are good enough to open a topic must still be further clarified.

We also tried more poetic words that connoted the whole underlying meaning of a given subdomain. We tried words like beauty, clarity, love, wisdom, energy because they held deep value, but they were also so abstracted that few would find them accessible. We found a lot of blank stares. Instead, we have settled on the opposite approach – to pick the simplest prosaic words and let the rest come out in follow-up. We want words that invite inquiry. We do not want words that merely satisfy with inspiration.

Eventually, we took comfort in the reality of this and included some space for aliases in parts of the framework.

There is No Language Without Sufficient Experience

We also recognized language as a structural challenge.

Leaders and leading is not familiar to enough to our first-person consciousness and experiences to support adequate language. The right terms do not exist because our experience is rooted in one flawed reality but not an ideal reality – where leading is clear and leaders are common. Our language supports the current state because language is a system of the current state. Our language does not support the better state. We have to choose the words and hope for a day when leading is clear and leading is common and then find there is language for that experience.

We have to make do. We have to build the new.

Making do and building new is not so easy.
The Tragedy of Lists

The framework is a set of lists and a hierarchy of topics. That brings limitations. Any hierarchy is one-dimensional, which is an imperfect match for our multi-dimensional reality. We’ve settled on living with that, too.7

A case in point is the domain of leader Exchange Skills. What the framework lists are the contexts that skills are used in. We open a question like this: What skills are most useful for us or best learned in this context?

The framework does not (yet) give those skills (mindsets and practices).

Given the choice of a contexts list or a list of topics, we prefer the contexts – in order that we can choose topics that will be learned and used in that context, which is the best scenario for learning through action and integration.

We also find that topics are not so clear when they are out of context. Out of context, we accept more vagueness and theory and less practice and action. So, we choose the contexts as the primary organization because they also lead to more clarity on the skills.

Should we create a list of topics, as well? We think so. We have done some of that work. There is more to do.

Lists vs Sequences

This sets up one of the other limitations of lists – the assumption of sequencing. If there are a list of six things that are numbered or lettered, it’s hard not to think of them as sequenced.

The framework identifies seven domains of leadership learning and tags them ABC and WXYZ. ABC are about who the leader is. WXYZ are about what the leader knows and does. These are just tags for quick reference in conversation even as they convey the ‘two sides’ of leadership as the leader vs the work and action of leading. However, there is no intention to convey a sequence or priority. You can start to learn with X or start with C or any other.8

At the third level in the framework, within seven domains, there are 38 sub-areas. Here, we sometimes intend to show sequence or hierarchy and sometimes we do not. Where we think there is a sequence, we find a way to make that point – but the list of single words (or word pairs) that make up the framework’s lists of domains and sub-domains do not always imply sequence or hierarchy.

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7 A future version may provide some solutions. We would like to someday build the relational models that satisfied these complexities as well as the next level of atomized detail.
8 We actually think that starting with Z is a good idea, because it leads to more specific and individualized insights around ABC WXY, some parts of the Z domain are adoptable by everyone in every context, so it builds over time and creates cohesiveness in the culture.
The domain of Action of Leading is another example. Its list of six sub-areas are not the linear experience that the list sequence may imply. There is a sequential logic to some parts, but in real practice these are addressed more organically to the situation. The first items, to ‘frame’, may very well start the action as implied by its position at the start of the list. But you could also frame and re-frame often and at any point in the action. Likewise, the ‘attend’ action can be done continuously across the whole action, not at the end of the action because it is positioned last in the list (figure 4).

As far as our bias for attributing sequence and hierarchy to lists, as Cher’s character says in the 1988 comedy Moonstruck, “Snap out of it!”

Metaphor and Symbol

Because the words used in the framework are simple and inadequate, but the concepts are rich with depth and inter-relationships, we find that more meaning is conveyed and more conversation opens with images and symbols. Even though they are not as specific, they evoke a richer story.

We spent time these months creating and testing images and symbols for the seven domains, and the four to six sub-areas that are associated with each of them. We will continue to build symbolic content and welcome contributions in this area.

These are sets of symbols for the six sub-areas of the Action of Leading domain, the three icons for the domains within the Being meta-domain and the three icons for the domains within the Knowing meta-domain. These are examples. Come back to these and see if they help form a story of Leading, Leaders and Knowing for you.

Toxicity

We recognize our bias is to describe the whole-being of leaders with generative skills and who chose creative action. Our bias is that we think that leaders are good.
We had quite a period of debate about this. Is everything that we cover in the framework true of good leaders and bad leaders, as well? Does Hitler fit these attributes as well as Mandela? Should a leadership framework be neutral about ethics or morality? This was a tough question for us and we may not have fully satisfied ourselves with the answer.

For now, our check against ill-intended influence, power and charisma is in two parts. First, the system of the whole person’s character, specifically, the leader’s Outward Stance, or the leaders’ capacities for what is outside their selves which we talk about in terms of care, love and good. Second is the assumption of leading as a collective experience, where there is attention to the persons, purpose, and process that are part of the Action of Leading.

We’d like to think the capacity for good, the presumptions of collective awareness, and the voices of stakeholders and contributors would be ‘guardrails’ for toxic leadership. But we acknowledge that has not worked in many cases. Someone can have the capacity to be outwardly focused but not use that capacity – they instead act selfishly or narcissistically. They can attend to a purpose that is ill gotten and attend manipulatively to the emotions and psychology of collaborators or followers.

Right now, we are uneasy with the moral and ethical neutrality of the framework and trust it is sufficient that those in the context will step up to what is right and good and not ceding power to the single leader.

One of the future efforts around the framework may be to articulate the ‘don’ts’ of leading, in contrast to our current emphasis of ‘do’s.’ We hope that crystalizing the ‘don’ts’ will empower followers and contributors to be more aware and make influential adjustments.

**Down Selecting for Cohorts or Classes of Learners**

Finally, the framework is useful if it includes all of the possible objectives to consider for a leader and leading, but it also has to allow us to down-select objectives and prioritize them.

We have done some work on the idea of baselines for cohorts or classes in an organization. For example, we held a series of focus groups with very highly experienced functional and HR executives and asked: “What would the leadership attributes be for someone be over the first decade of a career?” We have some good insights from this. However, the idea of a step-down guide is still on our list for the future.

**What are the Attributes in Framework Version 2.1? What has Changed?**

We have already covered the addition of structures for “how to” build each of the three meta-domains (first level).
For the main attributes of the framework, we have more than one version of lists and graphics that represent the content. Figure 1 shows a mindmap version. The figure is too detailed to read, but it conveys the idea of three major meta-domain branches, an associated ‘how to’ branch and seven (lettered) domains that are grouped and broken into 38 sub-areas that have various other groupings and clusters. All of the branches are color-coded and some show associated icons.

![Mindmap of Prometheus Leadership Commons 2.1](image)

**Figure 1. Mindmap of Prometheus Leadership Commons 2.1**

What follows is a summary of framework changes and evolution.

**Loosely Fixed Top-level Structure**

We use variations at the top-level structure. I suppose that is counter to those who want a neater framework, but we think they all work together.

- The simplest is that we arrange the framework by the distinctions between the leader and the leading. (We used this singular approach for framework version 1.0 where we had one group of “inner capacities of the leader” and another as “adaptive capabilities”).

- We also use the (increasingly) familiar structures of being, knowing and doing (“Be, Know, Do”), and variations. These are very digestible and effectively open curiosity and conversation around who leaders are and what leading is.
- We make the distinction about the “Know” meta-domain as being both “knowledge and experience” and “practices and skills.” When we say “Knowing” we mean all of this.

- Finally, including practices and skills in “Knowing” opens the view of the Action of Leading (or Doing) that we think is an important contribution.

So our top-level division is really a set of variations. We think this is just fine for approachability and usefulness.

The alternative, if we were very literal, would be three levels of abstractions before we drill down to the seven domains. This would be much too complicated! We are already too complicated. Simpler is better.

Figure 2 shows one high-level narrative across the three meta-domains. Figure 3 has the very simple domains along with the purpose of leadership (you create what you want), with the color-coding that we use in all the detail graphics.
Domain Knowledge Addition to the (Second) Mid-Level

The 2.1 version of the framework expanded from six to seven domains. The primary content of the framework is these seven domains and the three ‘how to’ domains are there as ancillary references.

The new seventh domain, Domain Knowledge, is part of the Knowing meta-domain. Domain Knowledge has six sub-areas that further define the categories of knowledge and experience.

Graphic views of the Knowing meta-domain and all seven domains are in figures later in this article.

The Challenge of Anti-intellectualism

There are some in the leadership industry who will disagree with Domain Knowledge as an attribute of leadership. They have two arguments.

One argument is that those areas of knowledge do not describe something unique to leadership — so they are not leadership. This is a really interesting point. However, we are not trying to identify the thing that uniquely distinguishes leaders from people in general, or that distinguishes leadership behavior from other behavior. We are identifying all of the things that are valuable to lead (because they then are also valid objectives for learning and development).

We think that there is a lot of other content that does not self-identify as leadership, but is. So choosing attributes that are also used to describe other practices or disciplines is not a bad thing, it is the kind of integration that The Prometheus Project is working to. We sometimes say ‘it’s the whole elephant,’ referring to the fable of the blind men unable to perceive the whole of the elephant.

A second argument is something like “Our survey respondents do not mention anything like Domain Knowledge as a statistically differentiating factor.” This may be literally true, but logically and pragmatically false. Those same survey results point to attributes like trust and behaviors like mentoring. They may further say that trust includes confidence in judgement, or discernment, or competence. We have never seen someone appreciate a mentor when they have nothing to mentor about. We have never known someone to have good judgement or discern a situation or to show trustworthiness in competence when they do not have sufficient knowledge and experience in the situation or subject.

Our own research over the last months confirms this for us. When we are speaking to the head of Artificial Intelligence, a technical product team or a physicist, you can bet your paychecks that they expect and admire domain knowledge in their leaders. When we discuss executive development programs with CHROs, you can bet that includes cross-functional and cross-cultural experience.

If our expectations on the future of work and the human race includes advanced technologies, or if the social experiences of anti-facts and anti-science are a cultural trend, that should convince
us that Domain Knowledge is part of the mix of who leaders are, what they know and how they lead.

We are also curious if the research population of corporate cultures of the 90’s (for example) might have outlived its relevance for more complex organizations and operations today. It would be hard to imagine that those who selected participants did not skew away from contributors who favored technology and science but were marginalized in the minds of the organizations’ research sponsors.

**Lastly, there may be a structural selection bias in those attracted to the leadership industry.** Those who hold uncertainty or disempowerment, or shame around their intellectual abilities or achievements, or who hold a stronger need for belonging and connection than achievement and change are influential and prominent in this space. The industry attracts people people.

We can find models, programs or proclamations that work, ideas, and people domains. We hear some assert that too much emphasis is put on work and results, so the leader is someone who focuses on the person. Others say, that leading is about results and requires the capacity to forget our own stake and gratification and to prioritize the mission. Others will point out that the creative pursuit of some situations is creating knowledge – the intellectual capacity is the point so it cannot be put aside in leadership.

We think all are true. All have to be present. There is no holistic leadership if the whole of the human experience is not included in our definitions of it. Just as with our individual clients – it is about the range and the balance.

Over-intellectualizing is not better or worse than over-introspection or action without reflection. If we are tempted one way or the other – we are stuck in our bias.

**The Max-of-Five-Constraint**

In early design of version 1.0 we arbitrarily chose to have a constraint: The domains could not be sub-divided into more than five sub-area attributes. Like most constraints, this forced our creativity. We had to let go of our long lists, re-conceptualize and consolidate the sea of terms and ideas and keep the list of sub-areas more digestible. It served us well. Five seemed like a small number.

Still, as we applied the framework in real situations and with real people, we adjusted. In a few cases, we found the effort needed to clarify the max-of-five-constraint was counter-productive. The complexity added to the communicating was more than the simplicity gained from the limits.

A clear example is in the domain for the Action of Leading. The changes from version 1.0 to 2.1 include new terms but also a sixth sub-area.

The Action of Leading domain shows the wider pattern of actions for what is going on in any act of leading. Specifically, the patterns include four core actions (reality, vision, intention, and resolution) which are sustained by two supporting actions (frame and attend).
For a long time, we tested with five terms, pivoting between the idea of vision and intention. What we really meant was that leading includes establishing and sustaining a creative tension between the current reality and the vision, designing a strategy of actions and criteria for resolving that tension, commitment to act and learn from the team/organization/individual, and to sustain action to results.

We struggled to keep the max-of-five-constraint. We tried many clever and suitable approaches in dozens of events, but in the end, what worked was just to say: vision, reality and intention as parts of the action of leading.

In Version 2.1 there are now 38 sub-areas and up to six per domain within the learning objectives portions of the framework, and the three ancillary “How To Domains” each add more. It is a lot to absorb.

One of the ways that we express suitability for this design is that the framework seems too simple for the underlying reality of leadership, but too complex to easily absorb at the detail levels. That seems like the “Goldilocks” balanced approach, and the reason the details, as sparse as they are, have two summary levels above them.

These categories are parsed in the lists, but integrated and inter-related in the reality. The ‘whole elephant,’ again.

The Action of Leading Domain

This Action of Leading domain is one of the central points of value in the framework. It is designed from a synthesis of models including those from business change, product development, creative arts, psychotherapy and anthropological studies of indigenous tribes. We see a common pattern of creating, changing and learning across all of these models/theories.

To us, this part of the framework is the forest among the proverbial trees. This is the view of what is going on that can guide all participants’ actions as well as leadership development. We think this is where learners meet the reality of each other, who they are and what they know and can do.

If our theory (and others’) is true that we lead with the people and skills that we have (not who/what we want), then the components of the action of leading are the most important thing to learn to evoke a culture of leaders and leading.

If the theory that we learn character, capacity and capability in action is true, then the attributes of the Action of Leading are where we understand reality, sharpen our vision of what to learn next, hone our people and work knowledge and skills. The action of leading is the crucible for the creation of something new in ourselves, our common collective.

Figure 4 shows a graphic of the content of the Action of Leading in the context of the other six domain titles. There is also more overview narrative later in this document.
How Do You Down-select a Baseline for an Early Career Class?

We held a series of workshops and focus groups where we were able to make a preliminary general summary for what we heard experienced sponsors of leadership wanted to see in early career staff. Below is some of what we heard.

Ideally, at the point of entering an organization people should have a foundation in these qualities. They would be expected to further develop and learn over a first decade of experience, so that initial qualities are well established and the next wave of capacities have taken root.

What Capacities of the Person?

From our focus groups one statement that stands out was from the woman CEO and MIT graduate of a tech company. Her number one leadership attribute was ‘someone who wants to have responsibility – the desire to be accountable is in their DNA’.

I would not disagree with this. But it is a great example of an attribute of a person that is not easy to deconstruct and to build into a development program. It can be a criteria for selection. But the settings where the candidates are being prepared still have the challenge of deconstructing the contributing elements – so they can be developed.

Looking at just the meta-domains of Being you might target these areas for development:

- I want the intellectual capacity to see past my bias and see a situation realistically and to see the possibility for change.
- I want the self-possession to be open to risk-taking, seeing and accepting reality, and courageous to take action.

- I want the dedication to purpose and resilience to be integral to the persons motivation so that they sustain effort for creating value.

- I want the person to be comfortable with their emotional experience so that judgement is balanced and effort and motivation is sustainable.

Beyond this example, the focus groups highlighted other attributes of the leader (aka being) that said in many ways that the development of a person in this stage of career should include what adult development theorists would identify as having grown beyond an early stage identity.

These staff should have a sense of their own values, even as this continues to be formed in the new contexts and new experiences. They should have capacities that might be labeled empathy, service and kindness.

They should show the courage of their convictions and the openness to others’ convictions and influence. They should have the emotional capacity and healthy identity to collaborate. They should have the self-possession to be open to the of constraints, authority and other actors.

Figure 5 shows the domain and sub-domains around the framework’s Being meta-domain. Using the letters and numbers on the graphic, what we heard in the focus groups is that strengths should be present and built around A 1, 2 and, B, 1, 2 and 3, and C 2 and 4 as a priority for this first decade.

**Figure 5. Being – the Capacities to Be**
What Experience and Knowledge and Contextual Skills Do We Want?

The domain knowledge for leaders is not just the technical and market knowledge that is specific to organizations and roles. These are the things we traditionally expect universities to provide and will continue on the job. Other knowledge domains in the framework may be less conventional university content and even with a solid foundation of theory from schools, are ripe topics to continue to learn on the job. These include:

- An integrated understanding of the process and practices of continuous, collective, life-long experiential learning.

- “The Ropes” of how organizations make decisions and the cadence of their operations.

- In school we might learn the concepts of business models and value creation, but in the organization, we want to observe and understand what is specific in that organization, both in the present and in possibilities.

- Constituencies, groups of collaborators, stakeholders and customers as real persons in the organization’s political and social system.

- Culture is also a topic where foundational knowledge would support specific observation and strategies in the context of the norms, values and power of the organization.

Moving from domain knowledge to skills and practices, what stands out is one-to-one and group communications and collaboration. Part of this is the capacity to work across multiple detail frames, from concrete to conceptual to general, as the basic skills of ‘communicating up and out’ beyond the immediate work groups and peers. These communication skills are not ‘once and done’ and are built upon and added to as time goes by and as responsibilities increase. For example, a new set of communication skills is needed for new managers who not only communicate laterally and up, but down and diagonally.

The work contexts and the skills should be mixed for both utility and learning. Whatever the situation they are in is the very best to learn those skills – because learning in action and learning in context trumps learning in theory or in the lab simulation every time.

So, what skills across the framework do we target? Some would argue that less experienced staff are most likely matched to more stable operations. So, the skills for incremental innovations, working from the perspectives of a team, contributor, leader and follower are useful. However, some roles may be more creative and innovative so ideation and co-creating skills would be appropriate right at the start.

It is safe to assume that most newer staff would not start out being responsible for leading in a crisis, or leading to scale changes across a larger organization, or leading globally or with unconventional relationships such as joint venture or tightly integrated channels. Even if someone were in those bigger situations, the skills they would need as pre-requisites likely include the one-to-one and group skills as a foundation.
Figure 6 shows the domain and sub-areas around the framework’s Knowing meta-domain, or the capabilities of knowledge & experience and practices & skills. Using the letters and numbers on the graphic, what we heard in the focus groups is that strengths should be present and built around W 1, 3, 5 and 6, X 1 and 2, and Y 1 and 2 as a priority for this first decade.

Figure 6. Knowing Meta-domain

What Do We Want Them to Be Ready to Do?

Most of the focus groups would say that they want staff who understand how to take action, and adapt with agility as contributors, followers and co-leaders to serve the intention of the situation.

Anyone working with others to a goal will be more confident, focused and aligned with an understanding of “what is going on” in a general way, so that action is not lost in the details. That is the value of the framework’s Action of Leading domain.

More senior members of the organization may typically want to take a front-and-center role in visioning, but the vision is not effective until it is internalized by the contributors. Ideally, a vision should be co-created and the idea of its place in the system (“this is what we will see when we are there”) should be understood by all. The same goes for the other actions of being clear with reality, designing a strategy that all are committed to, and doing the technical or relationship work that creates the valued results. Every team member will want to understand the obligations and practices to “Attend” to the people and the processes they are engaged in. Teams that are self-managing and self-sustaining will need these capabilities.

One exception may be the function of “Framing,” which is the perspective and larger context for the action. This is more likely the part for the more senior experienced members, rather than
those in their early career. Senior leaders may want to Frame the vision that is created, so that how that vision fits into the larger context of the organization and its business is clear. Without that many visioning efforts flail. That said, Framing is a capability for leaders at every level. Certainly during that first decade all of these leaders will have the opportunity to initiate and oversee some sort of creative action where they are the Framers. Some will do this on day one.

Looking back to figure 4, what we heard in the focus groups is that strengths should be present and built around this domain would be Z 3, 5, and 6 as a priority, but there would be value and contribution in all of the sub-areas.

Flipping a Narrative

This is the image that I would like you to consider: If I gathered all the references and materials on leadership from academics, practitioners and programs, I would have two big piles and one small pile. The table would have a big stack around personal development and the inner experience of the leader. There would be a big pile around techniques and tools to use as a manager, team member or team. The third pile about what leaders actually do, that pile would be smallest. We would like to flip that story for learning and development. We will make leading clear and leaders common faster if we do this.

The action of leading, to us, is the most approachable, the most pragmatic, the shortest time-to-results and the shortest time-to-self-experience-as-a-leader. I think that the possibility at hand, the timely action, is to help people figure out that they are already capable leaders in some ways and to create a cohesive sense of what they are doing as a team so that they can discover themselves as collective leaders – self-managing, self-organizing, self-empowering innovators, creators, learners and makers of change.

The techniques and knowledge of the Know meta-domain will be valuable in some specialized or tougher contexts. The personal growth of the Being meta-domain will also be valuable, there is no reason to wait for that longer lead-time and there is no better way to crystalize and motivate people to change than their experience in the Action of Leading, today. So, as we have said a few times, let us shift from preparing on the long-slope and to noticing the leading in action.

Future Interests

From Topics to Practices

The framework is a structure across all of the topics of leadership. It is a helpful tool to traverse and integrate the whole of the leadership story. This will help you set goals. This will challenge your assumptions.

The framework has always been a first step in the overall Prometheus Project’s mission of making leading clear and leaders common. What is needed in addition are insights into practices that are useful for leading. For example, one-to-one exchange skills include listening. What are good practices for a leader to adopt for listening? What are good practices for learning to listen?
This is not a shortcoming of the framework – it is unfinished business in the mission.

**More Explicit Sequencing**

There are indications in the newest framework about early vs advanced capabilities or capacities. Mostly, these are about contexts of greater scale or complexity. They are also about more collective consciousness, that are states of being consistent with adult development models.

However, additional details about dependencies and sequences would be helpful when actually applying the framework to an organization and its micro-learning and program design.

**The “Promethepedia”**

To support the specter of adding specific topics to illustrate the categories in the framework, with growing content and relationships across content, we would imagine a Wikipedia-like resource that is collectively created and curated by a cross-disciplinary group through The Prometheus Project.

**Down-select or Objectives Guide**

We think that further experience with individuals and organizations to apply the framework to their specific contexts and vision will provide opportunities to form a rubric or guide for decision criteria about which objectives are suitable. We can see the potential for AI assisted software to support this process.

**Clarity for Popular Concepts**

There are many concepts and constructs in the popular engagement around leadership. Terms like ‘emotional intelligence’ are used with a presumption that that means something specific. We think it means a range of things across the framework. So, we would like to make popular concepts like this clearer by using the structure of the framework to parse and illustrate them.

Another is the concept of “empathy” or “trust.” To build these requires meeting learning and development in several areas of the framework. If we are to progress past talking about leading and leaders and from abstractions to capacities, then some work is needed to parse and illustrate these kinds of outcomes.

**More Explicit Integrations**

There are valuable tools and models that have been considered in our research and are part of the experience we draw from. We think it would be helpful to articulate the relationships and the structure of the framework. The framework will meet its purpose when it can serve as a commons across all of the proprietary resources or provide a context for all of the atomized content and research.
Cross-sectional to Longitudinal

We would like to use the framework on a longitudinal basis to re-plan and govern an organization’s leadership development policies and programs – across all functions and levels of an organization. We recognize that some organizations are increasingly virtual/fungible across legal entities such as co-producers and contractors. We’d like to extend the scope of leadership governance and development to the whole of those who are contributors and stakeholders.

Do’s and Don’ts – Toxicity Rubric

As noted earlier, the framework is looking at the good leader’s attributes, but one of those capacities of leaders is to assess the current reality they are in – including assessing when something is not right, wholesome or generative. Then, to find a creative, generative response, which may not be ‘cancel culture’. We think more explicit content about the ‘don’ts’ of leading and creating will be helpful. We have opened a space in the www.WeLead.Gobal community as a placeholder and have taken a few initial steps toward this content.

Additional Voices and Influence

The voices of The Prometheus Project are substantial, but we would love to expand this. We would particularly value aligning more psychiatric, neurological and psychotherapeutic perspectives, more chief learning offices, like-minded practitioners and consultancies, and more individual leaders at front-line and middle levels.

Community of Purpose

The Prometheus Project holds a digital space for members who share the mission of making leading clear and leaders common. This can be found at www.WeLead.Global. Consumers and observers are welcome. But creators and contributors are needed to realize the vision for this space for inquiry.

Open Cautions

Feeding Perfectionism

All of these leadership attributes tend to push our assumptions to the point that we expect ALL of these attributes in our leaders. That will never be true (or rarely will be).

First, we remember that we think every single person in an organization, team or community has moments of choice and potential to lead in small and large ways. We want them to self-recognize these possibilities and to be recognized for these contributions.

Second, we have always held that leadership is a collective practice among imperfect leaders – not a heroic practice of one superhero. We are concerned that the scale of what is in the framework will convey unsuitability to someone who compares themselves to this system of leaders and
leading. Almost no one will measure up. We do not want the message to be that they do not have the stuff because they will never be all of these things. Rather, this is the basket of possibilities for themselves and the mix of whole leadership that they can assemble as a team.

Third, this raises the complementary ideas of followership, kindness and flexibility among each other and with those in positions where leadership is expected. They may or may not have all of these qualities. They will not. Leading can happen imperfectly.

This is one of the reasons why focusing on the Action of Leading domain is a priority – to just know and expect what it means to lead in some shared purpose.

**Feeding Exclusivity**

Similar to perfection, we know that the demands of leadership are broader and more complex at higher levels of an organization. So, we might be reinforcing the idea that long-term leadership development should be focused on those at the top (or on their way).

We want those at the top to be great leaders.

We also want those everywhere to be great leaders in their contexts.

We think that focusing on the Action of Leading domain can help achieve this. Everyone can execute the components of this domain – even if they do them as imperfect people and with imperfect knowledge and skills.

**The Prometheus Leadership Commons 2.1 Summary**

For reference, figure 7, shows all of the seven domains, grouped and color coded.

**The Capacity to Be**

The blue tones in the figure are the domain of Being (aka Capacity to Be) (aka The Leader). While this domain is about who we are, not what we know, there is a knowing component to persons. The brighter blue domain and sub-areas are about “What is going on in me so that I know?” or “What are the elements that I integrate to bring clarity and wisdom and consciousness about myself and the world?” The more purple tones are about me as the subject that is self-aware and me as the subject that is focused on what is outside of me, whether that is other people, principles or purpose.

When we are fully accepting and conscious of ourselves, we are beautiful and others are beautiful. We are filled with quiet power and energy. We are clear and unfiltered about all kinds of truth and wisdom. We may never be this whole or fully human, we may only have glimpses and moments of these states. If we are lucky and wise, we will leverage each other to meet this standard and accept and love our clumsy humanity as we go.
Figure 7. The Prometheus Leadership Commons 2.1 Framework

Our Knowledge and Skills

The orange tones are the adaptive capabilities that make up our knowledge and skills. The darker red tones are domain knowledge, the intellectual stuff. The orange tones are the contexts in which selected skills can be prepared and learned. We expect these to be well mastered in applied experience and integrated across related knowledge domains, self-integrated emotionally and socially. However, they may not only be the theoretical and technical knowledge we assume.

These are all handy for assessing, working and interacting in the real world. We can sometimes do this well in with humility, good purpose, intellect and observation and with little knowledge and few honed practices. This is the truth behind the idea that building the leader, the inner work, is the most adaptable. Or “Who you are is how you lead.” But our situations are often not that simple. We may not be in a safe-to-fail context. We may not have perfect or even viable constituencies. The reality we face may be more chaotic and complex than we can assess on the surface. We have some natural talents but other capabilities for influence and transformation may take some work. To illustrate, while improvisation can be natural, even improvisation is improved with conscious rehearsal of the practice.\(^9\) We may be better at it in our own minds than is objectively true.

We humans (at least this one) tend to over prepare. We do not (yet) trust our native ability and accept our flaws. So, we over-invest in collecting up knowledge. We do not dare the shame to be imperfect in public, so we are scripted and rehearsed. This is, obviously, not what we are suggesting by highlighting and valuing knowledge and skills.

\(^9\) We consider practices to be technique and mindset honed in experience.
I will lastly point to the irony of some who claim knowledge and skills and practices are less important – but assert a set of knowledge and practices for developing leaders or shifting cultures. Those same may assert that their leadership in the industry is built from their research and technologies. What would Loretta Castorini, Cher’s character, say?

**Leading is Action**

The third meta-domain in green tones is the Action of Leading domain. Whatever the details of your situation, these six things are present (or should be) to lead and succeed.

The darker green sub-areas (three to six) are somewhat of an iterative sequence of plan-do-check-repeat. You could consider them standards of health for creative change, so if we understand them we have language to raise concerns. Can we have a suitable strategy if we do not have a sense of where we are and where we want to go? In some cases, we do not have either of those clear, yet we are working hard. The lighter green sub-areas (one and two) are context for the others. Framing gives a context to action. Attending is considering and sustaining people and process.  

Some of these areas in the Action of Leading will fall in place, quickly and effortlessly. Some of them will be a lot of work to influence and align, with many teachable moments that require patience and experimentation. Vision, for example, is sometimes clear and quickly finds a resonance with the stakeholders and effortlessly fits the larger context of the mission. In other times, this is a major effort that takes much knowledge, learning iterations, a toolbox of techniques, human connections and open minds and hearts.

Finally, the sub-area labeled Resolution is referring to resolving the creative tension that is energized by the contrast between accepting Reality as it is and a vibrant compelling Vision. This may be one of the most valuable points to remember – because many of us practitioners and researchers forget that leading is not about just being there, thinking or doing, or inspiring. Leading is ultimately about results – whatever those results may be. We lead because we want change. We lead because we want to learn. We lead because we want to create. We lead to create what we want and what we want the world to be.

**Conclusion**

That concludes a summary overview of leaders and leading in the view of the framework and as it stands at this point of publication. While we very much welcome and expect disruptive contributors and amplifiers, we prefer some ‘yes, and’ partners. We very much look forward to applying and learning to bring this framework to more usefulness and fulfill The Prometheus Project’s humble-audacious mission of making leading clear and leaders common.

Thank you for your attention, your shared passion and commitment to leaders and leading, your shared sense of urgency for the broader possibilities we can create in the world.

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10 If you are an experienced Agile practitioner, you will recognize that an intentional effort to open and sustain individuals and relationships, observe what works and take responsibility for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of a system of action is ‘attending.’
Psychosynthesis and the Alexander Technique

Marilyn Monk

Introduction

After many decades as a practising scientist in the realm of molecular biology (DNA replication and repair, cell signalling, gene expression in development, epigenetics, embryonic stem cells, diagnosis of genetic disease and cancer), I felt a need to expand my occupations in life into the realms of art and spirituality. Although since childhood I was aware of the three realms of knowing and being as mind (objective truth), body (subjective truth) and soul (transcendental truth), I was aware that my science was taking up a disproportionate amount of my time. So, after many years of sampling the various approaches to self-exploration offered by the personal growth movement, I chose to train in the Alexander Technique. I had done the rounds of individual and group work, seminars and the different alternative and complementary therapies and treatments available. But for me, Alexander technique seemed to be the answer because it enabled me to take responsibility to work on myself each moment of my waking day and in every activity, whether mental, emotional or physical. Today, I still have great faith in the technique and see it as a valid approach to self-mastery. Yet something still seemed to be lacking. During my own training in the technique and while working with my pupils, I found that release of tension in the body would sometimes be accompanied by overwhelming emotional upheavals. At such times, fellow trainees would simply notice with understanding and compassion and continue with their own work. As a teacher, I have learned to be with pupils during periods of emotional release, to wait quietly and sympathetically, and then proceed, perhaps more slowly, with the teaching. The philosophy is that as the physical back becomes stronger it is able to support more opening of the body over the regions of chest, heart and stomach and, in my experience, this is what happens. Opening the front of the body is equated to opening to vulnerability. It is also quite a courageous confronting of the world outside ourselves.

I believe that psychological and emotional disturbances are slowly resolved during Alexander training. Nevertheless, I have always felt the process to be incomplete, in that we do not directly deal with the roots of our basic emotions – grief, terror, rage, shame and despair. In our training, we are taught that we may have emotions, but our primary concern is about the choice as to whether or not we let these emotions pass into the body. Many people criticise Alexander teachers for their apparent lack of visible emotion and associated body movement (hence the label, 'Alexandroid'). However, these critics may be lacking in perception and awareness. They may not be able to see that the greatest depth of passion and emotion can be felt and portrayed in

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stillness. The Alexander teacher is taught to trust that emotional upheavals resulting from release in the body will resolve in their own good time. Alexander technique is certainly not in a hurry. My own inclination, perhaps born out of so many years of scientific discipline, is one of leaving no stone unturned. I am impatient and unwilling to wait for the answers to come so slowly. I felt the need to look more intensely into my own emotional status and its history. Hence, after completing the Alexander Technique training, I decided to train in Assagioli’s Psychosynthesis. Each training takes place over three years.

I have been aware throughout the Psychosynthesis training that it is wonderfully complementary to the Alexander Technique. I hope I can convey a flavour of this in this brief article. The Alexander training is concerned with psychophysical awareness and conscious constructive control in the use of the self. Although, Assagioli’s Psychosynthesis claims to be concerned with the body as well as with the emotions and transpersonal dimensions (a term often used when avoiding the word ‘spiritual’), its attention to the body falls far short of that provided by Alexander Technique. On the other hand, it directly addresses the aspects which Alexander Technique leaves students to resolve by themselves – the psychic and emotional disturbances. I consider that these two disciplines together provide a complete and integrated approach to self-realisation.

**Life is Essentially 'Good'**

*For there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. Shakespeare.*

One of the basic tenets of Assagioli's work is that life is essentially good. This is perhaps a difficult concept for a Judeo-Christian community indoctrinated with the duality of heaven and hell, good and evil, right-doing and wrong-doing. Yet alongside our Judeo-Christian dogmas runs a stream of myths and fairytales, familiar since childhood, which hint that this duality may not be the only truth. Certain myths and fairytales portray apparent evil as simply the absence of goodness. It is the familiar question as to whether darkness exists of its own accord, or whether darkness is simply the absence of light.

While watching Disney's version of Hans Christian Andersen’s *Sleeping Beauty*, it seemed to me that it was all very well for Princess Aurora – young, beautiful, loved and cared for by all. She would have no problem at all in expressing, or reflecting, pure love. But my heart went out to the 'evil' fairy, Carabosse; shunned and rejected, uninvited to the party. Self-destructive, resentful, seething with hatred and seeking revenge – all clearly brought about by the absence of love. Recently, too, on the underground in London, I noticed a poster advertising the ballet. Again, I was struck by the cruelty (and the ageism) with which Carabosse is portrayed – old, arthritic, wrinkled and sallow. No doubt she would also be toothless if she were allowed to smile. But there are no smiles for Carabosse.

Is evil the absence of love? So, I must look further into my experience into the question of the duality of good and evil. The resolution comes not from my thinking on this question, but by way of direct experience of the workings of the Alexander Technique. The experience, simply stated, is that *when I eliminate the wrong-doing, the right comes through of its own accord*. You will notice that I say the 'right', and not the 'right-doing', because the ‘right’ may not necessarily be a
'doing' at all. As we proceed through this article, we might find a better term for 'right' – maybe 'harmony', 'poise' or 'balance' – but for the moment, I wish only to make the point that the experience is something that seemingly comes as a gift, or a state of grace, and not something we can do or attain by a certain set of activities of the body. Eliminating the wrong-doing is more akin to 'un-doing' or 'getting out of one's own way', as we shall see below.

Are there other arguments that life is essentially good? I often look to the creatures of existence for answers. Certainly, I consider that the concept of evil is human; it is a human thought construct. The trees, the birds, the foxes and squirrels in my garden do not operate in a world in which evil, – in terms of a force which means them harm, – plays a part. They may sometimes suffer from cold or hunger or 'designs' on each other (the threatening call of the tawny owl and the squeaks of his captured prey are common night occurrences) but, to my eyes, the 'default' state is one of celebration. That is, like Newton's second law of thermodynamics, the creatures of existence will rest or play (visibly enjoy their aliveness) unless propelled by some external force to do otherwise. In my own case, not feeling particularly enamoured with the status of human being (in fact, I feel rather the reverse), it is a simple step, born of observation, to see that there is no evil but that "human thinking makes it so." One memory from the teachings of a spiritual master, Shree Rajneesh, which is indelible upon my being, is his saying, "Existence is not against you. Existence has given birth to you. She loves you." This means to me that to grow, to flourish, and to be in harmony with all – this potential is my very birthright.

We come into the world with all that is required for harmony and balance in the life ahead of us. Small children, when they first begin their physical activity in play, are beautifully balanced. The disproportionately heavy weight of the skull of a two-year old is delicately poised on a perfectly balanced spine in a body that hinges like a little anglepoise lamp in all the right places. What happens to distort this balance – even by the time we are six years old? Alexander maintained that 'wrong-doings' multiplied thousands of times become indelibly imprinted, or 'wired in', upon the developing being, resulting in distorted patterns of responses to the constant stream of stimuli in life. Distortions result from physical, mental and emotional ‘wrong-doings’ in response to a world that seems to be against freedom, against authentic true being. The conveyers of the 'right-doing' (parents, priests, teachers, politicians) believe that their impositions are for the best. They are oblivious to the possibility that 'imposed doing' of any sort may be stunting the child's natural growth. Very few people in our society consider that the task of the mentor is primarily to enable the new being to flourish in its own unique way.

Although distortions inevitably accumulate, the birthright for fulfilment of potential, though latent, miraculously survives. This is the positive, good news part of the story. And it is where F. M. Alexander and R. Assagioli had much in common. Both believed that goodness and right-being were the essence of human existence, and that a latent sense of a harmonious self could be revealed by stripping away the psychophysical and emotional distortions built up since birth. Alexander's tenet was that in all walks of life, in all human activity (mental, physical, emotional), there is a misguided emphasis on trying to get things right and too little attention paid to what has gone wrong in the first place. He maintained that 'getting things right' places an undue emphasis on gaining an end, rather than on paying proper attention to the 'means whereby' the response to a stimulus is activated and performed. This state of 'doing too much’ and end-gaining inevitably overlays natural functioning with super-imposed tensions to the system which in turn distort
the natural balance of the psychophysical being. Even trying to see, or trying to think, can interfere with the efficient functioning of eyes and mind (memory). In a similar way, Assagioli asserted that individual human beings carry within them unspoilt qualities of peace, harmony, joy, radiance and wisdom; and that these pure qualities become layered with distortions built up by early trauma and continual disturbances throughout life. The approach of both men is to bring the distortions into the light of consciousness and, at the same time, to make clear the potential of the latent pure qualities needing to emerge once again. Their methods are different but their intentions to encourage the emergence of the inherent best being in each of us are the same.

Taking Responsibility

*God helps those who help themselves. Mum and others*

Nowadays, we look to the medical profession as a service. It is there to provide a 'quick fix' to our ailments – those things that go wrong in the body. The same approach is taken by many towards the complementary health therapies. We tend to go to the doctor or therapist with our depression, fatigue, headache, stomach pain, respiratory disease, skin disorders and many other symptoms of stress (tension), and ask for help to alleviate our suffering. The doctor may prescribe pills, ointments, medicines and treatments of one sort or another. But how would we feel if the doctor said, "Well now, how have you done this to yourself?" Yet, in many cases, this approach would be the most true and the most helpful for, more often than not, we do not take the time to consider our own relationship to the age–old basic rules for good health: – appropriate diet, exercise, rest, sleep and avoiding stress. Nor are we educated to take responsibility for our own health and well-being. Modern medicine is about illness, not health. It is interested in disease and takes the responsibility (and fattens the drug companies) for prescribing 'fixes' for ailments that are primarily caused by our own lack of care for ourselves. Today's human beings are not remarkable for taking responsibility. That is why the story of F. M Alexander's struggle to find the solution to his own particular ailment is so inspiring for us all.

Frederick Matthias Alexander was born into a large rural family in Tasmania, Australia, in 1869. He was a separate, and perhaps somewhat difficult, child with a passion for acting and reciting on stage. In his late teens, however, his passion to act and to recite was severely compromised by a tendency to lose his voice. He visited many doctors and specialists of throat disorders, but nobody could find an anatomical or physiological defect to explain his loss of voice. He was advised to rest, and in so doing, his voice would return; but as soon as he would recite again, his voice would become hoarse and weak. Alexander made a simple observation that many of us would be unable to make (although we may not like to admit it). He saw that *it must be something that he was doing when engaging in this activity that was causing his problem*. This initial step of taking responsibility for his problem was the starting point of a determined, thorough and painstaking scientific investigation by Alexander of his own use of himself.

'Use of the self' is an Alexandrian term that may need qualifying. The best approach to understanding use of the self is to consider the way we use various tools in life. We pay attention to the shape and feel of a pen, a saw, a toothbrush, a golf club, and so on, and consider whether the tool will function well in the task intended. After purchasing a food processor, a new car, or a video recorder, we will read the instruction manual and give some time and thought to the proper
use of the new equipment. We pay attention to proper use since we are aware of the simple universal law, 'Use affects function.' Its colloquial addendum, 'Use it or lose it,' is also important. Examples of this, well-known in biology, are vestigial organs (tonsils, appendices, ear muscles), lack of development of blocked or 'blinded' organs in new–born animals, atrophy of unused leg muscles, and so on. Proper use of ourselves is vitally important for maintenance and appropriate function. But do we pay any attention to the way we use ourselves in daily activity? The means whereby we use ourselves – whether distorted, tense and unbalanced, or poised, flowing and free – will profoundly affect the possibility of continued function as well as efficiency of function and, just as importantly, pleasure in activity. Poor use of the self is a constant force for deterioration in muscles and joints, and in mental and emotional well-being. Good use of the self is progressively enhancing to overall health and well-being. Evidence for the effectiveness of Alexander training on health-enhancement is rife – for example, increased lung capacity, lowered blood pressure, less expenditure of effort in activity and more balanced emotional and intellectual presence.

Alexander observed that in response to the self-given stimulus to recite, his pattern of response in taking up a 'reciting stance' was to pull the heavy weight of his skull back and down on the top of his spine. This resulted in a shortening and narrowing of the back and a gripping with the feet that distorted overall balance. The second stage of Alexander's enquiry was to try to change this pattern of response. The frustration of trying to break a habit of this sort would be enough to deter most of us, but Alexander's determination was quite remarkable. He first tried imposing the "doing" of something different – trying to do it right. However, thrusting the head forward caused more problems – more tightening of the throat and restriction of breathing and of the diaphragm. He then realised that he must simply eliminate the wrong pattern and not try to superimpose what he thought might be the right pattern. The third stage of his investigation might be considered as a still more difficult hurdle. He had to break his conditioned response pattern to the stimulus to recite. After many months of perseverance, Alexander had finally developed his method. Stated simply, he had learned to put a pause between stimulus and response and, in that pause, to give himself mental orders both to release any unnecessary tension and to encourage new direction. He mentally ordered his neck to be free to allow his head to go forward and up in relation to the top of his spine (thus freeing the joint between head and spine). As a result of these mental orders, he would experience his back lengthening and widening as if of its own accord (in response to his having 'got out of the way'). This experience is due to the natural postural reflex (through the spine) mechanisms now able to come into play. The job of the natural postural reflex mechanism is to govern a lengthening process in the body in response to gravity – the very experience of lightness of being that is so often reported by the Alexander pupil.

The pause, or hiatus, inserted between stimulus and response and the releasing of inappropriate tension is called inhibition; the new mental orders are called direction; and the proper relationship between head, neck and spine, undergoing delicate readjustments moment by moment, is called primary control. Thus Alexander had solved his problem and, moreover, he found that the same principles could be applied to solve or eliminate any problem in human functioning where the individual concerned was willing to seek out the wrong-doing in activity and to apply new conscious control over his use of himself. We will now look at the principles of Alexander technique in relation to the main principles of Psychosynthesis in order to observe the ways in which they are parallel and complementary.
Inhibition and Dis-identification

Give thy thoughts no tongue, nor any unproportion'd thought his act. Shakespeare.

A common hypothesis to both Alexander Technique and Psychosynthesis is the existence of a unique self, with pure qualities of love and will, needing to emerge from underneath the covering layers of accumulated distortions. Distortions, according to Alexander Technique, are the habitual patterns of faulty psychophysical use in response to stimuli; in Psychosynthesis, they are inappropriate, exaggerated or damaging behavioural responses. It is also common to both disciplines that the self needing to emerge is always present, so, in a sense, the emergence is one of re-membering. In fact, Alexander technique is classified as re-education of the individual in proper use of the self. It is also common to both that the process of stripping away the layers of accumulated distortions requires 'conscious constructive control' (Alexander's term). By this, we mean that the work is done initially through a properly trained mind aided by the engagement of conscious will, or intention.

Another term used by Alexander is 'inhibition'. There are many ways to see the concept of inhibition. Perhaps the simplest representation is that of saying 'no' to immediate (and therefore habitual) response to a stimulus: The telephone rings; there is a shove in a crowded place; there is a move to sit, stand, write or play a musical instrument, switch on the TV or hit a tennis ball (the reader will get the idea of any and every daily activity). The response must be to say 'no' to responding at all. This is in part 'inhibition' – it is the first step towards breaking the habitual wrong response pattern. Even when I think I am doing nothing, I must practise inhibition because, in fact, there is never a time when I am not responding to a stimulus. It may be a thought or an emotion and, if I remember, I can say 'no' to that thought or emotion entering my body to change it in some way. For example, if I feel 'down', then I say 'no' to the response of pulling down in the body. So 'inhibition' is simply staying very aware of the constant stream of stimuli that come into the mind – stimuli wanting a mental, emotional or physical response – and saying 'no' to responding to a stimulus in any way other than noting it. (I, myself, assume that all emotional and physical responses also start with a thought).

Of course, this is a very tall order, and often I am not aware that I am carrying thoughts, feelings and muscular tensions that are a pattern of response to a previous stimulus until a clear new stimulus attracts my attention. Then the task of 'inhibition' is to release all aspects of the old pattern, as well as saying 'no' to responding immediately to the new stimulus. The practice of 'inhibition' means that I do not carry over a psychophysical pattern belonging to a previous event into my response to the new event. I clear the system. Before responding to the new event, I also must practise the next Alexander principle: 'direction.' The practice of inhibition and direction means that my response will be from a more balanced and clear space and therefore it is more likely to be an appropriate response. It will also mean that my neck will be free to allow my head to go forward and up in relation to the top of my spine, which will be lengthening back and up. Another way of seeing inhibition in more physical terms is that I will stay back (the physical back stays back) from the stimulus. I will not be pulled into it. This will all become clearer when I say more about direction and choice, below.
In the practice of Psychosynthesis, one of the key principles is self identification – a conscious and disciplined process of dis-identification from the mind, the emotions and the physical body. In my own experience, practising dis-identification is very similar to the concept of inhibition. In affirming that I am more than my thoughts, emotions and physical sensations, I am visualising myself as so much bigger than the content of these faculties that the content itself diminishes in significance. Indeed, combined with meditation (releasing tension, staying alert, watching, non-censoring and letting go of desire for a particular outcome), the practice of dis-identification can approach the same state of still and silent readiness that comes about in the practice of inhibition and direction in Alexander Technique. This is the state we yearn for, i.e., 'nothing happening but anything possible', – and that is so beautiful to see in the total 'being-ness' of a young child.

Direction, the Will and Choice

This above all – to thine own self be true. Shakespeare.

In a small child, the natural orientation of the head to the neck and back is such that the joint between the heavy skull and the delicate top vertebra of the spine is free (the jaw is also jointed here and the position of this joint is between the ears). Over 90 per cent of stimuli are received in the head (sight, smell, taste, sound, thought) and, if the head is delicately balanced and free to respond, the lengthening back follows this response in a flowing and free way. Alexander found that it was necessary to give a powerful positive mental order to will this natural orientation to come back into play. Combining 'inhibition' and 'direction', we say, "Let the neck be free to allow the head to go forward and up in such a way that the back lengthens and widens." Note that the instructions do not imply that the pupil will do anything. The pupil is instructed simply to give mental direction and trust that the thought will be understood and translated by the body into an appropriate response. The teacher's presence and gentle guidance with the hands will confirm this. Inhibition and direction practised in this way ensure the best possible poised and balanced place from which to make a response. It is clear that a free and balanced psychophysical self is more likely to respond appropriately to any stimulus. Alexander maintained that a contorted, distorted body would result in distorted mental, emotional and physical perceptions of the events occurring in the outside world.

Now, and only now, the individual is ready to respond and now there is choice. Simply put, the individual may choose not to respond at all; to respond in a completely different manner than usual; to do something completely irrelevant (a useful choice with adolescent kids); or, of course, to respond in the old habitual way (although in the latter case, now there is something very different – a choice to do this has been made).

Alexander technique is therefore a form of self-mastery in that its practice allows me to have a choice from a free and balanced place of how to respond moment by moment to the constant stream of happenings in my world. It also allows the possibility of change. Not that it is about change; but, in unlinking habitual response from stimulus, it opens the possibility of responding differently. Ingrained habit is the most difficult barrier to change.

Now, how is this aspect of direction and choice seen in Assagioli's Psychosynthesis? Clearly it is in Assagioli's concept of the 'Will' in all its forms. Primarily, the Will is an intention (mental
image) that translates itself into physical embodiment and action. The Will in Psychosynthesis has a directive and regulatory function, balancing and integrating the energies of the being. Alexander's own words, "conscious constructive control,", could as equally apply to the Will of Assagioli as it does to primary control. The main aspects of the Will as strong (intensity of energy for action), skilful (effective strategy with least effort) and good (appropriate expansion into the outside world) emanate from the self. Right use of Will is associated with a sense of harmony and choice, akin to Alexander's direction and primary control. The Will directs with energy, mastery and purpose; but it is effortless.

**Grounding and Self-realisation**

*Individuation only takes place if you first return to your body, to your earth, only then does it become true. Jung.*

It is perhaps paradoxical that the aspect of grounding in Alexander Technique is strongly related to the sense of a higher self. The Alexander teacher uses gentle guidance with the hands together with quite insistent and intense verbal instruction (remember, thoughts have to be trained and the Alexander teacher must be holding, and even staying ahead of, the pupil's habitual thought patterns). With the engagement of the pupil's will, the teacher helps to bring about a new state of poise and balance in the pupil. Then the pupil will often say that they are suddenly aware of the fact that they have feet. They feel their feet on the ground solidly supporting them. They are grounded. Although they are free and flexible, the teacher will be aware that they are very strong and together (I found that the same supple, grounded strength is developed in Tai Chai). At the same time as being grounded, the pupil is aware of being in alignment with a lengthening process streaming up through the body and a sense of lightness, expansion and well-being. Every part of the bodymind is now in communication with every other part. This 'suspension structure', grounded by gravity, is also very sensitive to the world around and communicating openly and freely with this world. Pupils will often say that they feel that they are simply who they are; that they see clearly; and that this experience is very welcome. On the way to this place of togetherness and poise, the student has had to pass through many unfamiliar places, often feeling very off-balance indeed. Remember that what feels familiar feels right and whatever the pupil's habitual distorted patterns of holding, these will seem right, even if the tension is very disabling. Thus, the process requires some courage. The pupil must be willing to enter the unknown.

A similar passage may happen during the course of Psychosynthesis counselling. During a phase of intense work, the client may feel quite lost and on very unfamiliar ground. The Psychosynthesis guide will hold the true identity of the client through these lost periods and provide support and encouragement to the client to continue the exploration of who he or she really is. The realisation of a new insight or truth closer to the real self comes with grounding of these new experiences into daily life: – practising re-calling the new clarity of vision; noticing how harmoniously it fits with life; taking on new aspects of self-identity in a stable and actualised way. Thus, in Psychosynthesis too, grounding is associated with a greater sense of self. It opens new doors and expands the sense of being by integrating more and more acknowledged aspects of self; thus strengthening self-identity and lightening the burdens of daily life.
The Meaning of Change

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.  T S Eliot.

Of all complementary health therapies and treatments available, Alexander technique and Psychosynthesis are special in that they ask the adherent to take the opportunity to work on themselves in daily activity. They are not treatments administered to a passive recipient. In addition to working together, teacher and pupil also work on themselves alone. In fact, the process of giving an Alexander lesson is that of the teacher working on themselves and transmitting their own good use and strong direction (intention, Will) through non-interfering hands to the pupil. Both disciplines ask that the pupil or client be responsible for his or her own well-being and unique flowering into the best possible being that they can be, free from the imprisoning constraints of accumulated distortions superimposed on the finer qualities of his or her self expression.

But here I think lies the greatest pitfall – the desire to change. In Psychosynthesis, it is essential to stress that the goal is one of uncovering the essential qualities of the pure self that is unique to that individual. Unfortunately, this is often interpreted as trying to be a different self. In Alexander Technique, the emphasis is on eliminating the wrong-doing, not trying to get it right. But no matter how often this is stressed in lessons, I find that the pupil is still trying to get it right. To my mind, this is the worst affliction – wanting to change – and the danger of these disciplines is that they may create a desire to be different or better.

It is a common cry heard from many who have worked on themselves for years: – that they are seeking to become better or different, seeking peace, harmony, clarity, wisdom, radiance and love; but that – this is not happening. Why is it so difficult? How is that we can still be so destructive to our selves when, after so much work, we know what is needed and what is not needed moment by moment? Simple wrongs of excess or obsession – staying up late, eating too much of the wrong foods, not getting enough rest, not meditating when we mean to, being tired and irritable – behaving destructively despite our best intentions. What is the nature of this destructive force? Evil? Have I come full circle to disprove my starting premise? I do not think so. Instead, I believe that the destructive aspect is actually created in response to the desire to be better or different. Only human beings create this polarity. Does the rose want to be a lilac; does the cat want to be a dog; does the horse yearn to become a unicorn? I like to believe that the rose wants to be the best rose that it can be – a full flowering of colour and fragrance and beauty of its own true form. Life is not normally self-destructive. All desire to be other which brings destruction and frustration belongs to humankind. Desire of any form means frustration. In fact, I see satisfaction as simply the alleviation of frustration, not the gaining of the object of desire.

Our goal then is to drop goals beyond our reach and to live fully in the moment, fully accepting and loving our unique selves. We must let go of the wrong-doing of striving to superimpose some projection we have of who we might be. Paradoxically, coming back to who we really are opens a greater potential for who we might be; but this is not a promise. We are
simply in with a chance to receive a gift which may shine through when we get out of the way. This will not be something we have tried to achieve, but a gift that was ours from the beginning.
Relations Between Cognitive Development and Spiritual Practice (Yoga)

Huw Lloyd

Abstract: In this essay I relate aspects of cognitive development to spiritual practices such as yoga and highlight the role of active orientation. I describe some personal experiences stemming from certain developments bridging cognition and yoga, whilst also relating these to societal biases that fail to address the potential for developments of this form.

Introduction and Personal Experience

In April 2017 whilst exploring some literature on the periphery of developmental psychology I found myself experiencing some unusual phenomena foreign to conventional psychological accounts. In my subsequent searches through various literature, certain features of these experiences only corresponded to accounts presented in yogic literature. These remarkable, yet personal, experiences were of such uniqueness and distinction that I felt compelled to enquire into this newly emerging personal sphere. The new thread led me to widen the conception of active orientation that I had previously discovered and recognize its coherence with conceptions central to yogic science and apparently all mystical disciplines. At the same time, these newly emerging experiences appeared to be congruent with some of the more speculative frameworks of cognitive development indicating a continuum between conventional cognitive development and that of higher states of awareness.

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2 This literature conveyed similarities to the processes of morphogenesis in skill formation which I had been studying.

3 Cognition, in the sense that I refer to it, may be described as “the guiding aspect of activity”. It typically pertains to how an activity is to be undertaken, as the process of formulating (and revising) a plan of action that necessitates conscious attention. This simple description recognizes cognition's integral role in activity, with an emphasis upon the directing of attention through the use of signs (of varied kinds). Consequently, cognitive development pertains to the reorganisation of the structures used in cognition, notably the nature of the logic employed. Due to the integral nature of cognition with other mental faculties, transformations in cognition implicate significant and often profound changes in one's relations to the world. Although cognition may be applied to both thought and emotion, I typically emphasise cognition as thought, whilst recognising the close coupling between thought, emotion, movement and intentionality.

4 Frameworks such as those of Graves (2002) and Jaques, Gibson, & Isaac (1978).
I should like to stress that prior to these experiences, I was largely ignorant of yogic practices and indeed I had not undertaken any overt exercises that might be recognized as formal meditation. This happenstance suggested to me that the mental skills that I had some fluency with (reflective and systemic thinking) might have some correspondence to meditation. Further research led me to a central factor linking the two sources of literature (developmental psychology and yogic practices), this was my personal discovery of active orientation and the processes implicated.

In my original conception of active orientation (Lloyd, 2016) I describe a process in which action, thought, affect, and construal come together (are coordinated) through an interaction of intention, skill, and situational context. Unbeknownst to me, this coordination is highly congruent with mystical principles of achieving coordination and control of different “bodies”, called koshas, or aspects of bodies⁵ such that, upon successful alignment of them, new vistas become apparent in the form of faculties which were previously obscured.⁶ Indeed the formulation of active orientation has some striking parallels with “Ratha Kalpana”, an analogy in the Katha Upanishad that compares functions of man with functions of a chariot (Ratha Kalpana, 2021), see also Gurdjieff’s description of a coach and horses (Ouspensky, 2001/1949).

The implications of both these findings and the experiences were, for me, profound and initiated a protracted process of reorganizing my understanding of the world. Prior to these experiences I had arrived at a fairly resigned recognition that the higher reaches of cognitive development were largely rejected by society at large including within the sphere of academia. The unusual experiences facilitated a significant transition in my world view.

The unusual experiences may be conveniently grouped into three categories. All of these experiences are of a personal character. Furthermore, these experiences may be described as the initially novel experiences, they are not comprehensive. I am also quite confident that from the perspective of an accomplished yogi, these descriptions are quite banal.

i. The sensation or awareness of energy (prana) within the body.
ii. Awareness of synchronicities.
iii. Unusual dreams of an archetypal or spiritual character.

The first category pertains to an awareness of energy in the body that may manifest as a form of sensation and that is often located in the regions attributed to certain chakras. Usually it is of a sense of energy gently residing or moving in a given location that may be seemingly superimposed upon conventional sensation. An exception to this was an experience that was in agreement with accounts of “kundalini energy” which entailed a dramatic ascent of energy within the body.

The second category agrees with Jung’s (1955) characterization. A simple example would be the timely coincidence of three personal events: my discovering new information to an old problem, insight into a method for resolving the problem, and someone unwittingly providing me with an apparatus that I will only be aware of needing when attempting the method that the

⁵ Sadhguru (2016) asserts that thought and emotion are considered to both belong to the mental body.
⁶ Obscured through the friction and dis-coordination of the bodies.
problem pertains to. In such a synchronous situation, these events might all transpire within a short time frame (within hours, or the same day).

Of the third category, an example might be a meeting in a dream with an archetypal figure such as a lady resembling Athena. Of the spiritual variant, I might dream of a happenstance meeting with someone I know of, but not necessarily know personally. Such an occasion occurred whilst I had a chest infection. In the dream I happened to meet someone who was familiar to me from childhood experiences and wished to speak to me. The following day, I sought information about this person and discovered that they had died recently from a lung disease.

On the basis of my experiences and their close correspondence with yogic formulations along with a recognition of the systemic cohesion of the formulations, I found myself to at least be responsive to the broader yogic ideas. These ideas have a very good alignment with my experiences. However, when I have previously sought some contact with Western cultured people who might be aware of such terms like "kundalini" the direction has led to communities dealing with crises. That is, "kundalini" in the West often seems to be associated with crisis in the sense of extreme difficulty. This, however, has not been my experience at all. My experience and thinking has remained lucid, whilst the awareness of synchronicities has remained within a dual perspective in which the synchronous meaning is framed as an "as if". This, I understand, is a quality that persons referred to as psychotic do not enjoy. This experience might also be considered as one data point contributing to the project sketched out by Gopi Krishna for a scientific study of kundalini (Krishna, 1970, ch. 19).

There are, of course, many other details that I could describe and that are of a personal nature. Clearly, these presented experiences are open to criticism and may be reduced to labels of "subjective imagination." It is not, however, the purpose of this essay to prove the existence of these phenomena. One need not rely upon descriptions of these experiences to appreciate the coherence between studies of psychological development and those of 'mystical' development. Similarly, looking to the kinds of transformations that take place in children, one might not be so surprised to discover the possibility for further, yet similarly structured, transformations in adults.

Rather, my intention is to be candid about the various sources of my understandings and insights into the importance for fostering developmentally fertile environments, to indicate the need for greater cultural openness and awareness of such phenomena and greater opportunities within our society for fostering cognitive development. In the contexts of both cognitive development and yogic practises there seems to be agreement that such transformations do not arise of themselves, rather they arise through sustained conscious effort on the part of the agent.

Prior to these experiences I was immersed, intellectually, in the problem of cognitive development within educational environments. It now seems to me that this pursuit may be

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7 The principal characteristic of developmental phenomena, as compared with learning and growth, is that of systemic reorganization.
8 References to a need for consciously directed transformations can be found in Vygotsky (1998) and Davydov (2008). Refinement of consciousness and awareness is also a cornerstone of yogic practice.
appreciated as an expression, within a wider context, of personal and human development. That is, that the focus upon genuine cognitive development within contexts of education is an ethical issue, rather than considering education as merely serving to satisfy our cultural conditions for qualification. This is not, of course, to assert that everyone should be encouraged to pursue a program of cognitive transformation, but rather that, for those who find this practice amenable, it is necessary to acknowledge that it is unethical to harness people to an educational system wholly unsuited to their expressed directions and manners of interest.9

Other systemic relations between cognition and mystical practices

Having cautiously explored the phenomena and studied more widely, I can also account for further systemic relations between yoga (or mystic practices more generally) and cognition, which I describe briefly under four categories.

1) Self-observation and Reflexivity

Detached self-observation is a basic practice in meditation used to establish an “inner witness”. In cognitive activity a similar practice is that of reflexivity – of practising reflection upon what one is doing in the act of doing it. Reflexive activity has the additional complexity of balancing activity and reflection simultaneously. Another basic activity, encouraged in Gurdjieff-based practices, is that of practising self-observation to become conscious of the mechanical nature of much behaviour. Indeed, reflexive activity is in principle non-mechanical due to the alert and responsive nature of reflexivity (which entails both reflection and action).

2) Self-remembering and Orienting to Broader Scales of Awareness

Unlike self-observation, “self-remembering” in mystical practices may pertain to recalling to mind the presence of one's greater self (Atman) or the “unchanging consciousness” implicated in “being aware of being aware.” Punctuation in activity, marked by a change in orientation (cessation of outward focus) provides the opportunity for a recurrence of self-remembering or quiescence of mental work. In contexts emphasizing cognitive development, we may work mentally under the appreciation that there are respectively broader and more powerful ways to think about problem contexts. These circumstances can lead to a circumstance in which one “makes room” for the potential of greater intelligence (insights and syntheses of thought) in one's activity. Although in these two contexts (meditation and problem-solving activity) the direction of attention may appear to be opposite it may not be as polar as it may seem, for genuine insights into problems can arise from a mental state of abeyance from mental work once the problem itself has become familiar.

9 Conventional schooling does not support such transformations. It is oriented towards acquiring formal schemas, rather than learning to construe, interpret, and understand. In order to transform one's mode of cognition one must work beyond one's familiar capabilities, engaging in activities for which one does not have pre-established methods.
3) Concentration and “Will Power”

Discipline, hard work and persistence regularly feature in accounts of mystical practice, and the same can be said for intellectual work. Both practices entail self-transformation. Without efforts to “work upon oneself”, significant transformations are not expected. In this regard, the concentration of intellectual work exhibits rigorous mental work akin to the quiescence achieved in meditation, for in disciplined intellectual work the contents of thought are far from arbitrary – only particular and appropriate kinds of thought are admitted to the process. Hence there is a commonality of discipline in the controlled movement of thought with a disciplined inattention to irrelevant factors compared with either the abeyance of thought or single-pointed focus of attention in meditation.

4) Access to “Essence” or Divine Self and Cognitive Development

Mystical practices distinguish between an unreflective and mechanical manner of being that is often associated with a myopic or obsessive focus upon material, bodily desires and those practices pertaining to awareness of the greater Self. Hence in mysticism there is a distinction between the superficial habitual manifestation of being and the being latent with the greater Self. In cognitive work the emphasis of distinction can be placed between the habitual, unreflective activity and the activity that entails transformation in the way one thinks and acts. This cognitive transformational process can be likened to the process by which the mystic approaches the Self. Although in mystical practices the Self is considered to be unchanging, our means of approaching that unchanging nature seems to require much effort and personal transformation.

Complementarity Between Yoga and Cognition

A Russian mathematics teacher who spent many years teaching within a school programme designed on the basis of developmental psychology described his interest as “working with people with wings” (Matusov, 2017, p. 54). This applied to students who exercised the self-conscious direction to learn through active discovery and who endeavoured to resolve educational problem tasks. In the scientific and technical context within which this rationale was expressed, I think that it is relevant that these particular descriptive words were assiduously adopted - “to have wings”. This mode of education cannot, however, be transplanted to school practices that we typically find. It requires a curriculum designed upon an entirely different basis of education using principles of understanding rather than formal knowledge. It entails relating emotion, thinking, and action together in acts of construal rather than of simply learning a prescribed grammar of notation divorced from the intimate experience of problem-solving activity.

It is perhaps also appropriate to address, briefly, a converse shortcoming often found in the perspectives presented in mystical settings regarding the disparagement of “logical thinking” as a reputed obstacle towards higher forms of awareness.10 These disparagements generally assert that “logical thinking is all about cutting” (or abstracting). It is apparent that these assertions correspond loosely with the category of thought called formal logic. Formal logic, however, is by

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10 For example, Sadhguru (2016) disparages "logical thinking" frequently in the section titled “Mind.”
no means synonymous with logical thought. Thought may be expressed in a variety of logics, of which formal logic is one category that is perhaps the most frequently employed. The thought of "genetic logic", dialectics, or simply of considering the relationship between phenomena is, rather, a movement towards synthesis, of yielding a concrete understanding rather than an abstract categorization that is "cut."

From what I can discern, the disparagement of "logical thinking" in mystical circumstances may pertain more to the temperament and culture of the practitioners rather than anything necessarily inherent to the realization of 'higher' states of being. Indeed, a contemporary popular yogi gives allowance for the viability of this argument in the recognition of a "yoga of the intellect", Gnana yoga, and, also, an alternative approach to schooling which entails non-dogmatic exploration of a curriculum (Isha Home School, 2021). My own experiences and unwitting "path" certainly seem to have some correspondence with these appreciations which find agreement with the spiritual interests that have been shared amongst many leading practitioners of the systems scientists, who might be considered to represent the acme of Western “logical thinking” (Pickering, 2008).

In a similar context, the consideration by Wilber (2016) that both spiritual development and cognitive development may express different strands of personal development lends some theoretical rationale to the notion that one can exhibit a high level of development in spiritual aspects whilst manifesting quite localized and simplistic forms of cognitive expression. This implies that spiritual awareness is expressed in a manner appropriate to the medium of awareness, thereby paralleling studies of conventional activity and understanding in which understanding is mediated by cognition (Zinchenko, 1979; Piaget, 1980).

References


__11__Gnana yoga is described as "attainment of a state where one’s intelligence is employed to reach one’s ultimate nature"(Sadhguru, 2016).
Wilber, K. (2016). *Integral meditation: Mindfulness as a way to grow up, wake up, and show up in your life*. Shambala Publications.
Transmodernity:
Enrique Dussel at Research Across Boundaries

Editor’s Note

In 2010, a rare event occurred, a gathering of researchers from several diverse domains brought together by their passion for integrative, transdisciplinary approaches to research.

The international symposium “Research across Boundaries – Advances in Theory-building” was held at the University of Luxembourg in June of 2010. It brought together, for the first time, many leading boundary spanning and meta-level researchers from more than 15 countries across all continents and as many different research areas. In what became a set of truly global dialogues, the participants presented and commented an astounding array of contemporary integrative frameworks, as well as inter- and transdisciplinary reviews and research practices across various fields of inquiry of high relevance for the future. (Molz and Edwards, 2013, p. 3)

While a large portion of the works presented have been published previously, (https://integral-review.org/backissue/vol-9-no-2-jun-2013/), a few items have sat unpublished for a variety of reasons. In particular, the present transcript was never submitted in written form. However, the video recording of this session has sat in the background of my hard drive for 10 years.

I recall that session quite vividly. The topic was transmodernity. The setup of each breakout session was to have three presenters, each presenting one of the others’ works, followed by dialogue among participants and clarifications or elaborations by the author. However, due to circumstances, Enrique Dussel was unable to participate in this manner and was only able to arrive part way into the session. The first two presenters presented each other’s works and there was commentary and general discussion of these going on when Dussel arrived. As he listened to the conversation, I remember him leaning over and whispering in my ear that these people did not know what they were talking about.

Dussel then took his turn and presented his work on transmodernity. In my view, and I believe that of many of those present in the room, he was able to enlighten all of us that indeed, we did not know what transmodernity meant. His passionate and engaging presentation, followed by some questions and commentary, stood out for me during this conference as a window into a truly transdisciplinary and transcultural view.

After repeated unsuccessful attempts to contact Dussel and get a copy of the paper he mentioned at one point, or clarification on segments of the video that were too difficult to decipher, I have decided to publish this as is. You will need to bear with several gaps in the text, but I hope that the main thrust of the presentation comes through. You can find some items, mostly in Spanish at https://enriquedussel.com/index.html.
I would like to come to our discussion. I will improve and say something from the material that we begin to share. I would like to speak of three words. The words are important in our conversation. Modernity, postmodernity, and transmodernity. I will try to clarify, not to say that this is the content of this conference. But my vision of the three words is to put more material to the discourse.

Modernity

First, modernity. On this question there is a big discussion, and you know better than I. I would like to put my distinction in two questions. When begins the modernity? That is the problem of the old vision. For example you said (pointing to somebody to his left) that modernity is the “Ausgang,” is the liberation of the stupidity that means the coup de tat, the immaturity. That is the definition of that. That means that you think that the modernity begins at the end of 18th century, for example. And Wallerstein thought that the modernity begins with enlightenment at the end of the 18th century. But we discussed this with Wallerstein and we convinced him that it didn’t begin in the 18th century. It began before the modernity. The question of origin is a question of content.

For me, and I can say among a group of thinkers in the United States and Latin America, we agree that modernity begins when Europe woke up of the war that the Islamic world took to Europe. Seventh century. That means the seventh century and the fifteenth century in Europe was various small geographic organisms, very small. Europe was from Vienna until Granada …. One million kilometer square. Sixty million persons. But the big world, and the universal world was the Islamic world. In…, Egypt, Middle orient, Afghanistan; India and Indochina, until we meet now in the Pacific. That means that Europe was a provincial, secondary, never center of history and the only universal world was the Islamic one until 1492. That is very important when talking about modernity, because the modernity comes from their world.

Ibn Rushd, the big great philosopher from Cordoba was the creator of the 17th century philosophical renewal. And modernity comes from the south. That is a clear hypothesis that we can use. For us, modernity is when Europe broke out of this world, of the Islamic world.

The modernity began when Europe went out to Africa, through Portugal, to India, Japan with the Portuguese empire and to America with the Spanish expansion. That is the beginning of modernity. That means 1492. In the 15th century begins the modernity. That is a discussion. For me, it is clear. That is against Habermas, against Toynbee. That is a discussion.

If modernity begins in the expansion of Europe, we have four phenomena simultaneously. That means, we have first modernity as a companion? but that is the beginning of the world system in the sense of Wallerstein. That is the beginning of the connection between Europe, Africa, Asia, America, the first world system in history because America was not part of any system before. What system? This is the beginning of the colonialism, because never were there colonists in the other part of the continent. The Roman Empire did not have colonies, it was an expansion of the same. Chinese empire was the expansion of the same. But to have colonies in the other part of the ocean is a novelty in modernity. That is colonialism.
Then capitalism. Capitalism begins not only in the experience of the feudal cities but is the accumulation of wealth from the periphery to the center. From America come more than 20,000 tons of silver. And that is the primitive accumulation. And all of that doesn’t give a possibility of a very Eurocentricism of value.

That means the centrality of Europe in the world system is not in 1492, not for three centuries. After industrial revolution, that means in the 18th century, Europe becomes hegemonical in this world system. But during three centuries, until the 18th century, China and India were the center of technology, astronomy, mathematics and commerce. That is to discuss. But only Europe took advance to China and India in the end of the 18th century, beginning of the 20th. That is the centrality of the world system, is in the hand of Europe only two centuries ago. That is for me modernity. The culture of Europe that is the hegemony from two hundred years. That is the idea for discussion.

**Postmodernity**

The second, what is postmodernity. Postmodernity is very recent. In 1979 Lyotard wrote this book on the postmodern condition. But before and in parallel there are many epistemological narratives like, cultural studies, post-colonial studies in the colonial English departments. Subaltern studies beginning in India, and after they became very popular in the United States and many others.

But the last moment now is the coloniality of the epistemology. It is a Latin American group in the United States that said exactly that coloniality begins not like in the Commonwealth in the 18th century but began in the 16th century. That means there, for three centuries before, a colonial world and a modernity. We are against this hypothesis of the postmodern. For us, postmodernity is the last moment of modernity. It is a Eurocentric criticism of the dominant reason of Europe. But it is from the point of view of Europe. Because Lyotard and others, all these thinkers are Europeans. For us, it is not a question. We use the word *transmodernity* in a very precise meaning. That is against postmodernity and is another moment of modernity. It is not one preview of modernity, but it is another epoch. This other, I cannot say how, these 500 years of modernity begin to finish. And this is another age of the planet, or epoch.

But I would like now to make a description. (*Draws on the flip chart*). If the modernity is like a cone of light. That means here is the light and that is the cone of light. And for example, Latin America is here as a culture (*Dussel drawing an intersection into the cone*) plus the process of the inclusion of Latin America as a colony began in 1492. That is the exploitation of richness, the importation of food, many dominational processes in relation with Latin America that began there. But the inclusion for example of Africa is after. Because in 1885 was the congress of Berlin. That means Africa was invited one century for us. That means the question of the invasion of Africa is true that the slaves of Africa were from Africa to Latin America, the Caribbean and North America. The other groups were invited in the 19th century. India was conquered by England in 1780 was the occupation of the river Ganges etc. China was never a colony but was dependent. The modernity, not only the European culture but the inclusion of exploitable periphery that was absorbed in the world system under the hegemony of Europe.
Transmodernity

But now begins the concept of transmodernity. That is completely different than any other position that I know. It is a question of exteriority. And that is the concept. Dare I say totality as a category and exteriority as a category. That is a category of the philosopher of (...?) in Latin America. Exteriority is the …. The modernity exploited a part of the richness of the peripheral countries in the coloniality. But some of the parts said that had no value and what has a value was not included, was a pure negation.

And now begins the question of transmodernity. For me, the postmodernity is a moment of modernity where Europe decides itself. That is the postmodernity. But now begins the criticism from the exteriority of Europe. There is one in Latin America, myself. There is one in Africa, Bantu. There is one, Tariq Ramadan, an Islamic thinker. There is Quan yon Ming, a Confucian philosopher in China, who has criticized all the capitalism today in Asia, because in China, Singapore, Hong Kong etc. is not the Calvinism like Weber thought. It is the neo-Confucianism, and Quan yon Ming (?) is a philosopher of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century in China, that is not European. That is a thing in another tradition.

From this exteriority of Europe begin four movements. The first movement is the positive evaluation of their own culture, denied in modernity as barbarian, as not being, as “sauvage” (wild). Now they publish the first history of philosophy in Sao Paulo. The first. Now they publish thousands of pages in a big Encyclopedia. First, the history of philosophy land in America. The first. That means there is first a recognition of their own value, not against modernity. But not modern! First, that is a problem.

Second, that means that we need to make a reconstruction of the history of our traditions. And that is coming back to the Indian traditions, to the Bantu tradition, to the Brahmanic tradition, Taoist, Buddhist etc. etc. traditions. In each of these cultures, Islam begins to discover a big important tradition. Baghdad was the center of science for 500 years. In 756, Baghdad was founded. Baghdad was the MIT of the time. Numbers, we call them Arabic numbers. The old mathematic of the 9\textsuperscript{th}, 10\textsuperscript{th}, 11\textsuperscript{th} 12\textsuperscript{th} century was Arabic. Europe was in the Middle Age. They knew nothing. Baghdad was the center. Baghdad was connected to China, with India through Kabul and with Constantinople. Baghdad was the center of civilization for 500 years.

But that means, it is a vision that is impossible for a European. There are many specialists in Latin American culture, Bantu culture, Islamic culture, Chinese culture, in Oxford, Cambridge, Berlin. But it is very different to be a specialist, than to be an Arab, to speak Arabic, in the flesh. In Arabic at least, for the philosophy of the Arabic civilization. That is impossible for a European because it is Arab culture. This is the second movement.

The third movement is the dialog with modernity. Yes, we don’t deny, like the fundamentalists, modernity. We don’t say modernity is nothing and we are all right. It is not true, because the modernity is not an essence, but it is a process, and the culture of the periphery too, are in process. To all this in relation to modernity, that changed all cultures. This dialog has a difference when a European does a dialog with the periphery, than when the peripheral thinker does the dialog with Europe. Because the peripheral thinker, for example one Islamic person said “I think that to do a
new interpretation of the Koran and the problem of the woman, feminism,” they can go to Europe to do a new interpretation of the Koran. But they chose what of modernity is useful for them, and not the position of Europe. That is what is better for them. And after is the most important. After this there is the development of this culture that begins to be right now.

All the cultures in this movement, Chinese is an example, went to the Hindus, Brahmanic civilization, and to Africa, and to the Arabs and to Latin America begin from their own exteriority situation in dialogue with the modernity. This project for the future. For me is full of content. But it is not … a universality, an abstraction. That was in position of the modern of Europe to all countries. Is one analogical project of pluriversality. The pluriversality is the universality. The pluriversality is one thing and not the other, they are very different.

The analogy is where they have come to be together in some aspects and this seems enough. That means there are some parts where we are all together. A. B. C. D. Different cultures. A can coincide with B, with C, with D. And this significant is not identical. It is a similarity where each distinction to a different meaning to this similarity that is not a unique view abstract to the understanding, it is a question of logic. This pluriversality, not universality, it is pluriverse. It is transmodern. That means beyond modernity. Trans is not postmodern in the sense of the last moment of modernity. I think that will define it very precise. And I do not know another person that does a clear definition.

Discussion

**Discussant 1:** And this is another definition of the same thing … (pointing to posters on the floor).

**Enrique Dussel:** Yes, but it is very “leer.” The truth is leer (empty). But it is not empty. This is the universality. That is very important.

**Discussant 1:** …. It is different.

**Enrique Dussel:** But it is not the identity. But it is the similarity. And then we can make …. many centuries. I think that is what we meet now. China, India, Africa, Europe, Latin America. We make constructions parallel to cultures. That many similarities make a dialogue between us. Not only north south. But south south. That means the dialogue between Latin America and Africa. Between China and Europe. But south south. And that goes to a new project. And that is for me the transmodernity in the analogical pluriversality of the new age. And I agree that this age through the ecological question and the very negative …. intentional effect of capitalism … But we may ask a definition. What is capitalism? … in century … I do not know how much time …. because of the ecological problem….

**Discussant 2:** Could you please say something about the difference between 1 and 2?

**Enrique Dussel:** … For one Islamic person or for one Bantu now is South Africa…. In football we see Africa as folklore-Africa. But it was difficult for this third world, of this south civilization of a culture is to have a positive evaluation on the out existence of … I have values, not only
Europe. For example, we have this very strong sense of community. The modernity loses the sense of community is the father, the mother, and the daughter…. This is their reality. It is the discovery of the own values. First.

Second. It is necessary now to…. the memory of these countries. That they lose their memory because …the antiquity…. After middle age that was the only civilization that has a middle age is Europe and that is exactly the moment where Europe was in this situation. The Arab world was …. and not feudal. And there is not any feudal society out of Europe. And we use a universal category of history. Antiquity, middle age, modernity, there is a …. has nothing to do with science. That means, the memory of the own culture, the second.

The third. We need instruments. And the modernity is not only an invention of Europe. The modernity took information of all cultures. And this information is the beginning of almost all inventions in Europe. For example, the industrial revolution. All instruments to the machine from China. And we know the industrial revolution begun before… And all machines are from China. … in the 6th century the Chinese discovered the printer machine. The paper in the 8th century. The 9th century printed paper… And when the Venetian messenger in China, Marco Polo, … could not explain the paper and the people didn’t believe. We need to pay the ecological, philosophical and historical advance of the modernity because it is not only the construction of Europe, but it is the construction of the center of the …

…so much depth to other cultures, when they took the culture and they say it is our revenge …, the renaissance. The renaissance from Constantinople and from China. Now there is a … on the China astronomy and the China mathematics in the beginning of the renaissance. That is the dialogue, the third.

In the third begins the … independent movement. And how is the question of China? China is a …, the colonial. It is totally … And in 1860 China produces more iron … How is that possible? …. in … years China must produce more iron. China must develop more and begun a crisis and Europe was underdeveloped and begins the development in this cross…. Europe took the advance and was a … crisis in India and China. And now they come back to the history of the own development. And it is not a miracle. It is a normal process of development. For example now, it is technology and capitalism. But sure there is a … where they begin to rethink their tradition. I will go to China the next month. And we … on Marx. But we have a very different interpretation of Marx than the Soviet Union. And they are very interested in the definition question is Marx in the …. Many questions. The Chinese people, they begin their development. And in India the same. Now … there is big development etc. etc.

**Discussant 3:** I noticed you were talking from notes.

**Enrique Dussel:** Yes, the paper is done.

**Discussant 3:** It is done. So we will see it.

**Enrique Dussel:** I don’t know. Transmodernity and interculturality is my paper.
Jonathan: It is not on the website yet. We will put it out on the website for the conference. That was a … tour and expanded our horizon and enlarged our scope of dialogue, and we acknowledge that and take a deep breath before we engage in further discussions and questions and so on.

Enrique Dussel: Now it is the sense that you have a broader horizon of themes. And not only Eurocentric.

Discussant 4: What is exciting about it …

Discussant 1: You see, I feel. I agree completely with your …. Because what I feel is that we are all lost. Modernity cannot find a solution for the sustainable future. So, Europe goes to nowhere. The United States are no states for the moment. The states are still very modern and they

Enrique Dussel: … That means, which are the necessary negative effects of the system? The necessary negative effects. Unintentional. Because the modernity … and has not any measure to exploit/explore(?) the reality, the nature. But now we see that this nature is not infinitive. It is very finished. And the logic of modernity cannot stop the movement. That is the question. And HOW we can stop, that is the sense of capitalism. The rationality of capitalism is the growth of … of profit. And if I invest money and I have more … of profit, that is rational and efficient. If I don’t have this … of profit, that is inefficient. We need other criteria. And as you say (points to discussant 1) …the criteria is the life criteria. And the true rational is the suspendability … the life. But that was not any criteria in the modernity because the life was evident and was not a problem. But now it has become a problem. The …. of the planet is a negative effect of the system. We can’t stop this machine … to show the rationality of these economies. They have not the life after …. And this case is irrational because the true rationality is the suspendability of life in the long term. In the next 1000 years. Not the next president election. 1000! That is rationality. But the criteria are very close.

Discussant 1: But you see in your design. In every culture we have something in common. But it is not a universality anymore. It is a kind of pluriversality. Ok, I like that idea. But at the same moment, Europeans are here (points to poster on the floor). They are only one seat. One seat. Americans are here. Islamic countries are there. And no one knows the solution. That is the situation today. Therefor I say that this is empty. We do not know. We have no trends.

Enrique Dussel: This question is symmetrical. But it is not symmetrical. The United States are the military power today…. It is not a symmetrical moment. It is a center moment. And that is identity. That means a beautiful …. Today the domination is in the hand of the atom bombs of the US. And they are now for the humanity a danger because they have no other criteria than …. profit in the US.

Jonathan: Now we are going to bring more voices in.

Discussant 4: Ok, just about the intensity of the whole discussion…. When you talk about the question of life and sustainability, is there something that also has been an intentional impact. When you talked about China producing more iron than Europe and the US together, they were obviously sustainable. So, when you talk about the history here, first of all I would like your interpretation
here. What we finally have now is …. What you just presented has of course been very critical discussion of your…. But still we have to acknowledge that some come from other cultures …. 

**Enrique Dussel:** Yes, but the question of life is very ambiguous. And because of that the human and the life is a more objective criteria. An affirmation of life. And the love as a moment was affirmation, because I can love …. Or I can love the capital. This case is ambiguous. But the affirmation of life as a … is a very rational concept I think. Now the Chinese have the problem. Because they developed a very modern rationality and now they have to decide for the future China not to be responsible for the destruction of life through the ecological question, yes. We need now some global principles and …. the human and the life it brings.

**Discussant 4:** Do you think in this moment of reflection …. interior conditions and traditions, they were not critical enough to realize that the world of our next … is …. 

**Enrique Dussel:** … all human beings. All is global. And there are some global principles, but the life and the consensus and the …. This I think, is ethical consideration. But that there are some principles for all human beings and this is possible in the similarity of the different cultures.

**Discussant 2:** … The Universities for Humanity, which perhaps we should not call …. exactly wanted to give expression to what Enrique is talking about. So, it is actually alike what is happening and when I read your paper as well, it would inform us even more deeply. So, the first thing is that it is alike what is happening…and thank you for …. 

Second. There is another similarity between your four moments and our …. model. And after reading your paper, I immediately see a deep resonance between the four moments and that process of grounding, emergence, having an effect. So, that is profound ….. 

And the third thing was the invitation to what we expressed before, as for example I was talking to Charles about the amazing…. That you are doing here. You never really make that … division to life. I mean it is … it is rich, it is very very particular. The model in a very … unique kind of way and really it hurts me, coming from Africa, with something from a feminine soul as well, feel…. I am looking at Vietnam, I am looking at … other woman. And you have given us a powerful performance. Thank you.

**Discussant 5:** … he does a beautiful job in describing the … I really like that … division. But … a new form of economy because of …. markets. And this other book, the balance side, … quick story. I read this book and I teach these courses … we analyzed this book and he has pages and pages of other things you can do to push back against this and …. She printed out postcards, and on each postcard, it said, right now, my only choice is yours because you are not in the hospital or whatever. Literally, … an alternative. I am switching to another company and whenever she is applying for a new job she is going …. Mailbox …. She is a miracle. She has been doing that since I taught that course in 2001. A postcard every day. So this book is full of things that we can do …. And I find the connections to the future. That is one of the best … 

**Discussant 6:** I also want to reflect about my own process. I reflected 2 days ago when I …. in this group from Thursday already and I am happy to have chosen this group. And when I think back, I think I stepped into this group with an attitude of searching. I am searching for answers and
experiences and I wanted to learn from you what is the future. What is the future we have, and what about the vision we develop. And I learned a lot in terms of knowledge, in terms of experiences, your experiences. But there still is this empty spot. Sometimes, I think that contains everything. There are moments in life …. in touch with the empty spot. And I feel that for me that is the most important thing that I have learned, this bad consciousness, a state of consciousness. More than everything else. But this contains that at the same time. So we need knowledge and experiences…. states of consciousness. So that is my sharing. What I have learned today. And my question to you. I enjoy being at your presentation and this discussion and especially the four steps, the four points in …. But what I need, perhaps you have said something and I didn’t gather it, what I miss is when you talk about evaluating the own culture, existence of values …. and the histmats(?) becoming dependent. What I miss here is the connection, forms of honoring the other, the culture or the origin or your own roots. But the other.

**Enrique Dussel:** … But for me it is evident that the …. cultures discover in the …. and in this case it is the modernity …. and in this case discover the otherness of the own in relation with the modernity. But in the dialogue between the different cultures. Who? It is a person that is related to the own culture, that means, that is attentive to otherness in the own culture that is to deny. That is …. You must be responsible for the other in your own culture to discover the value. It is a very important question you put. The sense of consciousness, all this growth through. …

**Discussant 3:** The question that emerged for me …. that we can see visibly the scale and scope of the global credit crisis. For me, that is just a symptom. And it is about the … nature of present-day capitalism. This story you tell implies that we will find a way to put a collar on it, to limit and to find a way. How do you see that happen?

**Enrique Dussel:** I say that we slowly come to this point because the most important countries, governments begin to see the financial capital as a danger for the state. Because the big business today is exploiting the state. And the state exploited after the population to take the money to pay the depth. In this moment we have a very … never happened until today…. And the bank becomes this enemy of the national state. That is new because they were together. But now the interest of capitalism and the interest of the state, or better, of the population. Not only in the colonial countries but now in the central countries. And that is new. It was never like this. That is very important for the new theory in many aspects of economy. This is not sufficient. And the … logical theory of all time is…but we see now the failure…. the capital in favor with the people. The people of Germany, England, Kenya or Argentina. That is now to hope.

**Discussant 3:** So your hope is that we will …. that deeply enough and fast enough to make a difference.

**Enrique Dussel:** It is slowly through the suffering because the people must suffer to begin to understand. When it is very happy, nothing. But now it is the problem of many people and in the suffering they say that is …. What has happened? Where is the theory? ... there is mysteries. They will not know what happened. Now with the new theory on all these questions.
Reference

Mariana Bozesan undertakes an immense challenge in her book Integral Investing: from Profit to Prosperity. How do we, as investors, support a movement towards a more prosperous, liveable, meaningful and beautiful world?

The first part of the book, the Context of Investing, addresses some of the most dire and confrontational questions anyone could think to pose: are we at the precipice of civilisational collapse?; what is the role of democracy going forward?; how has capitalism served us all things considered? Although provocative, the discussion of these topics is all but callous. While we find ourselves in a dire situation requiring urgent action, Mariana emphasises we must tread carefully:

If we are not to self-destruct as a species, taking down the planet as we go, we must face the fact that the time has come for a radical transformation in our attitudes to life. But we must act carefully, responding rather than reacting so that we do not simply swap one harmful ideology for another. (p. 9)

The Context of Investing is rigorously composed and littered with references to reports from reputable institutions and agencies. Yet, it addresses topics beyond those generally covered in reports of global developments. The reader is invited to ponder what is the "life" or "consciousness" that we are trying to preserve in our efforts to create a sustainable world. Referencing Max Tegmark, Mariana introduces the different hypothetical evolutionary stages of life and consciousness that would become available to future civilisations. The evolution culminates in a stage where consciousness transcends its biological roots and evolves into "exquisitely sublime forms of intelligence," as yet unknown to humankind. While such views may appeal differently to different readers, the perspective speaks to the long-term horizon and philosophical openness of Mariana's inquiry into our current predicament.

As solutions to our predicament, Mariana features "exponential technologies," not least artificial intelligence, prominently. Her argument is clear: The word is changing at an exponential rate in many regards and if we are to participate effectively in its evolution we, too, must learn to think exponentially. The urgency of our social and planetary emergencies is such that technologies with the potential to improve at an exponential pace are our best shot at timely intervention.

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While the content of the first chapter could have sufficed for a book in and of itself, Mariana, as a uniquely pragmatic idealist, provides clear guidance for putting her investment approach into concrete action in the chapters thereafter. The second chapter of the book is titled *Hidden Dimensions and the Search for Meaning*. The chapter does an excellent job of laying out Ken Wilber's Integral theory as it relates to investing. Integral theory can be thought of as a world philosophy with profound implications for how to think about the development of human beings and society at large. Mariana's synthesis of the theory and the connections she makes to investing are useful for those well-versed as well as those unfamiliar with Wilber's work alike.

The third and final chapter of the book is titled *Integral Investing in the Disruption Era* and as a guide to integral investing it is eminently practical. At the start of the chapter Mariana reiterates her Moonshot objective "the Investment Turnaround." As part of the investment turnaround is implementing an investing paradigm rooted in the essence of all existence, the exterior reality, the material world, as well as interior realities such as culture, values, ethics, and morals. It is a reality in which financial returns are inseparable from environmental, social, cultural, and ethical impact, including individual joy and happiness. (p. 166)

And while the ambition is lofty, Mariana generously shares a comprehensive and succinct summary of all the investment stages involved in the integral investing approach – from deal sourcing, due diligence and onwards to a successful exit. Not least helpful is the section on smart de-risking which lays out a holistic framework called the Theta Model on analysing and mitigating risk factors related to making investments. In addition to traditional due diligence criteria, the Theta model includes sustainability and impact criteria as well criteria from Wilber's integral theory related to the behaviour, culture and consciousness of the people involved. The last part is of crucial importance, perhaps particularly, because it is often given little attention. In Mariana's integral investing it is thoroughly integrated in the investment approach.

Reading Mariana's book is a warm bath of inspiration. However, upon finishing the book we were left with a few considerations warranting further attention.

Firstly, while the book discusses rising inequality as a pressing issue, we did not see explicit measures in the integral investing approach for addressing inequality. To be clear, companies with an integral approach are bound to create vastly greater degrees of shared prosperity through their products, services and meaningful jobs. Yet, the concern remains that wealth will continue to accumulate to owners of financial capital and the occasional exceptional entrepreneur. While this can be understood as a fair exchange of risk and energy, this, too, is an exponential phenomena. A world of integral investors and integral companies would be emphatically more desirable, and yet it still might be a highly unequal world, barring explicit measures addressing inequality. The question remains whether addressing this should be the domain of business, e.g., through shared employee ownership or the domain of government e.g., by means of progressive taxation and the alike. For all the book's merits, we think it does not address the question of inequality sufficiently.

Secondly, Mariana positions Integral Investing in the upper left quadrant of ‘high financial returns’ combined with ‘high Impact’, emphasising shared prosperity. While we have no doubt that there are many opportunities where phenomenal win-win solutions can be created, we do
wonder whether this focus limits, or even impedes, the unfolding of the paradigm shift that integral investors seek to initiate. We believe all industries, whether they can foreseeably be disrupted by exponential technologies or not, need to alter course and become integral in pursuing multiple bottom lines based on a higher state of consciousness. If we, as integral investors, limit the scope of opportunities to those where returns are abnormally high, we question whether we can truly push the needle in the way that we desire. For instance, at Breathe, we have co-founded a real estate investment and development company which we aspire to build into an iconic pan-European Teal organisation. This organisation is using the latest technology and innovating on various other fronts. In this way, it is maximally utilising win-win opportunities. Yet, our aspiration is not to have the highest returns in the industry because it is not congruent with the purpose of the company. The purpose of the company is to change real estate to serve the whole by building people and planet positive homes. A part of that mission is to rebalance the interests in real estate development between investors, people and planet. After all win-win opportunities have been exploited, we believe that there are still trade-offs worth making where the benefits to people and planet vastly outweigh the costs of lower returns to investors.

Thirdly, Mariana's integral investing approach promotes value creation across multiple dimensions all the way to exiting the company. While that is a good start, the problem remains that a company is then reliant on the stewardship of the next investors and their good intentions. If the next investor, or the investor succeeding that one for that matter, has but unidimensional profit motives, the inherent flaw of our capitalist systems is once again revealed and the integral approach is lost. Venturing is largely done in legal entities that do not constitutionally acknowledge the interrelated nature of value creation of different types. Yet, at the same time, ventures are controlled by the beneficiary of value creation of one type only – financial capital. Despite the comprehensive scope of the book, we missed a discussion of this tension and a more elaborate discussion of the post-exit prognosis of companies previously owned by integral investors.

In conclusion, Integral Investing is a phenomenal book, both practically and philosophically. The topics in the book are thoroughly researched and well developed. The book has a personable character, given to it by the personal anecdotes, investing experiences and Mariana's "confessions" of various kinds. Mariana's background, having grown up in communist Romania, puts the content of the book in a fascinating and sobering perspective. In particular, we are grateful to Mariana for sharing her practical knowledge and learnings in the last chapter of the book on her investing approach. We know that we will keep Integral Investing around and frequently consult its final chapter going forward.

Reviewed by Heikki Jyväsjärvi¹

Introduction

Now, if ever, is the time for us to focus on the development of human mind, thinking, feeling and acting. The challenges we are facing now and in the future are and will be very complex in nature. We have to solve ill-defined problems and in order to do that we have to seek for new perspectives outside the box of our own comfort zones. We would need to be able to see multiple truths and create solutions that integrate different theories, worldviews and thinking paradigms. We would also need to find common grounds between different disciplines and academic research traditions – not to aim for confrontations, however easy and safe that might be.

Development of adult thinking: Interdisciplinary perspectives on cognitive development and adult learning offers us a perfect example of this kind of multidisciplinary, holistic and integrative way of thinking. It seeks to find commonalities between these different research fields - developmental psychology, adult learning and wisdom research - presenting the history and possible future of research on development of adult thinking and learning. Continuing the great pioneer work of the previous milestones such as Beyond Formal Operations (Commons et al., 1984) or Reciprocal Handbook of Adult Development (Hoare, 2011) this edition will find its’ way to the bookshelves of those readers, students and scholars interested in the development of the human mind, adult thinking and learning.

Summary of the Argument

This book aims “to seek and offer an integrative view on the development of adult thinking and learning processes” (Kallio, 2020, p. 1). Editor Kallio acknowledges the large variety of range covering these issues and the fact that there’s no way possible or even reasonable to introduce all different approaches to these themes. Thus, editor Kallio and all of the authors in this book describe some of the fundamental models and theories aiming for a bigger picture, holistic overview of the development and learning of the human mind, reaching towards wisdom. All of the chapters approach the main themes from a slightly different perspective, thus offering a reader a multiperspective synthesis of these complex phenomena.

Integrative thinking, as defined in this book, is thinking “where an individual integrates ideas and even opposing perspectives, is able to form a synthesis based on these different perspectives”

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(Kallio, 2020, p. 157). Editor Eeva K. Kallio and the authors are aiming for making such integration between different disciplines and theories and they succeed in this great endeavor beautifully. The reader gets a very thorough presentation of the history and present of these research strands covering the development of thinking and learning. I think it resonates also perfectly among the readers familiar with the writings of Ken Wilber – integrative thinking as a concept seems to come very close to integral thinking (cf. Wilber, 1995). One of the main goals in this book is also to show the commonalities and mutuality in development of adult thinking, different learning theories and wisdom research.

Representing developmental psychology, social psychology, education and philosophy the authors of this book have succeeded in creating a dialogue and speaking in mutual language to build the bridges between all these different disciplinaries and perspectives. They all seem to have a same goal; trying to find an understanding between the concepts, theories and models and thus build a bigger narrative, a meta-view to the development of the human mind. An interesting feature of this book is that all the authors are Finnish. Finland appears to have lot to offer to the research field of adult developmental psychology, adult learning and wisdom research.

About the Editor

Eeva. K. Kallio, PhD, is Adjunct Professor at the University of Jyväskylä and University of Tampere, Finland. She is also a senior researcher in the Finnish Institute for Educational Research (FIER). Kallio is the leader of Wisdom and Learning research team and founding member and Honorary President of the European Society for Research in Adult Development (ESRAD). Her research interests are mainly theoretical, and they focus especially on development of adult thinking and wisdom.

Summary of Contents

The Development of Adult Thinking is divided in three sections. In the first section the major developmental stage models on cognitive and moral thinking are introduced (Chapters 2-6). The second section (Chapters 7-10) deals with adult learning and knowledge construction presenting the major trends of this research area. The last thematic section offers some new perspectives and discusses the methods and insights for future research.

Adult Thinking

In chapter 2 editor Eeva K. Kallio presents the major theories and models in adult developmental psychology. She also links these theories with modern wisdom research. This chapter gives the reader a great overview of the theoretical themes presented in this book.

The starting point of modern research on adult developmental thinking is Piaget’s theory on cognitive development in childhood and adolescence. Piaget’s stage model is represented here with respect but also showing the limitations of it. The main focus in Piaget’s theory is the development of causal thinking, in other words logical reasoning or hypo-deductive thinking. According to Kallio one of the limitations of this theory is that it isn’t applicable to different domains other than scientific reasoning. To interpret all human thinking through the lenses of
Piaget’s stage model is seen as one form of reductionism (all thinking is logical reasoning with its true/false-statement). William Perry’s research on epistemic assumptions about knowledge was a very important step forward and it paved the way for so called Neo-Piagetian theories. According to Kallio: “Perry was the first one to study the development of adult cognition from different perspectives instead of logical reasoning only.” (Kallio, 2020, p. 17).

Kallio has already re-labelled adult thinking as integrative thinking (Kallio, 2011) and here she suggests that the terms postformal and relativistic-dialectical thinking could be replaced by the term contextual integrative thinking. Kallio’s arguments are well presented here when she elaborates the differences in ontological pre-understandings between Piaget’s theory of hard logic and more flexible logic of post-Piagetian scholars. For a reader entering this book this hermeneutical discussion is very important. There are also two very informative figures (fig. 2.1 and 2.2.) on pages 21–22. The figure 2.1 shows the three different modes of thinking (single-perspective, multiperspective and contextual integrative thinking). It also shows the way the previous mode is transcended but included in the next “stage” or thinking mode (cf. Wilber 1995). The figure 2.2 sums up the main research traditions presented in this chapter and ontological pre-assumptions related to different domains of thinking.

Finally, Kallio links contextual integrative thinking with wisdom research. She notes that the field of wisdom research (as well as developmental psychology) is highly heterogenous and full of diverse models and classifications. Thus, she suggests that “Wisdom as an Ideal Goal” would be a suitable umbrella term under which various domains of psychological and developmental research could integrate in a more comprehensive way.

This chapter is truly an integrating endeavor. It shows the great diversity and even fragmentation of the research field on adult development but also makes clear how all the different viewpoints or paths somehow lead to the same direction – outlining the same phenomenon.

**On Epistemologies**

In chapter 3 authors Hannele Seppälä, Sari Lindblom-Ylänne and Eeva Kallio delve deeper into development of logical reasoning and epistemic knowledge – especially aiming at integrating these two main lines of research in adult cognition.

This chapter shows connections between aforementioned approaches with an example of a study on higher education students in Finland. The results of this study indicate the connection between logical reasoning skills and development of epistemic knowledge: “The findings suggest that good reasoning abilities reinforce the notion about the individual’s own role in knowledge construction” (Kallio, 2020, p. 42).

As a conclusion the authors discuss how to enhance adults’ thinking skills especially in the context of higher education. They emphasize the importance of encouraging students to take an active role in creating the learning process and allowing the students to doubt and question, share their views and thus “develop their thinking in dialogue and co-operation with others” (Kallio, 2020, p. 43).
Anna-Maija Pirtilä-Backman, Salla Ahola, and Inari Sakki continue to present the well-known Reflective Judgment Model by Karen Kitchener (1978) and Patricia King (1977) in chapter 4. They describe the development of personal epistemologies and Kitchener’s and King’s interviewing methods, comparing them to Perry’s. According to King and Kitchener knowledge is seen as the result of critical combination and evaluation of standpoints and evidence at the highest stage of this model (Kallio, 2020; King & Kitchener 1994). Authors of this chapter introduce also some Finnish studies which have used King and Kitchener’s methods and Reflective Judgment Model (e.g. Kajanne, 2003; Pirtilä-Backman, 1993; Pirtilä-Backman & Kajanne, 2001). These studies have been made in different educational levels and educational fields and there’s been a strong connection between different theories of truth.

Moral Development

In chapter 5 Soile Juujärvi and Klaus Helkama discuss the moral developmental theories of Lawrence Kohlberg (1976) and Carol Gilligan (1982). Kohlberg’s theory emphasizes the perspective of justice and Gilligan offers the perspective of care in her critique on Kohlberg’s “male point of view”. These parallel and maybe contradictory views are very interesting, and this kind of integrative approach is more than needed. Wilber (1995) argues very similarly that there’s no use to make confrontations between Kohlberg’s and Gilligan’s theories. We need more both-and discussion to get a more holistic view on many dimensions of moral development. Here Kohlberg’s and Gilligan’s views on moral development are approached with an integrated perspective. The ethic of care is seen dealing with issues of micro-morality (close relationships) whereas justice of reason is focused on macro-morality (including also strangers beyond community). They are nevertheless often intertwined in moral conflicts of our everyday life. So, these two theories can support and contradict each other at the same time. They are also very much context dependent and the correlation between them is obvious – with variations among individuals of course. They get fused and integrated especially in postconventional moral thought in mature adulthood. As it seems to be the combining theme with all the articles in this book the authors see the development and integration of both moral perspectives - justice and care - as an essential component of wisdom.

Closing the first section of the book the authors of chapter 6 Jaana-Piia Mäkiniemi and Annukka Vainio broaden the view of morality from Kohlberg’s and Gilligan’s views presenting recent theories of moral development. The authors note that the need for widening the views of morality has emerged from the fact that justice and care components couldn’t cover all the moral issues especially in the domain of cultural psychology. Furthermore, they argue that there is a disagreement among researchers of what belongs to the moral domain.

Adult Learning

The second section of this book (chapters 7-10) addresses the perspectives on adult learning. In chapter 7 authors Mari Murtonen and Erno Lehtinen open the discussion with a very intensive overview of different theories of learning. Following the main idea of this edition, authors address learning as a complex and adaptive system with several levels.
This chapter presents also different philosophical perspectives on learning. I think that this part is very important because it addresses the epistemological and ontological issues of learning. Murtonen and Lehtinen continue discussing the theories on different levels (individual, social and cultural) of adult learning. At individual level the cognitive, motivational, metacognitive and regulation theories are presented in great detail. The authors aim to form a synthesis integrating these different theories which I find very interesting and ambitious. The authors present also a “warming trend” in educational theories when discussing the importance of different motivational, metacognitive and regulation processes of learning. Meta-cognitive and regulation skills are seen as very important factors when it comes to high-quality learning.

**Metacognition, Tacit Knowledge and Expertise**

In chapter 8 the authors Mikkilä-Erdmann and Liskala combine the theories of conceptual change and metacognition. Their article illuminates the connection between these two theoretical approaches and the benefits of creating an interaction between them. The authors refer to the research on Finnish medical students and classroom teacher students (e.g. Ahopelto, Mikkilä-Erdmann, Olkinuora, & Kääpä, 2011; Ahopelto, Mikkilä-Erdmann, Anto, & Penttinen, 2011). The findings show that even high-performing students in higher education have misconceptions in basic phenomena such as cardiovascular system or photosynthesis. According to the authors conceptual change needs metacognitive skills and this meta-conceptual change is obviously time consuming. Learning environments (i.e. curriculum, learning materials, teaching and learning strategies) should support students’ metacognitive growth and metaconceptual awareness in order to create real revisional learning and students’ awareness in their epistemological systems.

Tacit knowledge is another concept that seems very hard to define. In chapter 9 Auli Toom and Jukka Husu aim to untangle the shared core questions on tacit knowledge and present a model in which the characteristics of tacit knowledge and expertise are intertwined into four different perspectives. In this model they elaborate expertise, tacit knowledge and knowing both from individual and collective perspectives. The nature of knowledge (from process to product) is also well presented in figure 9.2. (Kallio, 2020, p. 151). In discussion Toom and Husu ask whether we are in danger of losing something essential regarding the tacit knowledge of experts such as features like affectivity, spontaneity and interactivity.

For me one of the key chapters in this book is chapter 10. Authors Päivi Tynjälä, Eeva K. Kallio and Hannu L.T. Heikkinen create a great synthesis of modern research on adult thinking and expertise, wisdom research and Aristotelian forms of knowledge. One of the main concepts in this edition, integrative thinking, is the focal point here. This chapter introduces the theories of professional expertise and elaborate the term integrative thinking in more depth. It also presents different wisdom models and draws connections between development of expertise and wisdom. And finally, the authors illuminate the aforementioned research areas and theories with the philosophical background, Aristotle’s forms of knowledge and Habermas’ Theory of Knowledge and Human Interests. Figure 10.1 (p. 169) illustrates this synthesis in an illuminating way. It is simple and very informative, and I personally enjoyed how the emotional dimension is shown here.
Opening Discussion for Future Research

Beginning the last section of this book chapter 11 presents a critical review of research methodology used when studying epistemic assumptions, concepts of knowledge and knowing. The authors Hyytinen, Postareff and Lindblom-Ylänne elaborate the methods being used from the days of William Perry to the present. Although the self-reporting methods and quantitative questionnaires have been quite popular in the eighties and nineties, they have been critiqued recently. Many researchers have found that epistemic conceptions are characteristically abstract constructs and therefore very hard to be measured with these kinds of assessments. The students’ interpretations of these concepts have been inconsistent with the researchers’ intended meanings and assumptions. Thus, the authors suggest that mixed- or multi-method approaches would be needed. In figure 11.1 they present two main strategies when using these approaches. In sequential strategy the researcher uses the follow-up phase aiming to answer the unanswered questions of the first phase. In concurrent strategy the researcher uses two or more data collection and analytical methods simultaneously. Furthermore, the authors note that authentic methods have been found to be rich sources when collecting data because they provide an opportunity to deepen the understanding of the nature of thinking.

In chapter 12 the development of adult thinking is reflected through the lens of systems thinking. This systems perspective is almost obligatory given the main idea of this edition. As the authors note: “Its foundations lie in different systems theories that take a comprehensive and multidisciplinary view on exploring phenomena” (Kallio, 2020, p. 191). The aim of this chapter is to link systems approaches on the development of adult thinking. The authors present the three systems paradigms (closed, open and dynamic systems) which are presented in table 12.1. (Kallio, 2020, p. 196).

Kallio’s (2015) critical reflections on Piaget’s paradigmatic choices are very important here as they rise from the dynamic systems paradigms. Piaget’s theory appears to be grounded in the closed systems paradigm (e.g. development of causal thinking has a final endpoint) whereas Perry’s approach represents more open or even dynamic systems paradigm (e.g. complexity, self-transformability).

The authors Ståhle, Mononen, Tynjälä and Kallio then delve deeper into the third systems paradigm and the theories of Prigogine (1976) and Maturana & Varela (1980, 1992) in particular. Although these theories were first created in physical/chemical and biological domains, they have been found to be applicable to social systems as well. Prigogine’s self-organizing system and Maturana and Varela’s self-referential system are well introduced and elaborated here. The link between the dynamic systems theories and adult development thinking is very visible in the works of Sinnott (1998), whose theory of post-formal thinking is grounded in the dynamic systems paradigm. I find this linking and comparing Sinnott’s theories with self-organizing and self-referential systems very illuminating.

Systems theories and these open and dynamic systems paradigms have a clear connection with the theories of development of thinking and learning. Future research on these domains would clearly benefit from systems approach. Now after reading this book once more I find this chapter the most useful for my own future studies.
This edited volume closes up with Tuominen and Kallio’s critical philosophical reflection on the psychological models of adult cognitive development. The authors note that the psychological and philosophical approaches to logical contradictions and epistemological relativism differ from each other. While developmental psychology studies thinking in empirical subject, the philosophical logic deals with logical validity. I think it is very important to build these bridges between philosophy and cognitive psychology since they both approach the same phenomena, thinking and knowing, but with different perspective. This kind of critical reflection reveals some problems when describing adult cognitive development and we should definitely be aware of them. Especially the central concepts in developmental psychology, epistemology and relativism, have a different meaning in developmental psychology and philosophy. The differences in psychological and philosophical epistemology are elaborated with concrete examples and the authors show how the epistemologies of the students in Perry’s research have quite different character than in traditional philosophical epistemology. “The truths” in Perry’s studies are much more subjective beliefs on the way truth appears to the subjects in the study. Philosophy tends to approach the logic of truth in a more “philosophical” way and that creates some confusion with the concept of epistemology.

The discussion on dialectical thinking is very interesting and again I find some similarities with the writings of Ken Wilber here. The notion that things have their features only in relation to something else or things appear to be one thing but at the same time they are also something else depending on the context or a perspective sounds very integral to me. The works of pioneers in dialectical approach to developmental psychology, Riegel’s (1973, 1976) and Basseches’ (1984, 2005) are introduced here and especially Riegel’s model of perspectives in four dimensions (Kallio, 2020, p. 214) comes very close to Wilber’s four quadrant model.

Once again, the authors bring forth the limitations of Piaget’s theories. The well-defined problems that were the basis of Piaget’s research are based on the “old” machine paradigm and thus may not cover the ill-defined nature of human thinking and problems we are facing especially in today’s world. We have to find more than true or false solutions to the challenges we are facing. We need problem solving that seeks for “the truths” from many different perspectives and shares also many contradictory truths. Of course, it’s easier to think in simplified dichotomies choosing one from two opposite choices. And that is why we often tend to think in dichotomies. In dialectical thinking both solutions might be true or false at the same time and the problem might get solved integrating them or maybe finding a third solution. The discussion on contrary or contradictory opposites are very important here and again show the differences between the philosophical logic and classical views of cognitive psychology. As the authors note: “…one crucial difference between youthful and mature ways of thinking could be that latter can recognize which oppositions are which and whether some conflicting notions exhaust the logical space or not, while the former tends to see all conflicts as ones in which it is necessary to choose between two given options” (Kallio, 2020, p. 218).

This chapter shows how important it is to differentiate these two approaches (PhilEp and PsyEp) to epistemology. They argue that to avoid confusion we should aim for analysis of mature ways of thinking in terms of integration. Integration differs from epistemological relativism since “it does not require that one assumes different standards of truth for different views” (Kallio, 2020, p. 224). The ability to integrate different perspectives and standpoints along with different and sometimes
very strong emotions in complex situations is the kind of mature adult way of thinking that goes beyond formal cognitive thinking and so-called unrestricted relativism. I’m sure that this chapter and the whole edition opens up a very important discussion for the future. Now if ever is the time to critically seek new ground for future studies on development of adult thinking and life-long learning in adulthood. This book offers us many important perspectives and new insight on these important themes.

Conclusion

This edition succeeds to offer a thorough insight to the research on adult development and learning. It shows how closely intertwined all these themes are and how they share many commonalities. The biggest strength of this edition is that it succeeds to build some bridges between different disciplines and research strands. It really takes a multiperspective approach to development of human thinking and learning.

As I mentioned earlier, this book stands tall before the previous landmark books on neo-Piagetian adult developmental psychology. Beyond formal operations (Commons et al., 1984) was a kick-off for this research tradition. I personally find it pretty heavy to read and I think this edition is easier to approach. I find that Hoare’s (2011) edition shares a lot of similarities with the book under review here. Development of adult thinking is very logically constructed and all the articles seem to continue where the previous one left off. This is one of its strengths compared to Hoare’s edition. Also, the conceptual analysis regarding post-formal thinking, epistemological relativism and dialectical thinking (especially in chapter 13) stands out as one of the key merits of this book compared to others. The way the integrative thinking and integration of cognition and other elements of learning and developing are articulated and synthesized here is what makes this book a landmark and definite must-have alongside the aforementioned books.

The fact that all the authors are from Finland might be considered as one limitation of this book. The long-term contribution of this book depends on how widely it opens up the global discussion on these topics. I hope that this edition will be an inspiration to scholars around the globe and maybe have an internationally updated edition one day.

Development of adult thinking is a wonderful example of integrative thinking in action. It presents different theories and viewpoints from multiple areas of research. It aims to form a synthesis where these different perspectives can fuse and integrate to create a more holistic view of development, learning and wisdom. I recommend this edition to everyone interested in development of human thinking and learning. It is an important handbook for every scholar and student studying these phenomena.

References


