Chapter 16

Turning Mindshifts into Transformation Leadership

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Abstract This chapter analyzes how mindshifts turn into transformation leadership. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated humanity's collective ability to provide solutions to a disruptive threat in record time. It is this mindset and political will that are required to address the much bigger, existential threats including nuclear, climate change, unsafe AI, and unethical social engineering that is assaulting democracy. After introducing Wilber's integral theory as an underlying map of consciousness, the author discusses some hidden truths of the current consciousness crisis and maintains that any transformation literacy, individual or collective, must go beyond exterior aspects of the world out-there to include interior, mindshifting factors of the world in-here. The author shares research performed on consciousness leaders and emphasizes (1) the complexity of the human psyche including the circumstances that enable, facilitate, and accelerate societal polarization; (2) the underlying dynamics facilitating broken information ecologies; (3) the major aspects leading to individual and collective mindshifts; (4) how the human capacity can be enticed to cooperate toward addressing current existential threats; (5) how to uncover cognitive, emotional, moral, and other biases that twist our picture of reality; and (6) how to learn to separate the truth signals from the fake noise.

Keywords Integral theory · Ken Wilber · Integral investing · Mind shift · Sensemaking · Mind set · Vertical growth · Horizontal integration · Emotional intelligence · Ego-centric · Ethno-centric · World-centric · AQAL · Near-death experiences · Flow · AI · Consciousness

16.1 Mindshift: The Hidden Truth of Evolution

On January 20th, 2021, Joe Biden was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States and promised to be the president of all Americans not only of those who voted for him. To achieve that, his biggest task is arguably not to combat the worst public

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health crisis in 100 years, not unemployment, not the massive wealth inequality, it is not even the existential threat posed by climate change. Biden's biggest challenge is perhaps the unification of a deeply divided nation because the election results leading to his victory¹ did not produce a landslide repudiation of Donald Trump, the previous president making the ongoing societal polarization the only clear winner of the election.

However, neither Biden's victory in 2020, nor Trump's presidential triumph in 2016, nor the Brexit of the UK from the European Union should have come as a surprise.² According to researchers of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the US can expect even more polarization in future due to ideological divisions and the inability to unify around common goals (Carothers, 2020). The rise of right-wing, populist, and nationalist political parties has been in the working for several decades in the democratic world. This includes the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party in Germany,³ the Italian Lega Nord,⁴ and France's Front National,⁵ to name a few more. McCoy et al. argue that the continuing "severe political and societal polarization" occurs not only in the US or the European Union, but across the free world and could have several outcomes including (a) a democratic gridlock, (b) the destruction of democracy under new elites, (c) the democratic annihilation under old elites, or (d) lead to reforming democracy, which would be the best-case scenario (McCoy et al., 2018).

What does come as a surprise, however, is the speed with which the fake news is spreading on the Internet through AI-driven social media all of which appear to have one goal and one goal only: profit maximization at all cost. The democratic discourse has moved from the legally mitigated public domains onto private servers of profit-hungry and not tax-paying Internet-based monopolies. What makes this polarization even scarier is the helplessness of democratic governments that seem to be taken by surprise and are unprepared to counteract it. Former BBC journalist and co-founder at Rebel Wisdom, David Fuller, considers this polarization to be a direct response to the (1) limitations of the twentieth century traditional TV, (2) blindness of democratic institutions and political systems with respect to the impact and growing importance of twenty-first century Internet-based social media, and (3) "shadow side of liberalism" that has ceased to be just and inclusive and "secretly judges and despises people that do not think in the same way."⁶ What began as political division across the isles of democratic parliaments, evolved to outright hatred, a split society that is increasingly ruled by fake news and shows open disregard for science and facts—seen by the way the COVID-19 pandemic is being handled. This seems supported through an "us-versus-them" type of activism that could lead to further tribalism, increased inequality, violence, and eventually collapse of democratic systems.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/yxq2ud5c>.

² <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2016/06/24/who-said-brexit-was-a-surprise>.

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternative_for_Germany.

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matteo_Salvini.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Rally.

⁶ <https://tinyurl.com/y4jejc22> starting with min. 18.

The current pandemic and the assault on democracy, which culminated in the US Capitol riot on January 6th, 2021, are only the latest in a series of obvious challenges facing humanity in the disruption era. This is why in this chapter I will focus on (1) the circumstances that enable, facilitate, and accelerate societal polarization; (2) revealing the underlying dynamics and the influencing factors that are at play in the current broken information ecology; (3) understanding when and how the mindshift toward unification can occur; (4) how we can harness and foster our astonishing human capacity to cooperate toward addressing current existential threats; (5) how we can become more aware of the many cognitive biases that twist our picture of reality, and how we can learn to separate the truth signals from the fake noise.

16.1.1 *Making the Case for Truth*

In spite of the enormous efforts trying to address the COVID-19 pandemic,⁷ humanity is still struggling to come together in a collective effort to address the existential threats posed by the grand global challenges.⁸ There are many reasons for that and Otto Scharmer of MIT attributes it to an “intellectual bankruptcy” and to “the blind spot of economics and economic theory [that] is our own *consciousness*” crisis (Scharmer, 2010, p. 17) while Donald Hoffman (2019) makes a case against our old understanding of reality. This consciousness crisis is not new, and Göpel (2016) argues that we are currently witnessing a noteworthy mindshift that is actively changing outdated systemic structures to accommodate the necessities of the new global reality. Spurred into action by personal emergencies, a whole host of consciousness leaders from all areas of life including business, finance, and philanthropy, to name a few, have surfaced as major players and seem to act more daringly in the world (Balandina, 2016; Bozesan, 2016; Giving Pledge, 2020; Godeke et al., 2009; Hoffman, 2019; Soros, 2008; Strong, 2009). Further, research supports the view that an increasing number of these leaders have *awakened to later stages of consciousness*, driving them toward exterior transformation referred to as *integral* or *second tier* (Arnsperger, 2010; Balandina (2011); Balandina, 2016; Bozesan, 2010; Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011; Brill et al., 2015; Clark et al. 2015; Torbert & Kelly, 2013; Senge et al., 2005; Sisodia et al., 2007). When looking more closely beneath, this collective mindshift phenomenon, one can detect a trend toward personal growth that has been going on for quite some time (Adams, 2005; Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Cook-Greuter, 2005; Cook-Greuter, 2013; Goleman et al., 2002; Hendricks & Ludeman, 1996; Jaworski, 1996; Kelly, 2011; Marques et al., 2007; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Ray & Anderson, 2000; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Senge et al., 2005). Such transformations in consciousness have occurred and evolved over thousands of years (Wilber 1998 & 2000a, b, 2017) and have been developmentally modeled by renown researchers such as (a) Abraham Maslow (Maslow et al.,

⁷ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03564-y>.

⁸ <https://su.org/about/global-grand-challenges/>.

1998) who became known for his *hierarchy of needs*, (b) Jean Gebser (Gebser, 1984) and his *structures of human consciousness*, (c) Robert Kegan (Kegan, 1994) and his *order of consciousness* model, and (d) Donald Hoffman (2019) who in his book *The case against reality* indicates “why evolution hid the truth from our eyes,” to name only four of the most commonly known. While such models help us make sense of the trajectories of human consciousness evolution, phenomenological investigation into the interior transformation of the participating agents has been relatively scant, despite increasing occurrences of individual dissatisfaction within the financial, and business worlds (Kofman, 2006; Ray & Rinzler, 1993; Secretan, 2006; Stiglitz et al., 2018; Stiglitz, 2010, 2011), which has become my own area of interest, research, and expertise over the past three decades (Bozesan, 2010, 2020).

The desired changes toward this type of consciousness transformation are taking place within an extremely complex context, whose complexity grows exponentially (Diamandis & Kotler, 2020; Hoffman, 2019; Kurzweil, 2005; von Weizsaecker & Wijkman 2018) and which must include changes not only in environmental, financial, economic, and social perspectives but also in individual and collective behaviors (Wilber, 2017). What Nobel Prize laureate Paul Krugman named “obsolete doctrines that clutter the minds of men” Krugman (2012, p. 191) are actually socio-political and inter-objective rules, conditions, and regulations that often impede transformation. These rules are a reflection of culturally interior, intersubjective, and deeply ingrained norms such as ethics and morals (Stückelberger & Duggal, 2018) which heavily influence both our individual and our collective behaviors. Therefore, in order to navigate this ever-growing complexity, multi-perspectival and far-reaching frameworks are needed that enable us to navigate the outside world while empowering us to better understand ourselves on the inside, both individually and collectively including our shadows, belief systems, traditions, and cultures to name a few. Such a framework would help us (1) comprehend how consciousness has evolved throughout the centuries; (2) better understand the evolution of life, including the development of human knowledge from science to mathematics to developmental growth; (3) gain a better perspective not only on ourselves and our purpose in the world; (4) simplify our decision-making process, and (5) acquire both a larger perspective of but also bigger insights into the future.

16.1.2 *The Integral Model: A Theory of Everything*

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, I found Ken Wilber’s integral theory (Wilber, 2000/1995)—which has been applied successfully, albeit mostly under the radar of mainstream systems, in more than 50 disciplines worldwide (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2010)—to be the perfect framework for my own work in academia, business, entrepreneurship, and investing because, it provides a veritable theory of everything. It helps make sense of the exponentially growing complexity of the world and simplifies reality by condensing all major components thereof into five simple elements called quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types (see also Fig. 16.1).

Fig. 16.1 Wilber's quadrants and stages of consciousness (adapted after Wilber, 2000a, b, c; Bozesan, 2020)

These five elements also give the integral framework its common name, the AQAL (pronounced ah-qwul: all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, and all types). The theory behind the integral framework is based on Plato's (1961/1938) *value spheres of humanity*—the *beautiful* (art/self), the *good* (morals/culture), and the *true* (science/nature)—and the understanding that these three *value spheres* are ever present, are indivisible, and are constantly co-arising whether we are consciously aware of them or not. In other words, everything that occurs has three dimensions, or points of view (Fig. 16.1): an individual, subjective view (the *Beautiful*); a collective-subjective, cultural view (the *Good*); and an objective view that can be proven by scientific facts (the *True*). Integral theory provides a post-postmodern framework of life that is based on the theory of evolution and integrates humanity's irreducible value spheres, the big three, as these value spheres are also called, and which are also embedded in William James's great chain of being (James 2017/1890). It also draws on Immanuel Kant's big three critiques (Kant, 1993/1949): The critique of

Fig. 16.2 Individual lines of development (adapted after Wilber, 2000a, b, c; Bozesan, 2020)

pure reason, critique of practical reason, and critique of judgment or subjective reality, as well as Jürgen Habermas's (1990) indivisible three worlds: the objective, the subjective, and the cultural (see Fig. 16.1).

Wilber (2000a, b, c) linked the first-person singular pronoun, the *I*, with Plato's *beautiful* value sphere, or subjective truth. The first-person plural pronoun, *WE*, is associated with Plato's value sphere called *good* and that represents the intersubjective truth and morals that make up the interior-collective culture in which we live. And the third-person singular gender-neutral pronoun *IT* is correlated with Plato's *true* value sphere, or objective truth associated with science. To achieve a higher granularity and be more inclusive with respect to additional exterior aspects of reality such as the social and the environmental aspects, Wilber added a fourth quadrant, the exterior collective, which is the lower-right quadrant as seen in Fig. 16.1. This fourth, lower-right quadrant, which Wilber associated with the pronoun *ITS*, can be best understood from a systems theory (Von Bertalanffy 2006/1969) or complex systems perspective such as the environment, society, and science.

Equipped with the lens of integral theory as a more holistic map of consciousness which enables a deeper insight into and higher granularity of reality, let us dig deeper and analyze (1) how its elements can help us make better sense of what is currently going on, (2) how it could help address the consciousness crisis at hand, and (3) which potential solutions could emerge that would help us address the challenges discussed earlier. As we have seen, the lower-right quadrant in Fig. 16.1 is the *territory of systems theory and analysis* (ITS). This quadrant is the area in which traditional institutions, businesses, economics, ecology, and geopolitical organizations usually interoperate in an objectively measurable and systemic way. Similar to

Fig. 16.3 Vertical growth versus horizontal integration across the AQAL (Bozesan, 2020)

the upper-right quadrant (IT), the *terrain of behavior* also called the *individual exterior/objective domain*, the right side of AQAL is also the domain in which science is active and which warrants an inter-objective perspective driving both the individual and the collective exterior behavior which affects our economic and financial systems, as well as ecological, infrastructure, and social systems. These two right-hand quadrants represent Plato's *true* value spheres, the areas in which we first notice the manifestations (individual and collective) of current crises including the grand global challenges discussed earlier (from individual behaviors to the shared actions manifested in our social and natural systems). We have also seen that all AQAL quadrants co-arise (whether we realize it or not) and cannot be reduced to one another. This fact is particularly important when trying to understand the causes of current systems collapse and building new and more resilient ones.

A whole systems view is crucial, yet this is exactly what we seem to lack according to Barrett C. Brown (2007, pp. 19–41). In his paper entitled *four worlds of sustainability: drawing upon four universal perspectives to support sustainability initiatives*, Brown explains what is missing. He uses the lens of integral theory to take an all-quadrant view of several bestselling books on sustainability (Brown 2006; Hawken, 1993, 2017; Hawken et al., 1999; Holliday et al., 2002; Jackson & Svensson, 2002; McDonough & Braungart, 2002; Natrass & Altomare, 1999; World Commission on Environment and Development, 2009/1987). In his analysis, Brown applied an ontological methodology without an epistemological elucidation and analyzed every sentence in each book, classifying the sentences according to the AQAL quadrant on which they focused. He surveyed each sentence to assess whether it was taking an interior or exterior view, and/or an individual or collective perspective of reality.

And he found out that the lower-right quadrant perspective (Fig. 16.1) dominated because the authors describe and address reality using a primarily social and environmental/systems view of the world. The interior aspects such as the collective intersubjective, shared values and vision, the culture, as well as the individual interior perspective, individual mindsets, or individual external behaviors, and action were exemplified in only a very small manner. While Brown agrees that the lower-right quadrant is the soundest and most powerful influencer for societal change, he also demonstrates why there is little chance of a holistic solution without an integral sustainability approach, one that applies the entire AQAL and not just one particular value sphere/quadrant.

The current cultural polarization—including, for example, the reviving of the White Supremacy⁹ or the Black Lives Matter movements¹⁰—supports this distinction and shows that change occurs when individuals and/or collective groups are not only cognitively but also, and more significantly, emotionally impacted. That is, when people's interiors are touched in a deep way, which can occur during times like the prolonged COVID-19 lockdowns (Armour et al., 2020). Or even worse, when people are fed falsehoods such as Trump's election fraud and subsequent loss with enough intensity that they are even ready to incite an assault on democracy by attacking the US Capitol.¹¹

16.1.3 *The Complexity of Transformation*

The above examples show how easily lies can be turned into truths to manipulate not only individuals but whole populations, which demonstrate once more the importance of these hidden dimensions and why they play a much more important role than the previously acknowledged (see the AQAL framework represented in a simplified way in Fig. 16.1).

The two interior *territories of felt experience*, individual mindsets (upper-left quadrant) and *culture, and worldview* (lower-right quadrant), the collective shared values and vision have, unfortunately, been neglected and excluded for too long by existing systems (lower-right quadrant) because their existence and influence were believed to be too difficult to prove in a scientific manner. So, they were left out altogether. While it is true that the right-hand side terrain of AQAL is more easily measurable with the scientific methods available today and includes “the brain mechanisms, neurotransmitters, and organic computations that support consciousness” Wilber (2000a, p. 63), the technologies addressing the interior/left-hand side of AQAL's quadrants have advanced as well (Bozesan, 2010, 2016; Cook-Greuter, 2013; Goleman et al., 2002; Hendricks & Ludeman, 1996; Jaworski, 1996; Marques et al., 2007; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Ray & Anderson, 2000; Rooke &

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_supremacy.

¹⁰ <https://tinyurl.com/yxuqo4b5>.

¹¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55640437>.

Torbert, 2005; Senge et al., 2005). The *interior individual* domain, or the *terrain of personal/individual experience*, represents the personal subjective area as it relates to the inner life of each individual including our feelings, sensations, thoughts, and spiritual awakenings.

The lower-left quadrant, the *terrain of culture*, enlarges the perspective of reality through the intersubjective areas of culture such as collective beliefs, norms, justness, and goodness. Wilber defined this quadrant as “the values, meanings, worldviews, and ethics that are shared by any group of individuals” Wilber (2000b, p. 63)—it is the cultural context in which finances, business, and politics occur. This cultural context helps give our existence meaning. In fact, we become almost inseparable from it, because it becomes what we perceive to be our reality. It is the territory where mindshift actually occurs. To understand this better, let us dig deeper into the interior quadrants themselves because they are also subject to evolutionary development as shown in Fig. 16.1 through the stages of evolution. Depending upon the location on the evolutionary ladder, the *stage* or *level* of development—individually or collectively—will enable a different view of reality and thus a different reaction in the world. Thus, the application of Wilber’s integral model allows for a much more differentiated view of individual and collective behavioral patterns depending upon the vertical position in each quadrant and how well the horizontal integration across all quadrants (shown Fig. 16.1) has occurred.

16.1.4 Intelligence is Not One

Researcher Brown (2018) joins Cook-Greuter (2013), Goleman et al. (2002), Rooke and Torbert (2005), and Wilber (2017) in their assessment that mindset growth occurs naturally through the regular process of consciousness evolution. His work points particularly to vertical growth that can help people accelerate their mindshift by (1) expanding their world views; (2) helping them perform better across several mission-critical domains; (3) inspiring their vision to become better leaders through transformational change (4) improving their cognitive abilities in all areas including strategically, systemically, and contextually; (5) becoming better collaborators and problem solvers, as well as in building better relationships; (6) improving their decision-making abilities that led to improved reframing of challenges better and to the creation of more innovative solutions; and (7) developing an enhanced capacity to tolerate ambiguity to better navigate complexity. I do not know anybody who cares about transformation who would not want to benefit from such growth, particularly since we are all familiar with the difficulties, we encounter when we try to change an unwanted behavior or let go of things that hurt us. The question is how can mindshift be triggered and how can it be accelerated both individually and collectively now that we need it most? And what in the world is vertical growth (shown Fig. 16.3).

According to Wilber (2000a), the upper-left quadrant “includes the entire spectrum of consciousness as it appears in any individual, from bodily sensations to mental ideal to soul and spirit” (pp. 62–63). And in *A brief history of everything*,

he argued that the evolution of consciousness has a direction, and the mindshift occurs along various lines of development (shown in Fig. 16.2), which he calls intelligences (Wilber, 2000b). Harvard professor and author of *changing minds: The art and science of changing our own and other people's minds* Howard Gardner (2004) considers the cognitive intelligence to be only one of nine different lines of interior development that influence our mindshift and sensemaking processes. Gardner goes beyond the logical-mathematical intelligence, that we mostly measure through traditional IQ tests, and recognizes linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, special intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, naturalist intelligence, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, and existential intelligence. He posits that human personality contains all of these, that they all influence human development, behavior, sensemaking, and ultimately our mindshift. In each and every one of us, these lines are more or less developed—making us unique—and no one line is to be favored over another. Wilber (2017) associated each line of development with fundamental life questions and groundbreaking developmental (shown Fig. 16.2) scientists in the following ways:

- The *cognitive* logical-mathematical (IQ) intelligence/line of development helps respond to life questions such as *What am I aware of?* It is the most popular in the Western world due to its importance in the scientific world. It was identified, researched, and popularized by Jean Piaget (1976/1972) and further developed by Robert Kegan (1982)
- The *emotional* intelligence/line of development addresses the main question associated with *how we feel about this?* and was popularized through the work of Daniel Goleman ((1995) & (2000)), who developed the emotional quotient
- The *needs* line of development represents the core of Abraham Maslow's (1999/1968) work, and addresses the question *what do I need?*
- The *values* line of development deals with *what is significant to me?* within human evolution as life's circumstances change and has emerged out of the work of Clare Graves (Beck & Cowan, 1996)
- The *self/ego-identity* line of development is a major line of development of individual ego/identity evolution that deals with the life's question *who am I?* and emerged from the work of Susanne Cook-Greuter (2008) who built upon Harvard researcher's work Jane Loevinger (1977)
- The *moral* line of development deals with the question *what should I do?* and has been researched by both Kohlberg (Kohlberg & Ryncarz, 1990) and Gilligan (1993/1982). The moral line of development is extremely important particularly within the context of the massive transformation literacy discussed in this paper. The world's major religions have tried to get their followers to adhere to their own form of moral guidelines without much success over the centuries. For example, Christianity has the ten commandments, or Decalogue, Buddhism has the eightfold path, and Islam has the Islamic Decalogues (Armstrong, 2001/1944, 2001/2000, 1993; Smith, 1995/1958; Wilber, 2017).

All intelligences or lines of development are, of course, interrelated and subject to individual personal growth, cultural and social context, and evolution at large.

Vertical growth also occurs along stages/levels of *growing up* (Wilber, 2017) (see also Fig. 16.2) and evolves from the (small) egoic *self* to a higher, *ethnocentric self* (belonging to my *tribe* à la America first), to a *world-centric self* (all of us), or even Kosmos-centric *self* in a Buddhist sense. Research indicates that mindshift occurs and is often triggered through *state*, *change* or *waking up*, experiences within the context of what Maslow (1999/1968) called transcendent or *peak* experiences, meditative or contemplative experiences, *near-death experiences*, or *out-of-body experiences* (Grof, 2006); or what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) called *flow* state or unity consciousness experiences, exceptional human experiences, transpersonal experiences, or other spiritual emergencies (Bozesan, 2010).

16.2 Why Growing Up Needs Waking Up

One word of caution is indispensable here: The idea of eternal growth is so deeply ingrained in our culture that one could fall into the trap of believing that later stages of development are somewhat better than earlier ones. Yet, this is not inevitably true. Why? Because, for example, high cognitive development paired with low moral development could lead to terrible destruction like the development of the atom bomb and its subsequent dropping over Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. Traditional education systems emphasize cognitive development while leaving ethics and moral education mostly to the family and the church. This must change in the future. Ethics and moral development ought to become our guiding force if we want to address the current global grand challenges. Vertical growth must be rooted in a healthy ego-identity because only then it can be of service to the group or tribe and later serve the world. Hence, the horizontal integration at each stage of development across all four AQAL quadrants is the premise for healthy vertical growth (see Fig. 16.3).

While vertical growth accelerates the mindshift toward later stages of development from egocentric to ethnocentric to world-centric views of the world, horizontal integration focuses on the skillset development at the same level of consciousness across all four quadrants (Fig. 16.2)—individual, culture, society, and the environment. And, while vertical growth helps us achieve not only higher cognitive intelligence (IQ), but also higher emotional intelligence (EQ), moral, and inter- and intrapersonal intelligences, horizontal integration helps achieve a well-grounded and highly developed sense of self-identity which helps us find our own healthy place in our culture and society. Both vertical and horizontal growth are instrumental to personal growth that helps us to hasten our mindshift and our path of self-actualization toward wisdom and global caring and to develop awareness and multiple perspectives across all quadrants. The result can be an enhanced ability to handle and navigate complexity swiftly in addition to an increased ability to deal with uncertainty in a fast-changing world. In *changes of mind*, Jenny Wade (1996, p. 267) asserts why people whose center of gravity is at “higher stages of consciousness comprehend lower stages, but the reverse is not true.” This could provide us with important clues as to how

to address the current societal polarization and to accelerate our (1) *collaborative capacity*: the ability to integrate diverse perspectives with the intention of developing all-encompassing and successful solutions; (2) *contextual thinking*: the ability to reflect on and analyze problems in terms of the larger systems and contexts to which they belong; and (3) *cognitive complexity*: the ability to think in a multi-perspectival manner about complex issues (Stein et al. 2010).

Transformation occurs whether we like it or not and is accelerated today by exponentially growing, AI-driven technologies, some of which we carry in our own pockets. As we have seen, they are unfortunately *not* driven by high morals nor world-centric ethics but unmitigated and subject to profit-only, or politically motivated egocentric and/or ethnocentric biases and take place under the radar of democratic value systems (Stückelberger & Duggal, 2018). What is even scarier is that these technologies drive the rate of exponential growth exponentially, which is even more difficult to understand let alone control (Bozesan, 2020). Thus, a truly inspiring future can *only* be created if we win the race against such systems and the growing power of unethical, AI-driven egocentric and/or ethnocentric mind sets. Time is of the essence for the scientific community which has long been warning about climate emergency that leaves us with only 10 years to address it (Masson-Delmotte et al., 2018; Randers et al., 2018). To win this race, we must get it right from the start and implement world-centric solutions that are based on world-centric and integral mindsets and levels of consciousness. Our generation does not have time to learn from our own mistakes as was the case in the past when human actions had only a local impact and could freely explore the downfalls of combustion engines, or even the atomic power.

In their paper, *rethinking humanity: five foundational sector disruptions the life-cycle of civilizations and the coming of age of freedom*, authors James Arbib and Tony Seba (2020) confirm that the 2020s are decisive for the future of humanity for we will be completely disrupted in all major sectors that make up the global economy including “information, energy, food, transportation and materials, and [where] costs will fall by a $10 \times$ or more, while production processes an order of magnitude more efficient will use 90% fewer natural resources with $10 \times$ - $100 \times$ less waste.” In their view, we can choose to implement the UN SDGs within planetary boundaries (Randers et al., 2018) within the next ten years or collapse and descend into another dark age as previous civilizations. “Dark ages do not occur for lack of sunshine, but for lack of leadership” said Arbib & Seba (2020, p. 6) and propose the following high-level leadership action plan (p. 67):

- Acknowledgements that we are at a breaking point without equilibrium and there is no going back because there is no “normal” to which we could go back.
- *Brace for the impact* caused by the breaking down of every major system we know including financial, environmental, social unrest, state failure, and mass migration, all of which will be compounded by technological disruption.
- *Beware of the cascading impact of further disruptions* such as the massive decrease in oil prices triggered by the transformations taking place in the transportation industry.

- Balance the need for quick change with the need for social, economic, and political stability
- *Create a clear vision and a tactical implementation plan* to manage adverse outcomes (instability, unemployment, etc.)
- *The race to the top has begun*; make sure nobody is left behind
- Smaller communities and big cities such as Shanghai, Seattle, and Silicon Valley will be more likely to succeed over big countries.
- Resiliency and robustness will win
- Rethink old concepts like economies of scale and efficiency that are not shock absorbent under new circumstances
- Apply existing technology and tools to solve the problems; do not waste time to develop new ones
- Exponential thinkers are more likely to succeed than linear thinking forecasters.

Massive transformations require radically different mindsets which is the reason why former Google ethicist Tristan Harris founded the Center for Humane Technology.¹² Harris' intention is to accelerate the development of transformational literacy by counteracting social media companies who currently profit from collective weaknesses such as addictions, depression, hate, and other divisions eloquently shown in *The Social Dilemma* movie.¹³ According to Tristan Harris, the social media technology has become the new twenty-first century infrastructure but it is more intimately embedded in our minds and nervous systems than any previous infrastructure be it electricity, cars, printed books, or planes. Such digital infrastructure attacks the very foundations of our humanity and sensemaking, because we lack a good understanding of the underlying technology and how it manipulates us to make a profit. Our addiction to technology and ultimately social media has become like a brain implant without our explicit volition, large scale tests, or approval by an accredited organization such as the FDA. Instead, the sensemaking of the billions of people on social media is dictated by (mostly young) AI programmers who are just implementing the requests of their bosses without a deep understanding of the long-term impact their AI code might have on the society at large.

For similar reasons, MIT professor Max Tegmark founded the Future of Life Institute together with other concerned scientists including the late Stephen Hawking, Ray Kurzweil, Dennis Hassabis, and serial entrepreneur Elon Musk.¹⁴ The institute came up with 23 Asilomar AI principles to ensure the ethical application of AI.

¹² <https://www.humanetech.com/>.

¹³ <https://www.netflix.com>.

¹⁴ <https://futureoflife.org/>.

16.3 Conclusions for Transformation Literacy

Systemic change is non-negotiable if we want to ensure humanity's future on this planet. New systems will have to replace current fossil-fuel-based, unsustainable free-market economies with integrally sustainable economies, to name just one such key system. The argument made in this chapter is that in order to succeed, the necessary transformation literacy must be integrally sustainable and go beyond exterior aspects of the world out-there to include interior, mindshifting factors of the world in-here. Integral theory (AQAL) by Ken Wilber, which has already been successfully applied in more than 50 academic disciplines, was introduced to serve as a holistic map for the human agency that supports of the necessary transformation literacy. In order for the mindshift to occur to the next level of consciousness, we need to address the entire complexity of reality, the platonic value spheres, because they are co-arising whether we are aware of them or not. The hidden, interior dimensions of reality are, therefore, emphasized. These covert dimensions include the collective intersubjective aspects of culture as well as the individual subjective, the unseen aspects that determine human personality, the mindshift, and ultimately the behavior of each and every one of us. The collective mindshift occurs when the individual mindshift happens at large scale and the tipping point for the collective next level of consciousness has been reached.

We can take advantage of existential challenges as an opportunity to evolve to the next stage of human civilization or regress to nationalism, populism, and dictatorship either through ineptitude or out of fear. The future will show. However, one thing is certain: times of crisis provide an indisputable opening for transformation because they remind each and every one of us that we cannot control the outside world, we cannot control other people, we cannot control the climate, and we certainly cannot control a pandemic. We can influence them, at best. What we can control is our own psychological state, what we think, what we do, and who we become during a crisis. It may not be easy, but we can still choose. We can lose faith and despair and become a burden to others or we can become part of the solution, an inspiration, and a force for good. Evolution takes place with or without us. We can consciously participate in it and shift our minds to the next stage of evolution or regress and eventually be eliminated by more resilient manifestations of life. Our psychological strength and mindset will determine our sense of happiness. As long as we have free will, the choice is ours. And if enough of us chose to grow beyond our old selves and address our shadows, the collective transformation to the better becomes unavoidable. Our past attests to that immense realization.

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