

Classical Intuition and Critical Futures

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Introduction

That consciousness contains non-local properties is a rational hypothesis well supported by experimental and anthropological evidence (Radin, 2006; le Shan, 2013; Sheldrake, 2003). “Classical” intuition draws upon the extended mind, operating, at least in part, beyond local space-time (Sheldrake, 2003).

Conversely, intuition can be represented in “mundane” terms, explained by more conventional and accepted neurophysiological processes, and avoiding any reference to the extended mind. Most accepted conceptions in modern scientific (including popular scientific) and academic circles frame intuition this way. Examples of mundane representations include: “automatic expertise” (Miller & Ireland, 2005); “intuition” (Gigerenzer, 2008; Klein, 2004) “intrapersonal intelligence” (Gardner, 1993); and “red hat thinking” (de Bono, 1999). It is not my contention that these models have no value or are “wrong”, merely that they place unnecessary restrictions upon the way we relate to our minds and the ideas of intuition and consciousness. Given the evidence for both the physiological correlations between consciousness and the brain, and for extrasensory sources of knowledge (Radin, 2015), it is reasonable to assume that intuition comprises both mundane and classical components – although it may be difficult to pin down the precise data source for an intuition in any given situation. It is also reasonable to assume that classical intuition functions in part through the human physiological system.

The prime distinction between mundane and classical representations of intuition, then, lies in the explicit or implied acknowledgement of the extended mind in the latter. Classical intuition may also involve a “non-ordinary” state of consciousness, as Markley (2015) and many others have noted. However what is deemed “ordinary” and “non-ordinary” is a rather arbitrary distinction based upon one’s life experience and the paradigmatic boundaries of one’s culture.

It is my personal and professional experience that classical intuition can be developed within individuals to enhance cognitive acuity, including creativity, imagination and problem solving. I thus use the term “integrated intelligence” - or INI for short (Anthony, 2008, 2012a, 2012b). Cognitive expressions similar to INI can be found in various literatures relating to: psychic abilities, parapsychology, extraordinary human capacities, new age,

spiritual and religious literature, popular fiction and cinema (Anthony, 2008).

Intuition as intelligence

By situating the idea of intuition within intelligence theory, the focus shifts onto how intuition can be employed, because intelligence is essentially about solving problems.

My literature review of the subject area identifies seven prime cognitive functions of INI: diagnosis, empathy, recognition, precognition, synthesis, evaluation and creativity, as well as two typical behavioural outcomes: wisdom and transformation¹ (Anthony, 2008, 2012a). Most of these are commonly recognised cognitive functions in mainstream psychology, but are depicted there in mundane terms.

These cognitive functions of INI are related to such “psychic” experiences as precognition, clairvoyance, remote viewing, clairaudience, and clairsentience. There is not space here to define the precise similarities and distinctions. I simply relate that I consider “psychic” cognitive structures as potentially legitimate experiences in the deployment of INI in workshops and research; and that the scientific evidence (Radin, 2015) for these “extraordinary” human abilities also represents a degree of legitimation for integrated intelligence. Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that any practical or theoretical exploration of integrated intelligence by futurists is problematic in that the prime cognitive functions are yet to achieve widespread acceptance in the scientific community. Therefore a discussion of the underpinning theory and evidence may be required by futurists working in more formal settings.

It should also be noted that debates about “psi”-related subjects within academia and the scientific community remain stultified by what Radin (2006) calls “the psi taboo.” Nonetheless, critical futurists can identify and challenge the constraints within the system.

Personal experience

While I have written and presented many academic papers on the idea of integrated intelligence, I also work in the public domain as a writer of popular books; as a workshop facilitator teaching people how to utilise intuitive intelligence in decision making and life in general; and as an “intuitive” life coach.

Other than facilitating a related workshop at the *Shifting Hong Kong* futures conference in 2010, my practical experience with participatory academic audiences is limited. Nonetheless, I believe my knowledge and experience can be of use to futurists wishing to employ intuition in their Futures work.

My life experience leads me to agree with the researchers like Targ (2012), Sheldrake (2013) and Nelson (2014) who have found that the capacity for classical intuitive perception is partly a gift, but nonetheless pervasive in the human population.²

I had no interest or belief in INI up till my mid-twenties. When I was twenty-six I began to meditate. I experimented with trance-style meditation, placing myself into deep, hypnagogic states. I also explored dreams. I discovered that I possessed a previously unknown internal world. One immediate meditative observation was of a blue, star-like light, seemingly just above and between my physical eyes. This I came to understand to be the third eye of mystical lore.

I had a great many experiences which could only be explained with the idea of the extended mind - premonitions, spiritual guidance, and the perception of mental projections from others, including those in far distant locations. After a long period of scrutiny, I learned to trust intuitive feelings, which enabled me to “read” people and situations in far more depth than previously.

At age thirty I moved to New Zealand and joined a healing group focused on inner child work. Their remarkable process involved learning to read consciousness fields. This greatly enhanced my intuitive abilities, and also vastly improved my understanding of the way mind and consciousness fields are related. I also witnessed first-hand that people with no apparent capacity for integrated intelligence are able to develop powerful intuition.

Later I employed these intuitive abilities to develop an enhanced research process which I have come to call “integrated inquiry”, which is the deliberate but informal employment of INI during research (Anthony, 2013). I have employed this process during the writing of my doctoral thesis and many other research projects.

In my most recent phase of appreciation of the intuitive mind, I have spent much time developing the capacity for mindfulness. I have come to appreciate that without relaxed presence, the intuitive realms can be highly problematic (Anthony, 2015). This is something that futures practitioners should keep in mind when employing intuitive and imaginal processes in futures work.

Framing integrated intelligence

There are several ways to frame classical intuition in public settings. The first is simply for the futurist to state upfront that he/she is employing a process which seeks to activate integrated intelligence. This approach is best employed before receptive audiences that have been told beforehand what is happening.

A second approach is to present integrated intelligence as a provocation. Here the practitioner states clearly that INI is being explored, but invites the audience to remain in a state of suspended belief. Given that some stakeholders may be sceptical or even hostile, both evidence and civilisational context for INI should be established before practical work begins.

The third possibility was personally shared with me by Peter L Nelson (2014). Rather than being explicit about the idea of the extended mind, Nelson leads his audience to explore “second stream attention”. This may, for example, be as simple as getting people to pay attention to what they are observing in the room, and noticing what “data” they (and others) typically do not attend to. This may also include being mindful of subtle feelings, sensations and knowings which are often ignored within modern culture.

Nelson’s approach has the advantage of beginning with praxis rather than theory, thus circumventing the sceptical mind (and perhaps cognitive biases). Nelson’s process later involves inviting the audience to share interpretations of their experience. The practitioner may then bring in theory of mind at later stages of the workshop. Such a process may be preferable with audiences predisposed to hostile or non-critical negative attitudes towards intuitive experiences.

Possible roadblocks in Futures work

In apparent contradiction, my experience is that the two philosophical schools which tend to resist the deployment of classical intuition can be witnessed in those with strong religious and “scientific” worldviews. Many religions are distrustful of experience or data which appears “psychic” (Nelson, 2014).

Scientism is the philosophical insistence that only scientific materialism is a valid schema for exploring the cosmos (Sheldrake, 2013), and it may be an issue in some environments. Yet science is ideally an impartial exploration of the cosmos, not an attempt to reify a delimited and inflexible mental map of nature. Therefore it is the culture of science as expressed through institutions and delimited paradigmatic thinking that is problematic, not science itself as a mode of inquiry.

In concession to certain criticisms, it remains true that an entanglement of minds is a problematic aspect to employing INI, and therefore information gleaned via intuition generally needs to be carefully examined for veracity and source (Anthony, 2012b, 2015).

Another consideration which futurists need to keep in mind is the possible professional backlash for espousing ideas that run contrary to accepted academic and scientific culture. This is probably more likely to be a problem for those who work in academic and corporate environments.

My open research focus upon INI has come at a professional price, as I am yet to convince schools and universities in Australia and Asia of the importance of this domain.³ The one exception has been my work with Associate Professor Gino Yu at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Yu has run several consciousness conferences which I have participated in, and this has included my sharing foresight tools and processes.

Intuitive and spiritual discourses are often received with disinterest or suspicion in corporate and professional settings. While I know many academics, futurists and researchers in Australasia who are personally interested in related subject matters, I know of but a few who specialise in the research and none who make it a prime focus within their classroom teaching.

There is the further practical problem that mainstream tertiary institutions typically have no place to put such teachers and researchers. More than once I have been told that my research foci do not fit into the faculty’s future plans. Administrators may feel that there is no demand from students or parents for related research or curriculum development. Yet this may be a self-fulfilling expectation. La Trobe University’s David Tacey (2003) has found his modern spirituality course in Melbourne to be incredibly popular. Tacey’s programme incorporates many of the transpersonal, spiritual and psychological themes that prophetic foresight and imaginal visioning (Markley, 2012, 2015; Miller, 2015) readily lend themselves to. Why are not more administrators, academics and futurists engaging this potential audience?

Futurists employing the intuitive mind in their work should first attain a degree of mastery. They must be comfortable with that experience, despite the fact that media, education and science often rejects and ridicules such things. There is a requirement for strong self-belief, moral courage and spiritual maturity. An evangelistic imposition of “the truth” upon others is unhelpful. The ideal attitude is provocative but respectful dissent, coupled with great self-conviction and a well-

developed sense of humour.

In practice

As Peter L. Nelson (2014) points out, the most common experience of “seeing” is delivered via personal feelings. This is what I refer to as “the feeling sense” (Anthony, 2012a, 2012b). It is my experience that most human beings can readily develop this capacity. It simply requires connecting with the body and feeling what registers within in relation to the task at hand. Kinesthetic intuitions can also be accessed via deliberate questioning.

Intuition is particularly useful where situations are complex, novel, uncertain, ambiguous and where there may be no immediate access to sufficient data (Bussey, 2015; Markley, 2015; Miller, 2015). Given this, intuitive ways of knowing can be of prime value to futurists, who are often dealing with realms of knowledge where data is incomplete or absent. The future inevitably contains possibilities that have never been experienced or even imagined. Considerations may fall outside of accepted paradigms and cultural boundaries. Here linear, sequential, memory-based methods are self-limiting. We require methods that facilitate what Markley (2012) calls “imaginal” knowledge.

I have found that the most reliable feelings to act upon are those which are either strongly positive or negative. However, given that problems are often complex and multi-faceted, feelings may be mixed. In these cases, the person can explore the situation further by clarifying the questions; or by utilising more orthodox tools and sources of data (research, experts, the internet etc.).

One prime difference between classical intuition and verbal-linguistic-logical thinking is that “knowing” in the former case is often immediate, and appears not to require a linear, sequential, conscious processing of data.⁴ There is a reduced sense of control and personal agency. I like to use the term “receptivity,” and it is one that has been used by many others.

My personal experience and teaching in this area has involved the following methods. There are many more, as Harman and Rheingold (1984), Hendricks and Ludeman (1996), Markley (2015), Miller (2015) and Sadler-Smith & Shefy (2007) have noted. However, here I will limit myself to those processes with which I have explicit expertise.

- Dream work. Recording and analysing relevant dreams.
- Deliberate hypnagogic states – using a “drowsy” meditation to posit questions and note the mind’s responses.
- Research – using integrated intelligence informally during research projects (Anthony, 2013). In particular, I have found free-form writing to be a powerful tool for generating ideas. This is very similar to automatic writing, but does not necessarily involve a “third party” spiritual guide.
- Guided imagery – guiding others into relaxed states, then positing questions.
- “Connection” techniques. These involve relaxing and focusing upon another person, group, place, object or scenario, and allowing thoughts, feelings and auditory information to emerge within one’s mind.
- A variation on the former occurs when the individual focuses upon him/herself, to identify the sources and possible solutions to personal problems: professional, relationships, health, psychological, spiritual and so on.

- Mindfulness. By bringing one's attention fully into the moment, subtle intuitions are more readily sensed and acknowledged⁵

An application for futures work is to use these methods with scenarios, as has been done by Oliver Markley (2012); or for generating ideas and possible solutions to problems, as Miller (2015) has done. I did likewise when preparing for the *Shifting Hong Kong* Futures conference, which I co-facilitated. Further, like Markley (2012, 2015), Miller (2015) and Sadler-Smith & Shefy (2007) I have used guided imagery as a means to help workshop participants to facilitate their intuitive intelligence.

Yet the purpose of such visioning is not to nail down the future. Its function is to add another layer of data to the exploration process, possibly opening to alternative and forgotten futures.

Conclusion

Until the mid-nineteenth century, rationalism and romanticism existed side by side in the western world (Tarnas, 2000). Yet with the advent of experimentalism around 1850 a split occurred and our world became increasingly materialistic, both philosophically and culturally (Tarnas, 2000; Pickstone, 2000). Futurists can be a provocative part of a re-integration by keeping abreast of ideas and developments in related fields, and incorporating intuitive tools and activities into their work.

Despite the possible problems, there is no adventure without danger, no excitement without exploration of the unknown. The fact that the journey may be a bumpy one is no good reason to refuse to take flight.

Note

1. Here "transformation" entails a shift in the way a person thinks about the nature of mind. The latter impacts the relationship they have with themselves and the world, as they no longer see themselves as being an absolutely discrete entity, but rather part of a greater whole. Markley (2012) identifies a similar outcome in the employment of imaginal visioning.
2. All these researchers have explored or researched slightly different but related cognitive functions. Targ has worked with remote viewing, Sheldrake with telephone telepathy and Nelson has both personal and professional experience with "seeing" – which is a similar construct to integrated intelligence.
3. It is for this reason that my practical experience with working directly with groups and individuals using integrated intelligence has been in settings outside of Futures Studies and Foresight communities, and the academic world in general. I facilitate such activities and workshops in private settings, under my own initiative.
4. Markley (2012) has also noted this.
5. These kinds of presence techniques are similar to those widely used in various spiritual practices, including the teachings of Eckhart Tolle and Leonard Jacobson (2006).

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