

# COMFORT ZONES AND DRAGON DREAMING: TOWARDS COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

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**ABSTRACT:** *This article sets our intelligence in a larger context using Dragon Dreaming as a metamodel for the development of a Holistic Science of collective intelligence.*

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## INTRODUCTION – TOWARDS A HOLISTIC SCIENCE

In many Dragon Dreaming workshops I say that there is a faulty view in our culture about the nature of Intelligence. Linguistic relativity suggests that the structure of our language affects the way we conceptualise the world, our cognition and hence our behaviour, demonstrating an interconnectedness between thought, language and culture. For example, we tend to have great capacity and facility to create atomistic “nouns”, which we then relate to as “things” that we can “have”. And this is true with Intelligence, we treat it as a “thing” which some people “possess” and others do not. Such a view creates a false hierarchy, and it colours the way in which we relate to certain people who are labelled as intelligent, or as unintelligent. It also creates a concept of “power”, where the “subject” of a sentence has power *over* the “object”. This “power over” concept is the source of all hierarchical power structures and the win-lose games that are the dominant feature of our culture.

But as Gregory Bateson showed<sup>1</sup>, intelligence is not a “thing”, it is a flow. It is a process of connection that connects you to yourself, to others and to the world. As such it is the result of a process of mutual causation. The individual, through the stimulus of their intention, crosses a threshold into possibility, and hence through the action of their behaviour in the environment creates a feedback response that reconnects to the individual and their intention. It is through the senses that the individual receive the stimulus of their relation to the world. When we breathe, it is a movement of giving and receiving from the universe. When we hear the sounds of nature this exact moment is one of perfect connection with the environment. It is the same way when we see and are seen or we feel the sensation of the breeze. Becoming aware of these connections is what Goethe and Paracelsus named, *active looking*<sup>2</sup>. At this moment you are considering your sensation and experience in relation with your body, your mind, emotion and the environment. This process is one holistic living system.

This living system of stimulus, threshold, action and response is the fractal source of Dragon Dreaming, it is the core of true intelligence and it is spiral in nature. In the flow, this intelligence creates the sense of who you are as an individual, and it also creates the world in which we live.



Figure 1: Drawing Hands

The famous Dutch artist M.C. Escher in 1948 did a drawing of Drawing Hands, which is shown above. This illustrates the property of true intelligence. I am as much a product of the world as the world is a product of me. Buddhists call this *pratīyasamutpāda*, and it is a core reality of the nature of Dragon Dreaming.

Joanna Macy in her work translates this as interdependent co-arising-

This is not new, it can also be clearly seen in the following quotations

The Vietnamese Zen Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh writes:

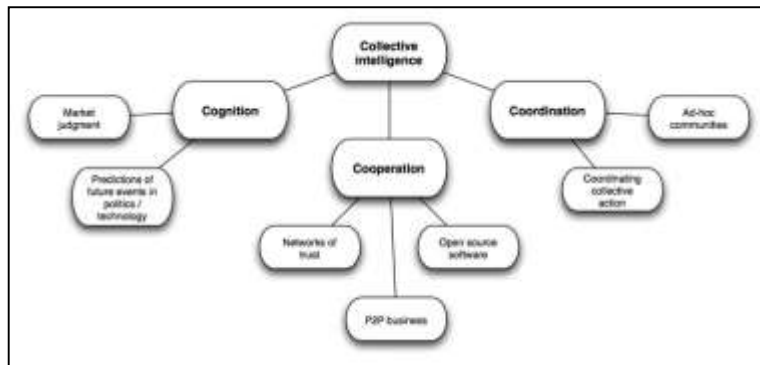
“*Pratitya samutpada* is sometimes called the teaching of cause and effect, but that can be misleading, because we usually think of cause and effect as separate entities, with cause always preceding effect, and one cause leading to one effect. According to the teaching of Interdependent Co-Arising, cause and effect co-arise (*samutpada*) and everything is a result of multiple causes and conditions... In the sutras, this image is given: "Three cut reeds can stand only by leaning on one another. If you take one away, the other two will fall." For a table to exist, we need wood, a carpenter, time, skillfulness, and many other causes. And each of these causes needs other causes to be. The wood needs the forest, the sunshine, the rain, and so on. The carpenter needs his parents, breakfast, fresh air, and so on. And each of those things, in turn, has to be brought about by other causes and conditions. If we continue to look in this way, we'll see that nothing has been left out. Everything in the cosmos has come together to bring us this table. Looking deeply at the sunshine, the leaves of the tree, and the clouds, we can see the table. The one can be seen in the all, and the all can be seen in the one. One cause is never enough to bring about an effect. A cause must, at the same time, be an effect, and every effect must also be the cause of something else. Cause and effect inter-are. The idea of first and only cause, something that does not itself need a cause, cannot be applied.”<sup>2</sup>

Albert Einstein in 1950 has stated

“A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely but the striving for such achievement is in itself a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security.”

More recently Eleanor Rosch has written

“Mind and world are not separate. Since the subjective and the objective aspects of reality arise together as different poles of the same act of cognition (are part of the same information field) they are already joined at their inception... our sciences need to be performed with the mind of wisdom.”



We therefore create ourselves and the world through the projects we do. It is, in a real sense at the same time our projects that create us, as it is through our projects that the world individuates us as human beings. We are therefore never passive, but we are always active in the world. Intelligence is thus not an

individual possession, but a collective property of the world. Intelligence is always a collective phenomenon, because the eternal relation between the individual and the environment- It requires communication, always based upon language shared between participants, and this creates a common platform through which intelligence can be expressed.

Figure 2: Components of Collective Intelligence

Creativity, the core of collective intelligence, needs a community with whom we can share the “Aha!”. Collective intelligence is therefore at the heart of Dragon Dreaming. It has been defined as “a form of universally distributed intelligence, constantly enhanced, coordinated in real time, and resulting in the effective mobilization of skills“<sup>3</sup>, and brings about simultaneously mutual recognition and enrichment of individuals as well as the strengthening of community groups. Howard Bloom<sup>4</sup> has shown how collective intelligence has worked in the evolution of complex life on the planet, significant in bacterial communities, the evolution of multicellular animals and plants, the development of social animals and within human societies. In every case collective intelligence has been an emergent factor based upon the operation of a number of simple rules concerning complex adaptive systems, parallel distributed processing and immediate feedback arising from living systems theory.

Like Thich Nhat Hanh -says, the causes and effects are not separated, effect and causes just happen. Recognizing what is good and allows growth from what does not, depends, among other things on how we treat ourselves, each other and the Earth. Every thought, word or deed, any interaction, no matter how small, a look, a facial expression, a casual word or gesture, however trivial it may seem, has a huge importance and has endless consequences. The only decision that can make sense in this situation is to consider each moment with full attention, relate passionately with every being in every moment. Even the smallest situation can optimally shift the situation and have a great positive effect at the time and continuously into the future.

Putting these thoughts together into an integrative holistic system is not easy, yet Stephan Harding<sup>5</sup> of Schumacher College has done exactly that and has created a Master of Science Degree in Holistic Science that creates such an integration, based upon Jungian theory.

Without throwing the reductionist scientific view out of the window, he has shown how an ethical dimension can be reintegrated into such a worldview, which easily fits within the



Dragon Dreaming framework. This ethical system too, is currently being used within the new project to create an Earth School in Western Australia. Out of this system we have a greater insight into the nature of collective intelligence.

## ESCAPING CULTURAL

## SUICIDE

In neuropsychology, it has been shown that “nerves that fire together wire together”. Thus, we should avoid actions unless we are willing to see a repetition of this act again and again. Humanity repeats its mistakes acts throughout history. The question is how do we exit the repeated errors of the past and enter into a new spiral cycle of conscious evolution? Set against this collective intelligence is our current situation of collective stupidity. A culture that consumes and destroys its own life support systems in the name of a mistaken win-lose ideological game believing this creates “progress”, is a culture that has functionally become insane, and will not survive very long. In such a culture what we define as normality, is in fact part of the illness. It is characterised and maintained by a form of “group think” founded upon a distorted belief in separated, disconnected individualism, cognitive dissonance and denial of reality. That we currently live in such a culture is beyond dispute. Such stupidity is based upon four principle blockages, relating to Dragon Dreaming, that are preventing the information about what is happening in the world to ever effect our behaviour

1. **Blockage in the Dreaming:** Firstly we do not recognise collectively what we are seeing about ourselves and in the world
2. **Blockage in the Planning:** People do not have the capacity to communicate and say what they really think about ourselves and the world
3. **Blockage in the Doing:** There is a huge gap between what we say we are doing and what we actually do with ourselves and in the world
4. **Blockage in the Celebration:** We are prevented from seeing the consequences of what we are actually doing with ourselves and in the world

Such a path of total blindness for any culture is suicidal. Tom Atlee writes, “Collectively, we are creating effects in our world beyond our collective ability to comprehend what we are doing, at a speed that surpasses our collective ability to reflect and respond”. What is needed is a new form of co-intelligence that has been shown by Tom Atlee to avoid the perils of “Group-think” and “cognitive bias” through “the capacity of human communities to evolve towards higher order complexity and harmony, through such innovation mechanisms as differentiation and integration, competition and collaboration.”<sup>6</sup> It emerges through focusing upon creating a new win-win-win culture that demonstrates

- A willingness to share
- An openness to the value of distributed intelligence
- A focus upon the common good
- A continuous iterative process

So how *do* we predict the future? In the ancient world there were a number of oracles, the most famous being the great oracle of Delphi, consulted by kings and emperors, peasants and common people for a period of over 1,400 years. Beginning possibly in Mycenaean times, originally a temple to Gaia, whose vapours were considered to cause the “enthusiasm” that led to the oracular utterance, the temple was taken over by priests from the Apollo temple at Delos in about 800 BCE, in an attempt to take control of the lucrative trade in foretelling the future. Over 680 of her oracular utterances have survived from the ancient world, often in cryptic iambic pentameter verse, and showing a remarkable degree of prescience. Modern research at the temple has shown that it was built at the intersection of two geological fault lines, where the waters of the Castalian Spring of Mount Parnassos, the home of the Greek Muses, travelled through bituminous limestone country, releasing vapours of ethylene at the intersection of the faults. But although tea leaf reading, palmistry, astrology and other esoteric sciences abound, over the last one thousand six hundred years there has not been a single institution prophetic institution that compares with the power or prescience of the oracle of Delphi. But it was not for oracular prophecies that we need the oracle of Delphi again today. As the supplicant walked the sacred way, the *via sacra* to consult the priests who would decide whether to allow the person to visit the oracle and ask his or her question, they would see written above the door the expressions that were considered to be the most important to our understanding of the future -

- γνῶθι σεαυτόν: gnōthi seautón = "know thyself"
- μηδὲν ἄγαν: mēdén ágan = "nothing in excess"

From the analysis above it would seem that our current insanity is based upon ignorance of these principles. We have no idea about who we really are, and our culture seems based upon “everything in excess”.

Is it possible to predict the future today? It would seem that it is, but to do this we cannot depend upon a single woman, possibly under the influence of an entheogenic dose of ethylene for our guidance. We need to look to other scientific sources. Unfortunately the dominant scientific paradigm seems based upon individualistic “reductionism”, a mechanistic model in which a single “intelligent” scientist who believes that things can

best be understood through dismantling them and analysing their parts and their interactions seeks to understand “his” world. But to understand the future and our place within it reductionism is of reduced value. The universe we live in is not only stranger than we imagine, it is, as J.B.S.Haldane was fond to remark, it is stranger than we can imagine. For this we need a different approach, a holistic science which allows for the property of self-generating “emergence”<sup>7</sup>. Seen from the point of view of intelligence as being a collective and not an individual phenomenon we need a different view. We are all of us caught in a mutual participating reality, and it is through being simultaneously a *participant* in and an *observer* of this reality, that we come to understand ourselves and the world, the present moment, our past and our future. Through the twin Titanic gods, who aided Zeus and the Olympians in the *Titanomachia* defeat the others, the ancestral chaotic Titans, Prometheus (foresight) and Epimetheus (hindsight), we can once again begin to predict our own future, by creating it through the projects we do. This Greek myth, however, contained a warning. In return for the assistance of Prometheus and Epimetheus the Gods gave them a gift - a common wife. Her name was Pandora (Pan = everything, Dora = gift) and she came with a box that was never to be opened. In the version of the myth we have the misogynistic Greeks had that it was the woman Pandora who in her curiosity opened the box and let out all the troubles of the world. No, it was intelligence - foresight and hindsight, disconnected from the reality of the environment, in its own hubris and arrogance that is the cause of our problems. Our individuated intelligence, disconnected not just from the environment, but from both our communities and ourselves, is what is killing both us and the world. It is for this, and not his theft of fire, that Prometheus was chained to a rock in the Caucasus, to have a divine eagle come daily to eat his liver, and have it be regrown overnight. It was here after the δωδέκαθλον, or *dodekathlon*, the twelve labours of Herakles, that the hero was sent to free Prometheus from his chains. Aeschylus in his great drama, *Prometheus Bound*, shows how the sin was of hubris of the human intellect, disconnecting itself from the natural world, that was the cause of suffering. We are locked into the belief that only one hand of M.C.Escher did the drawing.

Today, as we stand on the threshold of the Great Turning, with evidence all around us of the dangerous Great Unravelling that is proceeding rapidly, we need to follow Hercules and to free Prometheus, our collective foresight, from its chains. Then we can recover our foresight and create our future that works for all. And this needs a new holistic science<sup>8</sup>.

## THE FOUR INTELLIGENCES OF DRAGON DREAMING

Studies on how different cultures classify colours shows some universals and some differences, which support the theory of Linguistic Relativism spoken of above. Cultures that lack a way to distinguish blue from green, for instance seem to show confusion in discerning the differences. But all cultures seem to have words for black and white, and for the warm colours, red and yellow. These primary colours we use in Dragon Dreaming to distinguish southern hemisphere directions.

The English word “spirit” for instance, is usually seen a non corporeal, non material substance, contrasted in a dualistic fashion with the physical or material world. From a western religious point of view, “spirit” is seen as the creative principle, related to the Latin word “spiratus”, meaning to breathe, and is equated with the Hebrew word “ruach” the breath or spirit of Elohim (God) which moved across the waters in Genesis 1.2. From a scientific perspective, however, it is through breath that we get 17/18ths of the energy we live by, which is one reason why Pinakarri is so important. Breath is the physiology mechanism with which we connect to the universe, that we exchange with the universe. When we breathe with consciousness, one movement of return to our presence happens, instantaneously. You can go 40 days without food, 4 days without water, but not 4 minutes without a breath. It was the appearance of a breathable oxygen atmosphere, about 2.3 billion years ago that led to the appearance of complex cells that enabled multicellular organisms like us to first appear. But what if the spirit, rather than being a dualistic non-material concept, as seen within a scriptural, Greek or Iranian view, was rather an emergent evolutionary emanation, a property of material existence itself, as seen in older shamanistic or aboriginal perspectives? Johnson and Joyce<sup>9</sup> show how such an emergent “spirit” can emerge, not from the top down but from the bottom up, in ants, cities, cells, organisms, organisations and computer software. Seen from an animistic perspective spirit (unlike the religious concept of soul which is seen as eternal and sometimes is even viewed as pre-existing the body) it develops and grows as an integral part of life itself, expressing itself through intelligence, consciousness, complexity and sentience.

In Dragon Dreaming, this spirit is signified by the yellow ribbon to the east of the wheel and is associated with the quantum fire of the beginning of all things. This original plasma fire was extinguished at the recombinant era at the end of the Big Bang and in the following Dark Age, when the Universe became transparent, and Dark Energy (73% of the Universe) and Dark Matter (a further 23%) dominated. The fires were re-lit in the fires of the first stars, in which the elements of our bodies are made. It is the fire of the sun which provides the energy by which life lives, even today. From a holistic point of view this yellow ribbon is associated with the appearance of the spirit, the fires that were lit at the beginning of time and space. Spirit is thus the beginning from which we come. The Copenhagen Interpretation in Quantum Physics suggests that it is through conscious intervention in the creation that wave-particle duality collapses, creating the reality we observe in the universe.

I have been having a number of Aha's, and it relates to Dragon Dreaming and human evolution (if the article is have been written to 2 person, the use “I” is strange? I think you can just write, I suggest delete the first phrase, and begin:) It is interesting to the role of the fire at the beginning of things, and how it is fire, Aboriginal "karl", that created the fireplace, the "karlap" around which humans have sat in a "karlapgur", a place of trust where we gather in trust and sharing. Here for 2 million years we have been sitting; sharing dreams and visions of the future, telling stories, making plans, taking decisions, and after gathering the food we need, coming back to feast, sing together and celebrate. The karlapgur is the circle of the archetypal meeting from which all



subsequent meetings come, to undertake the task or activity found in a Karabirrdt, the web of songlines needed to make our dreams come true. It lies at the heart of the Dragon Dreaming process. In this way it is the fires of the spirit that connects us with all that is, was and ever will be. According to Stephen Covey “Spiritual intelligence is the central and most fundamental of all the intelligences, because it becomes the source of guidance for the others.”<sup>10</sup> David B. King considers “Spiritual Intelligence” to be able to “...contribute to the awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of one's existence, leading to such outcomes as deep existential reflection, enhancement of meaning, recognition of a transcendent self, and mastery of spiritual states.”<sup>11</sup>

Seen from within the Dragon Dreaming Perspective we find that Spiritual Intelligence is related to the reversal of the blockages of collective stupidity, mentioned above

- **Personal Meaning Production:** The ability to recognise what we see and derive personal meaning and purpose from all physical and mental experiences, including the capacity to create and master a life purpose. This relates to awareness of what has been called the “Higher” self or the Ecological Self, in terms of a “vocation” or “calling”.
- **Critical Existential Thinking:** The capacity to critically contemplate the nature of existence, reality, the universe, space, time, and other existential/metaphysical issues; also the capacity to contemplate non-existential issues in relation to one's existence (i.e., from an existential perspective), transcending dualistic separation and share this with others. This aspect is essential for collective intelligence, because at this moment, you have option to connect to the world, or stay locked in your egotism. This is the step of inclusion, of yourself with yourself, of yourself with others. Consequently the interconnection is the sharing of responsibility. We need understand that when you find your happiness and freedom, your realization and awareness, the world changes. This is one way to include all aspects of a situation.
- **Mastery of Immanent Awareness:** The capacity to identify dimensions/patterns of the self (i.e., a transpersonal self), and of others, in the physical world during normal states of consciousness, accompanied by the capacity to identify their relationship to one's self in the physical world. This also relates to the sanctification of everyday experience, through a spiritual mastery, doing what we say. All events have at least one cause and all causes provoke at least one effect. All thought, word, action, every interaction no matter how minimal that we see, even one facial expression has an effect and has an important consequence. We need recognise that our actions have a greater effect, because this is the first way to remove blockages and it is essential that this is the chance to recognize the action that blocks. The unique decision to considerer is the moment that has maximum attention reconnecting each moment with all beings.

- **The Expansion of Consciousness:** The ability to enter and exit altered states of mindfulness or consciousness (e.g. non separation, or oneness) and other states of awareness at one's own discretion (eg. Meditation or contemplation), through a regular practice, that confirms our ability to see what we do, “the ability to act with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the circumstances.”<sup>12</sup>

This path is an old one. It is as the spirit fire of the yellow meets the white of the air and the mind that comes the dreaming, the creativity, the Aha's. Seen from this perspective we have a faulty view of the nature of “genius”. We see genius as an individual of enormous capacity and skill, but this is not the way in which the ancients thought of the term. As Factsheet #31 showed, They saw genius as a collective spirit, a “geist” external to us with which we entered into dialogue through collective creative action to create with.

The second white ribbon to the north of the Dragon Dreaming wheel represents the air that is essential to all life. It represents the gaseous state of matter - the enormous clouds of hydrogen and helium that was all that was left materially at the end of the Big Bang, of the energetic breath to begin in effecting our evolution. The first stars relit the energy present in the hydrogen to allow the synthesis of the heavier elements of which our bodies are made. By lighting the fire of our respiration, in this way aspiration (used in both the sense of breathing and creating a goal in life) began the mental development that was to lead to humans. It related to the Noongar word “waug” meaning air or wind, linked to the Waugal, the rainbow serpent which lies at the heart of Dragon Dreaming. We still use the word inspire (breathing in), for when spirit moves us through the Dreaming of our intuition (inner teaching). It is “conspiring”, breathing together that liberates collective intelligence. The mind is here defined as the collection of the set of cognitive faculties that allows consciousness, perception, judgement and memory in humans and other living beings. As Dragon Dreaming comes from Australia, the southern hemisphere, where the sun is in the north at midday, this also represents high noon, the youthful vigour of high summer. It is in the morning, from 10-12am that we are best capable of absorbing factual information accurately, and from 12-2pm that we are best able to perform dull, repetitive physical tasks whilst making the least number of mistakes.

This white ribbon relates to the mental capability that, among other things, involves the ability to think theoretically, to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, logically and linguistically in the process of acquiring, storing in memory, retrieving, combining, comparing, and using in new contexts information and work conceptually, to comprehend complex ideas, and learn quickly.

This one is fairly easy to identify as it relates to what is generally thought of as mental intelligence. The four states here of mental intelligence are

- **Distinguish subjective / objective states:** The ability to distinguish and work with subjective awareness and objective information, and move comfortably between them. It involves the ability of recognising the difference between factual information and personal superstitions.
- **Acquisition of problem solving skills:** The conceptual ability to acquire and store information necessary for solving particular problems and deciding various courses of action. This relates to the speed of learning conceptual information.
- **Using abstract thinking effectively:** through effective use of hindsight and foresight to engage in activities that relate positively to meeting one's needs.
- **To communicate and share information:** to be skilful in sharing and communicating, recognising and using abstract thinking and cognitive awareness with others in appropriate empowering social contexts.

It is as the white of the airy mind meets the blood and flesh of the body, of the environment, that the dream gets turned into a plan

The red ribbon of the Dragon Dreaming wheel represents both our body and the Earth of which it is made. In the Noongar language it represents “boodjer”, or Country, that from which we came and that to which we shall return. Earth to Earth.... The red colour is symbolic of the sunset, the closure of the day, the maturing of things, of autumn and the season of the ripening fructification of our acts. It is symbolic of the colour of our blood and flesh, the red colour of oxygenated blood that carries the energy by which we live. Our connection with the Earth is primary, it represents the 2.5 tonnes of food consumed by the average person in the course of a year, that is part of the cycling of the material constituents that has maintained the Earth as the living habitat, the environment for life over at least 3.5 billion years. Dragon Dreaming projects need to become “embodied” within the environment if our dreams are to come true. The warm red-yellow ribbon thus represents the threshold between theory and practice, between thinking and doing, where through our behaviour we make the possibilities of our plans manifest. It is through engagement, through participation in the living environment of the world that our projects truly appear as the fruit of our dreams and plans.

The core element of the bodily or kinaesthetic intelligence relates to the ability to handle the body and the objects in which it comes into contact skilfully. People who are connected to their body find it easy to learn through movement and activity. It includes four states of being

- **The first is an intuitive ease in fully inhabiting one's body;** a sense of physical comfort in one's movements and state of being. This relates to seeking comforts that foster health and wellbeing.
- **The second relates to an understanding of one's body;** the awareness of interior bodily states and the ability to name discomforts and the ability to seek what brings health in physical activities.

- **The third relates to the use of one's body;** This also includes a sense of timing, good hand eye coordination, a clear sense of the goal of a physical action, and a joy in physical activity along with the ability to train one's responses.
- **The fourth relates to the connection of our body with space and place;** This is deeply rooted in ecological receptiveness, a sensitive ethical and deeply rooted understanding of place and space, in relation to where one is and what one is doing.

It is as the red of our body gets in touch with the flowing water of our emotions we build our commitment in the doing.

The final ribbon is black. Symbolically it represents the midnight sky, south, in the southern hemisphere, where the sun is invisible as it is below the horizon on its apparent return journey back to the east from where it will, thanks to the eastwards spinning of the world, at nearly 1,000 miles per hour at the equator, rise again next morning. This blackness represents the mystery of our existence, that which lies beyond our awareness. Seen within the perspective of Dragon Dreaming, everything is in a state of flux, of the flow, and those things that we recognise are just temporary nodes in that flow. It is in this flow of experience that we can maintain ourselves. Nearly 70% of our bodies are water, and there is not a single molecule of our water that was present in our bodies even a month ago. We replace the water in our body many times over in the course of a year. The black flows of water within our body, beneath or skin is seamlessly linked with the flows of water outside our bodies in the vast circulation of the water cycle which maintains life on the planet. Life began in the water, and when it developed the capacity to come onto the land it carried the oceans encapsulated within it. If we were to calculate the amount of water that passes through all living things in the course of a year, it represents a sizable ocean, called the "Hypersea" by the M<sup>c</sup>Menamin's<sup>13</sup>. The Noongar word for water here is pronounced half way between "kep" and "gabee". It also represents the flows of our emotions, temporary states of physical feelings produced by the Amygdala deep within the limbic system of the midbrain - the oldest part of the brain, evolved over 150 million years ago and which still provides us with information about ourselves and the world which we can get in no other way.

Emotional Intelligence seems to be based upon four particular skill sets also related to Dragon Dreaming<sup>14</sup>.

- **The first is the ability to perceive emotions** - the ability to detect and decipher emotions in faces, pictures, voices, and cultural artefacts—including the ability to identify one's own emotions. Perceiving emotions represents a basic aspect of emotional intelligence, as it makes all other processing of emotional information possible. It relates to self-awareness and motivation.
- **The second is ability to understand emotions** - the ability to comprehend emotion language and to appreciate complicated relationships among emotions.

For example, understanding emotions encompasses the ability to be sensitive to slight variations between emotions, and the ability to recognize and describe how emotions evolve over time. It relates to the ability to self-regulate one's emotions

- **The third is the ability to use emotions** - the ability to harness emotions to facilitate various cognitive activities, such as thinking and problem solving. The emotionally intelligent person can capitalize fully upon his or her changing moods in order to best fit the task at hand. This relates to the social skills of being able to emotionally influence others.
- **The fourth is the ability to transform emotions** - the ability to change emotional states in both ourselves and in others. Therefore, the emotionally intelligent person can harness emotions, even negative ones, and manage them to achieve intended goals. Here the emotional skill relates to the ability to empathise, considering the emotions of others in daily life and decision making.

It is as emotional intelligence, the black of our flowing feelings, reconnects with the fire of the spirit that we celebrate.

## COMFORT ZONE AND SELF IMAGE

What limits our personal capacities? Clearly over a life time we build up a set of skills and abilities that are the result of choices we have made, the opportunities we have had, and the encouragement of and discouragement of parents, peers and teachers. This patterning begins incredibly early, and in fact extends back before birth, into the experiences of the foetus in the womb<sup>15</sup>. It is certainly affected by the degree to which the infant bonds and attaches to their primary care giver. The patterning is also shaped by our acculturation into the world in which we live. Research shows that a person taking an "Observer-participant" role could have their opinion changed of what a person was feeling on the basis of an inference about the cause of the behaviour, and that we do this to ourselves and to others all the time. In fact this "spiral ladder of inference" is the cause of the negative judgements and stereotypes we make about ourselves and others all the time. It starts with a perception of an observable event. From this we select the data that fits our current emotional state and our unconscious expectations. This data is then interpreted through the concepts we draw as a result of our cultural and personal meanings. Based upon this we make assumptions about others (and our own) behaviour, expecting that a future observable act "means", not what is real, but what our selected biases, unconscious expectations and assumptions mean it to be. Key to the building of our self image is the accumulated criticisms that the person collected as a child which have led to damaging their own view of themselves. Children in particular are vulnerable to accepting negative judgments from authority figures because they have yet to develop competency in evaluating such reports. Also, adolescents are highly targeted to suffer from poor body image issues. Individuals that already exhibit a low-sense of self-worth may be especially vulnerable to developing a poorer self image.

Our self image is built, piece by piece from three perceptions:

1. Self-image resulting from how the individual sees himself or herself
2. Self-image resulting from how others see the individual
3. Self-image resulting from how the individual perceives others see him or her

And what we find in reality, is that none of these are ever accurate. They are constructions, built out of our limited experience of something infinitely more complex. We have no idea as to what we really are. We can only engage.

In analysing the nature of unconditional love, Factsheet Number #28, it spoke of the nature of our comfort zones. In Dragon Dreaming Intensive Workshops we do a test to help people identify their comfort zone, based upon two dimensions. The first dimension is the primary underpinning of a person’s personality, the degree to which they are extrovert or introvert. This dimension was brought into modern psychology by Carl Gustav Jung and his studies of Greek Alchemy. Hippocrates and other Greek philosophers had earlier divided between the temperamental “humours” or elements on a grid as follows:

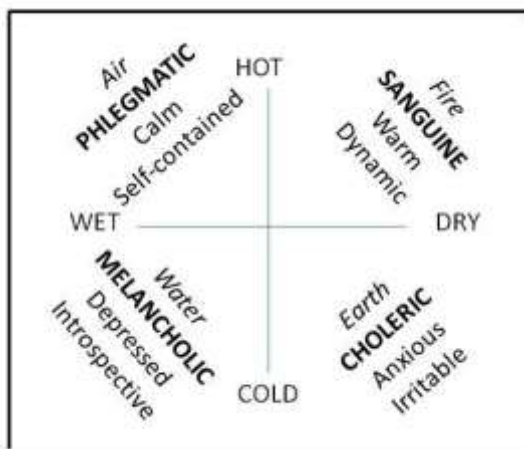


Figure 3: Hellenistic Model of Personalities

Along with various assumptions about male activity and positivity and female passivity and negativity, this “humeric” description lasted for over nearly 2,000 years.

Jung took this one step further and divided between two primary types of temperaments - the extravert and the introvert. Based upon exhaustive questionnaires followed up by interviews, Hans Eysenck<sup>16</sup> revised Hippocrates to suggest that Choleric and Sanguine represented emotionally unstable and emotionally stable extroverts, and Phlegmatic and Melancholic similarly represented emotionally stable and unstable introverts.

Thus positive extroversion (Sanguine) characteristics included:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sociable</li> <li>• Talkative</li> <li>• Easygoing</li> <li>• Carefree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outgoing</li> <li>• Responsive</li> <li>• Lively</li> <li>• Leadership</li> </ul>
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Negative extroversion or neurotic (Choleric) characteristics included

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Touchy</li> <li>• Aggressive</li> <li>• Changeable</li> <li>• Optimistic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restless</li> <li>• Excitable</li> <li>• Impulsive</li> <li>• Active</li> </ul>
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Similarly positive emotionally stable (Phlegmatic) introvert characteristics were

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Passive</del></li> <li>• Thoughtful</li> <li>• Controlled</li> <li>• Even Tempered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careful</li> <li>• Peaceful</li> <li>• Reliable</li> <li>• Calm</li> </ul>
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Negative neurotic unstable (Melancholic) introvert characteristics were

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Quiet</del></li> <li>• Reserved</li> <li>• Sober</li> <li>• Anxious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsociable</li> <li>• Pessimistic</li> <li>• Rigid</li> <li>• Moody</li> </ul>
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Although there has been disagreement about the placement of some of Eysenck's characteristics, and their limited number, I find them a useful starting point in identifying comfort (and discomfort) zones in Dragon Dreaming. Extroverts, I believe tend to be more "other" directed, taking their primary personality from their environment, whereas introverts find themselves more "inner" directed, through taking their emotional cues from within themselves.

Gordon Allport<sup>17</sup>, working from a dictionary identified 18,000 words related to personality and temperament which through analysis he reduced to 4,500. Cattell reduced this list further to 171, and later to 16 primary factors. Still later others<sup>18</sup> reduced this list to 5. These 5 dominant character traits are linked to our development, and we each have a mixture of these. In Dragon Dreaming it was  $\pm$  refined to use two dimensions of four of these characteristics. In particular, I feel these two factors other than extroversion and introversion relate most to how people work together and make decisions.

Thus there are those who are open to new experience, they tend to be those who like perceiving newly, and thinking globally. These people are at home in theory, in concepts and in thinking and thought. Positively they tend to be imaginative, liking variety and independence. Less positively they are often not very practical, they avoid routine, and are nonconforming, they can also be disorganised, careless and a little impulsive.

Those people who are more practical tend to be more conscientious than the first group. They tend to be more organised, careful and self-disciplined, liking routine, more practical, they learn more by doing, and are more conforming. They are more interested in percepts rather than concepts, they are more interested in acting locally and being personally than the first group.

Another category, not found in earlier studies is Agreeable. Although these people may have some of the introvert nature, mentioned above, in being retiring, sober and reserved, they are also soft-hearted, trusting and helpful. Their inner focus makes it

often easier to get in touch with their feelings of empathy and compassion. Those low on agreeableness tend to be more ruthless, suspicious or uncooperative.

Thus the dominant current theory of personality is that there are 5 major dimensions in personality as follows

1. **Openness to New Experiences:** linked to fantasy, aesthetics, feeling and actions, ideas and visions and a sense of internal values
2. **Extroversion:** shows up in gregariousness, warmth, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking and optimistic positive emotions.
3. **Conscientiousness:** is linked to competence, order, dutifulness, striving for achievement, self-discipline and deliberation
4. **Agreeableness:** links trust and trustfulness, straightforwardness, thoughtfulness, altruism, empathy and compassion and compliance, modesty, humility and tenderness
5. **Neuroticism:** is characterised by the traits of high anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self preoccupation, impulsiveness and vulnerability and pessimism.

We all have aspects of all five within us to a greater or lesser degree. What is I find interesting is that these relate five characters relate to the Dragon Dreaming thresholds in an interesting fashion. Thus Openness to New Experiences is the threshold that connects the “Perceiving Newly” of the Dreaming Stage to the “Thinking Globally of the Planning Stage. Extroversion as discussed already, is where an individual takes the basis of their personality from the environment in which they find themselves. It connects the “Thinking Globally” to “Acting Locally”. Conscientiousness relates to the threshold between “Acting Locally” and “Being Personally”. It is the practical application and source of the development of our personal skills. Finally Agreeable personalities, are those that take their emotional colouration from the threshold of “Being Personally” to “Perceiving Newly”. But what of Neuroticism? If the goal of Dragon Dreaming truly is Empowerment, then the Neuroticism axis is a measure of the personal growth in which we still need to engage. Is it out of our Neuroticism that the breakdown of loving occurs? It would seem that neuroticism is where we find the separation from self, others and the world, the realm where fear arises and trust is lost. To discover an answer to this question we first need to examine the other four personality traits at greater depth

In Dragon Dreaming we use these characteristics to map out one’s comfort zone and diagnose one’s likely strengths and weaknesses. Thus -

***Dreamers:*** Are open to new experience, are more intuitive, in touch with their visions and intentions, and tend also to be agreeable and slightly more introverted than others. They need directional leadership, and learn best through engaging the imagination through good stories.

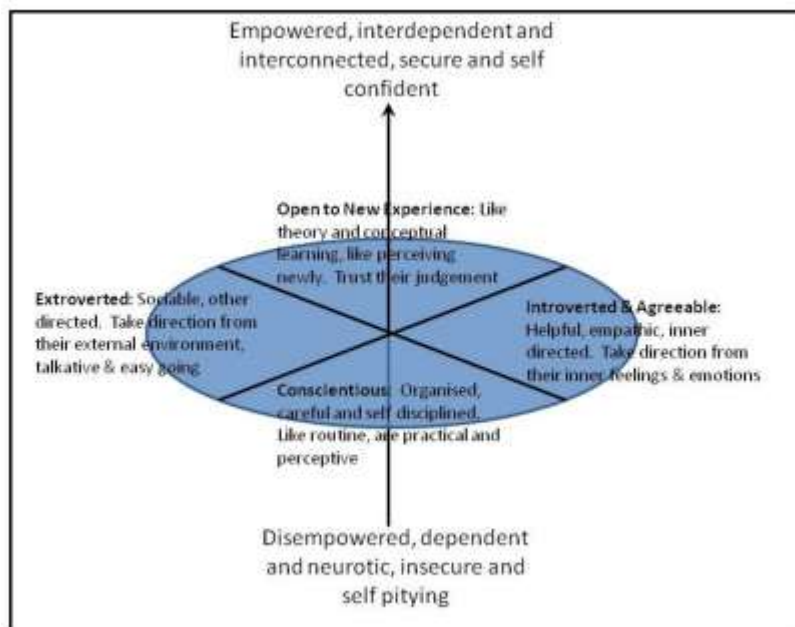
***Planners:*** Are also open to new experience, but are more judgemental, in touch with goals and objectives. They tend to be extroverts, comfortable in engaging with the natural



environment and with other people. They need effective coaching and learn best through understanding the concepts.

**Doers:** Are more conscientious, self-disciplined and committed to making things happen. They learn best through perceiving what is happening when they are doing it, and like the extroverts, are comfortable in engaging within the natural world. Doers are less interested in the overall strategy but are more interested in others behaviour and in appropriate support for what they are doing.

**Celebrators:** Are the group that is most agreeable, and like seeing what happens at the completion of the task. They are interested in the review process, the meta-cognition, of knowing what can be learned from what has been done, and celebrating the satisfactory completion of the tasks completed and of the people who have been engaged for who they are. Celebrators are interested not just in the product, but also in the process. For them the end does not justify the means.



This personality structure does not just apply to humans. It is also widespread in mammals. James King and Aurelio Figueredo<sup>19</sup> have found that the five factor model is also found in Chimpanzee behaviour. The same is true of the spotted hyena. Silke Haggemeyer, a “horse whisperer” of Sieben Linden Ecovillage in Germany, has found the same personality types in her horses. Sam Gosling, who did the work with hyenas, has also found the

same differences in sociability with Octopuses. It seems to be a result of the construction of our brains and nervous

systems, required to function in wider social groups.

The fifth category of Neuroticism I feel does not fall at all in the current Dragon Dreaming wheel in mapping comfort zones, but can be considered a vertical axis, stretching upwards, from disempowered neuroticism, to empowered humanisation and liberation. Movement along this axis, I believe, is the movement propelled by and moving towards unconditional love. The symptoms of disempowerment are linked to insecurity, worry and self pity, while those of empowerment are traits of security, self-confidence, calmness and satisfaction.

Another important aspect of human development, no matter whatever the personality, and always present in blockages, is the ability to deal with frustration. To be alive in the world is to sometimes feel frustration, because events will happen contrary our expectations. But, if we can see the others perspectives, the frustration are an opportunity to open our eyes to see something that we never imagined could exist. Frustration is therefore a stimulus caused by the external environment, and then this is the exact moment that the individual can grow their ability to deal overcome their narrow egotistic, individual perspective and open their mind to thousands of new possibilities. This is a powerful way to connect with the collective intelligence and to be an active participant contributing one's personal individual potential for the benefit of this larger group. One powerful way to grow this ability is the mode of *active looking*; looking at oneself, looking at each other and looking at the environment actively and fully.

## CONCLUSION

Thus the Dragon Dreaming wheel represents the nature of the holistic iterative and integrative science which Stephan Harding<sup>20</sup> speaks of as necessary for the healing of our age. It represents the universal story of the cooling states of matter in the universe, from plasma fire to gaseous air, solid earth and liquid water. It provides a basis for a science which integrates our spiritual, mental, physical and emotional intelligence and development together into a collective wisdom of which each of us is a part, and without which none of us can have a separate existence. If we are to re-enter the prophetic halls last seen by the oracle of Delphi, it will only be with such a wholeness that will open the doors that enable us to see both where we have come from and to where we are going. We now search for where this holistic science will lead us.

In Dragon Dreaming, true celebration derives from acknowledgement and recognition, gratitude and thankfulness, not from an event where large amounts of alcohol get consumed. The movie "Avatar" where the Na'vi woman says to the human man, "I see you", meaning I see inside you, I see you in your glory and magnificence, and in your woundedness and brokenness as a human being. And all is well, and all manner of things are well. Stephen James Joyce<sup>21</sup> in his book "Teaching an Anthill to Fetch" comments that there is a South African Greeting "Sowabona", which literally means "I see you", to which the customary reply is "Ngikona", meaning "I am", meaning I exist or I have value by virtue of being. In the Aboriginal Noongar tradition from my part of Western Australia, there were no formal greetings as such, they were later adopted from Europeans. Traditionally on meeting two Aborigines would exclaim "Kiya" (or Gaia), meaning "Yes!". It is this "yes" that underlies the proverb that we can only learn to know ourselves through the eyes of another.

This would seem to be the dominant phenomenological world view we need for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. G Spencer Brown has stated " Thus we cannot escape the fact that the world we know is constructed on order (and thus in such a way as to be able) to see itself.

This is indeed amazing. Not so much in view of what it sees, although this may appear fantastic enough, but in respect of the fact that it can see at all.

But in order to do so, evidently it must first cut itself up into at least one state which sees, and at least one other state which is seen. In this severed and mutilated condition, whatever it sees is only partially itself. We may take it that the world undoubtedly is itself (i.e., is indistinct from itself), but, in any attempt to see itself as an object, it must, equally undoubtedly act so as to make itself distinct from, and therefore false to, itself.

It seems hard to find an acceptable answer to the question of how or why the world conceives a desire, and discovers an ability, to see itself, and appears to suffer the process. That it does so is sometimes called the original mystery. Perhaps, in view of the form in which we presently take ourselves to exist, the mystery arises from our insistence on framing a question where there is, in reality, nothing to question.

Ananda K Coomaraswamy shows how this vision has indeed been integrated within some of the most ancient scriptures “The form of our “knowledge,” or rather “ignorance” (avidya), dismembers us daily; and for this divisive ignorance an expiation is provided for in the Sacrifice, where by the sacrificer’s surrender of himself and the building up again of the dismembered deity, whole and complete, the multiple selves are reduced to their single principle (consciously if they are “saved,” unconsciously if they are “lost”). There is thus an incessant multiplication of the inexhaustible One and unification of the indefinitely Many. Such are the beginnings and endings of worlds and of individual beings: expanded from a point without position or dimensions and a now without date or duration, accomplishing their destiny, and when their time is up returning ‘home’ to the Sea in which their life originated.”

William James, spoke of how we can access this collective consciousness. “Our normal consciousness in the waking state is just a special type of consciousness, whilst across your back, separated from her by the finest of fabrics, lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We can go through life without suspecting even their existence; apply to them, however, the necessary stimulus and at the first touch, however slight it might be, hey they are there in all their completeness ...”

James is supported by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who wrote “Fuller being is closer union. And union increases only through an increase in consciousness. That is to say in vision. And an increase in consciousness, is why the history of the living world can be summarized as the elaboration of ever more perfect eyes within a cosmos in which there is always something more to be seen.”

Ultimately the source of collective consciousness is beyond the personal. Andy Goldsworthy puts it well. “We often forget that we are nature. Nature is not something separate from us. So when we say that we have lost our connection to nature, we’ve lost our connection to ourselves”.

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<sup>1</sup> Bateson, Gregory, (2000), "Steps Towards an Ecology of Mind: collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution and epistemology" (University of Chicago Press)

<sup>2</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh (1991), *Old Path White Clouds*, (Parallax Press) and also Thich Nhat Hanh (1999), *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*, (Three River Press)

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Lévy, *Collective intelligence: Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace*, 1994, p. 13

<sup>4</sup> Bloom, Howard (2000), "The Global Brain: the evolution of mass mind from the Big Bang to the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (Wiley) and (1995) "The Lucifer Principle: a scientific expedition of the forces of history" (Allen and Unwin)

<sup>5</sup> Harding, Stephan (2009) "Animate Earth: Science, Intuition and Gaia" (UIT Cambridge)

<sup>6</sup> Atlee, Tom (2003), "The Tao of Democracy: using co-intelligence to create a world that works for all." (The Writers Collective)

<sup>7</sup> Johnson, Stephen (2001), "Emergence: the connected lives of ants, brains, cities and software" (Allen Lane)

<sup>8</sup> Harding, Stephan (1993) 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, "Animate Earth: Science, Intuition and Gaia" (Green Books)

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, Ibid. Also see Joyce, Stephen James (2007), "Teaching an Anthill to Fetch: developing collaborative intelligence at work" (Mighty Small Books)

<sup>10</sup> Covey, Stephen, (2004), "The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness" (Simon and Schuster, 2004, p.53)

<sup>11</sup> King, David B. & Teresa L. DeCicco (2009), "A Viable Model and Self-Report Measure of Spiritual Intelligence", in *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, Volume 28, pp. 68-85

<sup>12</sup> Wigglesworth, Cindy, (2006), "Why Spiritual Intelligence is Essential to Mature Leadership", *Integral Leadership Review* Volume VI, No. 3, August 2006

<sup>13</sup> McMenemy, Mark A & Dianna (1994), "Hypersea: life on land" (Columbia University Press)

<sup>14</sup> Mayer, J.D., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Implications for educators* (pp. 3-31). New York: Basic Books. This schema has been modified somewhat through the inversion of factors 2 and 3 and by renaming "management of emotion" as "transformation of emotion". It has also been modified to include the work of Daniel Goleman (See Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books)

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<sup>15</sup> Grof, Stanislav (1993) "The Holotropic Mind: three levels of human consciousness and how they shape our lives" (Harper)

<sup>16</sup> Eysenck, Hans (1958), "A Short Questionnaire for the Measurement of Two Dimensions of Personality" (Journal of Applied Psychology Vol 42, No.1 pp.14-17)

<sup>17</sup> Allport, Gordon, et al, (1936) "Trait names: a psycho-lexical study" (Psychological Monographs, Vol 47, No. 1 pp.1-171) and Raymond B. Cattell (1957), Personality and Motivational Structure and Measurement" (World Book Co.)

<sup>18</sup> Tupes, Ernest C. & Raymond E. Cristal (1961), "Recurrent Personality Factors Based on Trait Ratings" (Journal of Personality Vol 60, No 2, pp.225-251)

<sup>19</sup> King, James E. & Aurelio J. Figueredo (1997) "The five factor model plus dominance in Chimpanzee personality" (Journal of Research in Personality Vol 31 pp.257-271) and also Gosling, Samuel D. and Oliver P. John (1999) "Personality Dimensions in Non Human Animals" (Current Directions in Psychological Science, Vol 8, No. 3 pp.69-75)

<sup>20</sup> Harding, Stephan (2009), "Animate Earth: Science, Intuition and Gaia" (UIT Cambridge)

<sup>21</sup> Joyce, Stephen James (2007), "Teaching an Anthill to Fetch: developing collaborative intelligence at work" (Mighty Small Books)