



An Overview on Creative Democracies

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Abstract

In this essay I give an overview of the first of a series of four books with the overarching title of Creative Democracies. In it, I focus on the transition from preindustrial authoritarian societies to societies founded on the social embodiment of free creative intelligence that I call creative democracies. In the second book, *The Creative Hand*, I present the five main creative powers that constitute human intelligence: interest in reality, semiotic communication, subsidiary symbiosis, generalised research and liberation. *The Social Flourishing of Creative Intelligence* is the title and content of the third book. In book four, *Creative Democracies as a New Paradigm of Human Life*, I focus attention on the main features of these societies. These reflections might be understood as the fruits of my meditative research into human intelligence. In this kind of research I consider myself to be very much a beginner. Throughout each of the books, I suggest that the development of these democracies is the necessary outcome of the mutation process through which humanity is currently moving. Having started in the European Renaissance, it has now arrived at a tipping point. We are destined for either a healthy collective life within creative democracies – or complete annihilation. As in a symphony, across all four books I attempt many variations on a few central themes, taking the opportunity to expand and deepen into them from a number of different perspectives.

Keywords: Creative Democracies; Human intelligence; Symbiosis

From programmed to creative intelligence: Humanity's Radical Mutation

In the first book *From programmed to creative intelligence: Humanity's Radical Mutation* I describe human life - and human culture in particular - as a continually unfolding creative process, of which we have, for the most part, been largely unconscious. Life's primary agency is *creative intelligence*; its foundation is the creative freedom of reality itself - reality's continuous advance towards what is always new.

In the introduction to the book, I tried to establish the primordial character of creative intelligence as that which really matters in human life. There is one intelligence which

accesses two levels of reality. Firstly, the intelligence relating to human capacities, needs and interest; this is what I call *intelligence of need*. Secondly, a subtle but strong intelligence which is not purely relative to us humans, but which grants unmediated access to the creative freedom of reality itself. I call this *liberating intelligence* because it is the very foundation of human freedom.

The one creative intelligence also displays three specific, but integrated, uses or dimensions: an abstract functional dimension concerned with how things work, that I call *functional intelligence*; a sensitive *axiological intelligence* which creates meaning and values after needs and interests have been taken care of; most important of all, though, there is also this foundational *liberating intelligence* which frees

us from self-interest and ensures the creative and beneficial character of the other two dimensions. The social embodying of creative intelligence, with all of its three dimensions in harmony, is what constitutes creative democracies. The third book, *The Social Flourishing of Creative Intelligence*, explores in detail these three dimensions of intelligence. The final volume, *The New Paradigm of Life*, depicts the development of creative democracies as the fulfilment of humanity's most recent radical mutation.

The first of these four books opens with a description of how I discovered creative intelligence within my own experience; the chapter offers a personal reflection on life and its prime agency, intelligence. This very particular interest is the result of a professional life spent undertaking research on Artificial Intelligence (AI), which in turn is itself informed by the way that human intelligence works. My aim was to ground in concrete, personal experience some of the insights developed in a more abstract form in the rest of the books. Not simply in order to produce a theory of intelligence, but to point directly to the urgent need for creative democracies and to actively support their development.

Creative intelligence and its creations are inseparable; the first creates the second, while only the second shows the first. However, for about the last 600 years - from the beginning of modernity onwards - humanity's attention has been firmly on the *results* of creativity, on our general models of reality, on theories and knowledge, and on products and services in particular. What has been left far behind in second place is the development and social embodiment of a mature creative intelligence, the source of all wellbeing. Hence, economic growth or 'rational' economy has been the force allowed to shape modern societies. Our current moment insists on the urgent need to reverse this situation. We must now give all our care and attention to the development of creative intelligence within all human activities.

My intention in the next book *The creative hand* is to explore in detail the concrete agency of intelligence in all aspects of human life. I do this through examining the five powers that I have called *the creative constitutive powers of intelligence* or CCP. Together they make what I have called *the creative hand*, in which each finger represents one of the five powers: *interest in reality*, *semiotic communication*, *integral subsidiary symbiosis*, *generalised research* and *the power of liberation*. Their development deserves our utmost attention. Theories and knowledge are necessary means of creative intelligence, but by themselves they are not up to the task of confronting the uncertainty and the unsettling presence of the unknown that characterise our swiftly changing societies. This can only be achieved through a well-developed and socially embodied creative intelligence. We must empower the creative hand of all our citizens. In

other words, free, creative intelligence - and its nourishment through permanent education of the creative constitutive powers - must become the centre of human life.

We have habitually mistaken models of reality for reality itself. We have overlooked the source of these models: the primordial intelligence of creative freedom. This inattention to creativity has deep roots in human history. At the heart of human life is natural creativity. But the pre-industrial past seemed to lack interest in - even to dismiss - this creativity. Pre-industrial societies are characterized by their attempts to establish a permanent and static paradigm of life. For them, creativity with its dynamism and pluralism, was a threat to the very stability they sought. Although creativity has always been present in humanity, in such societies it broke through only rarely: a few wise people shared their deep insights into life; a number of artisans sporadically introduced new tools and materials; artists created beautiful objects; philosophers produced theories.

The main pre-industrial paradigms of life have been hunter-gathering, ranching and farming. The essential nature of them all is static, with each generation always repeating what has gone before. In these societies, intelligence was programmed by a religious mythology which was closely linked to the basic mode of survival that would ensure its continuation. Every change from one paradigm to another has involved a true mutation - a deep cultural transformation, with no way back, in every aspect of life. The most recent mutation of humanity has been the shift from farming to industry. It initially showed itself as the first Industrial Revolution. Even here, though, there was a hangover from old patterns, as the idea of a new - but static - industrial paradigm of life established itself. However, the Scientific Revolution and the subsequent Industrial Revolution were only the beginning of this profound mutation in which humanity is still immersed.

In the central chapters of the first part of *From programmed to creative intelligence*, I sketch out an overview of the radical mutation from an agricultural authoritarian culture to one which is predominantly techno-scientific. The result is an experience of deep crisis as we now transition - or mutate - from one basic static form of culture to another fully dynamic. I look at modernity mainly from the perspective of the creative powers of intelligence (CCP), which were now beginning to be recognised as capable of creating new forms of society. Accompanying this was the gradual loss of belief in a supernatural being on whom everything depends. The human person, rather than the will of God, became primordial, the main reference point for most human endeavours. The constraints of tradition-religion-mythology began to be left behind, allowing for the emergence of critical and rational thought.

The transition from an authoritarian agrarian society to one consisting of a pre-industrial majority with an influential minority of humanists, scientist and then industrialists, was not peaceful in any way. There were plenty of conflicts, wars and crises. In particular, the Scientific Revolution began a secularisation process that immediately came into conflict with established religion. Modern science promoted functional intelligence over mythologically programmed axiological intelligence, leaving belief in the supernatural as a private and subjective matter, when not actively negating it. For religious people it has been very difficult to realize that techno-sciences have created a new meta-language capable of predicting and controlling phenomena, first natural then social. It is based on a methodology that sets aside all the value judgements that could potentially interfere with the *how* of phenomena. Rather than being open to a fruitful cross-fertilization in which religion updates its worldview and deepens its encounter with the mystery of reality, techno-sciences were viewed as a threat to the dominance of established religion. Instead of the techno-sciences being wisely guided, they were left in the hands of capitalism and imperialism, with all the conflict and power struggles that inevitably entailed.

In the book, I describe the mutation as the transition from what I call *programmed intelligence* to *creative intelligence*. Intelligence was first programmed by religious mythologies, then, in the modern era, by ideologies, knowledge and the acquisition of skills. Creativity was left to a minority of specialists - mainly artists, techno-scientist and engineers. I devote a section to ideologies, the main programmers of modern intelligence, and their relative failure to guide ever-changing societies, due to built-in ideological rigidity. Most modern programmed intelligences work through the fixed patterns of thought that are characteristic of static societies. They are incapable of engaging with the pace of change in our current world and are vulnerable to replacement by machines. I respond to lines from T.S. Eliot's *Choruses from 'The Rock'* (1934) where he poses three fundamental questions:

Where is the Life we have lost in living?

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

I understand these lines as Eliot's lament for the lost unity of human life and its intelligence. Mindful of this great loss, we now must become aware of the urgent need for - no longer minorities - but for the *majority* of human beings to be living life to the full, through flexible, creative intelligences. Such intelligences are prepared to confront the challenges, dangers, uncertainties and, most of all, the unpredictability of continuous change which renders the *unknown* always much greater and more significant than the known.

Intelligence is not only the creative hand through which we engage with our needs and negotiate the art of living in community. It is also the way that we solve conflict in a global intercultural world, avoiding division and the violence that arises from it. It is my contention that only through the full awakening, the thorough exercise and the loving care of creative intelligence, can we hope to understand and to deal in an efficient and benign way with our globalised world as it goes through its radical mutation. We need to move towards Creative Democracies - societies in a permanent state of creation.

Modernity has degraded human symbiosis - creative cooperation - by enforcing individualism. This has happened not only at the personal level but also between nation states, many of which have been responsible for installing a repressive colonialism within cultures other than their own. The book *The creative hand* discusses *subsidiary integral symbiosis* as a key creative power of human intelligence. It manifests the common power of human life: free cooperation based on mutual service and care. This is an integral symbiosis between humans and with the Earth that, to this point, has still not been achieved. Yet it is subsidiary symbiosis, not the separate individual, that is primordial.

The first part of *From programmed to creative intelligence* examines the most essential and obvious transformations that current societies will have to go through in order to become full creative democracies. In the second part I devote two chapters to the foundation of such creative democracies: the creative freedom of reality and its agency, creative intelligence.

My insight into the creative freedom of reality came in the middle of 1980. As a researcher in Artificial Intelligence I was acutely aware of the threat of a possible digital dictatorship run by those who possessed the ever more intelligent machines that were widely predicted to come into being. I could not accept the idea of human beings in slavery to the possessors of these supposedly 'super-intelligent' machines. More than that, I could not accept that reality and truth could be possessed and colonised by any power. And so I came to understand, and to accept as a wonderful gift, that reality could not be anything other than pure freedom. Hence my proposal that the *creative freedom of reality* should be the symbol for the mystery of reality in creative democracies.

The creative freedom of reality means that the truth, beauty and unity of actual beings cannot be encompassed or determined by any invented formal system. No kind of story, information, knowledge or theory - present or future - can do justice to the irreducible reality of actual beings. Even elementary particles such as electrons show indeterminacy - their own essential freedom. If something

can be completely determined, it is not real but imaginary or virtual. Freedom is always the hallmark of reality. It must always be distinguished from the models we create of reality, and from any information about it. The models are always relative to our own capabilities, needs and interests, but they do not describe or exhaust reality. Good models leave room for freedom. In fact, they come from, and point to, the creative freedom that is constantly renewing them. Human life is full of it, with its infinity of new opportunities and threats.

The completely gratuitous way that we experience beauty is one of the most obvious examples of the liberating power of reality. When I first saw this, it was a wonderful revelation to me. It still informs my life as *the* great possibility - an encouragement to be free, to feel one with the world and to act creatively. It is a breaking away from programmed intelligences, freeing us from a second-hand way of living where we merely follow a script written by others. We are freed also from the scripts that we continuously write about ourselves, filled with much more fantasy than reality.

The last chapter of *From programmed to creative intelligence* introduces the three dimensions of intelligence. Throughout, I consider human intelligence from a humanistic and cultural perspective, complementing the naturalistic, functional approach of the biological and cognitive sciences. This chapter is entitled 'The Unity of Creative Intelligence.' It describes intelligence as a common creative power, the meeting point of humanity. Even more specifically, it is our common origin, bringing unity, justice and peace in an ever-more closely interactive global pluralism of cultures, societies, groups and individuals. I introduce also a general model of the universe as the body of universal intelligence. I understand it as a primordial web of interactions, highlighting the interactive character of intelligence in general, and human intelligence in particular - an outstanding manifestation of universal intelligence. Interaction itself is primordial, rather than *the terms* of interaction, which come into existence only through interaction. For this reason I have adopted the

term *intra-action* to refer to these constitutive interactions. In humans, intra-action is culturally exerted through the creative powers of intelligence (CCP), in particular through communication and subsidiary symbiosis, which turn intelligence and the individual into cultural, collective and social phenomena. The autonomy of the individual is recognised as interdependent with the autonomy of the collective of which it is a member; one affects and changes the other.

In my presentation of creative intelligence, I focus on the two dimensions that modernity has tended to overlook: *axiological* and *liberating intelligence*. Axiological intelligence does not work through reasoning as functional intelligence does. It is sensitive to the contrasts through which our senses operate (light/darkness) and to values and counter-values (good/bad). It includes what has been called *emotional intelligence* but focuses its attention on collective values rather than individual emotions. Axiological intelligence spontaneously senses what is bad for us (danger) and propels us towards what we sense to be the right course of action (safety). It also shows us that the best way to realize a value (for example, paying attention) is to confront its counter-value (distraction), addressing its nature and tricks (indolence, negligence, self-concern). By becoming fully aware of the counter-value, we come to the value ourselves without anything being imposed on us. By inquiring and confronting falsity, we open ourselves to truth. This is done not individualistically but through an integral symbiosis which exercises all of the creative powers.

Liberating intelligence allows us to connect with, and embody, the freedom and unity of reality. It is humble, unencumbered, sensitive, immediate, silent, non-temporal and radically free. It underpins the unity of intelligence, avoiding the fragmentation that knowledge brings. It is the highest form of intelligence and represents humanity's greatest potential for achieving true contentment. We could also call it *the intelligence of happiness*.

