**Towards an Integral Theory & Practice of Dialogue**
**FIRST DRAFT**

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## Introduction

This paper emerges out of two parallel processes that have engaged my time, thoughts and energy during the past 18 months. The first was my experience as co-author of a Handbook on Dialogue; and the second, my exposure to the literature on human development and consciousness and more specifically to Wilber's approach to integral thinking.

*Different and apparently incompatible visions of dialogue*

About 18 months ago I was hired as a co-author to work on a joint project between the Organization of American States, the United Nations Program on Development, International IDEA and the Canadian International Development Agency to develop a Handbook on Dialogue.[1] Each of these institutions has increasingly turned to the use of dialogue in helping governments and societies deal with a range of highly complex problems and challenges that characterize much of our global community today. Engaging in this collaborative project would allow each to learn from the experiences of the other institutions as well as to collectively leverage their influence as important inter-governmental institutions by producing one publication with each of their logos that would serve to legitimize and position dialogue as a core resource for more inclusive and participatory change processes.

Soon into the writing process it became clear that both within and between these institutions very different ideas existed about what dialogue is, what it involves and how it contributes to change. What some held as core beliefs about dialogue, others felt were irrelevant for the purposes of this handbook. What some wanted to put forward as central concepts, others viewed as marginal at best. For example, some insisted that personal transformation was an important outcome of dialogue while others viewed the language of personal transformation as "light and fluffy" and irrelevant for the kind of political processes this handbook addresses. Whether or not dialogue in and of itself is a worthwhile goal or does its significance depend on further action was another issue. There was disagreement about the importance or role of personal story-telling in the context of political dialogues. To what extent should dialogues focus explicitly on the relationship dynamics of those involved was yet another area of disagreement.

There was a period of about four months in which I engaged in extensive email conversations with another author trying to resolve some of these significant differences that brought the writing process to a halt. During this time, I remember experiencing tremendous frustration at our inability to recognize and validate the important aspects of each and every position on these kinds of issues that some how needed to be captured and included in this handbook if it was to successfully give a fuller more robust account of the dialogue process. The idea of Ken Wilber that no individual is smart enough to be 100 percent wrong echoed in my ears during this time. A larger framework or map was

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[1] Drawing on a number of learning workshops with practitioners from around the world and over 70 case studies representing the vast experience of each of these partner institutions with using dialogue, the Handbook "makes a case" for the importance of dialogue (i.e., explicates a conceptual framework) and seeks to promote its legitimacy and relevance for political processes. It also provides a practical "how to" guide for practitioners on the design and implementation of dialogue processes on public issues. To be published this Fall.

needed in order to accommodate and integrate all of these important, in only partial truths.

*Incorporating the developmental perspective*

At about the same time I became involved in this book project, I began immersing myself the literature on adult development and consciousness. I approached this literature with an interest in exploring questions that have emerged from my own experiences of working with dialogue processes in political contexts during the past ten years. Many of these questions or inner ambiguities reflect the same kinds of issues and tensions that emerged during the handbook process.

While the kind of dialogue processes involving the support of these inter-governmental organizations must clearly move beyond the level of personal transformations and strengthened relationships to concrete actions and decisions, isn't the quality of dialogue and its outcome limited to the extent these micro-level issues are neglected? What is the relationship between the micro and macro goals of dialogue? What importance should be given the interior subjective or intersubjective dimension in order to achieve concrete actions in the exterior world? When one participates in a dialogue as a representative of a larger group, how important or relevant is his/her own story and worldview as opposed to the broader perspective of the group being represented? What is the relationship between the individual and the collective? Is dialogue just a means to an end or can it be an end itself? Does dialogue require transformation to be effective? Does dialogue require of individuals certain cognitive capacities?

One of the key issues underlying these questions that has come into sharper focus for me has to do with the level of consideration given to the interior structures of consciousness or levels of development of individuals and groups involved in dialogue. It is obvious that my daughter would not be exposed to calculus in the second grade because her level of development is not capable of handling that complexity…it would be "over her head" to use Kegan's term (1995). It seems equally obvious that dialogue processes that bring together individuals from different cultures, backgrounds and worldviews with the task of reaching *mutual understanding* and generating solutions for complex issues also require a minimum level of development or capacity for complexity within both the individual and the collective.

However, it is my observation that much of the literature on dialogue as well as the practice of dialogue (as I have experienced it) in the political sphere give little consideration to this developmental perspective. I suspect this is the case for some of the following reasons or assumptions:

✓ Introducing the idea of levels of development that move in the direction of increasing depth and complexity begins to imply hierarchy, which has become an uncomfortable if not dirty word in many contexts.

✓ The impact of positivism and scientific materialism that considers as valid and real only that which has "simple location" in the external world. Because our interiors lack simple location (you can't see, touch, or smell emotions, values, or worldviews), they can not be studied as real, and thus have little importance.

✓ People may think whatever they wish, what matters is how they act (behaviors). So emphasis should be focused on what people do, not how they think.

✓ Dialogue is seen as a tool used by groups to achieve specific results or coordinated actions. What matters ultimately are the outcomes (external) of dialogue and its impact in society (its influence on social, political or economic systems) and so this is what must occupy our attention.

✓ The interior terrain of consciousness is too unfamiliar. Without an adequate map to navigate this territory, it is hard to know what taking a developmental perspective might involve or mean. It is much easier to focus on *what* we know or think needs to happen in the external world of behaviors, policies, systems. It is much more difficult to know how to talk about and negotiate the interior structures of consciousness (*how* one knows or thinks) that gives form the thoughts and actions we believe to be important.

*The need for an Integral Map:  Bringing coherence to divergent views*

In this paper, I draw on the work of Ken Wilber as well as other developmental perspectives as a way of beginning to explore what an integral theory of dialogue might look like that is able to hold together in one embrace the kinds of divergent visions of dialogue I experienced in the handbook process.    By "integral" I do not mean some kind of Grand Theory or final propositional truth that displaces all other theories.   I am searching for a frame or map big enough to include all perspectives in a way that respects important differences while also explicating their inter-connections and how together they form a more robust and comprehensive image of the whole.

Wilber describes the integral endeavor as follows (quoted in Brown 2005, p8-9):

> The whole point about a truly Integral approach is that it touches bases with as many important areas of research as possible before returning very quickly to the specific issues and applications of a given practice.  An Integral approach means, in a sense, the 'view from 50,000 feet.'  It is a panoramic look at the modes of inquiry (or the tools of knowledge acquisition) that human beings use, and have used, for decades and sometimes centuries.  An Integral approach is based on one basic idea:  no human mind can be 100% wrong.  Or, we might say, nobody is smart enough to be wrong all the time.  And that means, when it comes to deciding which approaches, methodologies, epistemologies or ways of knowing are 'correct,' the answer can only be, 'All of them.'  Since no mind can produce 100% error, this inescapably means that all of those approaches have at least some partial truths to offer an integral conference, and the only really interesting question is, what type of framework can we devise that finds a place for the important if partial truths of all those methodologies?  To say that none of these alternatives are 100% wrong is not to say that they are 100% right.  Integral approaches can be very rigorous in standards of evidence and efficacy, a rigor that some holistic approaches let go of too quickly in an attempt to be 'all inclusive.'

I want to reiterate that in this paper I am only beginning to think about this idea of an "integral theory of dialogue."    This marks the beginning of what is sure to be a

stimulating and difficult journey ahead.   I present a brief overview of my understanding of Wilber's Integral map and how I think it applies to dialogue.   More questions will be identified than answers given.   I will then present the Piagetian concepts of accommodation and assimilation as a way of addressing two ways of understanding or framing the task (reaches and limits) of dialogue, translation and transformation.

But first a word about dialogue.   While dialogue has many definitions and purposes,[2] I think there would be general agreement in defining dialogue as both a form of discourse and a way of engaging or relating with others.   Its purpose is to facilitate mutual understanding and generative thinking.   For the purposes of this paper, I am treating dialogue as a "holon" – something that is both a "whole" as well as a "part" of a larger whole.    The larger whole of which dialogue is a part might be a decision-making process or social change endeavor.   This implies that dialogue is *necessary but not sufficient* for achieving the desired goal.   Other parts must join with dialogue to form this whole.   Therefore the burden of achieving this goal should not rest solely on dialogue.  It is therefore conceivable that dialogue could be very successful without necessarily accomplishing the ultimate goal or whole of which it is only part.    The relationship between dialogue and other parts required to accomplish successful action is beyond the scope of this paper.   My focus here is on dialogue as a "whole"…looking specifically at the task of "reaching mutual understanding."


## Overview of the Integral Framework

In 1995, Wilber published for the first time his integral framework which has come to be called AQAL, which is shorthand for All Quadrants, All Levels, All Lines, All States and All Types.  What follows is a brief overview of each of these components and their relevance for an integral theory and approach to dialogue.

### *The four quadrants or "The Big Three"*

By developing a four-cell matrix distinguishing between the interior, exterior, individual and collective, Wilber has provided us a map for navigating the different but interrelated dimensions of all experience.   These four quadrants are often referred to as the "Big Three" (I, We, It) as a way of explicating their correspondence with the three perspectives found in all major languages around the world: 1st person "I," 2nd person "You/We[3]," and 3rd person "It."

The significance of these three perspectives (I/We/It) lies in the fact that they represent three very different and irreducible domains or worldspaces, each with their own validity claims.  Habermas (Habermas 1979) frames these three primary realities or worldspaces as "a particular inner world," "the social world," "the external world" or *subjective (I)*,

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[2] An important task of developing an integral theory of dialogue will involve identifying the different definitions that exist, but this is beyond the scope of this paper.

[3] Technically 2nd person is "you," however Wilber argues that when "I" am speaking to "you" (second person), one two possibilities emerge.  To the extent we understand each other, "you" and "I" (or the two first persons) become a "we" first person plural, or to use Buber's expression, the I-thou emerges.  However, if no understanding is achieved, "you" (the person to whom I am talking) effectively remains as an "it" like other objects I interact with .

*intersubjective (we)* and *objective (it)* realities.  For each of these Habermas identifies different validity claims.  The validity claim for objective reality is "objective truth."   To use Wilber's example in his Kosmic Consciousness presentation (Wilber 2003), if I say that it is raining outside, you can go to the window and see if it is indeed raining.  However, whether or not the rain is beautiful or how one experiences the rain is not an issue that objective truth can decide.  This is in the "I" domain (upper left) subjective experience.   The only way you can know what is in my interior is by me telling you.  This is the domain of self-expression and for Habermas, the validity claim is "truthfulness" or "sincerity."   As I articulate my subjective experience, you must decide whether or not I am being "truthful" or "sincere."   Finally, what one should do (ethics, morals) if it is raining is neither resolved by the right-hand claims of truth, nor by the upper left quadrant's claim of truthfulness.   In the lower left quadrant (We), the subjectivities of individuals come together (intersubjectivity) and seek mutual understanding and must decide together what is right, good, proper.  The validity claim is "rightness" or "appropriateness."

Curiously enough, these "Big Three" have been highlighted by a number of significant thinkers throughout history.  In a broad sense, these correspond to "Plato's the True (or propositional truth referring to an objective state of affairs, it), the Good (or cultural justice and appropriateness, we), and the Beautiful (or the individual-aesthetic dimension, I).  They are likewise Kant's three critiques: the Critique of Pure Reason (theoretical it-reason), of Practical Reason or intersubjective morality (we), and of personal Aesthetic Judgment (I)"  (Wilber 1995).
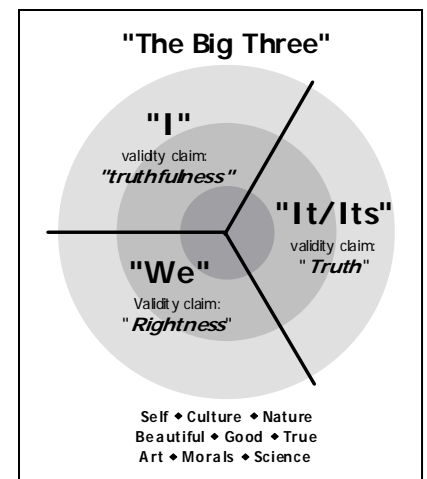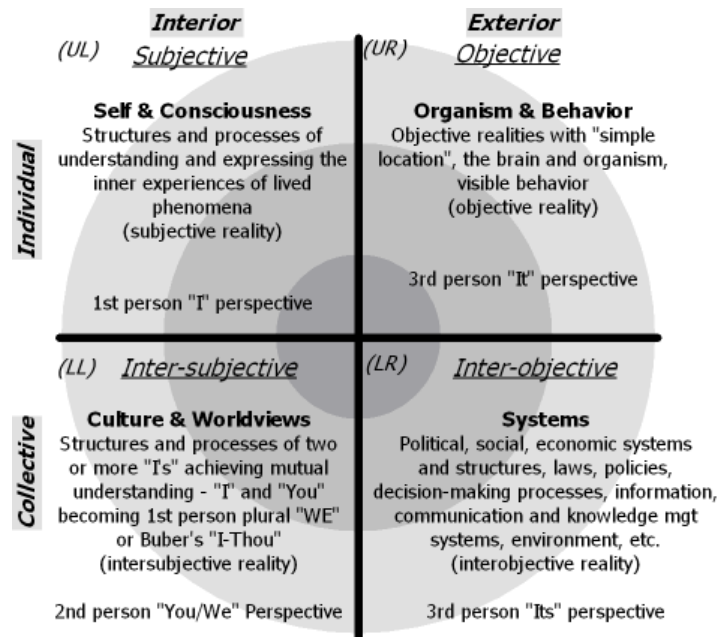


Summarizing the Big Three, Wilber notes (quoted in Brown 2005, p 11):

> These dimensions of being-in-the-world are most simply summarized as self (I), culture (we), and nature (it). Or art, morals, and science. Or the beautiful, the good, and the true. Or simply I, we, and it…And the point is that every event in the manifest world has all three of those dimensions… [A]n integrally informed pat will therefore take all of those dimensions into account, and thus arrive at a more comprehensive and effective approach—in the "I" and the "we" and the "it"—or in self and culture and nature. If you leave out science, or leave out art, or leave out morals, something is going to be missing, something will get broken. Self and culture and nature are liberated together or not at all.

The importance of this integral map is that it recognizes as valid the distinct knowledge claims of each of these quadrants while disallowing the kind of reductionism that occurs when any one of these quadrants frame as absolute their own truth claims. Scientific materialism would want to collapse the left-hand quadrants into the right alleging that the only realities that exist and can be known are those in the external material world that can be observed and empirically proven. Subjective Idealism reduces all quadrants to the upper left alleging that nature has no objective existence independent of the minds that perceive it. Postmodernism has also been guilty of this same kind of reductionism, reducing the quadrants to the lower left by claiming that all reality is socially constructed; there is no "out there" beyond the worldspace of intersubjectivity where truth claims can be made.

By now applying these quadrants or the "Big Three" to the theory and practice of dialogue, I hope to show how this map can be large enough to hold the very different visions of dialogue mentioned at the beginning of this paper, integrating them in a way that abjures the absolutism of any one of them. Every dialogue involves *individuals* (1st person perspective "I") involving both the interior world of subjective experience and the external world of body and behavior, *relationships* (2nd person perspective "we" or "I-thou") involving the intersubjective space of mutual understanding, and *issue or goal* (3rd person perspective "it/its") which is the focus or content of the dialogue (what is being discussed or talked about).[4]



An "integrally-informed" approach of dialogue will acknowledge (pay attention to) and incorporate the realities or influences emerging from each of the four quadrants. For each of the quadrants I sketch out what this means in terms of specific goals or foci (what to pay attention to), competencies (what is

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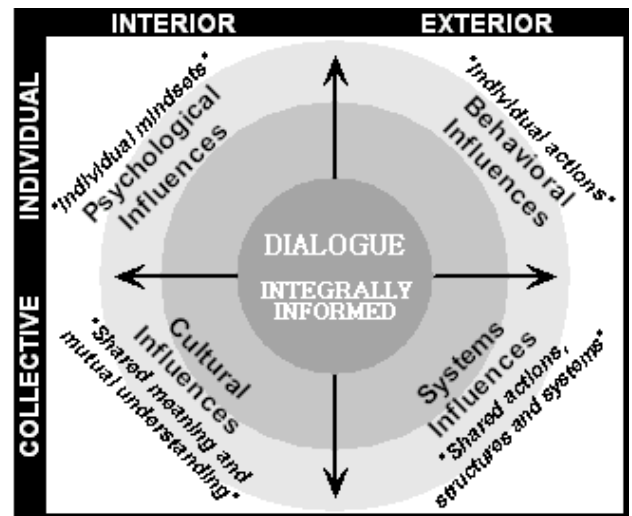
[4] The content or focus of the dialogue can be the relationship itself, for instance in a reconciliation process…but in this case, the relationship is being looked at from the 3rd person perspective…as an it to be acted upon.

required either of the participants or facilitation process), facilitation resources (tools and strategies), and examples of relevant knowledge areas or modes of inquiry[5].

### Upper Left:  Psychological influences (*"individual mindsets"*)

The upper-left (UL) quadrant focuses on the interior subjective world of the individual. Areas of interest include the developmental structures or "mindsets" within the individual that are used to make sense of lived experience, states of consciousness, different intelligences or lines of development.  (I will return to each of these concepts later in the paper).   It is important to note that even though one participates in a dialogue as a representative of a broader group, how that person makes sense of and engages with lived experience in the inner worldspace of subjectivity is conditioned by his/her own inner developmental structures.   Therefore, in a dialogue this quadrant highlights the importance of connecting with the individual's own experience rather than limiting his/her role to representing the broader group (which of course does not exclude the possibility of "speaking for others" as well).

In the following excerpt, David Bohm, Donald Factor, and Peter Garrett highlight both the difficulty and the importance of giving attention to the left hand quadrants or interior worldspaces.

> *We can be aware of our body's actions while they are actually occurring, but we generally lack this sort of skill in the realm of thought. For example, we do not notice that our attitude toward another person may be profoundly affected by the way we think and feel about someone else who might share certain aspects of his behavior or even of his appearance. Instead, we assume that our attitude toward her arises directly from her actual conduct. The problem of thought is that the kind of attention required to notice this incoherence seems seldom to be available when it is most needed. . . . Dialogue is concerned with providing a space within which such attention can be given (Bohm, Factor et al.).*

*Goals*:  To facilitate the process in which each individual brings into expression his/her own interior experience related to the topic of dialogue—to more fully understand from a 1st person (I) perspective how one experiences, processes and makes sense of a lived experience.  This involves helping the individual draw upon whatever interior resources he/she has in order to express this subjectivity with sincerity and truthfulness.   By facilitating self-expression, one hopes to promote higher levels of trust within the group (based on the perceived level of truthfulness).   Related to this, Cissna and Anderson mention genuineness and authenticity as a core characteristic of dialogue:

> Dialogue partners base their relationship on the presumption of authentic or genuine experience.  This means not that people always tell the truth, but that no sense of genuine dialogue can be based on a participant's self-consciously untruthful, hidden, deceptive, or blatantly strategic set of interpersonal calculations.  Rather, in dialogue, communicators are assumed to speak and act in

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[5] I'm going out on a limb here since I have not given sufficient thought to this…but wanted to at least include it as a way of anticipating how these ideas might continue to be pushed out.  That's why I insist on the title "Towards an integral theory/approach to dialogue."

ways that match their worlds of experience. Where such trust breaks down, dialogic potential dissolves.

*Competencies*: Self-awareness, mindfulness, *presence* (Senge, Jaworski et al. 2004) and the capacity for self-expression, emotional intelligence.

*Facilitation resources*: Use of silence[6], different methods of contemplation, nature walks, journaling to facilitate inner reflection. Use of art, music, drama, story-telling as possible forms of self-expression (offering options that are not limited to or require linear rational thinking). Use of guidelines, informal spaces or methodologies to promote safe and relaxed environments. Conceptual tools that help the individual engage the multiple identities that make up his/her sense of self (leader, mother, employee, woman, group representative, etc).[7]

*Knowledge areas / modes of inquiry*: Development & consciousness studies, contemplative traditions, phenomenology, psychotherapy, meditation, emotional intelligence, personal transformation.

## Upper Right: Behavioral influences (*"individual behaviors"*)

This quadrant focuses on the physical health and well-being of the participants as well as on their individual behaviors that influence the communication process.

*Goals*: To attend to the physical needs of the body to ensure maximum health, energy and alertness in the physical body as well as regulate and promote individual behavior in a way that fosters a climate of respect.

*Competencies*: Stress management, communication skills, awareness of body language, tone of voice, ability to remain non-anxious, awareness of social etiquette (behavior congruent with norms of the context)

*Facilitation resources*: Healthy food and beverage, fresh air, comfortable seating, adequate room temperature, diverse forms physical exercise in group, breaks to minimize discomfort and fatigue and maximize energy levels. Training in communication skills, raising awareness about the importance of body language, tone of voice as well as other signifiers that affect the communication process. Behavioral guidelines or norms.

*Knowledge areas / modes of inquiry*: Neurolinguistic studies, parts of the communication and behavioral sciences, empiricism, scientific analysis, quality control, behavioral modification.

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[6] For some, silence is very difficult. It the purpose is to dialogue, what role can silence play? If I remember correctly, more than half of Beethoven's Fifth symphony is silence. Only out of silence does the music emerge.

[7] The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory of communication offer a helpful set of tools for this purpose. See Pearce, B. (2004). Using CMM. "Voice Dialogue" (http://www.voicedialogue.com/what_is_Voice_Dialogue.htm) or "Big Mind Process" (http://delos-inc.com/Reading_Room/Articles/16/16.html) also provide interesting and useful tools for working with different voices or aspects of self.

### Lower Left:  Cultural Influences
*("shared meaning and mutual understanding")*

This quadrant focuses on the worldspace of intersubjectivity where multiple "I's" and groups of "I's"  engage with one another with the goal of achieving mutual understanding.   Recognizing that all knowledge is socially constructed, attention is focused on the worldviews, value structures, norms and dominant forms of discourse that serve as the structures for interpreting or "making-sense" of shared experience.

*Goals*:   To facilitate a process whereby individuals and groups coming from very different worldviews and value structures can find a common language that allows them to reach mutual understanding.   When this understanding occurs between you and I, a collective "we" emerges, or to use Buber's language,  an I-thou relationship is established.   Put simply, the goal is to manage the meaning-making process in order to achieve understanding.   This involves first expanding our awareness of our own respective structures of consciousness (*how* we know) that inform this meaning-making process.

*Competencies*:  Awareness, mindfulness, presence (deep listening and sensing), critical reflection (able to identify and reflect on assumptions), empathy, dialogue

*Facilitation resources*: Conceptual tools for managing the meaning-making process[8], extended retreats and informal spaces for fostering and deepening relationships, learning journeys, training (in dialogue and communication skills), use of silence, methods of collective meditation, etc.

*Knowledge areas / modes of inquiry*:  Hermeneutics, Coordinated Management of Meaning (a communications theory), social constructionism, development and consciousness studies, dialogue, multiculturalism, postmodernism, worldviews, corporate culture, collective values

### Lower Right: Systems Influences
*("shared actions, structures and systems")*

The lower right quadrant is focused on systems and structures in the external world.  On the one hand, the dialogue process itself involves multiple systems and processes including logistics (who and what is involved to insure peoples' concerns are taken care of so that they can be more relaxed and present), information and communication systems, the dialogue process itself (how all the different aspects and steps are articulated to form a coherent whole), etc.

On the other hand, the topic of dialogue or issue being discussed is often embedded in political, social, economic, legal and cultural systems.  Public policies, institutions, documents, languages are all examples of things that exist in the external or objective world that may be relevant for a given dialogue process.

*Goals*:  to act upon the systems and structures that are necessary for coordinating collective action and sustaining a mutual desired outcome.

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[8] See  Ibid.

*Competencies*:  Systems thinking, problem-solving, process knowledge, expertise in topic of dialogue, political intuition.

*Facilitation resources*:  Attention to systems mentioned (logistics, information, communication, knowledge management, etc).  Appropriate use of virtual technology (asynchronous computer mediated communication) within a dialogue design, training

*Knowledge areas / modes of inquiry*:  Systems theory, organizational development/change,  social systems analysis, techno-economic modes, communication networks, systems analysis

As I end this discussion on the four quadrants, I want to reiterate that these quadrants all emerge together simultaneously.  Even though the length, height and width refer to different dimensions of a given object, neither can exist without the other two.   These quadrants, though irreducible, are inseparable and interdependent.  The emotion of anger or anxiety in the UL quadrant will have manifestations in the UR quadrant of the body (increased blood pressure, pronounced breathing, raised tone of voice, etc).  The interior structures or "mindsets" in the UL are always formed in the intersubjective space of the LL quadrant.  Without the LL, these structures do not develop as seen in "wolf boy" cases.
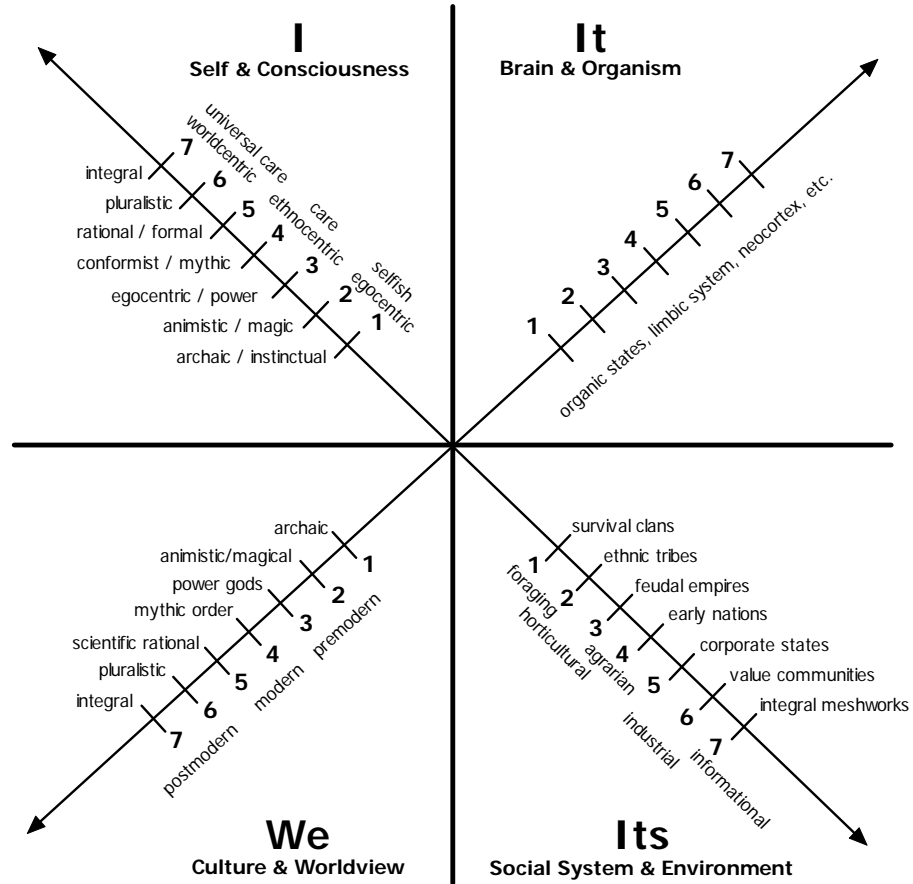
### Levels or Stages of Development (a look at the unfolding of interior structures)

Taking a developmental perspective means recognizing the process of growth and evolution that all holons experience.  An acorn develops or unfolds into an oak tree.  From an embryo emerges a mature organism.   This process of development or evolution involves an unfolding movement towards increasing levels of complexity where each new level or stage of development *transcends and includes* the former, forming hierarchies or "holarchies" of complexity.

As mentioned earlier, a "holon" is anything that is at once a whole and a part of a larger whole.   An atom is whole that together with other atoms form molecules, molecules form cells, from cells emerge organs, and organs form organisms.  The organism represents a holarchy made up of atoms, cells, molecules, etc.  The level of complexity that exists in the organism is greater than the complexity found in any of its parts simply because it includes and transcends them.  At each level of transcendence, new properties emerge creating more complexity  (the total is not the mere sum of the parts).

Consider the path of increasing social complexity in the movement from the individual to families to communities to societies to nation-states to a global community.  Each of these levels in the social holarchy transcends and includes the former.   Wilber identifies this same path of increasing complexity in the macro evolution of societies throughout history, moving from foraging to horticulture to agrarian to industrial to informational.  He discusses the new levels of complexity introduced at each of these levels that did not exist in the former (Wilber 1995; Wilber 1996).

Just as we can observe this evolutionary process in the external objective world of the right-hand quadrants, this same process can be seen in the other quadrants as illustrated in the figure below (adapted from Wilber, 2004, p27).

## I
**Self & Consciousness**

universal care
worldcentric
**7**
integral
**6**
pluralistic
**5** ethnocentric
rational / formal
**4** care
conformist / mythic
**3** selfish
egocentric / power
**2** egocentric
animistic / magic
**1**
archaic / instinctual

## It
**Brain & Organism**

**7**
**6**
**5**
**4**
**3**
**2**
**1**
organic states, limbic system, neocortex, etc.

archaic
**1**
animistic/magical
**2**
power gods
**3**
mythic order
premodern
scientific rational
**4** modern
pluralistic
**5**
integral
**6**
**7**
postmodern

## We
**Culture & Worldview**

survival clans
**1**
ethnic tribes
foraging
**2**
feudal empires
horticultural
**3**
early nations
agrarian
**4**
corporate states
**5**
value communities
industrial
**6**
integral meshworks
**7**
informational

## Its
**Social System & Environment**

Years of extensive research have been conducted including many different cultural contexts by developmental psychologist looking at different aspects of human development such as cognitive development (Piaget 1963; 1971; Kegan 1982; 1995), moral development (Kohlberg 1981; Gilligan 1993), faith development (Fowler 1981), and values development (Beck and Cowan 1996; Graves, Cowan et al. 2005), and ego development (Loevinger 1982). Cook-Greuter (2004) identifies the following as a list of assumptions shared by each of these different theories of human development:

- Development theory describes the unfolding of human potential towards deeper understanding, wisdom and effectiveness in the world.

- Growth occurs in a logical sequence of stages or expanding world views from birth to adulthood. The movement is often likened to an ever-widening spiral.

- Overall, world views evolve from simple to complex, from static to dynamic, and from egocentric to sociocentric to world-centric.

- Later stages are reached only by journeying through the earlier stages. Once a stage has been traversed, it remains a part of the individual's response repertoire, even when more complex, later stages are adopted.

- Each later stage includes and transcends the previous ones. That is, the earlier perspectives remain part of our current experience and knowledge (just as when a child learns to run, it doesn't stop being able to walk).

- Each later stage in the sequence is more differentiated, integrated, flexible and capable of functioning optimally in a rapidly changing and complexifying world.

- People's stage of development influences what they notice or can become aware of, and therefore what they can describe, articulate, influence, and change.

- As development unfolds, autonomy, freedom, tolerance for difference and ambiguity, as well as flexibility, reflection and skill in interacting with the environment increase, while defenses decrease.

- A person who has reached a later stage can understand earlier world views, but a person at an earlier stage cannot understand later ones.

- Development occurs through the interplay between person and environment, not just by one or the other. It is a potential and can be encouraged and facilitated by appropriate support and challenge.

- The depth, complexity, and scope of what people notice can expand throughout life. Yet no matter how evolved we become, our knowledge and understanding is always partial and incomplete.

Clare Graves' summary of his own view of development echoes many of these same generalizations (Beck and Cowan 1996, p 28):

> *'Briefly, what I am proposing is that the psychology of the mature human being is an unfolding, emergent, oscillating spiraling process marked by progressive subordination of older, lower-order behavior systems to newer, higher-order systems as man's [sic] existential problems change"*

Though the number of stages vary in each of the theories, for the purposes of this paper they can be grouped into more or less three broad stages: pre-conventional (egocentric), conventional (ethnocentric), and post-conventional (worldcentric). They can also be referred to as pre-modern or traditional, modern, and postmodern. While a fuller account of these stages is beyond the scope of this paper, each of these three can be briefly profiled in the following way:

1. *Pre-conventional or egocentric stage*: This can be seen in infants and young children who have not yet learned conventional rules or been socialized into society. Feelings, morals and values are heavily centered on the individual's own impulses, desires and needs. At the preconventional stage, individuals are unable to take the role of another person, indeed they are unaware that roles even exist. The world they see and experience is the same for everyone….thus egocentric. This is because their sense of self vis-à-vis the rest of the world has not yet been differentiated, they remain fused unable to see beyond the self (ego).

2. *Conventional or ethnocentric stage*: Individuals at this stage have taken on the conventional rules and roles learned in the socialization process. Moving beyond their own views, they have now taken on the perspectives of the group that defines them (family, peers, faith tradition, nation). The rules, roles, values and beliefs of define the system of these groups become their own. At this stage, one becomes fused or embedded in the groups with which he/she has identified and remains unable to see beyond them, moving them from egocentric to ethnocentric.

3. *Post-conventional or worldcentric stage*:  Movement to the post-conventional stage occurs as the individual increasingly differentiates him/herself from the underlying values, principles and beliefs of a given group and can then locate these in a broader perspective that includes other values and beliefs that define other groups.  At this stage, the individual is no longer fused with conventional thinking but is able to begin thinking for him/herself.   Transcending the ethnocentric stage, this individual is now able to take a worldcentric perspective.

To illustrate how these stages are studied lets look at moral development.  Kohlberg and Gilligan both used ethical dilemmas as a way of tracking the movement of moral development in individuals.  For example, individuals would be asked whether or not it would be justified to steal medicine from a pharmacy in order to save a person's life in the event money was not available to purchase it.   Some would answer "yes" saying they have a right to do whatever they want to do (egocentric, preconventional); other would answer "no" because stealing is a "sin" and is against the law (ethnocentric, conventional); finally others would answer "yes" explaining that while stealing is against the law, other principles come into play that warrant this action in order to save a human life (worldcentric, postconventional).

When these same individuals are asked these questions at a later time, if their answers have changed, the changes show directionality.  A previously egocentric response of "yes" (captured by the reasons given) has become an ethnocentric response "no"; an ethnocentric response will become a post-conventional response "yes".   From her own research, Gilligan purports a hierarchy of development where individuals move from "selfish" (egocentric care for self) to "care" (ethnocentric care for immediate community/family of which one is a part) to "universal care" (worldcentric care for all sentient beings).

## Cognitive Development

My statement earlier that my daughter would not study calculus in the second grade because the mental demands would be "over her head" points to the presence of distinct stages of cognitive development.   After seeing a glass of water poured into a taller and thinner glass, a three year old will likely conclude that the taller thinner glass now contains more water than what was poured out of the first glass.  Five years later if this experiment is repeated, when the now 8-year-old is asked which glass contains more water, the response will likely be "Dah, it's the same amount of water!"   What's even more striking is the fact that the 8 year old will likely refuse to believe that she ever responded differently.  At least this is how my own daughters responded as I have experimented (played) with them.

While the cognitive capacities of my daughters continue to evolve, they have not yet reached the stage where they are able to handle the complexity of dealing with the kinds of abstract ideas contained in this document.  What I am trying to communicate here is "over their heads" not because they lack intelligence (***what*** they know), but rather because their cognitive structures (***how*** they know) are not yet able to process the level of abstraction contained in these concepts.

Developmental growth in one's cognitive capacity or *how* (not *what*) one knows can be understood as an increasing capacity to take multiple perspectives.   Kegan explains

cognitive development as the process in which what is "subject" (that which is fused with ones own sense of self) becomes differentiated and integrated as "object" of the subject at the next level.   Regarding this "subject-object relationship" Kegan says:

> "Object" refers to those elements of our knowing or organizing that we can reflect on, handle, look at, be responsible for, relate to each other, take control of, internalize, assimilate, or otherwise operate upon.  All these expressions suggest that the element of knowing is not the whole of us; it is distinct enough from us that we can do something with it.

> "Subject" refers to those elements of our knowing or organizing that we are identified with, tied to, fused with, or embedded in.  We *have* objects; we *are* subject.  We cannot be responsible for, in control of, or reflect upon that which is subject (1995, p32).

About the different structures of consciousness, he goes on to say,

> They are not just different ways of knowing, each with its preferred season.  One does not simply replace the other, nor is the relation merely additive or cumulative, an accretion of skills.  Rather, the relation is transformative, qualitative, and incorporative.  Each successive principle subsumes or encompasses the prior principle.  That which was subject becomes object to the next principle.  The new principle is a higher order principle (more complex, more inclusive) that makes the prior principle into an element or tool of its system.  A geometric analogy for the relation between these three principles might be that of the point, the line, and the plane: each subsequent geometric form contains the previous one.   A line is a "metapoint" in a sense; it contains an infinite number of points, but as elements subordinated to the more complex organizational principle of the line, where earlier the point was itself an organizational principle.  Similarly, a plane is a "metaline," an organizational principle containing line as an element (p 33).

Kegan uses the phrases "*being had by …*" versus "*having …*" as another way of expressing this subject-object relationship.  That which "has us" is that which we are fused to, identified with and thus can not see (subject).  Through differentiation, our perspective expands to allow us to see our seeing, to become aware of that which "has us."   Once we can see it (object), we can "have it" or act on it to integrate it within our larger self.  So for instance, at the conventional stage or Kegan's 3rd order of consciousness, individuals can be responsible *to* their roles and relationships, but can not be responsible *for* their relationships.   At this stage, they are "had by" (subject to) their roles, relationships, the values and ideals that underlie their beliefs.  Whereas at the post-conventional stage or 4rth order of consciousness these things become object rather than subject of one's knowing;  one has developed the ability to subordinate, regulate, and indeed create (rather than be created by) his/her roles, relationships, values and ideals.

### Spiral Dynamics

Spiral Dynamics presents another vision of human development that focuses on the evolution of what one holds as *core values* that give shape to very different worldviews at each of the different stages.  This theory is based on the vision of Clare W. Graves which Beck and Cowan summarized in the following way  (Beck and Cowan 1996, p 29):

- Human nature is not static, nor is it finite. Human nature changes as the conditions of existence change, thus forging new systems. Yet, the older systems stay with us.

- When a new system or level is activated, we change our psychology and rules for living to adapt to those new conditions.

- We live in a potentially open system of values with an infinite number of modes of living available to us. There is no final state to which we must all aspire.

- An individual, a company, or an entire society can respond positively only to those managerial principles, motivational appeals, educational formulas, and legal or ethical codes that are appropriate to the current level of human existence.

Unique to this theory and I think important to highlight is the fact that this theory is the only developmental theory that explicitly links the developmental stages to life conditions in which they unfold. So while the developmental process does unfold in a particular direction that establishes verticality or hierarchy, life conditions are what make this possible. A change in these conditions can very well result in a person regressing to former stages.

Nonetheless, the image of a spiral intentionally suggests that as one comes full circle in his/her own development via the process of differentiation and integration, he or she transcends and returns on a new level.

The following table compiles information from Beck and Cowen (p. 45-47, 315) in order to present a quick view of each of the levels in spiral dynamics. Shades of gray are used to correlate these levels to the three main levels presented earlier with the lightest gray representing pre-conventional, the mid-level gray representing conventional, and the darkest gray representing those levels at the post-conventional stage of development.

| Level | Basic Theme | Characteristic beliefs and actions | Vision of governance *Democracy is …* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **First Tier** | | | |
| **Beige** "Survivalistic" Archaic | *Do what you must to stay alive* | • Uses instincts and habits just to survive<br>• Distinct **self** is barely awakened or sustained<br>• Food, water, warmth, sex, and safety have priority<br>• Forms into survival **bands** to perpetuate life | No concept of governance |
| **Purple** "Magical" Animistic | *Keep the spirits happy and the 'tribe's' nest warm and safe* | • Obey the desires of spirit beings and mystical signs<br>• Show allegiance to chief, elders, ancestors and the clan<br>• Preserve sacred objects, places, events, and memories<br>• Observe rites of passage, seasonal cycles, | What 'our people' decide to do. Announced by the chief and guided by elders and spirits |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | and tribal customs | |
| **Red** "Impulsive" Egocentric | *Be what you are and do what you want, regardless* | • The world is a jungle full of threats and predators<br>• Breaks free from any domination or constraint to please self as self desires<br>• Stands tall, expects attention, demands respect, and calls the shots<br>• Enjoys self to the fullest right now without guilt or remorse<br>• Conquers, out-foxes, and dominates other aggressive characters | Whatever the Big Boss says it is. "Power to the people" means to Boss and chosen few |
| **Blue** "Purposeful" Conformist Mythic | *Life has meaning, direction, and purpose with predetermined outcomes* | • One sacrifices self to the transcendent Cause, Truth, or righteous Pathway<br>• The Order enforces a code of conduct based on eternal, absolute principles<br>• Righteous living produces stability now and guarantees future reward<br>• Impulsivity is controlled through guilt; everybody has their proper place<br>• Laws, regulations, and discipline build character and moral fiber | Justice and fairness for the right, good people who follow rules and traditions |
| **Orange** "Achievist" Rational | *Act in your own self-interest by playing the game to win* | • Change and advancement are inherent within the scheme of things<br>• Progress by learning nature's secrets and seeking out best solutions<br>• Manipulate Earth's resources to create and spread the abundant good life<br>• Optimistic, risk-taking, and self-reliant people deserve their success<br>• Societies prosper through strategy, technology, and competitiveness | Give-and-take pluralistic politics within a check-and-balance game of economics |
| **Green** "Communitarian" Pluralistic | *Seek peace within the inner self and explore, with others, the caring dimensions of community* | • The human spirit must be freed from greed, dogma, and divisiveness<br>• Feelings, sensitivity, and caring supersede cold rationality<br>• Spread the Earth's resources and opportunities equally among all<br>• Reach decisions through reconciliation and consensus processes<br>• Refresh spirituality, bring harmony, and enrich human development | Everybody shares equally in making consensus decisions to care for "we the people" |
| **Second Tier** | | | |
| **Yellow** "Integrative" | *Live fully and responsibly as what you are and* | • Life is a kaleidoscope of natural hierarchies, systems, and forms<br>• The magnificence of existence is valued over material possessions | Process of integrating the majority of interests in expediting flows |

| | *learn to become* | • Flexibility, spontaneity, and functionality have the highest priority<br>• Knowledge and competency should supersede rank, power, status<br>• Differences can be integrated into interdependent, natural flows | up the Spiral |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Turquoise**<br>"Holistic" | *Experience the wholeness of existence through mind and spirit* | • The world is a single, dynamic organism with its own collective mind<br>• Self is both distinct and a blended part of a larger, compassionate whole<br>• Everything connects to everything else in ecological alignments<br>• Energy and information permeate the Earth's total environment<br>• Holistic, intuitive thinking and cooperative actions are to be expected | Macro management of all life forms toward common good in response to macro problems |

From the perspective of Spiral Dynamics, each of these levels or the capacity for these "adaptive intelligences" resides within all people. An infant enters the world as Beige, focused on survival. As life conditions change, other adaptive intelligences will be developed and call upon to deal with the increasing levels of complexity being experienced throughout life. Graves describes this process eloquently:

"At each stage of human existence the adult man [sic] is off on his quest of his holy grail, the way of life he seeks by which to live. At his first level he is on a quest for automatic physiological satisfaction. At the second level he seeks a safe mode of living, and this is followed in turn, by a search for heroic status, for power and glory, by a search for ultimate peace; a search for material pleasure, a search for affectionate relations, a search for respect of self, and a search for peace in an incomprehensible world. And, when he finds he will not find that peace, he will be off on his ninth level quest.

As he sets off on each quest, he believes he will find the answer to his existence. Yet, much to his surprise and much to his dismay, he finds at every stage that the solution to existence is not the solution he has come to find. Every stage he reaches leaves him disconcerted and perplexed. It is simply that as he solves one set of human problems he finds a new set in their place. The quest he finds is never ending"  (Clare W. Graves; www.clarewgraves.com/theory_content/quotes.html).

At each of these levels, the individual or culture forms very different worldviews or ideas about how the world is and how it functions. Furthermore, the worldview at each of the six levels of the "first tier" tends to be taken as absolute. Blue's world is everyone's world. While Orange views its world as superior, Green tends to insist on imposing its own values and worldview.

The "second tier" marks a significant shift where the higher levels, beginning with yellow, recognize that partiality and incompleteness of their own worldview and the important role of each and every level in the development of individuals and cultures. From the perspective of the second tier, the best level (or color on the spiral) is not necessarily the highest level, but the level which most adequately responds to its current life conditions.

**Dialogue and the developmental perspective**

Accepting the developmental perspective means recognizing and accepting the existence of hierarchies.  For many, the suggestion that one level of development is higher, more complex or more evolved than another seems wrong and dangerous.  It risks creating a ranking system where all human beings are no longer valued equally.   Developmental hierarchies (or holarchies of complexity) should not be confused with negative experiences with hierarchies of social domination where those at the top of these hierarchies are often individuals at the lower levels of development (egocentric or ethnocentric as opposed to worldcentric).

The developmental perspective (and the hierarchies it establishes) does not suggest that individuals with higher levels of development are better human beings.   That would be tantamount to suggesting that high school graduates are better human beings than second-graders.   It does, however, claim that the capacity for dealing with complexity and taking different perspectives increases at the higher levels or stages of development.   It would also claim that worldcentric or universal care is better than ethnocentric or selfish care because 1) its perspective is broader and more inclusive; and 2) it *includes and integrates* within itself the capacity for ethnocentric and egocentric care.

An integral theory and practice of dialogue is one that incorporates this developmental perspective.  If dialogue is essentially about the task of achieving mutual understanding, than paying attention to "*how*" participants think will be as important as "*what*" they think.   The interior structures of the upper left quadrant are the only resources an individual ultimately has to "make sense" of experience.    Just as the language and symbols of calculus would have no meaning for my daughters until their way of thinking evolves and becomes capable of these formal operations, the language of multiculturalism may not be understandable, or may be "over the heads" of individuals operating from a center of gravity at the conventional, ethnocentric level where their world, their culture is the only world and culture.    Or another example, the language of transpersonal realities remains incomprehensible to those whose level of cognitive development has not moved beyond rational scientific thinking simply because these transpersonal referents do not yet exist.

The success of dialogue, or the degree in which individuals achieve shared understanding depends in large part on their ability to navigate the journey between what may be very different social worlds that emerge from these interior structures.   The expectations dialogue places on us "demand more than mere behavior, the acquisition of specific skills, or the mastery of particular knowledge.  They make demands on our minds, on *how* we know, on the complexity of our consciousness" (Kegan 1982; Kegan 1995).

Some questions that emerge for me as I think about incorporating more explicitly the developmental perspective into a theory and practice of dialogue include:

- How to achieve the highest center of gravity possible within a dialogue in order to maximize the capacity for dealing with complexity and operate from the broadest, most integrative framework possible?

- How to facilitate conversations across different levels of development in order to achieve deeper mutual understanding?   To use Spiral Dynamics language, how to facilitate, for example, conversations between an orange value system centered on growth, competition and a green value system focusing on equality, harmony and community that tends to see orange values as the cause of the worlds problems?

- How to help individuals and groups become aware of their own interior structures or "worldviews" that shape their meaning-making process?   That "worldviews" can even exist implies a certain level of development that understands that the world as I see and experience it may not be the same world that others see and experience.

### *Lines of development*

As mentioned earlier, one of the strong criticisms of the developmental perspective is the perception that it recreates hierarchies where some people are allegedly better or "more evolved" than others.    However, because development does not occur evenly within individuals, to speak of a more or less evolved individual would need to be qualified in order to clarify evolved in "what?"   An individual may be at a very high level or stage of cognitive development (very smart), but morally show very little development (e.g., Nazi doctor).   Another individual might be a musical prodigy and at the same time unable to add 2 plus 2.  Some may excel in interpersonal development but kinesthetically unable to chew gum and walk at the same time.  This is where the "lines of development" come into play as the third element of the integral framework.

In 1985, Howard Gardner (Gardner 1985) introduced the idea of multiple intelligences which are also called lines of development because they show growth and development; they unfold in progressive stages.   For example, my daughter who just recently finished her first year of piano playing is now able to play complete songs that one year ago were not within her reach.  At the same time, she needs to continue grow in progressive steps before she will be ready to tackle a Beethoven sonata.  Other intelligences or lines of development include cognitive intelligence, moral intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, values (spiral dynamics is a line itself), and kinesthetic intelligence.   In the following table Wilber (2005, p 26) identifies different lines of development along with the core question to which each responds and researchers associated with each line.

| Line | Life's Question | Typical Researcher |
|---|---|---|
| Cognitive | *What am I aware of?* | Piaget, Kegan |
| Self | *Who am I?* | Loevinger |
| Values | *What is significant to me?* | Graves, Spiral Dynamics |
| Moral | *What should I do?* | Kohlberg, Gilligan |
| Interpersonal | *How should we interact?* | Selman, Perry |
| Spiritual | *What is of ultimate concern?* | Fowler |
| Emotional | *What am I feeling about this?* | Goleman |
| Aesthetic | *What is attractive to me?* | Houseman |
| Needs | *What do I need?* | Maslow |
| Kinesthetic | *How should I physically do this?* | Gardner |

*Developmental Lines, Life's Questions, and Researchers*

A psychograph is a simple way of representing in the upper left quadrant an individual's different lines of development which is one way of mapping the resources this individual has available to him/herself.   An integral approach does not suggest that an individual should excel or reach the highest levels in every line or intelligence.   This graph, however, can be used to help an individual become more self-aware of where his/her strengths and weaknesses lie.

A psychograph can also be used to map more explicitly the different levels of intelligences present within a dialogue group as a way of helping the group become more self-aware and able to identify areas of strength and weakness.   An integrally informed approach to dialogue will seek to insure those intelligences considered important for the success of dialogue are present in the group.   If, for instance, within a group, there is a high level in cognitive development, but very little emotional or interpersonal development, it is unlikely that mutual understanding around a contentious issue will be achieved.   If, on the other hand, at least someone in the group is highly developed in emotional or interpersonal development, he/she may very well be able to compensate for others' weakness and serve as a bridge facilitating interpersonal dynamics.

The psychograph below (adapted from (Wilber 2003) could either represent one person's intelligences or profile the group as a collective.  I have included *political* and *process* as two additional lines that I think are important intelligences[9] within a dialogue process. Political refers to ones intuitive ability to read group dynamics and demonstrate a high sensitivity to power dynamics.   Process intelligence refers to a clear understanding of process dimensions as opposed to substantive issues and an intuitive ability to both sense blocks in the process and maneuver in ways to unblock group processes and facilitate flow.   Both of these intelligences are lines that do develop incrementally with time and experience and also seem to be easier and natural for some and not for others.



**Pyschograph of Developmental Lines**

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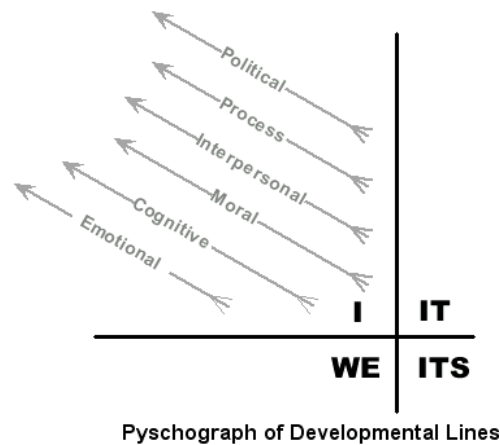
[9] I use the term intelligences losely without implying that these would meet Gardner's more rigourous criteria to qualify as intelligences.

The following figure is another way of doing a psychograph that shows the stage level of each of the lines of development.   In this psychograph, the individual's cognitive development is at the worldcentric level, but in terms of interpersonal development, this person is at the egocentric level (a smart, but likely difficult person to interact with socially).



| worldcentric |
| ethnocentric |
| egocentric |

Moral      Emotional     Interpersonal
      Cognitive       Spiritual
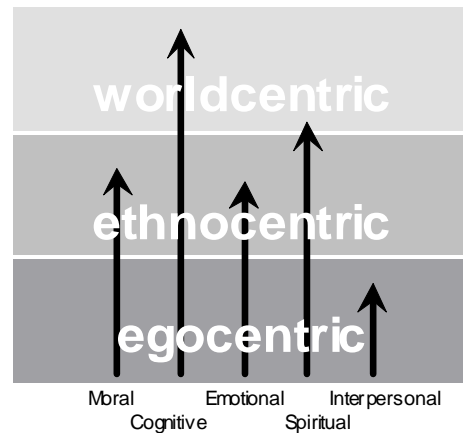
### States of consciousness

A fourth component of the integral framework deals with states of consciousness. Wilber says that while stages are earned, states are free.  According to Kegan (1982), it usually takes 5 or more years for adults to move from one stage to another.  There is no way to quickly jump ahead from the $3^{rd}$ to the $5^{th}$ order of consciousness without first moving through the 4rth order.   Stages unfold sequentially, each building upon its predecessor in very concrete ways.   However, one can be quickly introduced to different higher states of consciousness.

A state refers to any temporary mode of being (behavior or feeling) such as heighten awareness, emotional sensitivity or a peak experience.  Often, they can provide profound meaning or motivation in our lives.   An individual may have a "peak experience" or an altered state of consciousness where they experience, for example, a profound sense of oneness with nature, humanity, or God.  Or they may experience a heightened sense of an emotion such as compassion, or a "fight or flight" reaction due to an adrenaline surge.

Three states of consciousness we all experience daily are the waking, dreaming and deep dreamless sleep states.   Contrary to the idea of sleep being a period of rest and inactivity, during each of these three different states, including deep sleep, the mind (UL quadrant) as well as the brain and body (UR quadrant) continue to work.

Meditation is one of the vehicles used by individuals seeking to access different states of consciousness.  In meditation, the person practices "witnessing" or being ever present to observe what emerges.   Whatever the "seer" can "see" or witness in meditation becomes object, and thus differentiated from self.  If I can see my thoughts, then I am not my

thoughts. If I can focus on and see my relationships, then I realize I am not these relationships. If it can see my insecurities, than I am not my insecurities. As *I* (interior subjective self) observer *me* (exterior objective body), the "self" (I, the seer) grows, always remaining above and beyond that which is observed. Through meditation and this disciplined practice of witnessing as the self disidentifies with what emerges, it develops an expanding awareness of all things. Wilber claims that research shows that those who meditate regularly, frequently provoking these states of consciousness, show accelerated movement through the stages or levels of development.

In the upper left quadrant, some of the facilitation resources identified included silence, meditation, biodance, music, art, journaling (and there are many others). These are all activities that can help provoke deeper levels of reflection and the possibility of establishing the distance necessary for perceiving larger wholes. By provoking different states of consciousness, individuals may have breakthrough or gestalt experiences where they can begin to perceive wholes that are not identified by first looking at the parts. For example, in this classic *dog picture*, the Dalmatian dog sniffing the ground in the shade of trees is not perceive by first identifying the parts and then inferring the whole. The dog is perceived all at once.



Attending to the upper left quadrant is important to help participants in dialogue dis-identify with the specific roles they bring into the process in order to more appropriately reintegrate them into the newly perceived wholes or gestalts.

In the lower left quadrant or intersubjective worldspace, these activities can be useful for helping a group expand its collective awareness. There are other tools and methodologies that can be useful for provoking different states of consciousness often associated with breakthrough thinking or understanding. For instance, the following diagram[10] illustrates the "U Process" (Senge, Jaworski et al. 2004), which could be thought of as a process of intersubjective yoga or collective meditation. This process moves a group through what might be considered different states of consciousness, provoking a collective process of "witnessing" or to use the language of this process, "presencing" illustrated a the bottom of the "U."

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[10] Taken from http://www.ottoscharmer.com/TheoryULarge.htm
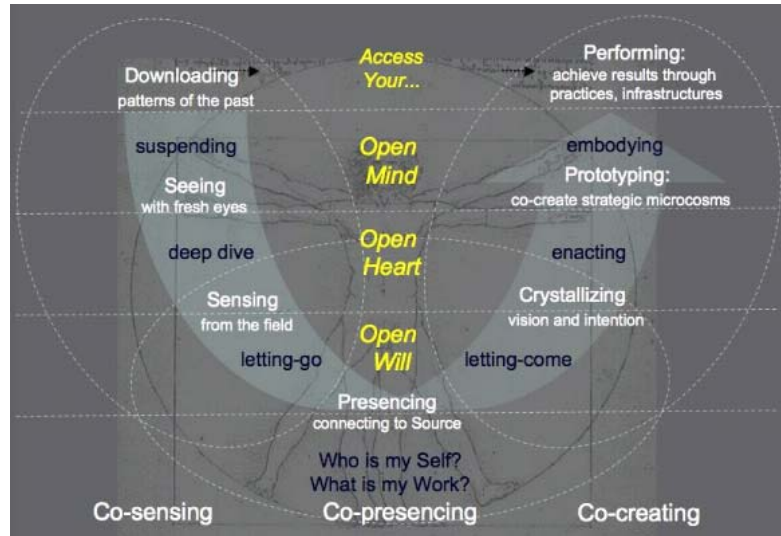
The aim of the process on the left side of the U is for the group to increasingly dis-identify with what emerges in their interaction, in order to see more broadly and deeply, expanding the collective awareness and deepening mutual understanding. Dis-identify does not mean ignore, exclude or throw out. Rather, as in the process of development itself, it refers to the necessary differentiation that allows for transcending and then including or re-integrating into a new level of perspective.

Unfortunately, many are uncomfortable with what appear to be "new agey" kinds of groups processes because they are perceived and naïve or overly focused on creating false sense or "state" of harmony or a mystical sense of transcendent oneness. Again, focusing on our interiors is uncomfortable and unfamiliar for many. It can be much easier to simply remain focused on the issue under discussion with recognizing how fused our own sense of self might be with our perspective on the issue. Or as Kegan's might say, we do not realize how often our "views or perspectives *have* us" rather than "we *having* them." The "U process" as well as other tools or processes such as Voice Dialogue (Stone and Winkelman 1989), Genpo Roshi's Big Mind Process,[11] and others from the Coordinated Management of Meaning theory of communication (Pearce)[12] can all be useful for facilitating an intersubjective process of witnessing or presencing that ultimately leads to expanded awareness and deeper mutual understanding.

### *Types*

Types are the last of the five components (quadrants, levels, lines, states, types) of the AQAL integral model. These refer to heterarchical aspects or horizontal typologies that can be present at the different states and stages. Two common personality typologies are the Myers-Briggs framework that identifies a matrix of 16 types (which is based on four main distinctions: introvert/extrovert, thinking/feeling, sensing/intuiting, and judging/perceiving) and the Enneagram which presents nine different types.

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[11] See http://delos-inc.com/Reading_Room/Articles/16/16.html
[12] For instance the Daisy Model that makes explicit the different petals or identities of Self.

Each of these typologies presents horizontal distinctions that are present at each stage. So, for instance, based on the Enneagram, I have identified myself as a FIVE. According to the Enneagram, I will likely remain a FIVE for the rest of my life. However, my "five-ness" evolves and manifests differently as I pass through the different stages of development.   An egocentric five is different from an ethnocentric five, which is different from a worldcentric five.

Types are important because they help us recognize that we are not all alike. Understanding types helps to identify and communicate across important differences. Gender, as a typology that distinguishes between masculine and feminine drives, qualities, tendencies, can be an illustrative example of the importance of understanding differences.   I mentioned early Gilligan's research *(Gilligan 1993)* that shows the process of moral development as moving through three sequential stages, each transcending and including the former.  Stage one morality is egocentric because it is centered entirely on "me."   At stage two, morality becomes ethnocentric and is centered on "us" (family, group, or nation).  The morality of stage three is worldcentric, centered on "all of us" (transcending one's own family, group, nation to include all of humanity). Gilligan refers to the stages in this hierarchical progression as *Selfish*, *Care*, and *Universal Care.*

The significance of Gilligan's work is not so much the identification of these different stages which are very similar to the stages of other developmental theories, but rather her observations that men and women progress through these stages using very different logics—they develop "*in a different voice*."   While men (masculine) foreground the importance of autonomy, justice and rights, women (feminine) tend to foreground the importance of relationship, caring, and responsibility.   The masculine drive values agency, doing and change while the feminine drive values communion, being and acceptance.

Many of the personality type frameworks recognize that for each type, there can be healthy and unhealthy versions depending on the extent to which their strengths move into excess.   Wilber illustrates, for example, unhealthy versions of the masculine and feminine types (Wilber 2003. p 19):

> If each stage of development has a masculine and feminine dimension, each of those can be healthy or unhealthy, which we sometimes call "sick boy, sick girl." This is simply another kind of horizontal typing, but one that can be extremely useful.

> If the healthy masculine principle tends toward autonomy, strength, independence, and freedom, when that principle becomes unhealthy or pathological, all of those positive virtues either over- or under-fire. There is not just autonomy, but alienation; not just strength, but domination; not just independence, but morbid fear of relationship and commitment; not just a drive toward freedom, but a drive to destroy. The unhealthy masculine principle does not transcend in freedom, but dominates in fear.

> If the healthy feminine principle tends toward flowing, relationship, care, and compassion, the unhealthy feminine flounders in each of those. Instead of being in relationship, she becomes lost in relationship. Instead of a healthy self in communion with others, she loses her self altogether and is dominated by the

> relationships she is in. Not a connection, but a fusion; not a flow state, but a
> panic state; not a communion, but a melt-down. The unhealthy feminine principle
> does not find fullness in connection, but chaos in fusion.

Including types within an integral framework for dialogue can enrich our understanding of the different ways of framing the purpose of dialogue or the different needs people have in terms of how the dialogue process unfolds.   For instance, how one responds to the question "is dialogue ultimately about results (agency/doing) or relationships (communion/being)" will depend on how masculine or feminine one is feeling in a given moment.   Is dialogue an end in itself?  My Y chromosome would say "yes," as a form of engaging in relationship, it is an end in itself.   My X chromosome says "no," we engage in relationship to achieve something, it is a means to an end.   The language of types can help us understanding and hold in tension both of these perspectives without needing to take either as absolute.   Further, a process design that recognizes and contemplates different types (introverts/extroverts, thinking/feeling, masculine/feminine, etc) will be more robust in facilitating communication and understanding.

## Accommodation & Assimilation (Translation or Transformation)

In the introduction I mentioned that one of the areas where significant differences of opinion emerged between the institutions sponsoring the handbook had to do with whether or not dialogue is or should be about transformation.   The issue was not about whether dialogue could lead to transformation (i.e., a descriptive account), but rather should it (a prescriptive account) involve transformation to be called dialogue.  While a fuller response is beyond the scope of this paper, I do want to explore briefly how an integral framework allows space for each of these positions.

For this discussion I will be using the term transformation in the developmental sense to refer to changes in "how" one knows, not "what" one knows.[13]  Transformation will be said to have occurred when one's worldview has shifted in the direction of becoming more differentiated and inclusive or as Kegan says "…the whole ('how I am') becomes gradually a part ('how I was') or a new whole ('how I am')" (1994, p43).   It refers to changes in the "*form*" as opposed the *content* of one's knowing  (Kegan 2000).   As used here, transformation then does not refer just to changes of opinion based on the introduction of more "information" nor does it refer to the movement from disagreement to agreement.   Both of these can occur without any change in the "form" itself.

Piaget's concepts of assimilation and accommodation can help further elucidate these distinctions.   Assimilation refers to the process of filtering or modifying new input or experience so that it "fits into" the already existing "form" or internal structures. Through assimilation, the meaning of an experience is reduced to the only way one's existing structure can understand it.   Piaget says "assimilation brings the new into the known and thus reduces the universe to its own terms" (quoted in Leonard 2004).    In this sense, experience is "translated" into one's already existing language or worldview.

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[13] I recognize that part of the differences of opinion that exist on this issue largely has to do with very different definitions of transformation.

Accommodation, on the other hand, refers to the process in which the internal structures that filter and make sense of experience are themselves changed in order to "accommodate" new phenomena.   "One's internal structure changes, adjusts, or develops to accommodate an experience that cannot assimilate or fit into the previous structure" (Leonard 2004, p132).  Accommodation is "trans-*form*-ation."

So, if dialogue is about achieving mutual understanding in order to coordinate collective action and address increasingly more complex challenges, must "transformation" necessarily be a part of this process?   The quick answer is no.  In fact, if transformation (as defined here as a shift in developmental level) was a necessary goal of a dialogue process, then the chances of success are slim because changes in "form" occur very slowly, for adults, over the course of 4-6 years.

A related question might be should we always try to "grease the spiral" in order to get people to reach new levels of development?   If the higher levels of development offer more inclusive and integrated perspectives and a greater capacity for managing complexity, shouldn't one goal always be pursuing these transformations?   The masculine voice within me that values agency and change says absolutely yes.  However, the feminine voice within me that values relationship is more likely to emphasize accepting people as they are and helping them be the best they can be right where they are at.   As Graves once said succinctly, "*Damn it all, a person has the right to be who he is*"  (Beck and Cowan 1996, p 28).

If there is balance of both the feminine and masculine voices within me, than I am able to understand how the answer to this second question really depends on the specific context.  To the extent individuals or the group show an openness[14] to growth, pursuing accommodation or transformation will be worthwhile.  If, the other hand, the thinking of individuals or the group seems closed, unwilling or unable to envision alternatives, then choosing an assimilation or translation approach will be more effective.   Regarding whether or not one should pursue transformative change, Clare Graves wisely suggested, "If he purrs, continue; if he growls, back off!" (Beck and Cowan 1996,  p103).

### *Translation*

Achieving mutual understanding does not require transformation so that all "centers of gravity" are located on the same level or stage of development.  It does, however, require effective translation so that the worldviews emerging from the different centers of gravity can understand each other in their own terms.     If we take the developmental perspective seriously, than this means that those at higher levels of development will need to translate their perspectives into the language of the worldviews of the lower centers of gravity.   They can do this because within their own developmental structure, though they have transcended, they have also "included" the lower levels.   So, in the language of spiral dynamics, mutual understanding requires that Green translate into the language of Blue (which it can do because it includes Blue within its own structure), but Blue can not translate into the language of Green because referents in the Green worldspace still remain unknown to the lower levels.   Wilber points out that:

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[14] For a discussion on Open, Arrested and Closed states and indicators of each, see Beck & Cowen (1996, p76ff)

> *All* signs exist in a continuum of *developmental referents* and *developmental signifieds*. The *referent* of a sign is not just lying around in "the" world waiting for any and all to simply look at it; the referent exists *only* in a *worldspace* that is itself *only* disclosed in the process of development, and the *signified* exists only in the *interior perception* of those who have developed to that worldspace (which structures the background interpretive meaning that allows the signified to emerge) (Wilber 1995 p 280).

The developmental perspective helps us understand that the worldviews at each developmental level interpret the same message or signifier differently, since each level constructs and experiences a qualitatively different reality. Unfortunately, each new level of development tends to treat as absolute its own worldview, quickly forgetting that prior worldviews even existed, much like my daughters forgetting they ever actually suggested a change of volume in the Piagetian water exercise mentioned earlier. When this happens, *social worlds collide* (Pearce and Littlejohn 1997). Elizabeth Behnke explained it this way in her essay on Jean Gebser presented at the "Symposium in Phenomenology and Hermeneutics" hosted by Ohio State University:

> The paradigmatic force of a life-world [or level of consciousness] unrecognized as such by those who dwell in it—those who simply maneuver in it as the reality tacitly assumed in everyday affairs—is such that alternatives may be literally inconceivable. Thus seemingly incomprehensible blocks to communication may arise when two life-worlds, each a genuine and complete 'reality' in its own right, clash (Leonard 2004 p 104).

I close this section simply quoting Leonard at length where he offers an example of two worldviews colliding and then how a third worldview that is able to promote understanding via effective translation between these different developmental levels.

> Suppose two people sit on a park bench wearing colored glasses, one with orange lenses and the other with green lenses. Both have no idea they are even wearing the glasses. Along strolls a Florida panther. The person wearing orange glasses angrily shakes his first at the panther, "These pests are pushing my housing development business behind schedule. They're driving down property values and costing my firm money!" With a look of horror, the person wearing green glasses exclaims, "Don't you see? This is a Florida panther, one of the most endangered species in the world. Your housing projects ruin its natural habitat and threaten the biodiversity of Gaia. Where's your heart?"

> The conversation degenerates into hostility. Each person attempts to persuade the other of the panther's true value implications. Both fail to acknowledge and honor the other's colored interpretation. Experiencing different value implications (Orange vs. Green) from the same fact (the Florida panther), they talk past each other. This dynamic results in ineffective communication. Despite such a simple metaphor, one can begin to see how communication among two or more worldviews can rapidly deteriorate into misinterpretation, talking past one another, unresolved debate, or constrained disdain (tolerance).

> Each person sees the "fact" of the panther with eyes already value-laden. They both see a panther, but one experiences an "Orange" panther and the other a "Green" panther. The colored value interpretation (Left Hand) occurs simultaneously with the experienced fact (Right Hand) as one seamless territory. No fact carries an inherent value imperative apart from the interpretive structure

already operating within the observing mind. "Oughts" change depending on one's internal worldview, not the external "facts."

A third person—this time wearing yellow glasses—sits on the bench. This person knows she wears yellow glasses and understands the orange and green glasses worn by the others from prior experience. Nevertheless, she distinctly sees the Florida panther as yellow. In contrast to the other two, however, this person has the ability to take on multiple value perspectives. She knows what an orange panther and a green panther look like. Informed by the ability to put herself in the others' shoes, she realizes that attempting to persuade the other two of the yellow panther would be a futile effort. Hence, she carefully refrains from articulating her experience in yellow terms. Instead, she communicates her experience in orange terms to one and green terms to the other— languages they can each understand: "You know," looking to the person with orange glasses, "sustainable building practices could increase the value of your houses, boost your profits, and keep environmentalists off your back." Turning to the person with green glasses, "Since people do need this housing space, we could introduce 'green building' principles to help housing contractors work in harmony with the Earth, facilitating an ecological balance with people, natural resources, and wild animals." Heads nod in agreement. The result: effective communication. From this space, a constructive dialogue begins.

The woman wearing yellow glasses, the integral communicator, naturally facilitates effective communication. She creates a win-win-win situation by communicating in two separate value structures that matched the respective depth of her receivers. Using language they each could understand, she explained how sustainable building could meet both of their value concerns. Only with an intimate understanding of alternative worldviews can such a translation strategy succeed (2004, p106-108).

## Conclusion

Increasingly, people and organizations working to secure peace and human rights, to promote human and economic development, or to strengthen democratic institutions have come to see dialogue as a valuable complement to both negotiation processes and political processes, such as competition among political parties, voting, and governance by elected representatives.  The number of dialogue processes taking place around the world has increased accordingly, and at the same time the need for greater understanding of what dialogue is, when it is appropriate, and how to do it effectively has grown.

In response to this need for increased understanding and effectiveness, I have looked to the integral framework commonly referred to as "AQAL" (All Quadrants, Levels, Lines, States and Types) of Ken Wilber as a way of beginning to develop an integral theory and practice of dialogue.   I have presented only a brief introduction to each of these five components of the AQAL framework and how each is relevant for dialogue theory and practice.   Perhaps what I most wanted to highlight here is the importance of incorporating more explicitly the developmental perspective in how we think about and work with dialogue.   I do not want to overemphasize or suggest this as the only or main perspective, but simple a perspective that might significantly enhance our understanding

of the four quadrants and the interior structures that are at play and that limit or facilitate a person's capacity to full engage in a dialogue process.

Societies around the world are facing complex problems (such as environmental crisis, HIV/AIDS, Inequality, etc) that exceed the capacity of any one institution to deal with them.  As processes become more inclusive and participatory (involving individuals and groups from very different backgrounds) the challenge of communication, and more precisely, "*understanding*" increases.   If the task of dialogue is to facilitate understanding, than attention to the left-hand quadrants or the  interior  structures or stages of development and the corresponding worldviews is vital.     Understanding the developmental perspective can serve as a helpful guide for effective translation between stages.   And to the extent a dialogue process incorporates within its design methods for helping individuals and groups dis-identify with the many roles, assumptions and views that currently *have them*, moving them from subject to objects that *they now have,* then the process itself will likely have contributed to, albeit in very small incremental terms, a transformation  process.

On last thing I want to highlight as an added value of using the integral framework is the fact that  it provides a language that permits cross-disciplinary communication.    For instance, using the language of the quadrants (upper left, lower left, right-hand) has proven to be immediately intelligible and useful in a number of recent conversations I have had with others on a wide range of issues.   My own experience corroborates Wilber's words regarding the usefulness of the integral language.

> Because [the integral framework] can be used by any discipline—from medicine to art to business to spirituality to politics to ecology—then we can, for the first time in history, begin an extensive and fruitful dialogue between all of these disciplines.  A person using [the integral framework] in business can talk easily and effectively with a person using [it] in poetry, or the arts, simply because they now have a common language…with which to communicate. (2003, p 40).

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Dialogic moment:  States of consciousness

Meenakshi Gopinath described this experience from her work in the contested area of Kashmir: [i]

*"I was with a group called . . . Women in Security Conflict. We [agreed we had to] look at breaking the silence on the conflict in Kashmir.  These were groups of women who always continued to blame each other, each other's community for their predicament. For example, the Muslim women in the valley blamed the Hindu community for what had happened to them.  The Hindus who fled the valley blamed the Muslims for having driven them out of their homes and for ethnic cleansing and so on.*

*But when they came together in a safe place, which was [away] from their immediate environment, and they began to hear each other's narratives and pain, they realized their pain does not cancel out somebody else's pain.  In other words, they both are going through a certain level of deprivation. . . .*

*Now, at that moment, **something happened where the women who were listening to each other's narratives . . . their whole body language changed, and a couple of them shed tears when they listened to what had happened to what were their erstwhile adversaries.  And they found that there was a commonality of human experience.** I think that was a very moving turning point. . . [Where] they never used to make eye contact with each other, [they] began to acknowledge each others' presence.  And so the 'othering' process which had translated into body language and the kind of guarded adjectives that were being [used], all that began to melt.  I won't say they hugged each other and embraced each other, but the walls of antipathy [came down]."*

Transformation: Stage of Consciousness

Nine months into a low-profile dialogue process in El Salvador involving the government, private sector and labor unions, a prominent business leader participating in the process saw on television the police beating up a union leader who had also been participating in the dialogue.  Upon seeing this, he immediately called the facilitator to say "look what's happening right now on the news…*this is wrong*!"  Later, he reflected on this experience and shared that had he seen this nine months ago, his immediate response would have been "*The bastard is getting what he deserves*!"  He noted that he had been moved not so much by the personal connection to the union leader as by a changed perception of what is acceptable behavior in a democracy.

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[i] Gopinath Interview.