

Sensuous Learning for Individuals, Communities and Organisations

Elena P. Antonacopoulou ¹✉

Email e.antonacopoulou@liverpool.ac.uk

¹ University of Liverpool Management School (ULMS), Liverpool, UK

Abstract

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This chapter extends the theoretical framing of *Sensuous Learning* presented in Chapter 2 of Volume 1 to elaborate how such learning can be operationalised to support not only professionals as individuals, but also in the communities and in the organisations where professional work is conducted. The focus here is to present a marked contribution of *Sensuous Learning* not only in addressing professional ineptitude, but in advancing also the quality, substance and impact of learning more broadly. The overall challenge is to expand the *place* that learning occupies in everyday life as part of living and working so as to better organise where, when and how learning is happening. This is so that the focus goes beyond designing reasonably well-functioning learning experiences and instead, appreciating the experience of learning itself embedded in the richness of the unpredictable, complex and ambiguous human nature.

Introduction

This chapter extends the theoretical framing of *Sensuous Learning* presented in Chapter 2 of Volume 1 to elaborate how such learning can be operationalised to support not only professionals as individuals, but also in the communities and in the organisations where professional work is conducted. The focus here is to present a marked contribution of *Sensuous Learning* not only in addressing professional ineptitude, but in advancing also the quality, substance and impact of learning more broadly. The overall challenge is to expand the *place* that learning occupies in everyday life as part of living and working so as to better organise where, when and how learning is happening. This is so that the focus goes beyond designing reasonably well-functioning learning experiences and instead, appreciating the experience of learning itself embedded in the richness of the unpredictable, complex and ambiguous human nature.

Perhaps one of the key issues that remain insufficiently understood is the ways learning and knowing support the *growth* of humans to enrich human flourishing both as individuals in professional roles and as architects of the organisations in which much professional work takes place. Here the intention is to account for the wider implications of professionalism in restoring the ethos of learning itself. In other words, *Sensuous Learning* needs to attend to the learning that it purports to be a solution for. To this end, the two Volumes problematise the idea of learning as knowledge acquisition and promote a notion of learning differently instead, that has the potential to make a difference to individuals, communities and the organisations, itself a longstanding challenge. By placing such learning amongst communities and organisations (in a variety of settings) the objective is to show how they can be redesigned as *places* where learning itself can grow as a mantra for meaning, *virtues* and the cultivation of character and *conscience*.

This chapter therefore, presents a new avenue for future organisational learning research by explicating further *Sensuous Learning* in action. It will be argued, that *Sensuous Learning* can form a powerful response to the Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA, Bennett and Lemoine 2014) mirroring the rhythm of the twentieth century. Understanding such VUCA conditions is imperative in explicating how *Sensuous Learning* can be operationalised to advance *Sensuous Organizational Learning*. In other words, here the *way CORE Intelligence* (CQ) corresponds in addressing VUCA will be elaborated recognising the

crisis in learning so critical to make possible navigating and leading through such conditions. The leadership implications are also discussed, making the case for *Sensuous Leadership* as the linchpin connecting individual and organisational (collective) growth integral to *Sensuous Organisational Learning* and the new 'Learning Organisation'.

Learning in Working Life and in Organisations: Rethinking the Relationship Between Knowledge and Action

In Chapter 2 Volume 1 the case was made, that Art-Based Methods are uniquely placed to foster improvements in personal and professional practice, because they do not adopt a didactic approach. Instead, they foster through the sensuous orientation energising learning, by igniting curiosity, building confidence and commanding the unknown by exercising choice. *Sensuous Learning* has also been positioned as a means to cultivate not only competence, but also character and conscience, because it creates the necessary conditions to experience learning—feeling safe being vulnerable. *Sensuous Learning* promotes a mode of learning that extends beyond reviewing practices and associated actions and seeking improvements by fixing errors. It also encourages beyond reflection and considering different perspectives, the capacity for phronesis, that practising reflexivity supports. *Sensuous Learning* is embedded in the practical judgments, because it extends the ways professional practice is conducted. *Sensuous Learning* shifts the focus to the ways of knowing that practising reflexivity encourages as a critical aspect of the process of *Re-search*, *Readiness*, *Resilience* and *Renewal* central the 4R framework (Antonacopoulou 2018a).

In this respect, *Sensuous Learning* is not only a means of aligning cognitive, emotional and intuitive insights—sensibility, sensitivity and sentience in conducting professional practice. *Sensuous Learning* marks a new contribution to learning theory and practice, because it is a different way of learning. It is a way of learning with a difference, because it explicates through reflexive critique the dynamic energy forces in the impulses that guide *intensions*, *integrity*, *insights*, *inspiration* and *intensity* that in turn fuel the impact of professional practice (Antonacopoulou 2018b). What makes such learning different is also the intelligence that it informs. *CQ* as explicated in Chapter 2, Volume 1, is not only a means of accessing the voice of conscience and cultivating character. It is also a source of liberation, it is the freedom to be human. The ways of seeing, being and becoming a professional and *mastering the art of learning* that sensuous ways of knowing invite, broaden not only sensemaking but the making of sense when coming to the CORE of who and what human one chooses to become.

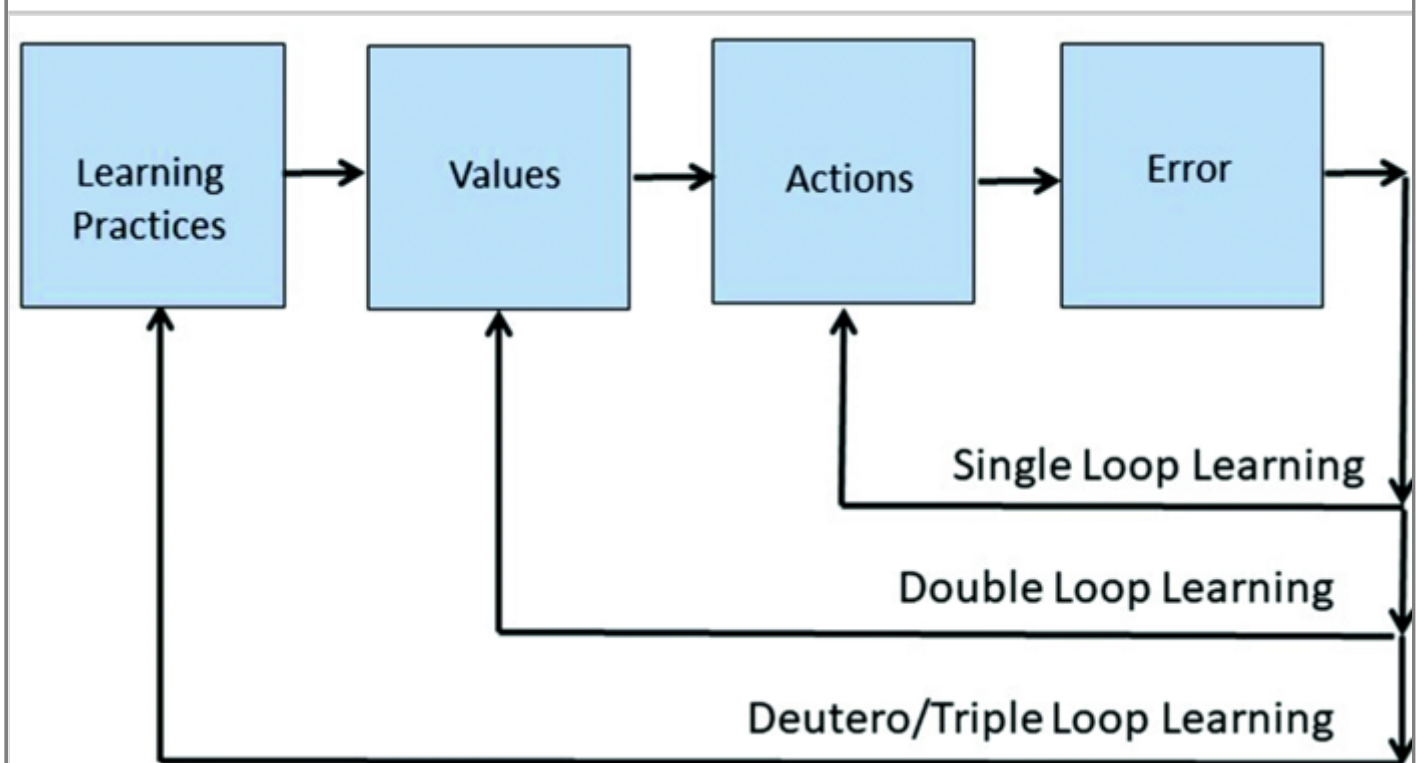
This orientation towards learning, places learning as integral to living and working (Antonacopoulou et al. 2006). *Sensuous Learning* also invites fresh ways of organising and within that leading and managing which this chapter will elaborate further. In short, to understand how to embed the ways of knowing that *Sensuous Learning* fosters in everyday life in and beyond the place of work, our efforts need to extend to the ways of acting. This placement inadvertently orientates the focus on a longstanding relationship between knowledge and action. This relationship is imperative to understand better as it is the epicentre of much of the current thinking in relation to learning in work and organisations.

Chris Argyris' scholarship (singularly and with his collaborators) over many years (1974, 1982, 1985, 1993, 2000, 2004) has been leading the way towards helping us understand the relationship between knowledge and action through his two models of action: Model I—'theory-in-use' and Model II—'espoused theories'. Model I explains action through unilateral control often supported by defensiveness, misunderstanding, self-fulfilling and self-sealing processes. Such a model of action results in skilled unawareness and skilled incompetence. Model II disturbs current practices and seeks to introduce new actions by generating new knowledge about ways in which the existing problems can be overcome. Correspondingly, single and double loop learning provide the basis of becoming better aware of the inconsistencies between actions and their consequences and in doing so attending to the actions themselves or the governing values and knowledge that inform actions. *Single loop learning* is predominantly concerned with identifying and correcting a problem and depending on the consequences if the problem persists, because the actions taken failed to address it, then one has to consider alternative actions. Double loop learning on the other hand, still propounds a problem-solving orientation as the focus of learning, however, the emphasis shifts to the underlying norms and objectives, which have guided the implementation of the initial action. Figure 1 represents these modes of learning and associated action models, diagrammatically and in relation to

subsequent developments promoting a **triple loop learning** approach oriented towards learning how to learn (Bateson 1979; Romme and van Witteloostuijn 1999).

Fig. 1

Single, double and triple loop learning



Central to modes of learning are the tensions between knowledge, action, governing values and outcomes. Tensions are key to what Argyris refers to as defensive routines as they reflect the incompleteness of learning as a process. In other words, tensions expose the unintended consequences of actions that may generate new problems that need to be resolved through further learning. They also capture the ways in which individual **factors** seek to protect themselves when gaps in their capabilities reveal the need for development which they may not always be ready or willing to embrace. This is what Antonacopoulou (1998) explains as a negative disposition to learn when the learning need is recognised—‘mathophobia’. Such a disposition (and its opposite—‘philomathia’) reveal how individual learners’ attitudes and the cognitive, emotional, political and other contextual conditions that promote these attitudes, affect their learning practice (Antonacopoulou 2001). By implication attitudes to learning affect the development of the organisation in the **culture** that governs the way learning transcends across levels and potentially becomes institutionalised (Crossan et al. 1999, 2011). The tensions embedded in individual learning practices, also lend more visible the intensions of actions and the associated knowledge. They expose the dynamics of learning in the power and political forces that affect the choices made in relation to what, **how and why learning may or may not take place** (Antonacopoulou 2006). Tensions reflect the inherent **dilemmas** and **paradoxes** that challenge what one knows and the **connections** necessary to deal with the unknown.

As elaborated in Chapter 2, Volume 1, tensions call for practical judgement—**phronesis**. They reveal the ways in which insights fed back through the loop of learning create a new **place** for nurturing reviewing, reflecting and reflexively growing *ways of seeing, being and becoming* (Antonacopoulou 2018a). However, they are no guarantee that the impact of learning will be realised if the dynamics of reflexive practice and the ways in which learning and changing are negotiated are not appreciated (Antonacopoulou 2004a). Through a phronetic orientation, one adopts a critical stance and engages with the identified tensions as a foundation for creating new possibilities. In other words, a phronetic orientation and a commitment to **reflexivity** provide a foundation for transforming tensions into ‘ex-tensions’ (Antonacopoulou 2008). This process of multiplicity in possibility is what underpins reflexivity; the ability to encounter the familiar as new (unfamiliar) as a central **quality** of the capacity to reflect on one’s **reflections** as Weick (2003) suggests. However, to exercise

critique in cultivating the capacity for *phronesis* is more critical (Antonacopoulou 2010). This is because *reflexivity* enriches the ways of *seeing* by fostering critique which casts a gaze on the issues at hand with a greater capacity for *intuitive* insight that aligns perspectives from the inside and outside the issue simultaneously (Antonacopoulou 2018a).

This phronetic orientation towards the relationship between knowledge and action provides the potential for rethinking the loops central to the models of action Argyris proposes. These loops are not only a *reflection* of the feedback mechanisms. It could be argued, that they are also a reflection of the *practising* that is so central to the process of learning, changing and becoming (Clegg et al. 2005).

Practising: Learning in Crisis—The Impact of Learning

Antonacopoulou (2008, 2018a) explains that *practising* is not about routinisation. It is about *repetition*—*re*-hearing, *re*-viewing, *re*-newing, *re*-searching. *Practising* is not an attempt to replicate the same experience, akin to following a recipe to ensure a particular outcome. Instead, practising is a route to perfection through endorsing difference (Deleuze 1994). *Practising* enables discovering new dimensions to issues and mastering the courage when balancing *curiosity* and confidence in equal measure to define the choices in *dealing with the unknown—VUCA* conditions. This is because integral to *practising* is *learning in Crisis (LiC)* (Antonacopoulou and Sheaffer 2014). LiC is a mode of *re*-learning—learning afresh, learning differently. Such *re*-learning emphasises the repetition that *practising* entails, to not only develop new understanding, questioning current practices, experimenting with existing knowledge to develop improvements in actions, negotiating *emotions*, attitudes and behaviours in responding to political forces shaping learning. Perhaps most fundamentally, LiC engages the unknown when experiencing learning.

This orientation towards re-learning is in sharp contrast to previous conceptualisations, which present unlearning in relation to organisational memory and the transfer of knowledge which often assumes either forgetting or discarding old knowledge in favour for new knowledge (Hedberg 1981) a position that has attracted a measured critique (Tsang and Zahra 2008; Howells and Scholderer 2016). Even more recent debates on unlearning (Fiol and O'Connor 2017; Visser 2017) that account for discarding old routines, following phases or integrating learning and unlearning, they do not fully explicate the most fundamental aspects of the experience of learning—*crisis*.

Crisis in this analysis and in relation to learning is used in the double meaning of the word from the *Greek krisis*—where the meaning of the word is not limited to circumstances of emergency and disaster. Crisis/Krisis also refers to tensions that call for practical judgments, exercising critique, *reflexivity*, which would inform decisions reached and actions taken (Antonacopoulou and Sheaffer 2014). In this vein, learning is not only an *emergence* of the ongoing *practising*. It is also an *emergency (crisis)* when learning engenders conditions where judgments have to be made in response to the tensions one may experience. Such tensions frequently calls to one's accountability and responsibility in relation to the resulting decisions and actions. Justifiably Weick (1993, p. 663) recognises tensions as a 'cosmology episode' when 'the universe is no longer a rational, orderly system ... shattering ... both the sense of what is occurring and the means to rebuild that sense collapse together'.

Whether *crisis* is endogenously driven due to mistakes and failures, exogenously engendered by environmental, social, economic or political forces that may be considered as rare or critical events or catastrophes, LiC moves beyond punctuating learning as a process occurring before, during or after *crisis*. LiC emanates from the premise that the unknown and unknowable shape the way learning and crisis are experienced. It introduces a way of understanding learning, crisis and their relationship as a dynamic process of *practising*. This perspective challenges key assumptions that underline the debate on learning from failure (and success) and offers new insights to explain why failure to learn is an endemic organisational challenge (Antonacopoulou and Sheaffer 2014).

This compelling message is extended in this chapter, to invite a fresh look at the strategic role of learning across individual, group and organisational levels *and its impact especially under VUCA* conditions. In this respect, it marks a clear focus on the impact of learning when experiencing learning exposes the human condition and why feeling safe being vulnerable is integral to *Sensuous Learning*.

In this respect, references to unlearning even when they purport to educate ‘individuals into their true form, the real and genuine human nature’ as Chokr’s suggests (2009, p. 50) need to explicate further how such learning impacts action. This is why Antonacopoulou (2009, p. 428) refers to unlearning to explain impact as the process of instilling through learning an appreciation of what it takes to make a difference if professional practices (in the case of the analysis scholarly practices) are: ‘*Influential, Memorable, Practical, Actionable, Co-created, Transformational*’.

LiC embraces re-learning as the continuous process of the *emergence* learning reflects and the *emergency* unlearning demands. LiC accounts for all these dimensions as integral to the *symplegma*/complex that learning practice reflects as elaborated in Chapter 2 Volume 1. LiC however, also revisits the strategic role of learning across levels and units of analysis *focusing* on its impact especially during conditions that are deemed out of the norm causing confusion, uncertainty and doubt over the suitability of existing practices as a way of continuing to operate. LiC as a mode of learning encourages individuals and organisations to exercise their judgments by *practising* *reflexivity*. This orientation towards *practising* *reflexivity* extends beyond single and double loop learning (Argyris and Schon 1978), triple loop or deuterio learning (Bateson 1979). This is because LiC focuses on the tensions in the space in-between stimulus and response to reveal the *energy* force that propels the *movement* from single to double to triple loop and beyond. Moreover, LiC reflects the *practising* that is not expressed in the loops of learning itself, but in the sensations mobilising the response to a ‘call’ for learning.

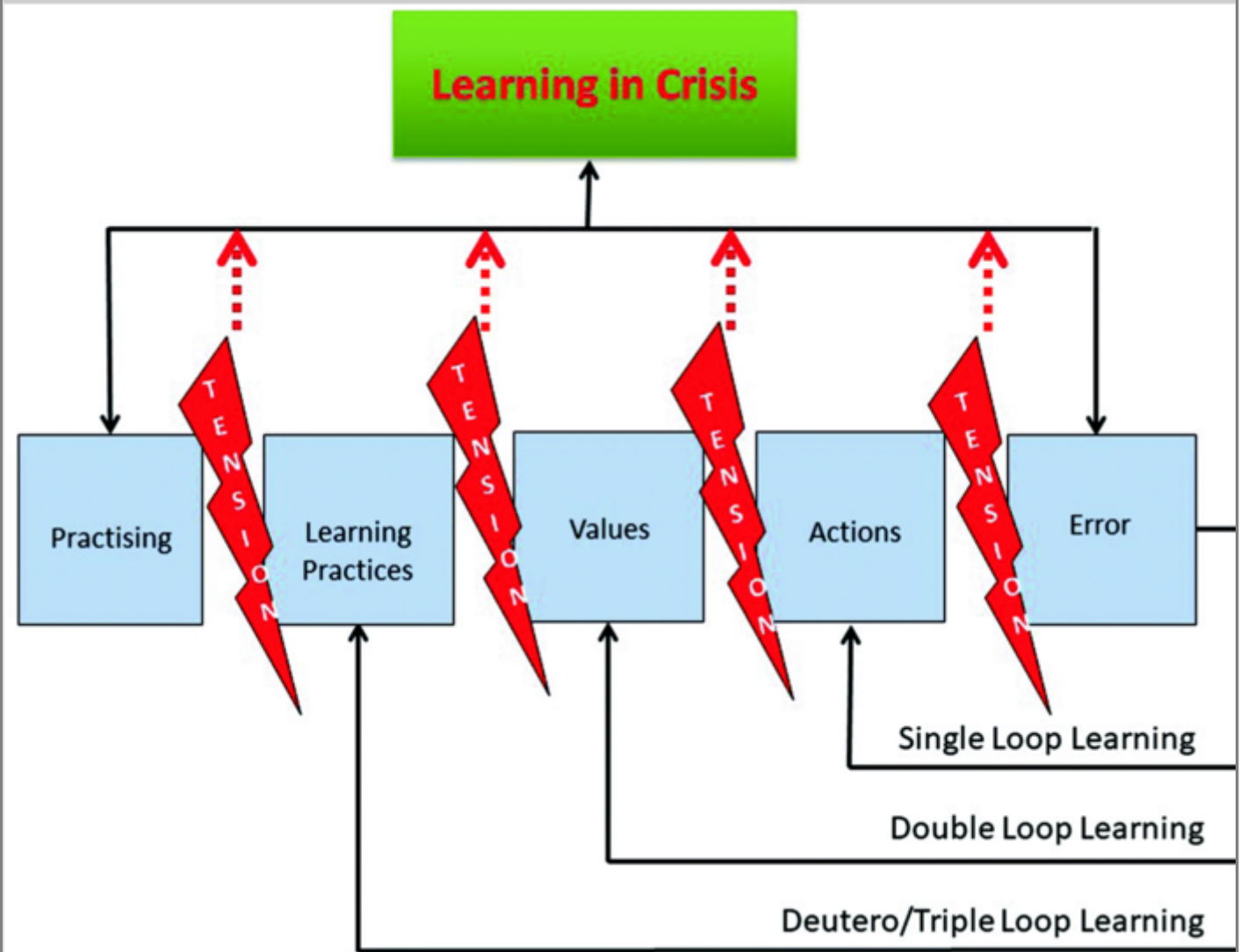
The uniqueness of LiC lies in that it introduces *crisis* for the first time as integral to the learning process itself. Unlike other modes of learning and their sequences (Bingham and Davis 2012), LiC as a mode of learning develops a wider repertoire of learning practices, because it embeds critique in the way actions and the knowledge they are founded upon are reviewed, reflected and reflexively engaged with to also renew the learning practices and practical judgments that guide them. As such, LiC emphasises the ongoing *practising* that performing professional practices entail, highlighting that what is known and the approach towards learning may no longer suffice or be appropriate to engage *the unknown and unknowable that VUCA* conditions epitomise.

Hence, LiC promotes learning practices that embrace critique reflective of the *energy* as discussed in Chapter 2 Volume 1, catalysing not only an *emergence* and *emergency* restoring clarity amidst the confusion of a complex situation not by simplifying it but by overcoming otherwise a *crisis* in confidence. This crisis of confidence exposes more clearly the crisis in learning and the struggle learning itself entails (Antonacopoulou 2014). LiC explicates how *Sensuous Learning* is operationalised, because it highlights that it is not uncommon for a whole range of reactions including: egocentricity, posturing, superiority, arrogance and fantasies concerning power and overconfidence to reflect the *vulnerabilities* that such a *crisis* in learning may expose. LiC attends to these *vulnerabilities* by creating safety through the dynamics of reflexive practice in learning and changing individually and collectively. LiC encourages *curiosity* to search and re-research for the *choice* to act. By enabling reflexive critique to inform the often taken for granted ways of doing things, including one’s *habits* and not only standard operating procedures, LiC safeguards against the trap of complacency and the *professional ineptitude* accounted for as central to many of the grant challenges that financial, political, social and environmental crises create.

By acknowledging that judgments in the course of everyday action are susceptible to blind spots like the inability to see the whole and stepping outside of one’s limited perspective to explore further *connections*, LiC offers a foundation for rebuilding confidence in the process of navigating *the unknown and unknowable —VUCA*. LiC accounts for cognitive, emotional, social, psychological and political forces affecting learning practice. This multiplicity of conditions shaping learning practices is also why LiC promotes through *practising*—re-turning to re-visit issues, offering the space to rehearse new possibilities. Figure 2 presents diagrammatically LiC as a mode of learning that energises critique and *phronesis* in the way tensions are embedded in the space in-between stimulus and response (action and error; values and action, values and learning practices) and how these tensions become the foundation for extensions through *practising*.

Fig. 2

Learning in Crisis as a new mode of learning



This analysis prompts accounting for how might LiC deliver the impact that *Sensuous Learning* promises? It will be argued that if we understand afresh that learning needs to attend to the *crisis* that tensions present, we also need to account for the *way CO* as the key emerging impact that such learning invokes, also attends to the emergency of *acting* well to serve the common good. At a time when organisations are gaining a stronger influence over society, *Sensuous Learning* needs to be extended beyond the individual professional practitioner or the professional communities and associations that guide their professional conduct.

Sensuous Learning essentially has to be embedded in organisations and form the new system and structure that supports any kind of work to be conducted with professionalism. This provides the foundation for making the case for *Sensuous Learning* so central to Art-Based Interventions becoming central to revitalising the idea of the 'Learning Organisation' (Senge 2014). However, for that to be realistically feasible it is imperative to ensure a pragmatic set of actions than just a set of ideals. To address this need this analysis, puts forward a new framework of *Sensuous Organisational Learning*.

Sensuous Organisational Learning

One of the very early contributions by Argyris (1957) was to account for the role of organisations as a fundamental part of individuals' *maturation* processes. It is here that the fundamental relationship between individuals and organisation is exposed and where the idea of organisation learning is born. Argyris recognised the 'inability to learn', to 'detect and correct errors' as a 'self-sealing', 'corrosive' and a mark of 'non-learning', because it did not lead to 'understanding, insight and explanations ... connected with action'. These 'inner-contradictions' support self-defeating actions when there is a lack of maturity among the people who make the organisation placed in different levels of the hierarchy and with different levels of power to take action. As Argyris (2003, p. 1181) puts it: '... the realization that the human beings and the

organizations that were being studied were faced with the same degree of **complexity**. Somehow, they were trying to put their arms around the complexity that they were creating'. Perhaps most powerfully, Argyris sets the example by applying this to management scholarship itself to invite scholars to be more reflexive of their theories and their implementable validity (Argyris 1982, 1993). In doing so, he conducts a wake-up call in an attempt to achieve multilevel change by simultaneously reaching three groups individuals, managers and academics (Antonacopoulou 2004b).

Consistent with Argyris' conceptualisation, if the hierarchical structure is substituted with a flatter one (akin to recent developments in the idea of 'holacracy', Robertson 2015), individuals' personal and professional development would significantly advance. It is here that one finds the major theme of human nature in Argyris's body of work—his belief that people's maturation processes include the development of fresh attitudes including: expansion of interests and activities, demand for higher independence, and long-term orientation. Treating people as 'tools' to fit tasks as if they are 'children' who are to be told what to do and expected to obey the instructions given through the chain of command, span of **control**, task specialisation and unity of direction, impedes individuals' innate developmental aspirations. Therefore, the very systems that are intended to support maximising the value added contribution of human capital are the very same that undermine it. Similarly, in fostering learning, the very systems intended to support learning, e.g. training and development interventions prevent learning from happening (Antonacopoulou 2001; Contu et al. 2003).

In essence, organisational learning is creating the conditions for the propensity of individual learners across levels to take action, develop, mature and grow to their full human potential. This is when the tensions between individual and organisational interests give way to actions that serve the common good. This proposition goes beyond merely situating learning (Lave and Wenger 1991) or **focusing** on the participation of learners in 'associations involving a range of heterogeneous material' (Gherardi 2001). Understanding communities of practice and their strategic role, calls for attending beyond the knowledge processes of creation, retention and transference (Argote and Miron-Sektor 2011), to the **practising** that learning, unlearning and re-learning demand as communities and their practices are continuously transformed (Macpherson and Antonacopoulou 2013).

This means that returning to better account for the **journey** of becoming human, central to the maturity processes that the original conceptualisation of organisational learning promotes, needs to also go beyond the transition that Argyris (1957) accounted. In other words, **practising** as integral to the experience of learning is not only the **movement** from passivity to activity, from dependence to independence, from simple behaviour to complex behaviour, from having a short-term perspective to having a long-term perspective, from a lack of **self-awareness** to a full self-awareness. These are all important accounts of the process of **transformation** that adult learning theories have long purported (Brookfield 1987; Mezirow 1981).

In this chapter, a new framework of organisational learning is put forward based on the theory and practice of **Sensuous Learning**, that the two book Volumes seek to advance. As elaborated in Chapter 2 Volume 1 **Sensuous learning** aligns cognitions, **emotions** and **intuitive** insights by fostering critique such that the complex—**symplogma**—of emerging sensations exposes **the CQ** that inspires **acting**, reacting and conducting one's practice with freedom of choice. Building on this conceptualisation, *Sensuous Organisational Learning* promotes the conditions that foster reaching the full *awakening* that Argyris envisions by cultivating the development and deployment of CQ **to navigate the unknown that VUCA** conditions create. *Sensuous Organisational Learning* supports the process of **growth** and maturation of individuals and communities by fostering greater *Attentiveness*, *Alertness*, *Awareness* and *Appreciation* as integral to the way emerging conditions call for actions whose consequences cannot be predicted nor controlled.

In other words, *Sensuous Organisational Learning* is **a strategic response to the VUCA** conditions that organisations operate in by energising **reflexivity** individually and collectively, prompting greater *Alignment* of interests and priorities to serve the common good. By igniting the **energy** and reflex within and across organisational systems, *Sensuous Organisational Learning*—SOL—is a *solace* for individual and collective **growth** by centering and seizing the moment in the emergency it causes *Activating* a response and not merely knee-jerk reaction. This means that *Sensuous Organisational Learning*, signals the **emerging CQ** at the community and organisational level when **focusing** on the conditions that foster *Centeredness*, *Oneness*, *Reflex* and *Energy* as critical dimensions of making sense of environmental conditions by changing

organisational practices striving for high reliability and resilience shifting the focus to serving the common good. CQ is reflected in ways of **acting** when the **emerging capacity for Anticipation of VUCA** conditions, itself becomes a **reflection** of the emerging *Agility* in managing, organising and leading a possible set of responses.

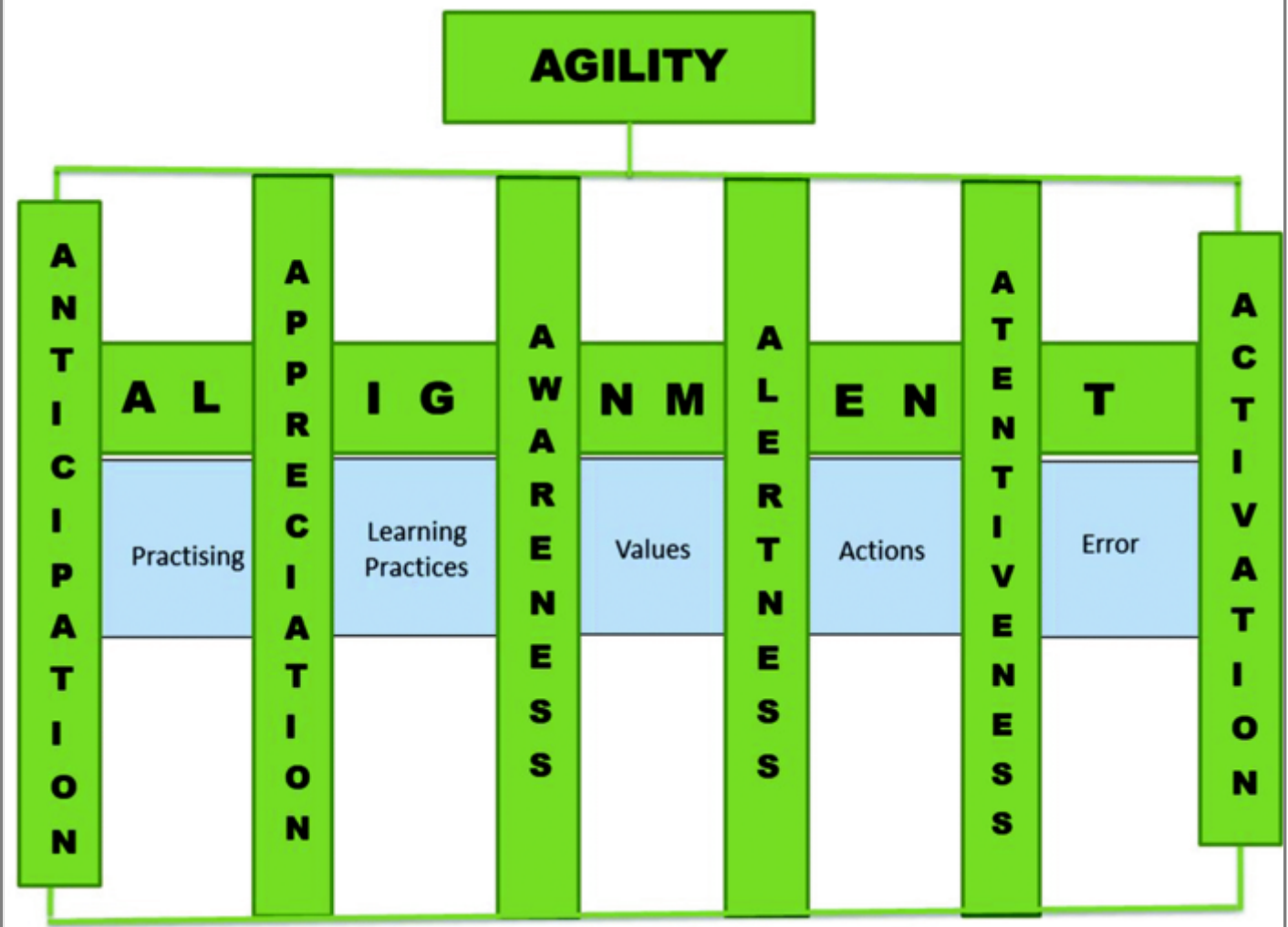
Essentially, *Sensuous Organisational Learning* expands the space-in-between stimulus and response as the tensions that single, double and **triple loop learning** reveal are reviewed, assumptions are reflected upon and learning practices are reflexively revised. *Sensuous Organisational Learning* fosters through greater alignment of individual and collective **growth** the maturity to serve the common good. Such alignment draws on the vibrations that connecting multiple ways of knowing and **acting** catalyse, to *activate* sensations of *attentiveness, alertness, awareness and appreciation*. These sensations create a state of awakening where emerging actions and **reactions to the emergency that VUCA** conditions call for, are grounded in the capacity for collective **phronesis**. In short, *Sensuous Organisational Learning* energises the emerging growth and maturity that the sensuousness this mode of individual and collective learning awakens, and encourages individuals and communities of professionals to reconfigure their professional **practices demonstrating the agility** the VUCA conditions demand.

Sensuous Organisational Learning, goes beyond demonstrating ‘absorptive capacity’ (Zahra and George 2002; Alexiou et al. 2018) and ‘ambidexterity’ (March 1991; Tushman and O’Reilly 2004) in exploiting and exploring opportunities. It signals a new dynamic capability (Zollo and Winter 2002; Teece 2007) not just to engage in strategic learning, but in *anticipating* and responding with *agility* **when navigating the unknown that VUCA** conditions create. By awakening the capacity for *attentiveness, alertness, awareness and appreciation* the models of **acting** (Models I and II as Argyris 2003 proposed) become better *aligned*. Such alignment fills the gap between ‘espoused theories’ and ‘theories in use’, with the courage to remain in a **practising** mode. Enduring the **crisis** in learning and committing to LiC energises learning with **curiosity** to keep searching and *re-searching*, even if it means becoming vulnerable and confused. This is because confusion gives ways to *confidence* in trusting the process of learning even if unclear where it might lead, because the growing *resilience* enhances the *readiness* for action. And it is such confidence that will provide the *renewed* sense of purpose to make the *choice* in the ways of **acting**, even if the actions are risky and potentially may not deliver the desired result.

Sensuous Organisational Learning becomes not **only a courageous response to VUCA** conditions. It awakens responses that extend the **vulnerability** that volatility, uncertainty, **complexity** and ambiguity entail into a new platform of safety from which to respond. The *8A—Sensuous Organisational Learning framework* is diagrammatically represented in Fig. 3 and provides the foundations for realising the ‘New Learning Organisation’ (Daly and Overton 2017).

Fig. 3

The 8As Sensuous Organisational Learning framework



Sensuous Leadership: Learning Leadership in the New Learning Organisation

The 8A—*Sensuous Organisational Learning framework* presented here, demonstrates that ‘the clarity of purpose’ that necessarily must drive the ‘New Learning Organisation’ is not only about ‘a shared vision and an open dialogue in how people are valued and need to adapt to deliver the organisation’s performance’ as Daly and Overton (2017, p. 7) suggest. Such a clarity of purpose fundamentally must arise from the drive to serve the common good. Similarly, driving the New Learning Organisation is rightfully about ‘holistic people experience’, ‘thriving ecosystem’, ‘agile—digitally enabled infrastructure’, ‘intelligent decision making’ and ‘continual engagement’ (Daly and Overton 2017, pp. 8–9) that are seen to form the expanded dimensions of Senge’s (2014) earlier framing of the Learning Organisation. However, valuable as these dimensions are, they are still unlikely to attend to learning that serves the common good.

The 8As framework of *Sensuous Organisational Learning* is the *conductor* energising the New Learning Organisation, beyond infrastructures, platforms, brands and vision. These dimensions are needed too, but without *the CQ* to mobilise and connect the soft and hard aspects of human capital it is unlikely that sustainable learning will result. *Sensuous Organisational Learning* promotes a sustainable learning approach, because it activates alternative *ways of acting* by building on new *ways of knowing*. This learning itself is sustainable not because it is performed by ‘learning leaders’ as Daly and Overton (2017, p. 39) suggest. Learning leaders are not only Learning and Development professionals. Learning leaders are all the learners that engage their CQ. Their ‘learning leadership’ as Antonacopoulou and Bento (2010, 2016) promote, is a ‘call to beauty’, because it promotes sensuousness. Such sensuousness does not ‘suppress the ugly’ in the interest of ‘looking good’ as Edwards et al. (2018) explain. Instead, it invites a sensuous orientation the leadership that *Sensuous Organisational Learning* invites individuals, communities and organisations to engage in. Consistent with Antonacopoulou’s (1998, 2006) critique whether learning organisations can exist

without learning people (leaders), this question is extended to ask, how can the New Learning Organisation be developed through *Sensuous Leadership*?

Antonacopoulou and Bento (2003, 2010, 2016, 2018) have been advancing 'Learning leadership' as a way of rethinking leadership on the basis of three characteristics: 'Leadership as a window to inner learning', as a *relational* process' and as a 'labour of love'. Leadership conceptualised in these terms, changes the conversation in the leadership field with all its rich variations and interpretations beyond a focus on the person—as Hero or Human (Antonacopoulou and Bento 2018; Petriglieri and Petriglieri 2015); the authentic (Gardner et al. 2011; Liu et al. 2017) or distributed collective practices (Cunliffe and Eriksen 2011; Raelin 2016) that constitute leadership. Instead, it presents a fresh ontological stance to what leadership means. It offers a foundation for conceptualising *Sensuous Leadership* as a process of connecting ways of knowing and *acting* integral to *Sensuous Organisational Learning* and mobilising the 'New Learning Organisation'.

This ontological extension to the concept of leadership *places* 'leading' as part of everyday life. It encourages professionals to explore leadership not as a process or phenomenon to be studied under certain conditions. We are not to look for leadership in formal hierarchies under the hot light of fame and fortune, rank and privilege where political dignitaries, top managers, multi-star generals, religious figures and charismatic champions of one cause or another are to be found (Tourish 2013). Antonacopoulou and Bento (2010, 2016) encourage us to look for leadership in another *place*, 'the context of the ordinary people' who find in themselves, and in others, a different *place* from which to act in 'extra-ordinary' ways to serve the common good. Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of such an ontological stance is not only the acts of ordinary people, that can account as leadership practice. It is also the way ordinary people become the *place* that matters, because they exist in a *place*—they are at home (become mature humans) even if that is the workplace. This point has profound implications in our conceptualisation of leadership beyond its enactment and *embodiment* but as explicated in Chapter 2 Volume 1 in its *emplacement* (Pink 2011).

Approaching our appreciation of leadership as *emplacement* extends beyond conceptualisations of embodied leadership (Ropo and Sauer 2008a; Ladkin and Taylor 2014; Taylor 2015; Küpers and Statler 2008). It offers a more nuanced appreciation of how and why learning reflects the social, material and environmental conditions shaping leadership practices. *Emplacement* draws attention to the role of sensory forces that impact the political and ideological agendas and power relation which remain integral to learning. *Emplacement* embraces leadership, symbolically, in the 'flesh' (Merleau-Ponty 1962) of leaders, followers and 'the space in-between them' (Ladkin 2010, p. 71). An emplaced mode of leading implicates the whole person, encompassing intellect and *emotion* and embracing sensation, values and character and *conscience*.

Consistent with the way *Sensuous Learning* has been defined, an emplaced orientation towards leading, promotes *Sensuous Leadership* as the 'fleshing out' of leadership to experience it symbolically and actively through the sensations it invokes. In this sense, *Sensuous Leadership* highlights the fiduciary responsibility of leaders, which in this analysis concerns all professionals, to engage in leadership practices that actively regard the environment and how it affects and is affected by individual and collective '*presencing*' (Scharmer 2009). This means that we need to take fully on board the '*aesthetic leadership* knowledge' that Ropo and Sauer (2008b, p. 563) invite us to appreciate as we see, hear, smell, taste and maybe even feel how leadership is reproduced by experiencing people in the workplace and other community spaces where organising collective work make leading part of everyday life. However, *Sensuous Leadership* also invites going beyond the sensory appreciation to also understand this kind of contagious learning which enables leaders to be 'willing to feel the *vulnerability* implicit in *not knowing*' (Antonacopoulou and Bento 2003, p. 83) demonstrating the courage to 'see reality as it is' and 'inspire people to move from current reality, back to possibility' (Adler 2011, pp. 211, 215).

Sensuous Leadership more importantly, realises the possibility of leading beautifully by making a difference in others' lives in ways that inspire those other people to go on, in turn, to inspire others. The question then arises: how do we express this kind of viral, distributed, collective leadership, which 'catches' from human, to human, to yet another human in a working net of interrelationships? Intriguing answers can be found in this Volume in the Art-Based Interventions that combine a variety of Art-Based Methods and release new forms of expression often through bold experiments that engage professionals in vivid and *creative* new ways of learning together to lead with a difference.

However, an **emplacemen** of Learning leadership also emphasises that in **Sensuous Leadership** ‘leadership is not a **place** where suffering is avoided or courage is unnecessary’ (Adler and Delbecq 2017, p. 11). Whilst Learning leadership requires *courage*, it also calls for *commitment, confidence and curiosity* to persevere, because discovering compassion is where the love for life and freedom are realised (Antonacopoulou and Bento 2018). Hence, a sensuous approach to leading goes beyond augmenting the *impulse* energising the *intention* to lead. It focuses on leading with *integrity, insight, inspiration and intensity* to fuel the *impact* of leadership practice, be that applied in professional practices or in everyday life. Leadership charged with **Sensuous Learning** becomes dynamic, collective, **relational**, as well as reflexive (Alvesson et al. 2017) that is situated and socially defined, and where **practising** receives special consideration.

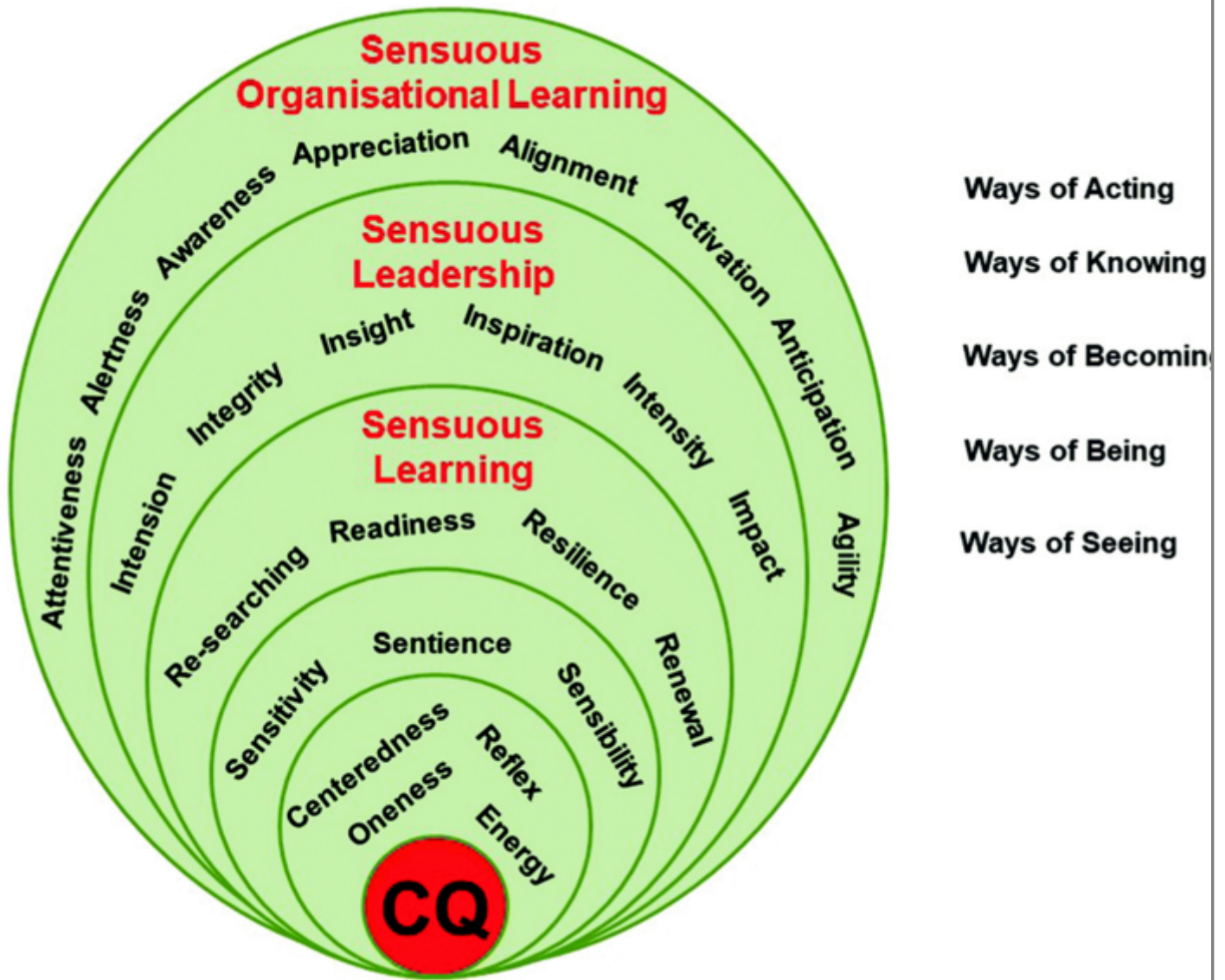
This is a fine distinction that even much of the current conceptualisation of leadership-as-practice (Raelin et al. 2018) misses. **Practising Sensuous Leadership** is not just about action or social **interactions**. Practice is also about impact and change, about what we do collectively, to contribute to the common good and as explicated in Chapter 2, Volume 1, the ‘goods’ of practice (leadership or otherwise) **places phronesis** as integral to leadership practice. Consistent with other accounts of the centrality of phronesis to leadership (Grint 2007; Küpers and Statler 2008; Ladkin 2010; Antonacopoulou 2012), **practising** leading with sensuousness, is an ongoing work-in-progress, that highlights the choices and **virtues** that guide the leaders’ conduct.

Through this perspective, leadership practice has no clear outcome and no single ‘best’ way of **acting**. The ‘right’ action emerges in relating to others, containing where necessary **contradictions** and **paradoxes**, cultivating ‘the ability to create and live with ‘both/and’ conceptualisations, rather than collapse into ‘either/or’ dichotomies’ (Ladkin 2010, p. 173). By the same token, **practising** leading as an act of serving the common good is also mutually and relationally constituted as **phronesis**, not as something individuals ‘have’ (e.g. wisdom), but the ‘imaginative knowledge and ethically reflected judgment and corresponding action [...] qualified by powerful historical, embodied, emotional, cognitive, social as well as systemic-structural **connections**’ (Küpers and Statler 2008, p. 388). Therefore, **phronesis** is entwined in relational practices, which not only create it but also disperse it. This is what makes **Sensuous Leadership** emerge through **practising**. This is also why **Sensuous Leadership** can be best appreciated in the critical moments that express the ways of **being** and becoming leaders navigating the unknown through the inner agility to anticipate ways of **acting** that can produce and manage desired changes.

Sensuous Leadership reflects such agility and anticipation not as competences, but as the emerging impact of the learning that awakens the *attentiveness, alertness, awareness* and *appreciation* of being in the environment one contributes to creating. **Sensuous Leadership** has the power to awaken such sensuousness and the learning that underpins it. Figure 4 illustrates the oscillation effects that **Sensuous Leadership** reveals as it realises the impacts of learning **drawing on CQ** to serve **Sensuous Learning** for individuals, communities and organisations.

Fig. 4

Sensuous Leadership for the New Learning Organisation



This process of sensuous leading reflects the process of learning to embrace the challenge and struggle that learning leadership entails in the *emergence* and *emergency* that the collective capacity to feel safe being vulnerable entails. *Sensuous Leadership* mobilises LiC to awaken communities and organisations to commit to *learning from the experience of leading and leading from the experience of learning* cultivating the CQ to stand together to preserve the human right to be free.

Sensuous Leadership casts new light to one of the most fundamental purposes of leading—to energise a life lived well, with joy, with contentment, with meaning and with purpose, because learning to endure the challenge of feeling safe being vulnerable creates a capacity to act with *agility using CQ* as the essence of humanity that it seeks to preserve. *Sensuous Leadership* extends previous calls for virtuous leadership that focuses on the intellectual and emotional aspects central to leader character (Havard 2014; Crossan et al. 2017). Fundamentally, *Sensuous Leadership* is not only about the magnanimity, humility, prudence, self-control and justice among the cardinal virtues that leaders would reflect in their conduct. *Sensuous Leadership* explains what is the ‘extra’ to the ‘extra-ordinary’ leaders that otherwise ordinary people be they in professional roles or otherwise demonstrate through their conduct.

Sensuous Leadership is rising to the challenge of living fully in the moment striving for personal excellence, by conducting leading with the ethos of learning to bring virtues to life when acting with *synaesthesia—conscience* (Antonacopoulou 2012). This humanisation of leadership (Petriglieri and Petriglieri 2015) implies that leading, regardless of one’s stage in life or career, requires a willingness to continuously learn from the CORE place where everyday actions and the associated judgments justify also their title of ‘leader’. By the same token leading with professionalism when confronted with VUCA conditions, reflects the capacity of individuals, communities and organisations to anticipate such conditions as they become

progressively able to extract learning from them navigating the unknown **practising** with the courage to make a difference. The sensuous interrelationships between body, mind, materiality and environment create the conditions for **emplacement** in leading by intertwining sensual bodily presence and perceptual **engagement** in fleshing out the 'qualities of objects' Mearleu-Ponty (1962, p. 4). Sensuous leading in turn, **places** experiences in unbounded zones of possibility, especially when the capacity for **phronesis** liberates **imagination** and wonder as an **energy** force propelling the making of sense, with sentiment, **sensitivity** and **sensibility**.

GNOSIS 2020—A Sensuous Learning Community Leading with a Difference

To demonstrate the ideas presented here, an illustration is the **GNOSIS 2020** initiative that brings together artists, executives and scholars across disciplines (psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, arts, education and economics) in Management and Business Administration Departments, from a rich international base of countries and institutions. The objective of forming this network is to review current developments in relation to **reflexivity** and to pursue a programme of collaborative work from which three main impacts will be realised:

1. Capture the difference Art-Based Methods make when deployed in the learning of leadership practice. Here the focus is to account for the innovative and value-adding contribution of these methods, to foster **reflexivity** and improvements in professional practice.
2. Represent the impacts of these modes of learning as an approach for fostering **reflexivity** as integral in restoring **trust** (through cultivating character and **conscience**) in improving professional practice.
3. Design and launch a series of Art-Based Interventions that can be incorporated in existing programmes or design new professional development programmes, **drawing** on Art-Based Methods to realise improvements in management and leadership practice across the professions.

The two edited book Volumes are among the key outputs co-created by members of the network. Throughout the course of the last 3 years, network members have created formal and informal gatherings (averaging in 2 per year) where a variety of **collaborations** emerged. The governing principle throughout has been to create the conditions for all contributors to the **GNOSIS 2020** gatherings to feel safe being vulnerable as they share their professional practices and Art-Based Methods and in bringing them together, to explore and account for the learning that is experienced. A typical way of capturing our individual and collective learning in the **GNOSIS 2020** are the 'album of memories' after each of our gatherings. These go towards arresting our individual and collective sentiments from the experience of learning we co-create. The albums capture in a lively way using **poetry**, text, **drawings**, **images** and other sensuous ways, what matter to us in that moment, that the **place** of the **GNOSIS 2020** gathering created. Figure 5 presents extracts from the albums of memories in a collage of the **images** that capture our individual and collective learning.

Fig. 5

GNOSIS 2020—An illustration of Sensuous Learning for individuals, communities and organisations



GNOSIS 2020 as a network can be considered as an example of the *New Learning Organisation* presented in this chapter. It is in the collective and individual learning it invites members of the network to experience, in the way it encourages participation as a free-flowing coming and going, that *Sensuous Organisational Learning* is fostered. It engages members by inviting them to take the lead to design and deliver *Sensuous Learning*. In this respect, the impact of the work of the **GNOSIS 2020** network, is in the fluidity it permits as leaders emerge at different stages in the process of mobilising the collective and individual work. This may result in collective outputs such as these book volumes and several other outputs that members of the network have led on individually or collectively (e.g. Chemi and Du 2018; Springborg 2018). The point is that the *Sensuous Organisational Learning* that members of the network have contributed in co-creating enabled us to affect and be affected by each other's learning and leadership practices. In this respect, it has served the common good in enabling us as a community of practitioners (wearing different hats as scholars, artists or executives) to both create and sustain a momentum but also enable multiple outcomes to emerge not all by design and certainly not ex-ante.

Essentially, the GNOSIS 2020 gatherings have emerged as a *place of practising* instigating a crisis in learning among the participants and in doing so extending our individual and collective modes of knowing and ways of acting differently. The GNOSIS 2020 network, reflects the relational and intersubjective nature of human experience both as a meaningful dialogue between participants as well as, a means of taking stock of our respective professional practices generating in the process collective learning and through that the impact we anticipate the two edited book volumes have the potential to realise.

We remain agile as the network evolves and whilst we set ourselves an agenda to deliver by 2020, the learning we are experiencing in the process of engaging in *Sensuous Learning* leads us in directions and possibilities that we have not anticipated. At the time of writing, there were no leadership programmes that engage professionals in their communities and organisations in the *Sensuous Learning* and leadership we

promote in this book. Our hope is that by detailing in the chapters that follow, a whole variety of Art-Based Interventions in an equally rich set of contexts, we can inspire new learning possibilities.

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