

Imaginal Visioning for Prophetic Foresight (Expanded preprint of published article)¹

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Abstract

This article, written for a [special issue](#) of the *Journal of Futures Studies* focusing on the topic of “Communication of Foresight,” makes the case that:

- a) Rational/analytic methods for futures research, foresight and planning need to be complemented by “imaginal” visioning methods that are based on higher intuition—especially in times involving systemic disruptions and transformative change expected in the next decade and beyond; and
- b) “Prophetic” foresight, involving a moral or wisdom component, is similarly essential for the evolution of wise futures.

After tracing the 40 year-long development of imaginal visioning methods by the author, foundational concepts are introduced that support the idea of personal, interpersonal and transpersonal co-creative partnerships in the use and communication of imaginal visioning for prophetic foresight.

Due to length constraints, several sections of material had to be cut from this article that are particularly important as foundational information supporting the credibility of the proposals made herein. Therefore, this expanded preprint is posted online for the convenience of interested readers.

Please note that the numbering of figures and endnotes differs between this expanded preprint and the published version, although the numbering main sections is the same for both.

Key words: visioning, imaginal visioning, foresight, prophetic foresight, evolution, conscious evolution, intuition, wise futures

¹ This is Version 2.1 (March, 2014) of an expanded preprint version of [Imaginal Visioning for Prophetic Foresight](#), published in *Journal of Futures Studies*, Vol. 17, No.1, pp. 5-24, 2012, and is available online at: <http://www.imaginalvisioning.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Imaginal-Visioning-for-Prophetic-Foresight-Preprint.pdf>. This update principally contains a new section (4.4), “An Imagistic Model of Co-Creative Consciousness,” and citation of Christopher Bache’s magisterial treatment of The Science of Fields in Section 3.3.1.

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Imaginal Visioning for Prophetic Foresight

The most remarkable feature of this historical moment on Earth is not that we are on the way to destroying the world — we've actually been on the way for quite a while. It is that we are beginning to wake up, as from a millennia-long sleep, to a whole new relationship to our world, to ourselves and each other.

Joanna Macy

The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant.
We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.

Albert Einstein

1.0 Introduction: The Future Context of Foresight Communication

The likelihood of *epochal* change is increasingly recognized by both professional futurists and citizen activist leaders as essential to prepare for and to influence to the extent feasible. For example consider the following writers who represent different schools of thought about the future:

- *Sociotechnological enthusiasts* such as Ray Kurtzweil (2005) and William Halal (2008)
- *Sociotechnological alarmists* such as Thomas Homer-Dixon (2006), John Michael Greer (2008), Michael Marien (2009), Lester Brown (2011), and Mark Bailey (2011)
- *Evolutionary transformationalists* such as Willis Harman (1998), Barbara Marx Hubbard (1998), Ken Wilber (2001), and Ervin Laszlo (2009)
- *Cosmic transformationalists* such as Ruth Miller (2011) and Sal Rachele (2011).
- Cutting across such orientations as above, the journal *FUTURES* recently featured a series of articles based on the idea that we are already living in *post-normal times* (Sardar, 2010), e.g., “Toward a new macrohistory: An extension to Sardar's 'postnormal times' ” (Gary, 2011).

All of these tend to see the present and near-term future as transitional between major historical epochs for humankind, and most of them exemplify the precept known as *Dator's Law*—that any useful statement about the future should at first seem ridiculous.

“Communication of Foresight” is thus a worthy topic at this time, not only due to the alternative future ways in which a new civilizational epoch may emerge (including the impending MegaCrisis recently focused on by this journal),³ but also due to the cascading explosion of new social networking applications through which to communicate—both about such threats, and about evolving visions of a wisely evolving civilization as guidelines for handling those threats. Clearly, deeply creative and visionary thinking is called for.

1.1 From MegaCrisis to Wise Futures: The Need for Higher Level Thinking

As noted in two prior articles in this journal (Markley, 2011b, 2011c), not only is our society headed for a new civilizational epoch, it is likely to get there through the gateway of a cascading series of disruptions (economic, ecological, civic, etc.), leading up to a MegaCrisis/tipping point toward disintegration—after which, hopefully, there will be a recovery with whatever type of reformation can lead to what I would here like to term a *wise future*.

Wise futures may be envisioned as being ecologically sustainable, socioeconomically just, psychospiritually fulfilling, and protective of the needs of future generations—such as are aspired to by citizen activist groups like the Bioneers Conference⁴ and Pachamama Alliance.⁵ Comparable concepts are “integral futures” (Gidley, 2007; Slaughter, 2008a; Collins & Hines, 2010), or “aspirational futures”

³ <http://www.jfs.tku.edu.tw/16-2/S01.pdf> retrieved May 15, 2012.

⁴ <http://www.bioneers.org/> retrieved December 25, 2011.

⁵ <http://www.pachamama.org/> retrieved December 13, 2011.

(Bezold, Peck & Olson, 1998), and the thrust of Tom Lombardo's recent writing about wisdom, consciousness and the future (2011a, 2011b, undated).

As also noted in Markley (2011b), the potential run-up to MegaCrisis is increasingly beset with a loss of resilience, and filled with *wicked problems*: challenges that are difficult or impossible to solve for many reasons, often including complex systemic interdependencies such that the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems (Gall, et al, 2010; Ritchey, 2011). If one accepts the well-worn adage widely attributed to Einstein—*that no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it*—it follows that any path to wise futures must involve new “higher level” approaches that extend our capacities for foresight, proactive problem solving, design thinking, communication and collective action.⁶ Foresight methods involving “higher” intuition constitute one such approach (Markley & Harman, 1982; Harman & Rheingold, 1984, Markley, 1996).

1.2 Imaginal Visioning for Prophetic Foresight ⁷

In my own futures research and forecasting work, I have increasingly found it useful to complement rational/analytic methods for conventional foresight with higher intuition methods. In response to the needs developed above, I now propose to use the terms: *imaginal visioning* for *prophetic foresight*. Although their understanding needs additional information given later in Section 3.4, please consider the following definitions as keynotes for this article—with the footnotes a technical part of these definitions:

Imaginal Visioning—the process of intuiting transcendently supra-rational knowledge in a focused receptive mode

Prophetic foresight—proactive ⁸ knowledge that includes a moral, ethical or wisdom component; often a vision of wise and unwise futures and ways to manifest the one and avoid the other.⁹

⁶ Illustrative of recently developed approaches that appear to meet the above criteria are:

- The “Theory U” approach currently being put forward by Otto Scharmer (2007a, 2007b) that involves “Presencing” – learning from the emerging future (Senge, Scharmer, Jawarski & Flowers, 2004).
- The synthesis proposed by Nicholas Gall and his colleagues at Gartner Research (2010), which they dubbed “Hybrid Learning”—itself an expansion of the concept of “design thinking.”

Both are relevant for the two principal design proposals of this article, described in a later section below.

⁷ As suggested by the peer review process, this section is written in the first person as the best way to communicate the empirical foundations of my R&D on what I am now defining as imaginal visioning for prophetic foresight.

⁸ Defining prophetic foresight as proactive means that it is relevant for the choosing of wise paths to the future, not that it is predictive of the future expected to occur. Although this distinction is of fundamental importance for futurists, it should not deny the relevance of “remote viewing” (Lee, 2008) as a futures research method.

⁹ As I use the term, *prophetic foresight* is less about predictive aspects than about a deeper level of truth than is customarily recognized about wise versus unwise consequences of following particular actions; as in the Biblical story of *the handwriting on the wall* which warned what would happen if people wouldn't change their unwise ways. Futurists traditionally call this type of foresight a “self-denying prophecy”—i.e., one that does not come to pass if its warning is heeded. A well-known recent example of such self-denying prophecy is Al Gore warning about global warming.

Self-fulfilling prophecies, on the other hand, come about because people act to fulfill that which is prophesied. Recent examples include Eric Drexler (1987) forecasting the nanotechnology revolution that is now well underway; Ray Kurtzweil (2005) forecasting a technological “singularity” involving

Imaginal Visioning for Prophetic Foresight is a 15 min. introductory video that can be seen online at <http://youtu.be/SPVz8vz0fe8>.

To help navigate the many interdisciplinary concepts brought together in this article, here is the basic outline:

- Section 2 – An empirical description of my work developing visioning methods for futures research and foresight
- Section 3 – Essential concepts for their further evolution of imaginal visioning methods
- Section 4 – Three imaginal channels (personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal) through which to co-creatively seek and communicate prophetic foresight for the evolution of wise futures, and containing a new “Imagistic Model of Co-Creative Consciousness”
- Section 5 – Where imaginal visioning is apt to be most useful
- Section 6 – Summary conclusion and further work.

2.0 Empirical Foundations of My Imaginal Foresight Methods

My first experience as a professional futurist trying to cope with the methodological challenge of transformative change came in the early 1970s, after I had been hired as a fresh postdoc by Willis Harman to lead methodology development at the new futures research think tank he was forming at the Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International). Soon thereafter, I got my first taste of personal/professional paradigm change.

As if it wasn't hard enough to figure out how to do holistic research on the future of society, the first major results of our modeling methodology¹⁰ indicated that of some fifty of the most highly plausible alternative future histories for society, only a small handful were by any stretch of the imagination desirable. And most of them involved deep seated transformation regarding underlying attitudes, images and policies in response to emerging problems involving over-population, resource depletion, pollution, dangerous weapons build ups, etc.—a Pandora's Box of problems we dubbed, "The World Macroproblem"¹¹ (Harman, 1969; Markley, 1972/1981; Harman, Markley & Rhyne, 1973).

computers becoming conscious—perhaps by 2030; and Barbara Marx Hubbard (1998) forecasting an epochal evolutionary advance in the level of consciousness of humanity, based on spiritual rather than technological maturation.

An example of both self-defeating and self-fulfilling prophecies packed together is what Thomas Homer-Dixon (2006), in a book with this name, terms “the upside of down. (More on this in the next endnote.)

Additionally, please note that this use of *prophetic* needs to be carefully distinguished from the ways in which practitioners of Evangelical and/or Pentecostal religious sects use the term. Jay Gary's learned (2007) blog, “Do You Hear Voices in Your Head?” does much to clarify this issue. More clarification on this will be given in a later section introducing the concept of “cornucopia causality,” which I consider to be the ontological foundation of prophetic foresight.

¹⁰ The qualitative modeling methodology we used was the Field Anomaly Relaxation (FAR), brought to us from Johnson Research Associates by Russell Rhyne. Please see Rhyne (1981) for a later and more complete write up of this method.

A graphic portrayal of the tree of alternative future histories we produced using the FAR method—originally carried in “The Forecasting of Plausible Alternative Future Histories: Methods, Results and Educational Policy Implications” (Harman, Markley & Rhyne, 1973 and now out of print)—is reproduced as Figures 3 and 4 of Markley (2011b), available online at <http://www.jfs.tku.edu.tw/15-3/E01.pdf>.

¹¹ The Club of Rome used the term *le Problématique Humaine* to denote essentially the same cluster of problems our group at SRI called the World Macroproblem.

With my methodological responsibilities in mind, I, in turn, reasoned that foresight methods based on rational/analytic modes of thinking are, in principle, not suitable for creative exploration of transformational alternative futures because such thinking modes are more or less extrapolative of what has gone on before. My knowledge of cognitive psychology pointed toward intuition as the appropriate mental mode to use; and after reviewing many different ways to access one's intuitive faculty, I came to settle on *guided cognitive imagery* as the most "appropriate technology"¹² for helping people tap their intuitive sources of knowledge for purposes of foresight involving transformative change.

So I immediately set about learning the art of guiding interactive visioning sessions in which the guide facilitates the process of relaxing cognitive beliefs and expectations, so as to help participants' focus their intuitive resources on the task at hand with minimal bias.¹³

2.0.1 An Initial Public Workshop

Soon thereafter, a public trial confirmed the appropriateness of this mode of acquiring foresight for a lay audience as well as for researchers. It occurred when our team was invited to do a two-day workshop about the future of education for the staff of the Los Angeles Superintendent of Schools. We needed an entertaining after dinner event for the first day—and after learning that we would all be having drinks together before dinner, I decided it would be safe to risk taking the group on an after dinner experiential visioning expedition. In it, I had them imagine being elementary students, listening to a lecture about the ecological challenges at various times in history—both past and future—and having them imaginatively "be there" long enough to explore how education was done in each, starting 10,000 years ago, and ending 2,000 years in the future.

The exercise went quite well, and afterwards, as the participants were sharing what they experienced, their comptroller—who during the day beforehand had been a rather troublesome critic, continually questioning the credibility of what we were sharing, and who rather obviously had enjoyed the "attitude adjustment" period of drinks before dinner—blurted out that in the very long-range future he saw "time travel." I innocently asked if this was managed mechanistically, or done with the powers of the mind. When he replied "the powers of the mind," I immediately recognized that I had discovered a "mental time travel" method that could be used in many different ways—both by professional futurists and by lay audiences—for intuitively based futures research and forecasting.

¹² *Appropriate technology* is a term that was popularly used by futurists beginning in the early 1970s to denote technologies that were considered to be safe, economical and relatively free of undesirable side effects ("cross impacts") (Porter, et al, 1980). As compared with other methods for tapping intuition in professional settings, guided cognitive imagery is effective, inexpensive, teachable, and relatively free of undesirable side effects.

One side effect that I discovered when teaching a graduate course in "Visionary Futures" from 1980-2000, was that students can become quite alarmed and sometimes a bit depressed as a result of doing repeated mental time travel (described later in this article) as a visionary research tool, and viscerally experiencing undesirable futures as highly probable if current trends continue (e.g., what is portrayed by Figure 1). For this reason, I created a "Transformative ReVisioning" process as a "self-therapy" for resilience and sustainable well-being that is useful when facing really scary futures, as well as to handle other types of projective phenomena, such as regret. You can read about this process at <http://www.inwardboundvisioning.com/Docs/TransformativeReVisioningCS.htm>.

More limited visioning experiences, however, have proven quite safe with all manner of audiences over the years.

¹³ The method I found most useful for putting myself "to level" was discovered almost by accident when I took a course in self-hypnosis for speed reading. It involved using a special type of deep relaxation that turns out also to open one's intuitive capacities. Books that I later found useful in teaching this and related skills are *Silva Mind Control* (Silva, 1977), *Mind Games* (Masters & Houston, 1973), and *Awakening Intuition* (Vaughan, 1979).

This particular exercise has proven very valuable over the years, with all manner of different audiences ranging from elementary school children to corporate executives. A more well-developed version of this method is described, together with instructions and a script an adult audience (Markley, 1994), and for adults and children (Markley & Burchsted, 1997).

2.1 A “Visioning Skunk Works”¹⁴ R&D Laboratory

Soon after the successful exercise with the education professionals in 1972, I enlisted a small group of my closest SRI colleagues to participate in a weekly Friday afternoon visioning lab we called our “skunk works” (a term used by aerospace design engineers for creatively advanced work that is kept hidden to avoid administrative obstacles), so as to have a solidly empirical R&D base for the development of these intuitively based visioning processes. The sessions were held in the living room of a nearby home and generally involved a sequence of steps more or less like the following:

1. While having light refreshments, we first conferred about the most difficult problems being faced in our rational/analytically-based futures research work, choosing one or two as the focus of work for the afternoon.
2. With the dictum that *the guide should be guided*, I would then relax into a special state of consciousness for enhanced intuition (called “going to level”), so as to intuit a suitable visioning process to be used for the work of the day.
3. To prepare the group for the visioning session to follow, I next led them in a guided induction to “level” that relaxes the habitual rational/analytic state of consciousness and simultaneously opens up the usually hidden reserves of intuition and what might be termed non-local awareness.
4. When a suitable state of consciousness was reached by the group, we did whatever type of process I had intuited as being most suitable for the task at hand.
5. We usually ended with a “debriefing” session in which we talked about what worked, what didn’t, and how to integrate our results into the conventional research methods we would be using in the following week.

Here is an extended “skunk works” example involving a scenario project on the long-range future of transportation-related pollution and its impacts (Elgin, MacMichael & Schwartz, 1975):

After relaxing into the altered state “level” suitable for what I have now come to call *imaginal visioning*, we all imagined being together in a ten-foot diameter eyeball that became our virtual vehicle for space-time travel. In it we “flew” at 20,000 ft. over the greater Los Angeles region in the year 2020, and then shared what each of us saw in the imaginal trance that we used for this “trip.” Afterwards, we injected the consolidated results into the rational/analytic steps that we reported to our clients regarding our overall methodology.

When all of the scenarios were done, and ready to be briefed to the client, the team thought it good to prepare for the briefing by “living” through each of them, using the method I later published as *Mental Time Travel* (Markley, 2007). After doing this exercise, we talked about what happened. One of the team was a somewhat hard-bitten transportation engineer who sat in on our Friday afternoon sessions trying to be open-minded, but with a quite skeptical outlook, never having much “visionary stuff” happen for himself personally. He led off by saying, “*Well, this is the first time that I can say that something really important happened for me in any of these exercises. I don’t feel like I learned anything really new; but now, for the first time, I feel*

¹⁴ After the formal journal version of this article was submitted for publication, I discovered <http://www.lockheedmartin.com/us/aeronautics/skunkworks.html>, which makes clear that Skunk Works® is a registered trademark of Lockheed Martin, Inc. Subsequently, in work with the Institute for Alternative Futures, we have chosen to use the term “Visioning Community of Practice” (VCoP), rather than Visioning Skunkworks, which was deemed not to pass the smell test (something of a joke).

really confident about briefing these scenarios to a possibly hostile client audience... because the scenarios are now something I can talk about from the heart of my own felt experience, rather than as something that I would have to talk about from only intellectual knowing."

Then, because we had finished early, with more than a half an hour to go before we usually ended our Friday afternoon sessions, we decided that it might be a good idea for us to do a time travel exercise in which we all moved forward in time about a week, and watched the forthcoming briefing take place, so as to alert ourselves to anything that might be important to know. When we were in the middle of this visionary run-through of the briefing, the transportation engineer suddenly sat upright from where he had been lying on the floor, and said loudly, "*We can't do the briefing this way; it simply won't work!*" When he explained what it was that he had seen, all agreed that the client would be confused by the plan for the briefing that all were working from. The team immediately redesigned that part of the briefing; then went back into the visionary state of consciousness, re-visioned the briefing, and came up with a feeling of quiet joy at having a design they felt confident in. At the next Friday skunk works meeting after the team had gone to Washington and returned, all agreed that the briefing went superbly—just as it was "re-visioned" as doing; and that it would have been a disaster to have run the briefing as initially envisioned.

It is perhaps important to note that we didn't risk our credibility, back then, by disclosing information about our use of research methods using altered consciousness for expanded intuition in the methodology section of our reports to business and government clients.¹⁵ It now seems imperative to come out of this closet, given the intensifying need for wise management in times of systemic turbulence, disruption and global vulnerability.

A further sampling of anecdotal examples is featured in Markley (2007; 2009), both of which can be read online. Although my grasp of visioning methodology has become much more nuanced since these early "skunk works" investigations, an historically useful mid-career white paper about my visioning work is "Visionary Futures: Guided Cognitive Imagery in Teaching and Learning about the Future" (Markley, 1998).

2.2 Visionary Development of an Evolutionary Image of Humankind

Two experiences from my ten years at SRI stand out as being turning points—not only for the strengthening of my confidence in visioning as a methodological channel for prophetic foresight involving extra-ordinary transpersonal knowledge, but also for the conceptualization of an evolutionary, transpersonal image humankind that is holistically integrative:

- Leading an interdisciplinary futures research study, "The Societal Consequences of Changing Images of Man" (Campbell, et al., 1974; Markley & Harman, 1982)
- Experiencing an unexpected visionary journey to a virtual "Omniverse Center for Cultural Development" existing in an inner domain of consciousness (Markley, 2009).

2.2.1 Changing Images

The *Changing Images*¹⁶ study was essentially a search for a plausible solution to the "World Macroproblem" noted earlier. In it, we used an interdisciplinary systems approach to explore the

¹⁵ Art Kleiner's seminal book, *The Age of Heretics: Heros, Outlaws and the Forerunners of Corporate Change* (1996), discusses our innovative futures research methods at SRI in some detail.

¹⁶ The original SRI study, by Campbell, et al, (1974) is not in print, but a published version edited by Markley and Harman (1982) is available online at <http://www.imaginalvisioning.com/changing-images-of-man/>.

feasibility of T.S. Kuhn's (1962) ideas about transformative paradigm change—but for an entire societal culture, not just a scientific discipline—in search for feasible paths to what nowadays is called *sustainability*. In this study we found it essential to contrast the currently predominant *economic* world view or paradigm honoring acquisitive wealth and control with what we called an *integrative evolutionary* path we concluded was essential for a safe transition to a civilization that is sustainable, just, and fulfilling.

Given the importance that intuition-based visioning methods had for us, it is perhaps not surprising that higher dimensions of human consciousness turned out to be central to the integrative evolutionary pathway we envisioned. Figures 1, 2, and 3 are among the most useful imagistic models we found for this purpose:

Figure 1 clarifies a distinction that C.G. Jung (1981) made in his observations about the individual and collective unconscious by adding the idea of a “gradient of awareness.”

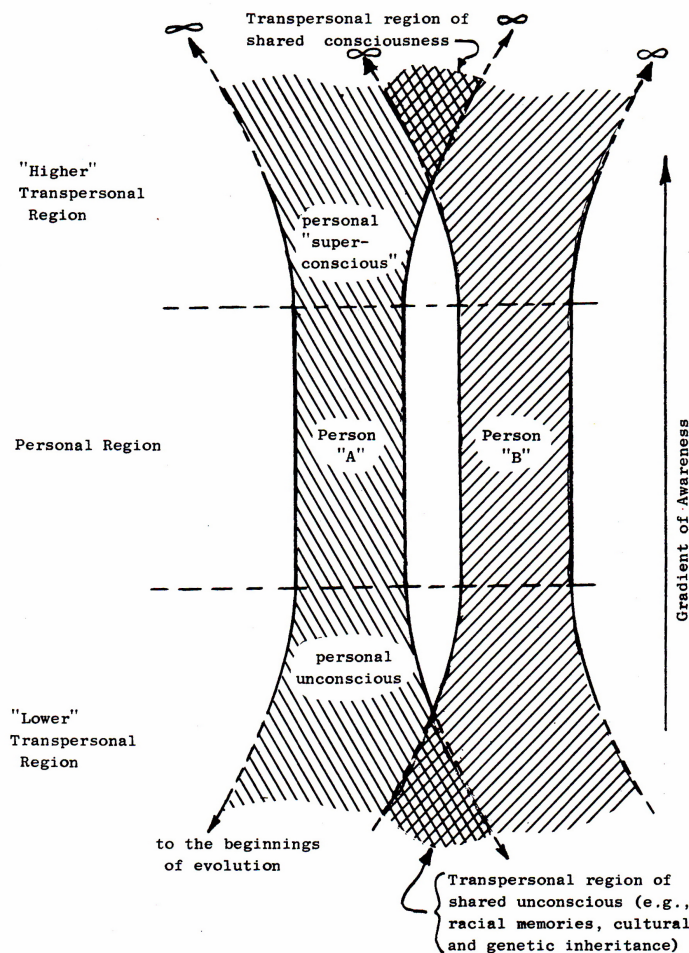


Figure 1. Personal and transpersonal regions in consciousness

Note: From Figure 11 of *Changing Images of Man* (Markley & Harman, 1982, p. 134).

Figure 2 is the final composite image in a series of developmental schematics (all of which are not feasible to show here). It portrays the range of images of humankind and their spokespersons that span the gradient of awareness, low to high. The infinity sign in the center tube of the model denotes the

transcendental consciousness ("the light within") that can be accessed through various processes of "centering"—a topic to which we will return.

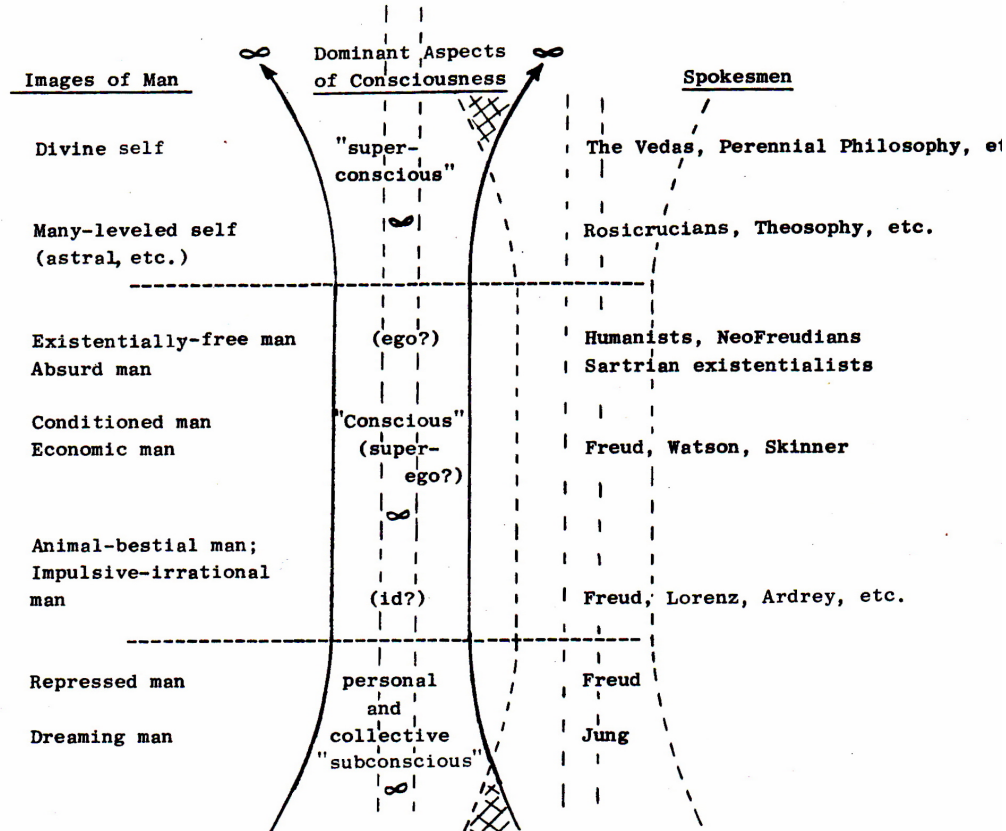


Figure 2. A Composite schematic showing the variety of images and spokespersons along the gradient of awareness.

Note: From Figure 15 of *Changing Images of Man* (Markley & Harman, 1982, p. 137).

Although the series of schematic graphics of which Figures 1 and 2 are a part were useful in our developmental work in the early 1970s, the much older model portrayed by Figure 3 is easier to grasp intuitively. It is a conception of the pioneering consciousness researcher, F.W.H. Myers (1843–1901) whose work was highly esteemed in esoteric circles.

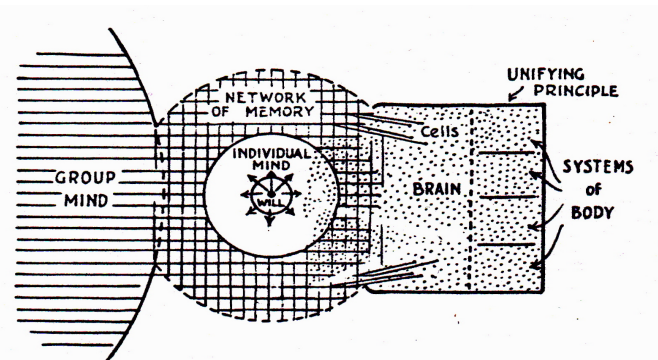


Figure 3. Personal and Transpersonal Consciousness Model of F.W.H Myers

From *Nurslings of Immortality* (Johnson, 1957);
used as Figure 12 of *Changing Images of Man* (Markley & Harman, 1982, p. 135).

2.1.3. An Intellectual Oasis for Evolutionary Operatives

An unexpected personal confirmation of what is pictured in Figures 1-3 occurred for me during the beginning stages of the *Changing Images* study—a time at which our visionary “skunk works” lab at SRI was beginning to prove quite productive.

One day, while I was riding my bicycle home from work, just as I rode past the perimeter of the SRI campus, an unseen messenger from the inner realms of consciousness invited me to go on a “journey” to something called an *Omniverse Center for Cultural Development—an intellectual oasis for evolutionary operatives such as myself*. (Markley, 2009).¹⁷ Of particular significance for this article is the fact that I later led my colleagues in our visionary lab on a similar journey to this Omniverse Center in order to solve a difficult research problem.

The journey was successfully experienced by all of us, and the research problem was resolved in a way using higher consciousness that was very surprising to all of us—thereby validating this “far out” experience in the manner of empirical science. The solution we found ultimately helped structure the “Apocalyptic Transformation” scenario depicted in *Seven Tomorrows* (Hawkins, Ogilvy & Schwartz, 1982).

2.2 Visionary Futures Work After SRI

In 1978 both Harman and I left SRI—he to become President of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, and me to chair the University of Houston-Clear Lake’s new graduate program in Studies of the Future. Being rather burned out from the demands of “grantsmanship” at SRI, the teaching of a graduate course in “Visionary Futures” at UHCL proved an ideal way to continue my visioning R&D without the need for external funding.¹⁸ In it I was able to explore how best to teach visioning skills to all manner of students, ranging:

- From *fundamentalist believers*, whose prior ideological indoctrination was often quite hostile to the use of suggestively induced states of consciousness for “higher” intuition, but who usually welcomed these methods once explained in a way both scientifically and spiritually compatible;
- To *corporate staff professionals and executives*, who usually found these methods useful and effective, but often felt it unwise to use them openly in their corporate settings due to concerns about political credibility.¹⁹

In 1995, an executive at the NASA Johnson Space Center commissioned me to write a visionary white paper on the long-range future of “Spaceship Earth.”²⁰ In it, my combined use of both rational

¹⁷ In addition to the shorter version of this story, carried as chapter in Ervin Laszlo’s *The Akashic Experience: Science and the Cosmic Memory Field* (Markley, 2009); a longer version, based on a conference presentation to an international conference on spiritual sciences, is available online at <http://www.imaginalvisioning.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Omniverse-Center3.pdf>.

¹⁸ This Visionary Futures class was something of a “Skunk Works” experiential research setting for the students and myself in the use of non-ordinary states of consciousness for purposes of learning and using higher intuition-based visioning. To avoid any ethical difficulties, however, I cleared all this beforehand with both the students involved and with relevant authorities in the university.

¹⁹ This problem is illustrated by case example 3.1 (Markley, 2007, p. 21) in which the use of “mental time travel” by a team from a corporate conglomerate highlighted the fact that while the use of such visionary foresight methods can (and did) reveal why current strategic policy directions must be transformed if wise futures are to be obtained, the team saw no politically acceptable way to communicate this to top-level executive management—both the research result and the method through which it was obtained were expected to have no credibility for top executives at this time.

²⁰ The Fourth Wave: A Normative Forecast for the Future of SpaceShip Earth. Retrieved April 5, 2012

forecasting methods and the visioning tools put forward here, led me to envision an early version of the schematic shown below as Figure 4.

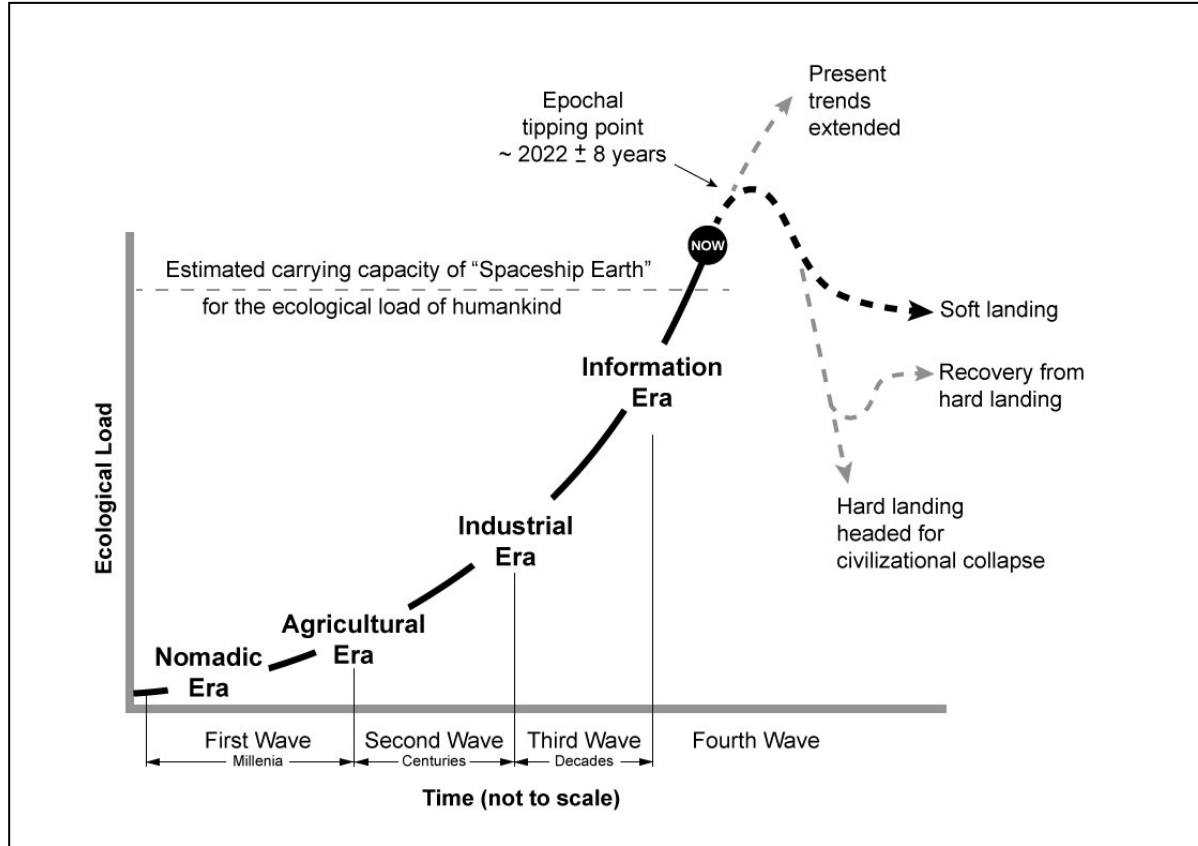


Figure 4. Idealized alternative futures following an epochal transition

This figure is updated from Figure 1 of Markley (1995).

Ecological Load: $I \sim P \times A \times T$ — Human impact on the environment is roughly the product of population, affluence, and technology (Erlach & Holden, 1971).

After early retirement in 2000 from university teaching, I turned my attention to the deepening of my own psychospiritual capacities with a year of meditation and study in Kauai. This extended retreat and my research since then have done much to give me an experiential frame of reference about the long term future evolutionary ascension potential for humanity, and of the need for the types of personal, interpersonal and transpersonal of visioning that will be developed below in Section 4.

Then in 2010, when it became apparent that the professional futures field was not, in general, weaking up to the increasing plausibility of a tipping point such as shown in Figure 4 if major STEEP²¹ trends continue unabated, I undertook additional research and related writing on “Type II Wild Cards” having high plausibility for knowledgeable experts but low credibility for most others (Markley, 2011 a,b,c).

3.0 Essential Concepts for the Further Evolution of Imaginal Foresight Methods

Several conceptual foundations of imaginal visioning are important to add to the empirical foundations described above. Space limitations dictate that only six be distinguished here:

- *Primary Mental Functions*

from <http://www.inwardboundvisioning.com/Docs/SpaceShipEarth.htm>.

²¹ STEEP is a well known acronym used by futurists denoting Social/demographic, Technological, Economic, Ecological and Political/governance trends, emerging issues and interactions among them.

- *Evolutionary Emergence*
- *Integral Thinking and Activism*
- *Imaginal Visioning*
- *Stress Reduction and Deep Resilience*
- *Co-Creative Partnership*

3.1 Four *primary mental functions*—sensing, thinking, intuition and feeling—were identified by the eminent psychologist, Carl Jung (1921) and have been used in many ways since. Sensing and thinking—the *rational analytic* approach—is the approach most frequently used by futurists for the production of foresight and vision (Linstone, 1984, Nanus, 1995). As was noted in the above section on empirical foundations, however, if most or all of the alternative futures on the other side of “MegaCrisis” involve transformation, then it seems obvious that rational analytic approaches are intrinsically inadequate for their exploration. Intuition and feeling—the *visionary* approach—while less frequently used is even more important for integral exploration of futures involving MegaCrisis (both beforehand and for the aftermath thereof). In addition to the previously cited literature on intuition and its development, “Intuitive Inquiry” (Anderson, 2011) provides a wealth of both theoretical and practical information.

3.2 *Evolutionary emergence* is an increasingly recognized frame of reference for many authors in various fields. In addition to the “integrative, evolutionary image of humanity” developed by the SRI “Changing Images” study noted above, particularly useful for me have been writing and media materials by: Barbara Marx Hubbard (1998, 2001/forthcoming), together with the various training and media materials associated with her Foundation for Conscious Evolution;²² and by Ervin Laszlo (2001, 2004, 2008, 2009) together with his WorldShift 2012 global social network “dedicated to sustainable transformation and conscious evolution.”²³ Together, these may be considered as benchmarks of “best practice” in the use of media to encourage prophetic foresight and citizen activism for the evolutionary emergence of wise futures. “Evolutionary integrity,” as taught by Michael Dowd (2008), is also of fundamental importance in this regard. The above author/activists are representative of the many contemporary proponents of co-creative alignment with transcendental wisdom for evolutionary human ascendance.

3.3 *Integral thinking*, in philosophy, characterizes ways of comprehensively synthesizing multidimensional transdisciplinary perspectives in a given field. Integral Yoga is both a philosophy and a practice developed in the early 1900’s by Sri Aurobindo (1972), connoting the integrative union of mental and supra-mental, or spiritual ways of knowing in the evolution of consciousness, both personal and societal. Aurobindo was a prominent advocate of *prophetic foresight* as I have defined it in the introduction.

Aurobindo’s work was carried forward by Ken Wilber (2001), who also carried forward the Spiral Dynamics work of Beck & Cohan (2005), especially as regards the promise of *second tier thinking* for what we are here calling “wise futures.” The idea of *integral futures research* is promising but also somewhat controversial in the field. For present purposes, please substitute the term *holistically integrated* if my use of the term, *integral*, is problematic for you.

3.3.1 *Integral activism* is a term I use for the intentional integration of “inner” with “outer” cause and effect relationships, both of which are convenient to visualize using the images in Figure 5.

²² <http://www.barbaramarxhubbard.com/>; <http://www.davidkorten.org/how-to-get-involved>.

²³ <http://worldshift2012.org/>

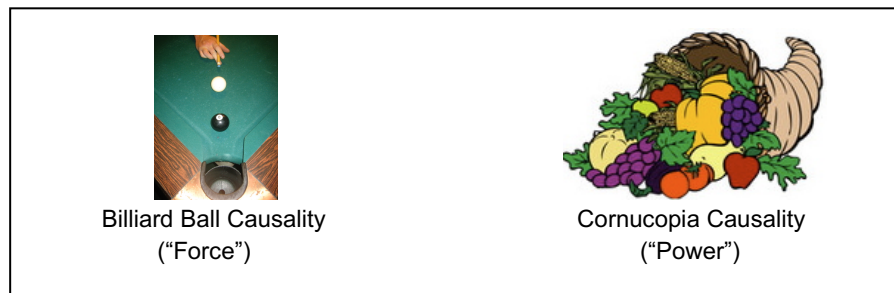


Figure 5. Two ways in which things change²⁴

Conventional or *Billiard Ball Causality* is easy to visualize as the action of physical force of one object on another. In the competitive sphere of the “body politic,” this type of causality can be visualized as *power over*. *Cornucopia Causality*, on the other hand, is *power from within*—power to mobilize the manifestation of things in the physical world from a trans-physical origin. Although the cornucopia is traditionally a symbol used in connection with American Thanksgiving Day celebrations, it is also an essential icon symbolizing this generative phenomenon in many cultures, both ancient and contemporary.

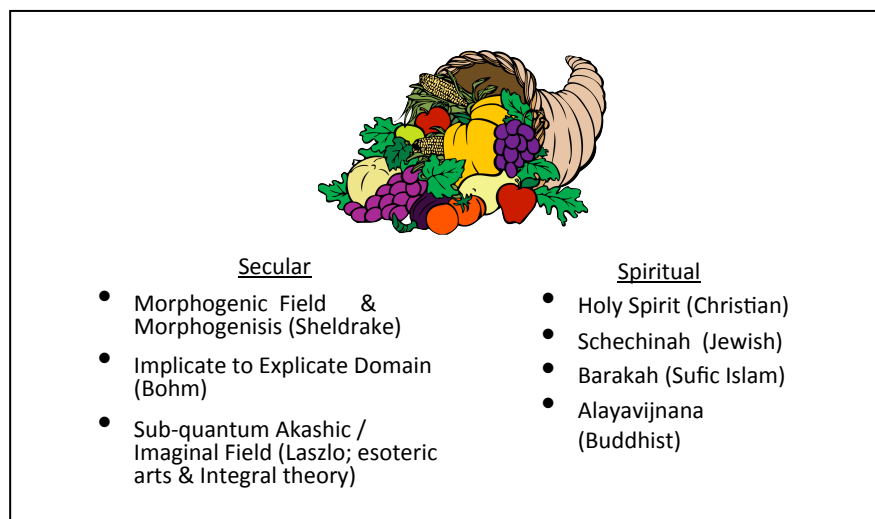


Figure 6. Theories and concepts underlying cornucopia causality

At a superficial level, the cornucopia obviously symbolizes a plentiful harvest, for which we naturally feel gratitude. But at a deeper level, it also symbolizes an expanding spiral vortex of manifestation, which quite literally out-flows from the “no-thing-ness” of the sub-quantum akashic field into the “this-here-ness” of matter, energy, space and time making up what we conventionally call physical reality, including bio-socio-psycho-spiritual phenomena such as thoughts, minds, emotions and motivations (Laszlo, 2004, 2009).²⁵ Related concepts include the *implicate* and *explicate orders of reality* and



²⁴ In his book, *Power vs. Force*, David Hawkins (1995) characterizes what is here called Cornucopia Causality as *Power*, and what is called Billiard Ball Causality as *Force*.

²⁵ Laszlo’s (2009) book, *The Akashic Experience: Science and the Cosmic Memory Field*, features a wide variety of scientific, artistic, medical and religious leaders, each of whom describes a personal “supra-mental” and/or akashic experience or viewpoint.

holomovement (Bohm, 1980)²⁶, the *morphogenetic field* and *morphogenesis* (Sheldrake, 1981)²⁷. Chapter 3, “The Science of Fields,” of Christopher’s wonderful (2008) book, *The Living Classroom: Teaching and Collective Consciousness*, offers the best available review of this whole domain of thinking that I am currently aware of.

This is the type of causality employed by the life force energy (*chi, prana, ki*)²⁸ enlivening all of ecology and what Harman & Rhineghold (1984) term *higher creativity*, as well as prayer and other transcendental sources of wisdom having names such as *Holy Spirit* (Christian), *Shekinah* (Jewish), *Spirit of Guidance* (Sufic), or *Alayavijnana* (Nondual Buddhist). Esoteric teachers from various traditions have used the term *imaginal* to distinguish this subtle phenomenon (referred to both as a noun and as an adjective), and its relevance for citizen activists.²⁹ Scientific skeptics, on the other hand, typically use only terms such as *insight* when referring to the hidden guidance of the mind (c.f., Costa, 2010). From a holistic, general systems perspective, however, it seems to the author that the wide variety of such terms are but different names for the same underlying resource whose nature is quite literally “beyond words.”

As shown in Figure 7, the integration of both Billiard Ball Causality and Cornucopia Causality in social change work is the essence of what I propose be called integrative, or *Integral Activism*, in which internal alignment with one’s “higher” sourcing is an essential complement to co-creative external alignment with others—as is known to be essential for “emergent” organizational change, especially in times of crisis (Laszlo, 2008; Holman, 2010).

	~	
Active Volition / Willful / Yang		Passive Volition / Willing / Yin
Expressive		Receptive
Mental / Rational Thinking		Supra-mental / Intuitive Feeling
Imaginative Visualizing		Imaginal Visioning
Conventional Foresight		Prophetic Foresight

²⁶ See <http://everythingforever.com/Bohm.htm> for an especially concise discussion.

²⁷ See http://www.sheldrake.org/Articles&Papers/papers/morphic/morphic_intro.html for a concise introductory summary.

²⁸ About this type of energy, Anita Moorjani (2012, p. 145), talking about her Near Death Experience (NDE) that involved an intense illumination, leading to rapid and complete healing of her lymphoma stage-4B cancer, said:

“To explain this [healing] from another perspective, although I have been using the words, *Universal energy*, know that I could just as easily say *chi, prana, or ki*. These words mean “life-force energy” in Mandarin, Hindi, and Japanese respectively. This is the *chi* in Tai Chi and Chi Gong, and it’s the *ki* in Reiki. In a nutshell, *it’s the Source of life, and it runs through every living thing*. In fact, it fills the entire universe and is inseparable from it. (Emphasis added.)

²⁹ See, e.g., “Accessing the imaginal realm to heal our planet,” by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi with Raqib Ickovits (2005); also the writings of Neville Goddard (1954) who frequently spoke of imaginal prayer; and the writings of Gerald Epstein (1981, 1991) whose online exposition of imaginal theory, “The imaginal, the right hemisphere of the brain, and the waking dream” (http://u2.lege.net/biomindsuperpowers.com/site_retrieved_by_wget-20130206/Pages/Imaginal.html) is a good technical introduction to and overview of the topic.

Figure 7. Two types of mental process in obtaining foresight

3.4 Imaginal Visioning

Henri Corbin (1969,1995), who did much to popularize the idea of the imaginal in the West, said,

“the world of the Image, *mundus imaginalis* [is] a world as ontologically real as the world of the senses and the world of the intellect, a world that requires a faculty of perception belonging to it, a faculty that is a cognitive function, a *noetic* value, as fully real as the faculties of sensory perception, or intellectual intuition. This faculty is the imaginative power, the one we must avoid confusing with the imagination that modern man identifies with "fantasy" and that, according to him, produces only the "imaginary."³⁰

The writings of Gerald Epstein (1981, 1991), also provide useful introductory overviews.³¹ Another prolific author, who frequently spoke of imaginal prayer as causally effective, is Neville Goddard (1954).³²

The distinctions in Figure 7 help both to clarify the meaning of the phrase, *imaginal visioning*, and to make clear why it is so relevant for prophetic foresight. The ~ symbol in the middle of the table denotes a relationship of synergistic reciprocity—as in yin and yang—between the elements of the first and last columns, rather than of opposition, as in two sides of the same coin.

3.5 Deep Resilience and De-Stressing

3.5.1 Forms of External Resilience

Futurists consider that while disruptive change is almost certain, precise foresight about the timing or sequential order of each *type* of disruption is not generally feasible. Resilience is thus a needed “capacity for all seasons,” and essential for the evolution of wise futures. As developed in an earlier journal article (Markley, 2011b), resilience is in some ways overtaking sustainability as a priority strategic goal.

Three forms of external resilience are useful to distinguish:

- *Adaptive* resilience, which is the goal of traditional Business Continuity Planning
- *Dynamic* resilience, which the new Risk Resilience Network (RRN) of the World Economic Forum characterizes as the taking of proactive steps such as alternative future scenarios to anticipate and prepare for systemic risks unique to this era of highly disruptive change.³³
- *Emergent* resilience is an even more promising concept—not only to recover but to evolve into even better “emergent” forms, as shown in Figure 8.

³⁰ This quote is from <http://www.imaginal.net/>, retrieved December 13, 2011, where more useful information on the imaginal realm can be found. For useful background on Henri Corbin: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Corbin retrieved December 13, 2011.

³¹ For example, the online 1981 essay: “The Imaginal, the Right Hemisphere of the Brain, and the Waking Dream.” Retrieved December 13, 2011 from <http://www.biomindsuperpowers.com/Pages/Imaginal.html>.

³² For useful background information on Neville Goddard: <http://nevillegoddard.wwwhubs.com/> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neville_Goddard, both retrieved December 13, 2011.

³³ Retrieved April 5, 2012 from <http://www.weforum.org/community/risk-response-network>.

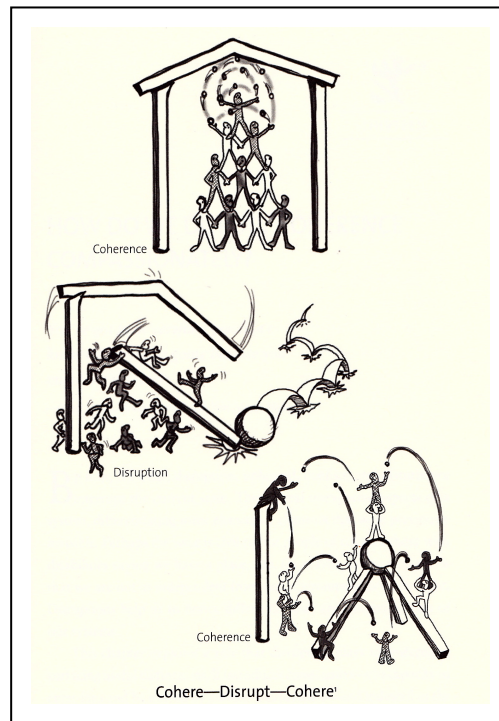


Figure 8. Illustration of emergent resilience

From *Engaging Emergence: Turning Upheaval into Opportunity* (Holman, 2010 - Used with permission from the author.)

Holman et al (2007) extensively covers a range of best methods for “emergent” whole system change, and Holman (2010) focuses more specifically on the art of facilitating emergence at all levels, individual, team and community. As stated there (and based on research findings summarized next), the requirements for emergent resilience are very similar to those for openness to imaginal intuition and creative inspiration—something my colleague Alan Davidson and I have found instructive to *deep resilience: the personal capacity for creatively “emergent” problem solving and well-being, even in time of crisis* (Markley & Davidson, 2011).

A central hypothesis of this article is that imaginal visioning and prophetic foresight as herein described should provide significantly greater dynamic and emergent resilience—especially for teams and communities (that are external to the individual). The next section moves from external to internal resilience.

3.5.2 Internal Resilience: The Importance of Stress Reduction, “PERMA,” and Five Intelligences for Well-Being

Findings from the new disciplines of holistic medicine and positive psychology demonstrate a variety of factors directly related to the capacity of deep resilience (Weil, 2004, 2009; Siebert, 2005; Achor, 2010; Seligman, 2011; Childre, undated; Davidson, 2010). For our purposes the essential findings are these:

- When an individual is highly stressed, the neural basis of problem solving tends to be

associated with the primitive “reptilian” brain whose major tendencies are “fight or flight.” In this mode, the brain tends to be quite literally incapable of proactive solutions that creatively envision new possibilities for the future that haven’t occurred in the past.

- On the other hand, when an individual is happy and/or optimistic and not stressed—even under conditions of crisis—the neural basis of creative problem solving and intuition is associated more with the forebrain, such that proactively emergent innovations are more likely to emerge.
- The research clearly shows that happiness and optimism lead to success, not vice versa—in a wide variety of situations and types of success: health, wealth, effectiveness, sociability, creativity, friendship.
- Due to “neuroplasticity,” higher levels of habitual happiness and optimism can be “learned,” and directly complement other proven methods for stress reduction, such as exercise, meditation, relaxation and play.
- Due to a neural “mirror effect,” happiness and optimism are contagious.
- The principal source of happiness (greater correlation than other relevant variables): having a network of meaningful relationships, especially those that are supportive and involve trust.
- “PERMA” (an acronym suggested by Martin Seligman),³⁴ represents five discrete variables that expand on and are scientifically more satisfactory than happiness and optimism.
- The balanced development of the five “vital intelligences” (physical, mental, emotional, moral and spiritual), is a needed complement to PERMA for positive well-being and deeply rooted resilience.

In light of these findings, it is hypothesized that training for imaginal visioning and for deep resilience (including stress reduction), are reciprocally synergistic—i.e., that they strengthen each other—and thus are both essential for individuals and teams desiring to become “emergently resilient”. Such training would provide a needed foundation for sustainable use of the types of co-creative partnership to introduced next.

3.6 Co-Creative Partnership

As used here,³⁵ co-creative partnership is an orientation in life that contrasts with the paradigm of patriarchal domination that writers such as Eisler (1998, 2000, 2007) and Korten (2006, 2009), argue must give way if the MegaCrisis noted earlier is to be handled successfully. These authors provide a clarion call for what we might call *integral* partnerships, in which under-represented voices, views and methods are brought into full co-creative partnership with those that usually predominate in the dominant paradigm of western culture.

Here the ideal of co-creative partnership applies not only to *inner* and to *outer* partnerships, but more importantly to the *integration* of inner and outer, in what Ferrer (2002) terms *participatory knowing*—developed in the next section below.

4.0 Co-Creative Channels for Imaginal Visioning and Prophetic Foresight

Ervin Laszlo, in his brief, but exceptionally learned essay, “Human Evolution in the Third Millennium” (2001), contrasts:

- *Extensive* sociocultural evolution marked by *conquest, colonization and consumption*; with
- *Intensive* sociocultural evolution marked by *connection, communication and consciousness*.

The first set of “3 C’s” have characterized the 10,000 year historical ascent portrayed by the left hand

³⁴ PERMA stands for positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011).

³⁵ It should be noted that the term “co-creative partnership” is also used within the currently dominant paradigm of business and industry, but in ways rather different from (although complementary to), how it is used here. See, e.g., “Co-creation: New pathways to value An overview,” retrieved December 26, 2011 from http://personal.lse.ac.uk/samsona/CoCreation_Report.pdf.

side of Figure 4. The second set are clearly needed if humanity is to achieve “the upside of down” toward sustainably wise futures, schematically diagrammed by the “Soft Landing” path on the right side of Figure 4.

Laszlo’s “3-Cs” suggest how the the further development of the above visioning methods can contribute directly toward the evolution of wise futures: by proactive connection, communication and consciousness in ways that are holistically integrative.

Thus we turn to three types of co-creative partnership for participatory knowing through which imaginal wisdom needs to flow:

- *Intrapersonal* partnership—between egoic self and Higher Self
- *Interpersonal* partnership—between individuals, teams and organizations, especially those that are in alignment with higher guidance
- *Transpersonal* partnership—between representatives of various system elements in the “ecology of all that is”—both physical and non-physical.

4.1 Intrapersonal partnership

Common to success with virtually all prophetic disciplines is the necessity to bring the self-active egocentric mind into alignment with higher aspects of the Self (such as those listed above), which for convenience, we summarize with terms such as Higher Self, or Essence—the source of imaginal intuition. Thus the call is to move beyond merely cognitive visualization of future possibilities with the egocentric level of consciousness, to the use of higher intuition, involving a true co-creative partnership between the ego-self and the Higher Self.³⁶

Although this is difficult for people to do on their own without experience in meditation or related esoteric disciplines, this can be facilitated by the use of suggestively induced physical and mental relaxation followed by guided imagery. This makes feasible the visioning of possible, probable and preferable futures in ways that transcend one’s customary beliefs and biases.

The ability to do all this can be learned on your own but is much easier when taught by a skilled teacher.³⁷

³⁶ Interestingly, a series of some eight formal experiments soon to be reported by Pham, Lee & Steven (2012, forthcoming), show that individuals who have higher trust in their feelings can predict the outcomes of future events better than individuals with lower trust in their feelings.

³⁷ Of the many good sources for how to meditate and/or become psychically sensitive in ways helpful for “in alignment” imaginal visioning, here are several that I personally recommend for futurists wanting to “tune in:”

- *The Book of Meditation: The Complete Guide to Modern Meditation*, by Patricia Carrington (revised edition, 1998a); and the *Learn to Meditate Kit: The Complete Course in Modern Meditation* (1998b)
- *The Silva Mind Control Method*, the book by Jose Silva (1977); and the course (<http://www.silvamethod.com/>)
- *Integral Life Practice Starter Kit*, particularly the Spirit Module, by the Integral Life Practice Team (2005)
- *Emergence: The Shift from Ego to Essence*, by Barbara Marx Hubbard (2001; revision forthcoming); and the course (<http://theacettraining.com/FromEgoToEssence>)
- *The practical visionary: A New World Guide to Spiritual Growth and Social Change*, by Corrine McLaughlin with Gordon Davidson (2010).
- *The Multidimensional Human: Practices for Psychic Development and Astral Projection*, by Kurt

4.2 Interpersonal Partnerships

It is productive to extend this type of intrapersonal relationship to include co-creative partnerships with others doing so as well. The seeking of higher guidance for prophetic foresight in groups can take many forms. Perhaps the most traditional way is how indigenous tribal leaders sit in council, or the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) meet. In both of these traditional forms, all participants sit in silence as they strive to bring through the Spirit of Guidance for wise decision making—only speaking when there is a felt call to share a message received from the Source of inner wisdom. When a consensus emerges such that the whole group feels it, the decision is made. In the language suggested above, we might say that they are individually and collectively integrating the supra-mental Higher Self mind with their individual intuitions and normal, rational thought processes to solve problems by sensing the response that is most resonant with the morphogenetic field for the evolution of the group.

There are also a number of technical approaches for co-creative interpersonal visioning. In addition to the types of group visioning exercises described in the Empirical Foundations section above, Otto Scharmer's (2007a,b) "Theory U" approach involving "presencing" – learning from the emerging future – is an increasingly recognized contemporary methodology through which higher intelligence is manifested through group process (Senge, Scharmer, Jawarski & Flowers, 2004). The *Visioning Workbook* (United Church of Religious Science, 2005),³⁸ is a useful introduction and set of guidelines for such work. Other sources—including the previously cited works by Barbara Marx Hubbard and Ervin Laszlo—also exist and are too numerous to detail. One more example is useful to cite here, however, due to the way in which it so clearly overlaps with the transpersonal level to be discussed next: the demonstration of group consciousness in the classroom by Christopher Bache (2008, 2009).

4.3 Transpersonal Partnerships

Although phenomena involving conscious communication with different life forms are not part of the dominant paradigm of western culture, the literature contains many examples, including learning from nonphysical beings in the "ecology of consciousness," whose roles involve teaching and guidance for the furthering of human wisdom and evolution (Maclean, 1994, 2010³⁹; Perkins, 1997; Narby, 1999; Harner, 1980/1991, Leland, 2001, Markley 2009). "The Council of All Beings" is a group process which voice is ritually given to all types of ecological entities so as to quicken the ecological awareness, ethical sensitivity and activist zeal of participants (Seed & Macy, 1998). Although well beyond the scope of this brief article to develop, ecological sustainability may ultimately depend on the development of transpersonal consciousness as a well-established paradigm of knowledge.

4.4 An Imagistic Model of Co-Creative Consciousness⁴⁰

A convenient way of portraying many of the concepts detailed above is through use of an imagistic model of co-creative consciousness, schematically diagramming various aspects of being—from "egoic self" to

Leland (2010)

³⁸ Scharmer and colleagues are producing a series of "Global Presencing Forums" the goal of which is "to form a global action research community and platform that uses awareness based social technologies like presencing and is committed to reflecting and sharing these experiences with colleagues across sectors and cultures. Our guiding intention is to pioneer practices and pathways for a society that is more sustainable, inclusive, and aware (Society 4.0)... We believe that we live in a time where emerging global communities like ours may have a big impact if we can rise to the occasion. This is our time to act in a more intentional, collective and conscious way!" Retrieved January 13, 2011 from <http://www.worldchanging.org/WIC/en/contentview.wp?contentId=EVN508>.

³⁹ Appendix One: "Attuning to the God Within" in Maclean's *Memoirs* contains a simple and direct way of opening to one's divine sourcing.

⁴⁰ This model was developed in support of an as yet unpublished brief course in "Imaginal Manifestation."

“Higher Self”—and the various zones of consciousness through which manifestation emerges.

The first of these schematic diagrams is Figure 9, a schematic representation of the experience of being an independent person, with both self-aware consciousness and “other” consciousness that one is not aware of most of the time. The solid wavy line above the eyes represents the “felt” boundary between the conscious experience of self—what I am normally aware of as myself—and the “other” of me: that which various people refer to as *unconscious*, *subconscious*, *preconscious*, or *superconscious*.

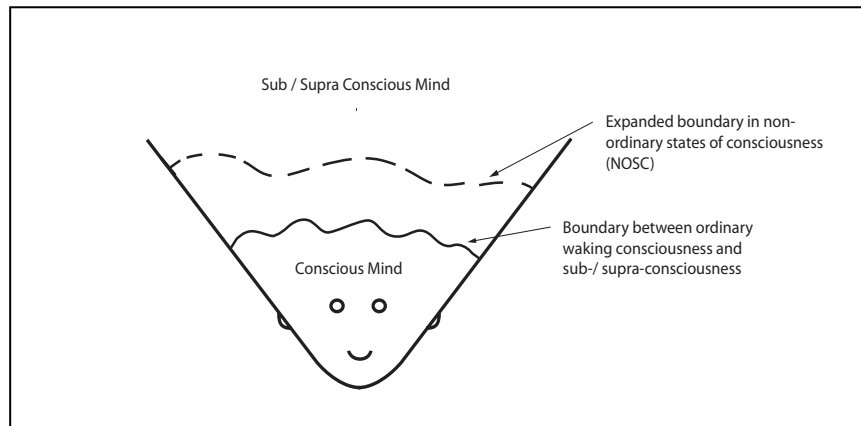


Figure 9. Zones of Personal Consciousness

The expanding “V” denotes the subjective experience of expanded “inner space” which often comes with non-ordinary states of consciousness (NOSC), as in deep meditation, shamanic trance work, or when having a peak experience of being “in the flow” (a.k.a. “in the zone”) of whatever you are doing, such as high performance athletes often report. Thus, the vertical position of the wavy line, and the amount of “inner space” available is not fixed, but highly variable, depending on the level of consciousness held by the individual at any given point in time.

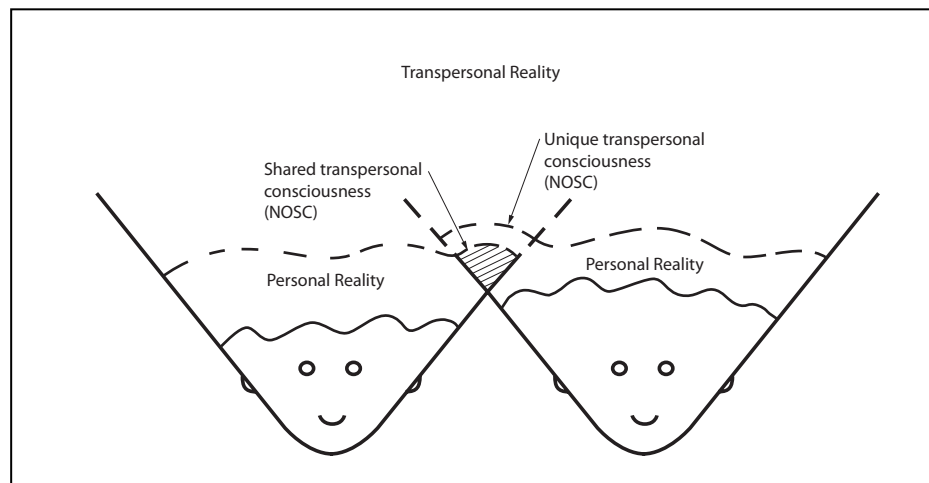


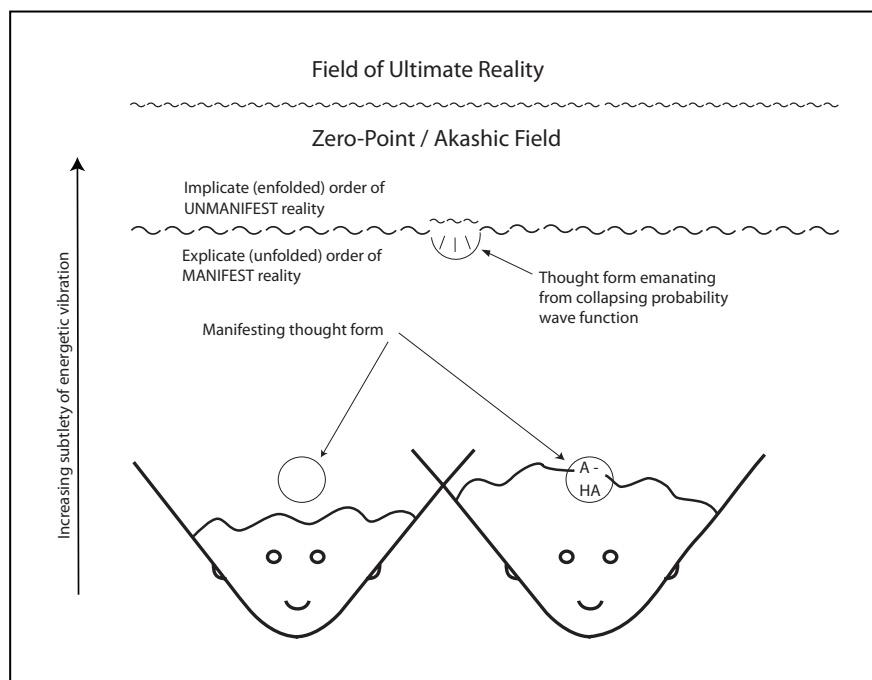
Figure 10. Zones of Personal and Transpersonal Consciousness

In Figure 10, the overlapping of the two “V” shaped personal zones denotes a “Transpersonal Zone.” Although usually not available to normal waking-state consciousness, sometimes waking-state transpersonal experiences occur which can include the experience of “shared consciousness” with one or

more persons (e.g., “telepathy”).⁴¹ As portrayed above, it is possible in these “non-ordinary states of consciousness (NOSC), either to share the experience of transpersonal consciousness, or to have one person conscious of specific transpersonal content that the other is not conscious of. And present at all times is the transpersonal phenomenon that C.G. Jung called the *collective unconscious*, also called the “collective subconscious,” as well as what research biologist Rupert Sheldrake calls the *morphic field* and *morphic resonance*.⁴² It is hypothesized that many of the results from using the [Transformative ReVisioning Process](#) (Markley, undated), occur in this transpersonal region.⁴³

Fields, Particles, Waves and Manifestation

Figure 11 introduces the idea of other fields of reality than the normal space-time continuum in which we live. The curly dashed line in the upper middle of the diagram is the boundary between ordinary reality and the Zero-Point Field⁴⁴ of quantum physics, which quantum physicist, David Bohm, described as being characterized by an Implicate Order of Enfolded Reality, and an Explicate Order of Unfolded Reality⁴⁵ into which things physically manifest as energy, matter, space, time, and all of the “thought forms” on which individual and collective consciousness is hypothetically based. Another aspect of this field is traditionally called the Akashic Field.⁴⁶



⁴¹ An observable phenomenon of transpersonal sharing of consciousness is astutely described by Charles Tart in "Psychedelic Experiences Associated with a Novel Hypnotic Procedure, Mutual Hypnosis," a chapter in *Altered States of Consciousness* (1969). Transpersonal communication with animals and plants are described in many sources, a particularly good one of which is *The Spell of the Sensuous*, by David Abram (1996).

⁴² Rupert Sheldrake *Morphic Fields and Morphic Resonance: An Introduction* (2005),

⁴³ Several case examples of this can be seen at

www.inwardboundvisioning.com/Docs/TransformativeReVisioningCS.htm.

⁴⁴ For more on all this in a way written for intelligent laypersons, please see *The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe*, by Lynne McTaggart (2002).

⁴⁵ For a readable treatment of this concept, please see

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wholeness_and_the_Implicate_Order.

⁴⁶ For a synoptic treatment of this, see *Science and the Akashic Field: An Integral Theory of Everything*, by Ervin Laszlo (2004).

Figure 11. Elements of Intentional Manifestation

The ultimate “sourcing” of all this, is what, for convenience is termed the “Field of Ultimate Reality,” which includes but transcends the Zero-Point Field currently hypothesized by quantum physicists.

Experimental quantum physics has shown how the act of observation collapses the wave function, thereby transforming a probable reality into particulate actuality. The theoretical “Copenhagen Interpretation” of quantum physics suggests that this happens with the phenomena of consciousness as well as physics. The Sanskrit word for mind is *chitta*, literally, waves. The nature of the subtle body—both of individuals and of the whole—is waves. And as stated earlier, it is the vortex motion of these waves that is symbolized by the spiral basket of the cornucopia (Figure 5), with its infinitesimally small point of origin, bringing forth its manifested fruitage from the “no-thing-ness” of the Causal Field of Ultimate Reality, through the Zero Point Field of profoundly subtle energy and into the “this-here-ness” of physical manifestation in the ordinary reality of physical matter, energy, space and time.

According to the “multiple worlds” theory of quantum physicist, Hugh Everett⁴⁷ and other sources, such as the *Seth* books channeled by Jane Roberts,⁴⁸ the Field specifically includes alternate probable realities that are part of our total experience of being, even if our waking-consciousness is not aware of this phenomenon. When one of these (i.e., a specifically *preferable* probable reality) is attracted and observed via Imaginal Manifestation procedures, it “collapses” from being a wave-like probability function in the Implicate Order of Enfolded Reality, into being a particularized “**thought form**” of energy in the Explicate Order of Unfolded Reality, where it takes the form of an imaginal vision. Commitment to this vision and releasing it back to the Field as a causally real identity, then, acts to attract external manifestation in similar fashion.⁴⁹ Esoteric writings such as Kurt Leland’s (2001) *Otherwhere: A Field Guide to Nonphysical Reality for the Out-of-Body Traveler*, hold that transcendental “Overseers” have, throughout history, produced and “downloaded” thought forms such as guiding images for the continued evolution of both physical and non-physical realities.

Ascending Levels of the I AM identity

Figure 12, below, carries the concept of ascending levels of vibrational subtlety a bit further, incorporating the idea of three different aspects of the “self” that can be associated approximately with the so-called physical, subtle and causal bodies demarked by Vedantic seers and scholars.⁵⁰

The egoic “I AM” sense of self as a separate psychophysical being is shown as centered inside forehead of the physical body, where many experience themselves as being centered. This is where the “third eye” (*ajna*) chakra is located, and also corresponds to the location of the pineal gland and the corpus callosum, connecting the two separate lobes of the brain.

⁴⁷ A very lucid treatment of Everett’s Many Worlds Hypothesis is posted at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Many-worlds_interpretation. For an equally readable bio, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Everett.

⁴⁸ Jane Roberts’ two books that offer particularly detailed theory and practical advice on using this property for intentional manifestation are *Seth Speaks* (1972) and *The Nature of Personal Reality* (1974).

⁴⁹ If you find this hard to follow but really want to understand, the movies *What the Bleep do We Know* and *Down the Rabbit Hole* provide a good, albeit controversial, introduction to these ideas.

⁵⁰ Ken Wilber has an excellent treatment of these bodies and their context is posted online at <http://wilber.shambhala.com/html/books/kosmos/excerptG/part3.cfm>. Also a somewhat simpler summary by Frank Visser is “Subtle Bodies, Higher Worlds” at: <http://www.integralworld.net/visser4.html>.

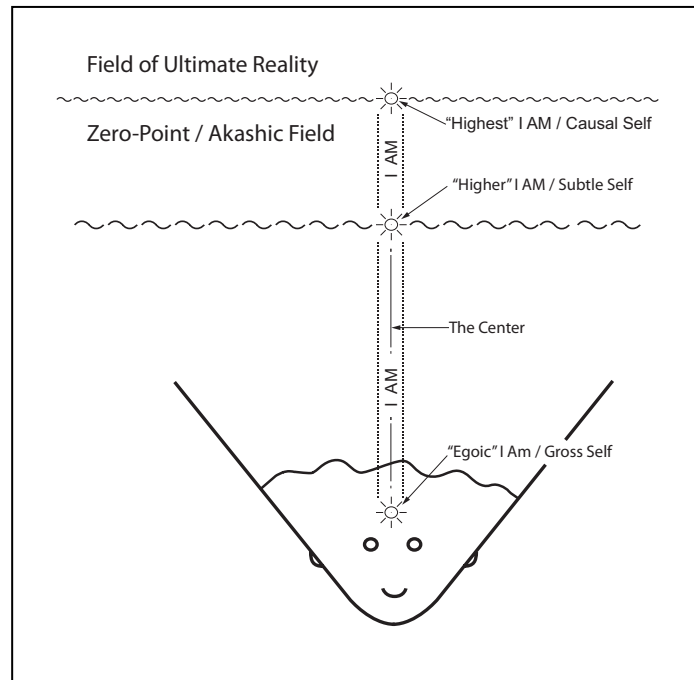


Figure 12. Ascending Levels of the I AM Identity at the Center of Consciousness

The "Higher Self/Causal Self," acting as an intermediary between root causality and physicality, is depicted at the boundary between the ordinary physical reality and the Zero Point Field.

Acting as the ultimate causal source is the Divine Ground of Being (God, Allah, Ishwara, etc.), which, for convenience, may be termed the "Highest Self" —the origin and source of all manifestation in this reality. Please note that atheists or others for whom theistic terminology is problematic may equally well view the more subtle levels of causality as a mystery yet to be understood. This is, after all, only a model using culturally available language and concepts. And just to make clear the limitations of such a simple model, Figure 13 shows the "Highest Self" as common to all individual selves.

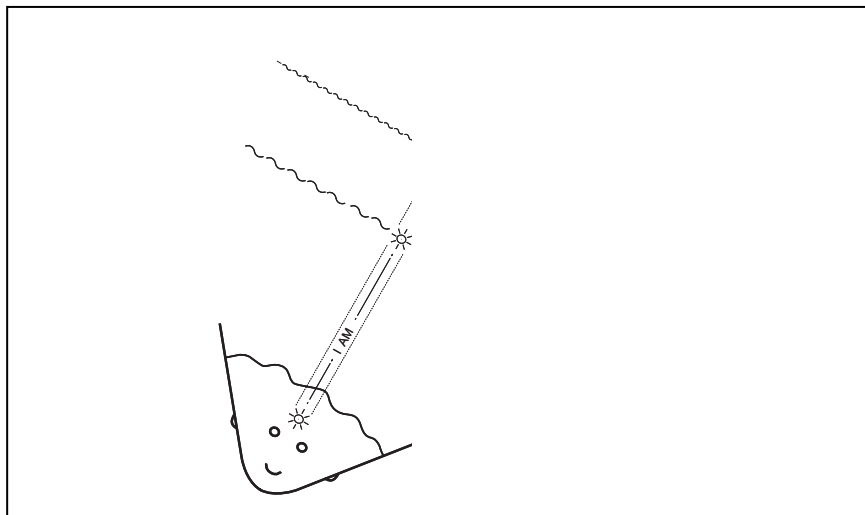


Figure 13. The Transcendent Commonality of the “Highest” I-AM / Causal Self

The Experiential Center of Being

It is important to note that although all three selves shown on Figures 12 and 13 are for convenience arrayed hierarchically as separate, they are described by ancient seers as concentric sheaths surrounding the unitary sense of “I AM” at all three levels in the **experiential center of one’s being**, both immanently and transcendently co-located as the one I AM Self that is a pure observer of all, even though the range of one’s conscious awareness is usually limited to egoic perception of being apart from rather than a unified part of all that is.

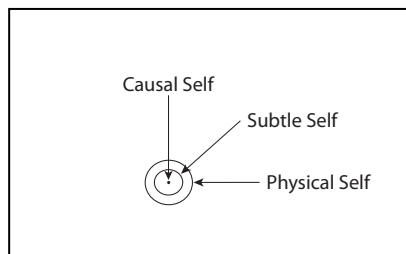


Figure 14. Physical, Subtle and Causal Aspects of the Self⁵¹

Experientially located at this center of one’s consciousness, as Philip Golabuk, author of the Field Training says, “is the I AM of your identity... infinitely creative... aware of itself, aware of you and everything that you desire. This center of your consciousness expresses itself through your imagination, which you occupy in an interior [imaginal] body that looks like your physical body, but isn’t physical. This is not just imagination in the sense of daydreaming or fantasizing or visualizing, but a four-dimensional imagination, you can step into that is so real, you can feel objects, taste tastes, smell smells, and hear sounds that are not themselves physical, just as you can in a dream.”⁵²

The **center of being**, portrayed in Figures 12 and 13 as a diaphanous, tube-like plenum that cuts through and connects all three levels of “I AM” awareness, is intended to help conceptualize the importance of focusing one’s awareness on the center of one’s being—both meditation, where a daily practice of pranic breathing and deeply centered relaxation naturally leads to integration and alignment within; and in intentional manifestatin work, where it is far wiser to intend, attract, and experience an imaginal vision from the deeply centered standpoint of the Higher Self rather than from the more superficial outlook of the egoic self. So it becomes clear why centering exercises involving the flow of subtle (“pranic”) energies, and stabilized meditation focusing through the center of one’s own subjective being is a foundational for skill for practitioners of this work.

Or so goes the theory. But it is neither necessary to understand or to accept all of the above ideas for the Imaginal Visioning and/or manifestation processes to work for you.

5.0 Where Imaginal Visioning Is Apt to be Most Useful

Imaginal visioning methods are useful in all stages and phases of futures research, forecasting and

⁵¹ It should be pointed out that only three “sheaves” are shown for reasons of introductory simplicity. Following the tradition of Theosophy, many esoteric writers such as Leland (2010, pp 26-27), hold that all humans have the following subtle bodies (“vehicles of consciousness”), arrayed like Russian nesting dolls, as shown in Figure 14: physical/etheric, astral (emotional), mental (cognitive), causal (motivational), buddhic (intuitional), nirvanic (atmic or soul), monadic (dualistically divine), and logocic (nondualistically divine).

⁵² This quotation is from a guided meditation in “Move No Mountain: The Paradox of Faith,” the first of a two-CD set by Philip Golabuk, entitled “Field-Particle Aspects.” <http://www.fieldcenter.org/audioseries.html>.

strategic planning—both as a source of new ideas and as a useful source of wisdom for vetting proposed policy choices before they are implemented. Case examples of proactive policy vetting (“plausible impact assessment”), are featured in “Mental Time Travel: A Practical Business and Personal Research Tool for Looking Ahead” (Markley, 2007).

However, as noted earlier, there needs to be an organizationally receptive climate for such methods to be considered credible. Thus, preliminary work often needs to be done to create a hospitable political climate for using what are sometimes disparaged as “high wu-wu” ways of thinking outside the box of the currently dominant paradigm—even though that same paradigm greatly limits the creativity and wisdom that is so urgently needed in times of disruption and radical change. Courageously pioneering work along these lines is definitely needed!

Positioning the use of guided imagery for futures visioning as *entertaining education*—as in keynote speeches and workshops for specific interest groups—is a remarkably easy way to get around the problem of credibility, and can be a very welcome alternative to “talking head” types of presentations about the future. The “Experiencing the Needs of Future Generations” visioning exercise (Markley, 1994; Markley & Burstead, 1997), has proven very useful in this way.

6.0 Summary Conclusion and Further Work

This article brings a whole new way of thinking about Ervin Laszlo’s two sets of “3 Cs”—*connection*, *communication* and *consciousness* that need to replace *conquest*, *colonization* and *consumption*—and how the three types of co-creative partnership (personal, interpersonal and transpersonal) involving higher sources of wisdom can contribute significantly to prophetic foresight and the achievement of wise futures.⁵³

Anticipated directions for further work include:

- Public training in imaginal visioning, prophetic foresight and resilience enhancement—both face to face and online, where people can gain entry-level skills and further develop their proficiency
- Developmental facilitation of client-specific “skunk works” communities of practice in visioning and related tools for prophetic foresight and proactive resilience
- Peer-to-peer networking on visioning of wise futures.

More information on these will be posted online at www.imaginalvisioning.com.

Finally, here is a recommendation in line with the “Communicating Foresight” theme of this special

⁵³ The credibility of above conclusion is supported by some astonishing anthropological evidence I found after this article went to peer review: “Preconquest Consciousness” (Sorenson (1998). E. Richard Sorenson is a pioneering “observational” anthropologist, whose use of photography and other media recording enable him to study pre-literate cultures in ways that transcend verbal language. Through multiple visits to various indigenous tribes whose traditional ways had not yet been “uncultured” from contact with conquest-oriented civilization, Sorenson showed that “preconquest consciousness” has properties that are in amazing alignment with both the three types of co-creative partnership developed in this article, as well as with the co-creatively participatory vision of transpersonal knowing developed by Jorge N. Ferrer in his seminal *Revisoning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality* (2002).

The idea of high-trust *neo*-preconquest consciousness and culture seems especially promising as a guiding image for further work. And methods such as those described in *Transforming Self and Others through Research: Transpersonal Research Methods and Skills for the Human Sciences and Humanities* (Anderson and Braud, 2011), may be particularly appropriate for so doing.

issue of the *JFS*. It is based on Senior Editor Jose Ramos' insightful suggestion that I post an expanded preprint version of this article on my own personal website so as to enable access to critical foundational material exceeding the length restrictions of the journal:

That the *Journal of Futures Studies* enable its authors to post an expanded version of the material they publish in the hard copy of the journal on the *JFS* website.

For both authors and readers, one of the most endearing things about the *Journal of Futures Studies* is the promptness with which it makes access to its contents online free of charge. Such a change in policy could do much to further extend this most valuable competitive advantage offered by the *JFS*, and would enable a much richer and deeper discourse, at no appreciable additional cost to the journal.

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