

An interview with Dr. Louis Klein - Emergence of Heart-Centered Praxis in the Anthropocene.

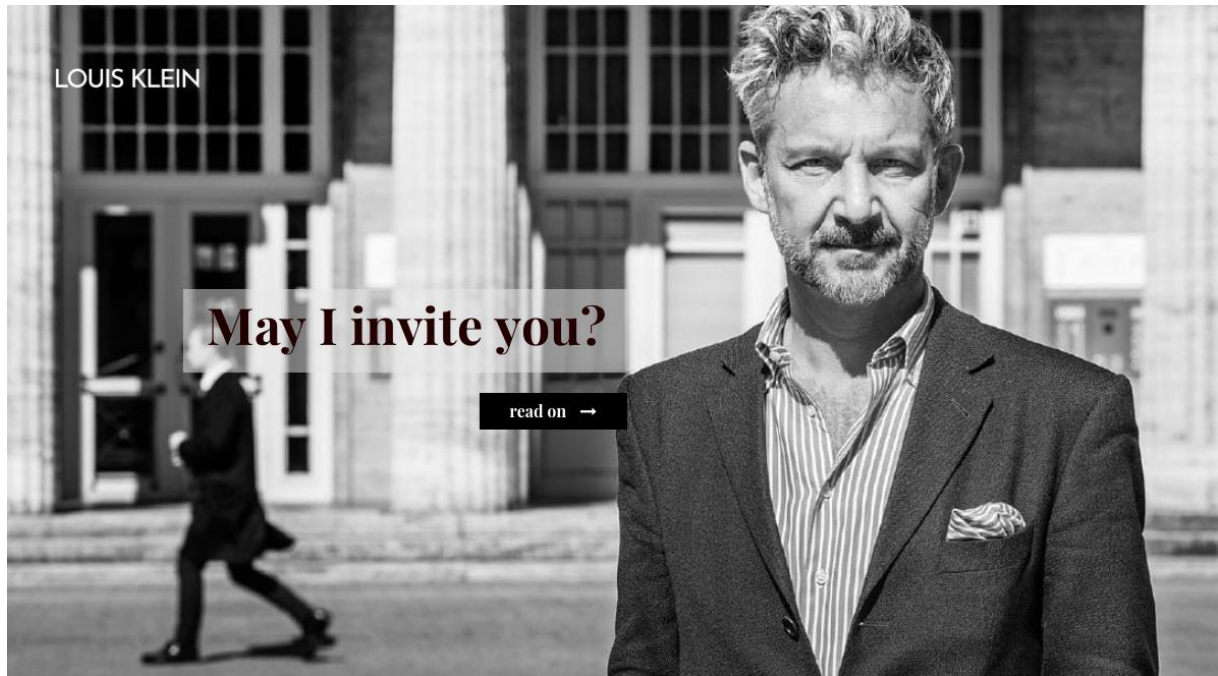


Photo from webpage, Anka Bardeleben for [Louis Klein](#)

Dr. Louis Klein, A Systems Native, and an ARTist.

Klein has been a proponent of transformative systems practices through varied systemic fields over the last three decades. Along with other communities such as AR+, he propounds that the challenges present in the 21st Century cannot be solved with the thinking and actions that produced modernity. As most people acknowledge, we live in a time where human impacts on Gaia have deeply disturbed our eco-systems of which all life is interdependent. Increasingly many individuals and communities feel the pressing matter of fostering contexts for systemic sensibility to flourish.

The Anthropocene has emerged as a conceptual framing of this challenge, but little systemic understanding and praxis has yet meaningfully informed this unfolding discourse.¹ This is where [AR+](#), and as we shall see in the following, [The European School of Governance](#), and the [International Federation for Systems Research](#) supported through Klein's efforts, are aligned in their missions of dialectical learning framing developmental growth for those involved.

Louis Klein has often been quoted along the lines of: 'if complexity is the problem, systems thinking is the answer.' Complexity is a given in our fast-paced, now pandemic-ridden world, and although systems thinking is not new, true to life application of such thinking require more diverse expression and engagement from all of us. Few of us are skilled at reflexive practice around our emotional, conditioned issues, much less at sharing them for the sake of transparency and transformation.

¹ Ison, R. & Shelley, M., DOI: 10.1002/sres.2436.

As I understand AR+ concept of ART (Action Research for Transformation), reflexivity is cultivated as a developmental praxis, aiding scholars/ARTists becoming more aware of our *impact* on, and in every system we are a part of, how we are impacted in return, by effectively engaging with aligned hearts and minds in dialogue and action to navigate toward sustainable solutions to the betterment of all life on our blue-green planet.

In this conversation Louis shares examples from earlier and current research and work experiences. He generously dances with my (rather messy) questions so that this piece in sum yields a (to me) powerful take on how humans in the Anthropocene may realize that we are indeed *enough* simply by existing, instead of feeling that we are stuck in the past, not fully equipped for future tasks. No matter what a mess we have made of the Anthropocene, much hope and optimism is available – if we reach for it. Louis believes change is not that difficult! We have everything we need readily available; it is mainly a question of which perspectives we choose. We have created the situation we are in, and we are equipped to make the necessary right changes to be and do better. Contributing to the discourse and transformation through a systemic perspective and practice on all issues, technological, cultural and political alike, are called on by systems workers of all kinds as a baseline for global stewardship in our VUCA-world. What a Systems Native based in the large version of love sounds like, is my unabashed take from having the privilege of speaking with Louis Klein.

Silvie's entry to systems thinking stems from over two decades in Construction as an architect, more recently from Organization and Relationship Systems Coaching, Center for Right Relationship, and presently by being a Ph.D. student researching multi-disciplinary, interdependent collaboration in Construction, through lenses of Action Research and systems thinking. In coaching-relationships and in the co-research group alike, the relational systems intelligence is in short about cultivating awareness of the system as a whole, in order to cultivate a shared systemic attunement to lessen tension, misunderstanding and conflict, becoming more aligned in action, reaching for reliable efficacy. People learn to notice what impact (and power) each has on the members of systems, and the system as a whole, by becoming aware of relational systems intelligence. Any relationship-system impacts each person as well, and a relational system can learn to reveal itself to itself, (meaning notice and learn to read what is going on, and articulate issues from a reflexive position). This way, members of systems learn to cross edges, and fields of desired transformation can start to emerge. Coaching the whole system reveal that relationship-systems skills yield a purposeful co-existence, and an atmosphere for innovation and problem-solving, more so than a system that is not aware of itself.

The interconnected core-themes in this conversation are more a dance between distinct perspectives in-between what systems thinking and practice may entail through Klein's story of his thinking and practice in becoming, and cultivating being a system scholar-practitioner. The perceived output of his practice from this account, and the systems he inhabits and influences, brings me to envisioning a river delta meandering - where water meets resistance, new pathways simply flow to new pathways, creating new watercourses.



River meandering, creating new watercourses, Iceland. Courtesy Robert Bye, Unsplash.

The presence of Louis Klein:

I, Silvie, first learned of Dr. Louis Klein in a conversation with Jennifer Campbell on the *Systemic Leadership Summit* (SLS) earlier this year. SLS features systems thinkers and practitioners in all shapes and colors, leading-edge thinkers, scholars, teachers, leaders, coaches, and more. In their conversation, what stood out for me was Klein's gentle, alert presence, the concepts, and examples he brought, and how he shared them with Jennifer. This sparked a deep curiosity to know more of how he 'connected the systemic dots' to Anthropocene thinking. Dr. Klein's spoke to our responsibility in stewardship of our planet, how we do not seem to learn from past mistakes quickly, and thus remain tangled in our constructs of competition, a service-to-self position, and inertia. It is time to re-learn governance, management, and leadership, to practice in the relationship-systems we are a part of and learn to navigate through a service-to-others perspective. What Dr. Klein unpacks demands intentional agency from us, a willingness to transcend our conditioned positions of victimhood or inactivity, embracing our existence from where we are, right here and now.

Dr. Louis Klein is a polymath; gentleman scholar, researcher, educator, writer, editor, international thought- and practice leader, economist, former banker, sociologist, founder and leader of think-tanks, successful consultancies, and more. He is merely highly accomplished in many fields. I became intrigued to learn more about his take on systems thinking, practice, and how he became known as a 'systems native.'

With Nordic directness I merely asked Louis if we could have a chat about action research, systems thinking, systemic approaches in practice, and more. Graciously he agreed, and fast forward, we did! I am very grateful for the generosity, the in-depth knowledge of many fields and dimensions he so abundantly shares, and ultimately the new references and questions that equally abundantly arose from this conversation! I also much appreciated that Dr. Hilary Bradbury, editor-in-chief of ARJ/ Curator of AR+, prompted me to share this interview through AR+, allowing this conversation to be shared with other action researchers, cybernetic-, system-, and emergence-oriented people.



Zoom Interview, Louis Klein interviewed by Silvie Le Muzic, Berlin – Oslo / 2021. Screenshot.

Firstly, co-creating the interview space:

I asked Louis for his permission to enter the conversation in systemic style via a short visualization to co-create the interview landscape together. Louis graciously agreed, and I invited him for a 'walk,' bringing our minds to an uncharted terrain that, for me, at first glance looked like beautiful scenery from a high altitude of vast mountains and valleys. When we sat down on a large flat rock to take in the view, the landscape looked more like a vast galaxy, and the colors changed from real-world colors to blues, purples, and an intense source of light, a distant sun perhaps? As soon as we sat down, two small glasses with a plasma-like blue drink with adamantite particles appeared. In this setting, we made a toast to acknowledge the experience and had a sip. I felt the drink color my inside with a sort of tingle, a readiness, a kinship to relationship systems, and a recognition of possibilities to engage. I also felt a benevolent, calm curiosity, not knowing how this would unfold.

Louis: What came up for me, for me, was a Morocco, Kenya, or South African landscape, sitting under a tree, just in a circle, discussing things, drinking wine. It would be the golden hour, sun setting before dark, and then you have this wonderful, night-sky. I'm so happy with the planet as it is! It is so full of beauty! It could also have been India or China or somewhere in the Alps, where I tend to hang out hiking. So that's what came up for me, very much being in nature and a circle discussing, drinking, perhaps champagne. I enjoyed it immensely and went back to so many beautiful experiences I have had, all triggered by the visualization. It was the perfect opener to an interview because I was very relaxed, sitting under an African tree, with a mild breeze and a vast landscape, which stretched onto the horizon, a savanna, or the winelands of South Africa, or something like it.

Silvie: Mm, I can feel your affinity for landscape and ambiance, your being in a relaxed setting in an environment you cherish. Thank you for providing this vivid description. Wish I was there. The next best is feeling it from your description, an earlier experience that brings you to an atmosphere you recall with joy, and then transporting this value by sharing it with others!

So, may we begin with your story? Three short questions demanding much longer answers, your timeline this far: Who *were* you? Who *are* you now? And who do you want to *become*?

Starting on a Vineyard, meeting Kierkegaard, and on emergence.

Speaking to the question, who were you?

Louis: Firstly, I grew up in a winery, in an agricultural environment, with all that comes with it. Seasons and work, pruning, and growth, harvest, and the tranquility of winter; a particular exposure to what we may want to call ecology. That's the lived experience of my childhood being in such a context. It was harsh at times, there was much work, and it was not as jolly as one would imagine living on a winery would be. It was a time when we had to do all the jobs all by ourselves, a family business farm-life, more work than anything, not fancy and colorful really. There were jolly moments as well, of course, but those were not the dominant experience from the time.

Secondly, at school, I vividly remember the day I was exposed to the subject we called Ethics. We went into anthropology and pursued the question "What are human beings?" We looked at a text from Søren Kierkegaard where he describes a human being as a 'relationship that relates to itself.' Oh! It took me a while to get my thinking all around that. Still, I found it fascinating that it was possible to think in such a way about things, which look quite compact and material like a human being. Then, going all into this relational realm, adding a bit of philosophy, of course, and exploring the basic idea in the context of cybernetics. It led to feedback loops and relationships that relate to themselves or things that relate to each other in a feedback loop. That is sort of, the fundamental formula of everything that we call emergence. On all levels, it can be *life* itself, or thought, or social systems, all of that. With that encounter of Kierkegaard (I liked his thinking, his philosophy not so much) that particular thought kicked it off, and I have been looking for this ecological complexity of thinking ever since.

I was lucky when I went to university to study Economics and Sociology. I came across system theory, management- and socio-cybernetics and had my Eureka-moments. I could say, "Ok, that's it. That's it's wonderful!" These moments are why you go to university because you learn all this exciting stuff there! Later, I realized that I was lucky to move from one niche to another starting with the Niklas Luhmann's Theory of Social Systems. I next moved to British management cybernetics and went to the UK and came back to the realm of Economics. I thought, well, everybody would study things like this, and I thought everyone else thought it was relatively normal to think in terms of emergence and dissolving, of sensitivity to initial conditions and path dependencies, of power of contexts and operational closure - all of these, and what comes with it in the vocabulary of systems, system thinking, or system sciences, but - they did not! (hearty laugh).

These are the three main aspects of system thinking: First, you have the emerging and the dissolving. Second, you have the paradox of - that is more the chaos theory - sensitivity to an initial condition and path dependency. In the beginning, everything is possible, but there is this path dependency, where a

minor change at the outset creates a significant difference in the end. And third, the power of context is to see that the power, or the logic of the context is always mightier than any intention. It is the context that provides for the possibility of a system to manifest and grow. You look at the context to understand the system, rather than looking at the system itself. On the other side, you realize that a system, especially when we look at autopoietic systems, like living systems, are all operationally closed. They are capable of boundary maintenance, just like your body, where many things happen contained in closed loops, like the blood circulation, a very sophisticated, closed loop. It doesn't reach out to the environment. Take your thinking, for example; nothing is entering your head, but you resonate very much with the context, and it informs and forms you. So, these were the three aspects of systems thinking I am referring to systems basics.

Navigating in the world:

So, I learned it all that way. Then I threw myself into life and all kinds of jobs! I was in Germany at the time, and it was all about the so-called Aufbau-Ost, meaning bringing East-Germany up to speed in terms of the Western way of book-keeping, accounting, controlling, and all that. I did that for a while before I was headhunted and became the director of a bank. Didn't like it, left it after a while, went into advertising, which was sort of glamorous and colorful. Didn't like it, and I went back to university to do my Ph.D. in Sociology. And I took it from there and became an organizational development-, and change-management consultant. I did that for twenty years and realized that's kind of limited in the end and retired from that too. It occurred to me that it would be more exciting to change the game than just to play it. I returned to Action Research. Now, with the EUSG as an independent think tank and the IFSR, it's exploring the governance aspects of the challenges of the Anthropocene, climate change etc., and the digital transformation and what the two have to do with each other. And my passion is very much in the social and societal development context. I am currently working with a NGO in Morocco which was asked to support the transformation of the education system. This is one example of being immersed, among many other things that seem to me as being more meaningful and more exciting than consulting. I'm a researcher, certainly. I'm a coach - at times. Mainly, what I'm doing is described as navigation. Me being a navigator exploring the unknown, drawing maps, identifying routes and risks. I support an endeavor, a ship with its captain, the crew, for them to get wherever they want to go and make sure that they return home safely.

Action Research, technology, culture and politics, parts of social complexity:

Silvie: What an inspiring tale; seems like you have grasped your opportunities to the fullest. So, from that, I would like to ask you some questions that go in the direction of Action Research (AR). I mean, what does *research-with* look like for you, research that creates change, ARTistry, with the T representing transformation. How are you being an action researcher given your systems thinking orientation?

Louis: My question would rather be, what kind of research would it be if it was not Action Research? Is that still meaningful research then? Rather not!

I'm going back to what I'm doing on the research side; it certainly has to do with social systems, and it certainly has to do with social complexity. I tend to break it down into political complexity and cultural complexity, the two, in contrast to the third element, just technology. So, whenever you can think of things in relatively the way of a linear causality, it makes nice technology, and you can build bridges

and planes and buildings, and accounting, law, and other functions. So that's all technology. That is pretty powerful, but it's only one-third of the pie.

The other two-thirds are the political and cultural aspects. Politics in this perspective is very much looking into the co-existence of interests. All co-existence ranges from fierce competition to intimate symbiosis. So, you have it all - but fluid, and it's complex in the way that interests are not 'chiseled in stone.' They move with their context, move in resonance to other interests. In addition to politics a large part of what governs our lives is embedded in cultural complexity. I like to refer to culture as the paradigmatic reference for a community of practice. Whatever we do, we attribute meaning to it. Culture is sense-making and meaning creation, all that. Having a nice embedding narrative that explains what we do and why we do it and provides a coherent background to it is very helpful to navigate life. So, culture or the cultural element is mainly about narratives and stories describing how we think how the world works and we in it. So, these two parts, politics and culture, come together fueling social complexity. These are the parts I'm interested in and what my research has been focusing on, again and again.

Stories about researching and writing:

My first Ph.D. was what they called a systemic evaluation of in-house consulting at the Daimler-corporation, Mercedes Benz, and their in-house consulting department. They were wondering what they were and what problem the organization believed itself to have to which they were a solution. They believed that monitoring their existence would yield the answer. At that time my idea had been to look into research on systemic intervention. Yet, the distinction of daily job and research was tedious. So, I did let go of the initial academic ambition and committed myself to the field. I felt it was more honest to go into the practice, researching what I was immersed in, making my daily job my fieldwork. That allowed me to be at ease with the struggle of earning money. Doing my everyday job, being immersed in this environment it felt like being paid for conducting the fieldwork. This work became my first encounter with Action Research, going more into the anthropological side, using autoethnography to understand that what I was doing was the actual research, so to speak, by identifying the implicit frames that were already there. I'm part of the system, and the action research helps me reflect on what I'm doing there. And which is a fascinating situation where you have to juggle your identities. This smorgasbord is what action research is all about; you allow yourself to immerse in it and pull yourself out of it now and then, to observe yourself being immersed, and then reflect on it, come up with new questions, and in-between answers to them. The action research and the action learning were always integral elements of what I described as systemic inquiry, as my primary research method, growing one's understanding out of the field.

Silvie: Could you please elaborate on the aim of the action research in your first Ph.D.? What wanted to transform in the organization from your action research inquiry?

Louis: Well then, to answer the question 'why is there in-house consulting in the organization?' So, the research question as mentioned crystallized around the idea of looking at what kind of problem an organization thinks it has to which internal consulting or in-house consulting is a solution? That was the question through my work, leading the systemic inquiry. So, they had posed the question of which way to go. They then conducted much research, workshops and brought in experts to find answers to their questions to steer their course. In the end, I came up with many answers to their questions

which they didn't like. There were four routes, with corresponding risks, of which three routes were OK, but one route that would lead off a cliff, and with the recommendation 'please not to go there as you will inevitably crash,' They did decide to go for the cliff. And they did crash. My contract allowed me to leave before this happened.

Speaking to the who am I: Let's start in the present with the hats I am wearing and the things I'm doing. So, there are two institutional hats I'm wearing. I was elected to the Executive Committee as Secretary-General at the International Federation for Systems Research (IFSR). This federation used to be a think-tank for Systems Research. The president, Ray Ison, is a well-known system scientist from Australia and for years with the Open University in the UK. Back in 2015 Ray and I, organized the conference on governing the Anthropocene for the International Society for Systems Sciences. In 2014 along with the Club of Rome, we explored moving its guiding question from “material limitations of growth” towards “conditions for the possibility of humankind's sustainable well-being on the planet”. Now, we're turning the IFSR from what used to be just another think-tank into the systems community's peak body, which is an association of institutions, think-tanks, consultancies, and more. We provide a platform where they can meet and further their shared understanding. Such a platform is what is needed in these times more than anything else. We don't need another smart institution that explains the world to us. We need platforms where we can meet to foster and further a shared understanding, in a process of inquiry, learning, and understanding based on epistemic humility.

To do just that in this field has been a bumpy road for the last two years, finding the acceptance of the system's community; and that it was a good idea to collaborate rather than to compete. Now with systems jargon going mainstream, there comes a question about who knows something about it! Suddenly, the world is full of systems experts where from the perspective of the systems community or the community of Systems Research, almost of them are amateurs. They've probably read a couple of books, and then they feature themselves knowledgeable in the field. What we see that in football every four years, for example, with the World Cup, where everybody becomes experts on football all of a sudden. As nowadays, all are experts on systems, which is excellent for the energy and the dynamic, but it needs to be connected. People need to be invited to explore what's there already in terms of existing concepts, body of knowledge, people, and initiatives already existing. This way, they have neither to reinvent the systems sciences nor the wheel! They can take it from where it is at already. I welcome everybody to stand on the shoulder of giants, but it's nice to find a giant to stand on in the first place (laughs). So that's what is happening at the IFSR. (I'd love to stand in the second row having somebody being the president and feature whoever makes a good president, the impressive stature - while in the background, I care for the nitty-gritty of making it possible!)

A similar situation is ongoing in the European School of Governance (EUSG), which is very much in contrast to the IFSR really a think-tank on governing the Anthropocene. They are sort of closely linked in what they're looking at, which is governance in the 21st century, or governing the Anthropocene. The European School of governance brings it more into a form of a trans-disciplinary community of scientists and artists to find ways to work together in a transdisciplinary fashion and address a broader public through blogs, videos, and more. We have a full, proper journal, double-blind, peer-reviewed, the Systemic Change Journal. EUSG is a think tank looking at bringing people together to foster and further their shared understanding of what can and should be done now. That's the scope of the European School of Governance where the activities are more in curating and communicating. And,

again, we don't have a president. There is a vacancy; let's see who ends up in that position. I run with the title of Dean, which is the equivalent to the Secretary-General, making things possible and co-facilitating and co-creating the space to let things grow. Learn more about the impact of [EUSG projects here](#).

Silvie: Do you get in some sleep?

Louis: Oh, this is just accounting for the afternoons! In the morning, I write. And there are two things I'm pursuing now. One is writing up my research [2nd Ph.D.] that I did in Morocco, with the [Tamkeen-approach](#), a fascinating approach to societal development and metamorphic transformation. The word Tamkeen is Arabic with a very particular meaning. It means a fertile niche, hosting the seed and the potential fruit's that may come out of it. So that's Tamkeen. It's a great word. In Arabic, the radical of a word does not have any vowels. Tamkeen's root is merely mkn. So, there are words like limkan إمكن (potential), Momkin ممكن (possible), Imkania (possibility), Amkanyh امكانيه (to be possible), Makin مكين (safe, strong, firm, well founded), Makan مكان (place, space, venue, locus), and those are all entire fields around possibilities and potential. It's all in the root of the word, which I like very much. And that's the approach. I am writing that up and will publish it. At the same time, I am involved in fostering Tamkeen on global platforms, especially those who gather philanthropists who want to make the world a better place and who have additional perspectives on what they are doing there. And again, using the entire thing that I'm writing up as a facilitating document for the conversation that has the potential to foster and further a shared understanding of societal development and metamorphic transformation.

On whom I want to become: There's a fourth thing I'm doing, which is going back to the writing that some would refer to as my artistic roots. It is also about writing for a new audience, in addition to academic writing, finding one's tone, comment my text by writing books, and speak about it. My form of expression has always been writing, which I have loved since I was a teenager. I used it as a reflective means of what had been happening or to what I had been reading. I have always wanted to, at some point, go back. Now that I don't have to be a managing director anymore, I can go back to my writing. I am finding myself in a situation where I move from academic writing to popular science and a broader audience. I now enjoy a very challenging process, which is finding my voice writing this way. To find the writing tone is a greater challenge than I had foreseen. I may fail. I am familiar with arranging the content, the flow of arguments, and then crafting it into a nice story. I'm familiar with having my voice, knowing who I am, yes, but finding the tone to write engagingly, informing, and entertaining simultaneously, is a wonderful new challenge. You write text and sort of think it's fabulous, and next morning, you revisit it and say 'no way! 'It's like a musician, deciding on what kind of music you want to perform, what you know, how you have some mastery in playing your instrument, and all of that, but finding that tone that sort of, resonates. Well, that's a challenge, so that's the fourth part, and it may lead towards writing a pile of books. At least that's what I would love to bring together. As Schopenhauer, the German philosopher, once said, until you're 50, you write text, and after 50, it's all commentary.

I have been out and about in the world doing research, consulting, change-, and project management. Now, I enter a time where I can reflect and comment, find the lines and tone, and describe it all. So, this is what I'm starting at the moment, which is to say that all the rest will stay the same, the EUSG,

the ISFR, and more so, further research, being out in the world, and finding myself in the middle of a jungle, and doing action research or anthropology, or whatever you like to call it, will always be there.

Silvie: Through watching YouTube, the spoken word is very much your native tongue as well. You deliver and contextualize the systemic message that both have power and is easy to grasp as a listener. Have you considered sharing your reflections orally, in a podcast, or video series, and the like?

Louis: Yes. Exactly. I'm invited to be a keynote speaker here and there, and people like it, and then they're so disappointed that they can't buy my book because I haven't written it yet! (Laughs)

Silvie: I see, hence the writing a pile of books then, (laughs). Is there more you want to add to the whom do you want to become segment?

Louis: Yes, there is more. I am reminded of these prominent birthday markings forty years, fifty years, and so on. I always have a motto for these, that I'll try to translate since they are very present in German. So, with forty, it was all about being able to do everything, but not obliged to do anything. And now, at fifty, it was: seizing to become, and starting to be. So, in my forties I was still striving for independence in the workplace, my world of immersion at that time, and I found it very liberating. But now, with fifty, I see that I so very much enjoy just being, and with that comes no ambition would drive me; it is just the joy of doing what I'm doing. And most of the time, I forget to charge people. I just do it, then trust, and I go along with it. Especially now with the lockdown, I have been, 'pruning' the setup of my life, to reduce it to the max, as they say, and to shrink my footprint, and with that the necessity to earn money for things I do not need. To live by a small gentle flow, and you know, the little you need. And - I want to have more of less and to settle into it. It still grows, that feeling of *being* still grows, and the feeling of freedom still grows, and I enjoy that growing.

Silvie: Mmm, I hear you! And I am looking very much forward to reading the texts from your being, gentle flow, place of growth.

Change, emergence, language, quantum, and mentioning love:

Silvie: Speaking of growing. What about all the talk of change? An old, well-used cartoon comes to mind. A pulpit with an official logo on it, with a speaker behind it addressing a crowd. He asks, 'who wants change?' All hands of the public go up. The speaker then asks, 'who wants to change?' No hands go up, and everybody's eyes go to the ceiling. So, from this distinction, is it more difficult for us humans as players, to grasp that we are due to change ourselves to be able to play the game of life better together, from a systemic perspective?

Louis: Yes, but I think change is overrated. Change is what's happening anyway, sometimes almost invisibly, like a silent transformation. It is what happens without us noticing. Only in hindsight can we see the change, like that we, in fact, age. We only realize that we have aged when we look at old photos of ourselves and say, 'oh, yeah, that's still me, but I have changed.' Suddenly, we see all of the change, but we didn't realize it because we didn't feel it at the time. And even that is deceiving because, of course, we have changed not only on the outside but also on the inside. We learn from our experiences, and they all do leave traces. Change needs care, like the image of gardening; if you

don't care for the garden, you will have wilderness, overgrowth. If you tend to care for it, your garden will flourish. You are not doing any of the growing, things grow by themselves, but you tend to the care.

As I shared with you earlier, I have been journaling since I was a teenager. Going back to the old texts is going back to integrity, and I find that my perspective didn't change much in the flow of expression. So those texts to me still read fresh. Although I think, 'oh, I've learned so many things, and so much in the world,' it did not depart too far from that what was present in my past. It was all there already. It grew indeed, but it's not that something that was not there, is here suddenly. It doesn't work like that - it all just continues instead. It's still kind of the same garden, with only a few things changed. A few new flowers were planted, and then the trees have grown, but it is still me.

Silvie: Could your 'change' be substituted by 'growth' or 'evolution' perhaps, because of what is happening to all of us, that we are a part of the transformation on one level, by merely our physical experience, while not necessarily noticing the rest?

So, does systems thinking in action research enable you to advocate the possibility of systemic practice, you know, an actionable practice of *being* in practice, to evolve, grow - that being willingness to-be-in-motion for something new to emerge?

Louis: It reminds me of once I gave a keynote on systemic consulting to the International Society for System Sciences, presenting what we did at the Systemic Excellence Group at the time to the audience. Afterwards, I got the question, 'how do I talk to managers about systemic consulting?' I said, 'Oh, that's, that's very easy, you must only avoid two terms, systemic and consulting.' And, and this is what comes up for me immediately when I get the question. Sometimes the academic language, the systems language, even change-language, get into our way and inhibits the communication we all want to have together. So, I find that very fascinating.

Silvie: I appreciate that you bring up the challenge of language because firstly, words and assigned meanings bring up a variety of purposes. I find your written texts inviting in that regard, rich and different, and full of possibility somehow. In the Venturing Anthropocene Thinking paper, you write that "language is older than logic and what sounds almost unrealistic as a vision for quantum computing is our everyday experience of language. We attribute meaning to soundbites and call them words, and connect these to build sentences, engage in conversation, tell stories and pass on narratives and legends from generation to generation, creating the social realities that constitute cultures and civilizations."

Secondly, we assign meaning to words and automatically assume that we mean the same thing in a conversation. However, we likely attach different cultural and individual meanings to use of words. A M.D. and shaman from the Mexican Toltec tradition, Don Miguel Ruiz (The Four Agreements) posits that words are magic in that we can either choose to use them impeccably, hence unite, create beautiful stories, and 'heaven on earth.' Or, words can be misused, destroy everything around us, and we then create our own personal hell with them. Are you suggesting something of sorts about words and meanings by the Tamkeen and your paper on Anthropocene Thinking?

Louis: There's no truth in the meaning of a word. It is how it is used in the context of a sentence, in an utterance, or of something that you say, and the surrounding context that gives it meaning, or resonance. On the one side, words mean what they're used for in conversation all the time. Okay, their meaning changes a bit over time, but words are very banal in that respect. Then the other aspect is that words sometimes work like spells in the other direction. Words can be powerful, they can be healing, they can be dissolving, and they can be just wonderful or even destructive as well. Once uttered, they cannot be taken back. They're out there. It might be just that one word that flips the entire reception of the understanding and triggers whatever, for better or for worse. Then on the systems side, that sober system scientist kicks in and says, yes, every meaning is meaning in a context. And every magic is magic in a context. The same word, which goes unnoticed in one context, can cast a spell in another, and it's not the meaning; it's in the relationship or the resonance of the word with its context and the particular people involved. Sometimes it's a question of frequency. They stick out because we use them so often. Some words are probably not used that often, but they have a specific criticality to it, and once that word pops up, it makes a difference immediately. For example, giving a scientific presentation, and somewhere in that presentation, pops-up the word love. Oh, that gains much attention and makes a difference. Although it was just used once in an entire presentation, otherwise full of scientific jargon and words and well-thought-through sentences, the mentioning of the word love took it all, changed it all, and ran with it!

Big Questions Get Bigger Answers.

Silvie: As mentioned earlier, I find you leave clues to other realms in your writing. You talk about beauty and simplicity as valid criteria; you talk about emergence, phenomena of quantum theory and Vedic wisdom, and perhaps the need for a new axial era, to name a few. I feel all of these are related to our ongoing, present timeline of significant global change. Will humans be able to co-create the end of duality? Perhaps we finally will merge quantum mechanics with what we call spirituality? Is it the human species' task to evolve or become the consciousness on earth that Gaia needs to heal herself? Perhaps humans' task is to end all division and become the unified field with every form of life? So, where are you with all these concepts in your texts? Do ideas from this realm have meaning in your context? Big messy questions!

Louis: (laughs) No, no, no - big questions. Well, you asked for it, you get it.

If I had to go as deep as possible and describe what I see, I would describe it as a theory of dissonance, which is undoubtedly a bit of a provocation! Especially for spiritual and religious people, who believe in a great harmony behind all things, but let's assume it is not. There's dissonance. That's the basic assumption. To move from dissonance allows you to navigate at ease with all the phenomena that you meet on different levels. Suppose you go to the quantum mechanics, or even before that. In that case, the philosophical question of why there is *something*, and not just *nothing*, is in quantum mechanics answered with what they call a zero-point field. That is the humming of the universe or, call it the humming of being, the moment that something is humming will cause waves to collide, over and over. In whatever we know about levels of emergence, is that if you have something colliding, if you have dissonance, that dissonance has two physical tendencies or propensities: either entropy or emergence.

Entropy is everything, every kind of order tends to dissolve. It is this tendency for things to dissolve, to even out. Or to build order. If you move from here to the Vedic and their inner belief, which they

called Nada Brahma, which is to say everything is sound, so nicely reflected on that zero-point field, the humming of the universe, and the dissonance that you have with all these colliding waves. Whatever there is, such a collision of waves of dissonances, seeking the safe harbor of order. Energy fuels emergence. And in the end, the manifestation of order *is* harmonious. Take the planets, how they revolve around the sun. In that case, they do so in the same kind of harmonic order that you find in a string-instrument; the specific tones on the string, like a guitar or a violin, which relate to each other in the same kind of mathematical equation. So, there are bands of order, and we're back to chaos theory and the order from noise phenomenon.

SOCIAL REALMS - Emergence of consciousness and social systems:

Let's push all that physics aside and say okay, let's go back to our social realm, and how we relate to *each other*, acknowledging to start not from the idea that there is a great harmony that we have violated, but instead that there is a great dissonance in which we have the capability to realize order. If we want to learn and eventually understand more about this (especially in sociology or social sciences), it will not be looking at society nor looking at people but looking at *relationships* and looking at *relations*. And in our human capabilities we are able to sense and realize this in three relationships that are meaningful to us.

First, the relationship to ourselves, and we're back to Kierkegaard, we're back to the very beginning. So, starting with things like, we have many stories about body and mind, yes, and there's a relationship between the two. And if that relationship relates to itself, we have a self, not quite; we have an ego. For the self, we need a relationship with other human beings. And if you have a relationship to the living matter, especially your own body, and a relationship to your conscious mind reflecting, and to others, that is all that is possibly accessible for you as a human being in the world.

Silvie: May I ask a question regarding those three relationships?

Louis: Yes, sure.

Silvie: So, isn't there a fourth relationship as well? Depending on what you believe in, of course. We also have the heart, and a heart-consciousness. The self-operating systems in the body operating without any will or control on our part. Who or what governs these systems? Some believe, or sense, or even see, that we have energetic bodies around our physical bodies, our biofield - and a soul much larger than the physical body. We are conditioned with many different stories about what a soul is, such as that it is a small part outside of the physical body. But what if the opposite were true? What if most of who we are, exists in other realms outside the physical, and that only small parts of who we are exist through our physical body? What if our purpose of evolution is to contribute to all of life's evolution through living our physical lives from our heart-consciousness from a soul-level? What are your three relationships then, and perhaps a fourth through the heart, in connection to a larger energetic body, or a source of some kind, that we have given many names throughout history?

Louis: So, there are two answers to that if you address me, which is not to rule all of that out, but rather to embrace it. One is a perspective of *systemic emergence*, which acknowledges that our capabilities of realizing go one level up and one level down. That has a nice Cartesian center saying, 'I think therefore I am.' That is our most profound, or if we put a center in our relational stretch within

levels of emergence, that would be our consciousness. Our consciousness is linked to what neuroscience would describe as brain functions. But this perspective is not distinctively emergent – it is not addressing something that is more and different from the sum of its parts. We don't, or we can't relate to any thinking or self-awareness beyond something on the material realm doing something. So, when all that we know about our thinking is that something happens in our brain on the living body level, something happens which emerges and brings about consciousness, or the conscious self, or the conscious mind.

So, when we go one level up, we have conscious mind using the living body capabilities, to modulate soundwaves that we recognize as words, and sentences, and stories, which again, emerge into what we call social systems. These are sort of the three levels of emergence that we, from the center of cognitive and conscious awareness, have access to. We have a lot of sensations in our body, many things happen in our body that we don't have access to, that we seem not to control consciously. And it goes even further down as we are not getting to the level of the molecules or the amino acids, or whatever. It cannot; it doesn't happen that way. So, from the center of the consciousness, we are sitting pretty much in the middle; we can sense and feel ourselves as living bodies. And we relate it to our, let's call it, social inclusion. So that's what is possible there. And just one interesting feature there, is that the further down, the more rigid the level of emergence is, in the living body, we have a minimal range of plasticity. Whereas the psyche's plasticity operates with a far broader range of what we see is possible and modular. And if we go even further up to the level of social systems, we see that within a generation we change and evolve and come up with new ideas in terms of our social systems. We don't do that so much with our conscious mind, and we very rarely do that with our bodies. So, that was just one thought there: the psyche's plasticity is greater than the body's plasticity, and smaller than the plasticity or variability of a social system.

The other part is just looking at the dualities that we relate to in terms of relationships that relate to each other. We have the body-mind distinction, which we bring together in an ego, where the ego-and-other distinction which we bring together in the self. We can transcend the self and then talk of a soul. And if we sort of flip on the other side and transcend the soul, then the Hindus have the idea of Atman, 'eternal self,' and so on. So, we can describe that. We can apply (which is the system scientist in me) a lot of what is available in terms of narratives to attribute meaning to our sensations, and our being, and the development that we see in the world. All that can be re-narrated from a systems perspective; however, all that is limited to what *language* and grammar allow us to express. Many things that cannot be expressed escape our awareness. Even if we relate to something that escapes that setup that I just described, we are still talking about it; we are still relating to it in the form of language, which makes it accessible for us.

In the editing process of this conversation, Silvie stumbled (or is there such a thing?) upon a twenty-year old conversation on YouTube with the Poets Mary Oliver and Coleman Barks. Mary has just read her poetry for an audience, and Coleman attempts to ask her questions afterwards. He finds this difficult because he says reading her poetry leaves him open, and empty, and pleased to have no answers. He laughingly asks her if that's the way she wants it? (About 5.04 minutes in) Mary laughs and says "Oh, yes, that is absolutely the way I want it. Whether one is writing for the sake of the poem or the sake of one's own sensibility is another question, but that so many of us live most of our lives seeking the answerable, and somehow demeaning or bypassing those things that can't be answered,

and therefore denuding one's life of the acceptance of the mystery, and the pleasure of mystery, and the willingness to live with mystery – is greatly what I think about. And if I could do something for people, I would say don't forget the mystery. Love the mystery. Be glad of it. Don't want answers, all the time."

Somehow, I find that this urge from Mary Oliver, about embracing the mystery; that which cannot necessarily be fully understood, much less expressed, that we still relate to and attempt to speak about, however incomplete, dovetails with Louis' elaboration above. All those things that escape our awareness because we cannot express them with words, but still sense, and are attracted to notions of, and that somehow form relationships in resonance. Accessed [here](#), retrieved April 4th, 2021.

Emergence:

The basic idea that I'm trying to describe is that there is more life than consciousness on the planet. They are at different levels of emergence, so from living bodies, we have the emergence of conscious minds, and from there, we have the emergence of social systems. We see that the lower the level of emergence, the smaller the variability. So, there are rarely people born with three arms or four legs or something - we pretty much come out the same. But if we move to the psyche, we see a more diverse variety, and we see that in our own lives as well. Therefore, we have all these therapists and psychoanalysts, and what not. I don't want to say deviation, but the possible variability is much broader in the psyche than with the body.

And if you go to the social systems, we are continually changing, even within our lifetime, especially back home in Germany. They moved from the Empire to the Republic, to the Third Reich, and then to Democracy, just on that level all in a lifetime! All these kinds of different configurations of social systems are just sort of the very recent top layer of societies describing themselves. It is the point that I wanted to make that you could look at it in the extensive timeframe of the history of the planet. It took a while for life to become alive, so to speak. It took overall longer to arrive at the point where our brain cells to produce something like a consciousness, and it took even longer than that for our social systems to come into existence and being. In just a couple of thousand years, the first cities emerged, and now we are heading towards a global society, and things like that. The younger the level of emergence, the broader its variability, was the point I was trying to make.

The Sufi mystics had a wonderful language, (they were all poets) like this wonderful Rumi-quote "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing there is a field. I'll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass the world is too full to talk about." The tranquility or serenity of being beyond, what we violate by using language - and put words to sensations or thoughts; and that is what we're doing now. So, this is a longer answer to your question.

Silvie: Thank you for providing a longer answer, and with apologies in advance for more disregard or violation by application of language, I still feel compelled to understand more about the realms your texts reside in. For example, when you write "*acknowledge the role of vibrant sound and colors as carriers of meaning*," I wonder what you think is possible for humanity as we move through our clearing- or healing-work in becoming earthlings resonant to their planet, all within or beyond the powerful system structures with enormous leverage in both negative and positive direction. However, I remain lost in the things you mentioned earlier, and the effect of your dropping such a concept of

love in a formal talk you gave, and the impact this word had on your audience, and can have beyond that.

The juice: Realizing beauty and love, beautifying relationships, and courage to trust:

Louis: (Laughs) You certainly learn a lot about your audience when you do that! I tend to counterbalance propositions as I moved from harmony to dissonance. It seems like an underlying pattern. Now, I would love to move from the individual enlightenment efforts, or 'how do we get there', to 'no, we are there, we are there already.' *You don't need to get anywhere. We're here already! We are alive now.* And that's very much what I was taking away from the work with Tamkeen in Morocco. Their approach, through the term *Tamkeen* as I described earlier, is how this is thought of in a very systemic way. *Tamkeen* represents the seed and the right place, the fruitful place where the seed can come to its full fruit. But the word neither means the seed nor the place for it. It means the *potential* that comes from this marriage of the seed and the right place that allows it to come to fruition.

The key here is beauty. We all have, we all share, a sense, a sensation of beauty. If something is beautiful, or something is joyful, we sense it, all humans do. What if we found the courage to trust that feeling or *trust* the attraction of beauty, finding the courage to trust love? And that is not where you need to do anything beforehand; you can do it right away, there's not much preparation, no preparation at all really. It's our human potential. It's our human potential to recognize beauty, to realize love. And it's our human potential to allow ourselves to trust or to find the courage to trust. So, if you start there, and you make it the focus of your intention, the focus of your attention, the relationship to yourself, the relationship to the living world, the relationship to others. If you look at all the relationships, sense all the relationships, seek beauty in them and consciously prefer the more beautiful, or what feels more beautiful, and learn how to beautify relationships, starting with the relationship to yourself. Start returning your locus of value from what is the prevalent dislocation in our society to look at achievement, status, power, and money, and all of that - to return your locus like a dislocated disc; let it yield the joy of being!

To discover the beauty in oneself through the reflection of the other.

To start from there is to say: 'you're welcome to the world as you are' - full stop! You don't need to earn your living, you're living already. You take it from there and realize that beauty is in fact everywhere. As you realize this, the beauty of the world emerges. Realizing is a wonderful word. It is describing perceiving something on the one hand, and on the other hand bringing something about, into being. Isn't it wonderful understanding that this is the same thing? Realizing means realizing beauty, means creating beauty through your awareness of it. And at that point, you can start with allowing yourself, start from compassion, and not stretching it morally, immediately to the world - but start with yourself. Self-compassion: 'Oh, you're a jolly mess, but lovely' and take it from there, and then just be open, to discover the beauty in yourself.

The easiest way to discover the beauty in yourself is to see it in others' reflection. Shams Tabrizi said something like, 'If you want to learn something about the world and yourself, find yourself a mirror.' A human mirror is describing the relationship of a resonance. So, again we go back to the living body, the mind, and the other. The easiest way is through the other person; use the other person, which is easy, and sometimes also complicated because you never know what is coming. You can relate to

yourself and use the resonance that you have to yourself as a mirror. And walking in nature, oh, that is full love, maximum resonance right there. Like the Taoist said, 'all you can know, you learn from nature.' You learn from nature; you learn from every relationship that allows for a resonance. If you're aware of that, you learn and find the courage to trust beauty. When you seek the beautification of these relationships to yourself, to the world, and with others; well, there you have your silent transformation. You don't need another project or program. All unfolds from there.

Louis: So, how did we get here from Action Research? (Laughs)

Silvie: A profound take on beautifying relationships; thank you again! This resonates! (laughs). I should just stop right here and bask in it! But alas - to continue with another Taoist perspective: Choosing beauty is simple, but not easy. Most of humanity will hardly subscribe to feeling inherently welcome to the world, especially in this prolonged pandemic situation.

So, I keep thinking of change and emergence again. Benyamin Lichtenstein² speaks of two familiar tracks of adaptation and growth surely familiar to ARs like yourself. He speaks of there being the incremental change – learning from experience, and a major transformation - questioning a guiding assumption that leads to a major shift in several aspects at once. Both refer to modification of existing elements. So, change refers to current situations. Does notions like these have to do with your reservations to change?

Emergence, is a third category, a process leading to something new, distinct from transformation or change in that it is *creation*, the invention of a new system, context, or entity and the structures within it, yielding a new 'unit of analysis,' a formative process in a social ecology, an agency that can be expressed. Creation leads to new. Emergence is non-linear in complex systems views where interdependence between stakeholders, and co-creative qualities, along with passion and other positive emotional affects, are drivers that generate emergence. So, where passion is expressed, emergence will follow?

When speak about choosing to embrace beauty and beautifying relationships, I understand this is an emergent field, but not how to possibly remain there, hold the frequency steadily so to speak. Not knowing where we are in our evolutionary process, (the silent transformation?), still leaves us subject to universal laws that we may or may not know about, but subject to, or intertwined with nonetheless...Uhm, does this make any sense to you?

Sound, resonance, voice, your voice - and more beauty.

Louis: Absolutely. Yes. I might mildly take you from there to the Anthropocene thinking which harbors there as well. Starting from your thinking, feeling, doing – for the lack of a better word, let's say it creates a sound. It creates *your* sound, and then your sound resonates with other sounds. And depending on what the other sound is, it may be resonant in a very harmonic way. It is an experience of beauty. That's the beautiful thing that even bear a chance to tune in, like in a choir, for example, people singing together in complex harmonies, and creating something more and different to the sum of its parts.

² Bradbury, H. (2015). *The SAGE handbook of action research* (3rd ed., pp. XLIII, 450-451). Sage.

Yes, we *can* change or modulate our sound, find our voice, by all the things that you referred to earlier. You find it for example in meditation, which I do a lot of. Just looking at cleansing is one path, but it's more sort of getting in touch with my sound, for me. And when, once I have it, oh, I can move it to the other side. The wonderful thing about meditations, especially if you chant, go to the mantras, is a funny humming, say, everything sort of tickles and swings and, and you can take yourself here, and there, and tune in like a singer would do before giving a concert. Finding her voice, exercising it a bit, and then singing and bringing it to the world and resonate with it.

In Anthropocene thinking resonance came to be one of its three roots next to system thinking. If you are out and about with the system's people, they think it's all systems. Well, it isn't. (laughs); it helps to think about emergence, and dissolving, and entropy, and power of context, and all these things that I mentioned earlier, but it doesn't support thinking in terms of resonance. It doesn't, and it's very much looking at *distinction*. One major part of system theory is the distinction theory, as the laws of form, coined by George Spencer-Brown, to find a distinction to different sides so that they can relate to each other. But there's this very little, if at all, awareness of the relationship's *quality*, let alone the resonance. So, if you go systems thinking up and down, you don't find it. At least we don't see it, so we'll describe it in all those theories of resonance.

Integral theory, development process, emergent level of social systems:

What is still missing then, which brings us to moving toward is integral theory, which is scientifically relatively shallow but popular. It comes with colors of orange and green and blue et cetera, and all this hierarchy-thinking that goes with it. But this is not the point. What it does bring is the perspective of a development process that grows. The easiest way to relate to that is to look at evolution on our planet. And say it started from a kind of nothing, just sort of gases, and gravel and water and a lot of nothingness. And now we have forests, green, oceans, animals, and plants and all that beauty! So, there has been an inevitable growing development, what we call life or the living world. And then, we have the Gaia hypothesis (Lovelock) and how all that comes together.

We now move on to say, 'okay, if that is possible on the living world's level, what do we expect from the level of the conscious mind?' Will that be just sort of an awareness or a growing understanding of being. We could go back to the roots of the integral theory, the cognitive and moral development of children, Kohlberg, Lovinger, Piaget, and the lot. If we acknowledge that that is possible and that there is a kind of growth or maturation, shouldn't we assume the same possibility for social systems and the emergent level of social systems? We can talk of - for the lack of a better word - civilization and assume it's a process of civilization. Where is it coming from, and where is it going?

Going back to my initial description of these three levels, acknowledging that the mind has more variability than the body, and the social system is more variable than the mind, a sort of the emerging the next level of emergence, and seeing many things going on - and that again we will probably not see so much further development of the mind. If you go back to the Sufi-mystics, the Taoists, and the Vedics, and what they knew about the ego, the self, the soul, the transcendence of all that; it makes you marvel: 'Oh, they've been there *already*?' So, it's not so much a question of us seeing something utterly *new*, emerging on the level of the mind in our lifetime. Rather not. But we *will* most likely see

an increasing step of evolution in what we call social systems, and how they relate, in what mode they dwell.

When it comes to society, we're currently stable in those three levels of: law and order, competition, and solidarity. Going back to the tradition of European values, the French Revolution, and the German anthem, these three levels are always addressed. There is equality before the law, and the freedom for the individual to compete, and always a level of solidarity that makes our society's prevalent and dominant texture. It doesn't say, 'oh, we have more law and order, and less competition and less solidarity.' What we may see is that it swings more and more towards solidarity in our lifetime. If we see something popping up like a universal basic income, we're certainly a big step further into that direction, including the possibility to explore the next level from there, whichever that next level may be, and what color it may have. Integral theory ascribes 'colors' to those levels. The theory may know the color, but we have minimal *experience* with what that next level may be. We do have experiences of the levels further down, like the 'law of the jungle' and in tribal aspects of integrating societies.

Integrating social systems on a global level and fertile in-between.

However, having said all that, and going back to the Anthropocene's challenges in the 21st century, and looking at climate change, loss of biodiversity, polluted oceans, and so on, there is the need to integrate social systems on a global level. Will we see that in our lifetime? Hopefully yes! It's not that difficult. It's not. It doesn't require something that we do not have now. It's not like back in the 60s, where we didn't have the rocket to bring a man to the moon so, you had to build one. What we already have available on the planet would be sufficient to move towards a global integration of social systems, whatever that may look like. And going back to Francois Jullien, who wrote about this Silent Transformation, and is deeply immersed in China studies, always looks at the different systems, the Western and the Chinese thinking and writing; and how that creates an *in-between*. The in-between tends to be very fertile. So, it's not the question will the West rule or will the East rule? Instead, it is a question of how we make that in-between fruitful in the best possible way to grow those things that will save the day basically. And then allow us to integrate with social systems on a planetary level, in a meaningful way, and further that process of civilization, which started somewhere in the jungle and on the Great Plains.

Silvie: Oh, this brings up ever more questions! At the same time, I'm mindful of your time (and the reader's – or is that a paradox given the length of this) - we shall have to stop somewhere for now. I'm so appreciative for everything you have so beautifully unfolded, and for learning about your thinking and experience. I have this flourishing feeling (laughs, gestures), and will do my best to make something of this and run it by you to share the interview with other ARs afterward.

Louis: Let's take it from here, and there will undoubtedly be more questions. Let's leave the space open. I like that. I like the atmosphere of the kind of conversation and felt very welcome to unfold a few thoughts that I rarely can unfold with this sort of leisure. I'm very grateful for that. Oh, and arriving at that point. I'm most excited to see where we're going to take it from here!

Silvie: As do I. Thank you so very much!

In conclusion:

Are we better equipped to respond co-creatively to the Anthropocene challenge where the action because of the thinking presented here, can be seen as bridges to outdated gaps? Does one of the imperative answers lie in all of us learning not to shy away from our own development, stabilizing our *tone* to the humming of the universe, by choosing self-compassion, beauty, and resonance in a reflexive practice? In a reflexive approach, we then understand that every thought, emotion, word, and action have an impact on ourselves, the other and the whole. We can at will (and with practice) attune the resonance with ourselves and the planet, become more aware of and trust the silent transformation, the inherent evolution of our being in physical bodies. We have what it takes inherently in us, and in the Anthropocene world. The Tamkeen illustrates the fields of potential and inspire us how to tend to this potential by ‘foster and further shared understanding,’ (care for the garden) in all our work, by being willing to advance our ‘inner technology,’ benchmarking reflexivity, sharpen our focus, cultivate less service-to self; as quality choice-points of choosing conscious evolution in the Anthropocene.

Realizing community-based learning ecosystems is a start, not an end. “...*The learning community can be the safe space where we experience and realize what a humanizing society can be, and what it feels like. The learning community can grow in its understanding of being a humanizing community, a place, a space, a field of care where human relationships can heal and thrive.*”

EUSG positioning paper, Trusting Community-based Learning Ecosystems, by Louis Klein

“The learning community learns by itself. *It learns based on its own experiences, out of its own capacity, out of its own human potential. It does not need change-makers and impact investors to humanize it. A learning community does not need to be taught. The learning community is not an achievement, it is the experience of caring, it is the realization of our human potential and the understanding of humanity as what connects and defines us. What emerges and grows out of community-based learning ecosystems, is our responsibility. Realizing a humanizing society is a process of inquiry, learning and understanding, knowing, in all epistemic humility, that we do not know, yet sensing the coherence, resonance, and clarity of our human relationships, experiencing it. If we had the courage, we would speak of love. If we do, we know that we have come one step further on our way to experiencing and realizing a humanizing world.” (Ibid.)*

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About Writing, Speaking, and Publishing

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