

Developing *Integral Review*: IR Editors Reflect on Meta-theory, the Concept of "Integral," Submission Acceptance Criteria, our Mission, and more.

Introduction

Over the past three years our journey as editors of *Integral Review* has been full of rich learning. The processes of providing authors with feedback, going over reviews of articles as well as writing ourselves have all contributed to our growth. The primary forum for this learning has been the many conversations amongst us to deal with the various issues that arise in publishing IR. Our intention in this brief piece is to share some of our reflections on this learning journey with you. These will take the form of contributions/reflections from individual editors, allowing us to share with you the particular issues we feel of value in this process.

By writing these short pieces, we aim to provide additional resources for understanding how IR works. While we have guidelines and criteria for submissions on our website, it seems that narrative voices from individuals may add some flesh to them. Relating how we perceive issues around writing for an “integral” journal offers a supplement for engaging these criteria, and will hopefully bring them to life. As well, we hope that our writing provides insights into how and what we think about issues relevant to IR’s mission. These pieces reflect the unique voices we have as editors of *Integral Review*, and demonstrate some of the thinking and passions behind this journal.

Russ Volckmann

I believe my most significant contribution to *Integral Review* during this “start up” phase has been the interviews I have done with people whose insights and publications contribute to our processes in significant ways. By processes, I mean the community’s ability to reframe and build a metatheory that allows us to incorporate the brilliant ideas and perspectives so often confined to academic disciplines or labels that often exclude, rather than invite.

Integral Review is an invitation, foremost. It is an invitation to participate in and contribute to a process that I hope will lead to approaches to framing our world, our experience, and our aspirations in ways that generate far more hope for our future than fragmented approaches are capable of doing. There are some arenas in which the fragmentation is welcome; after all, specialization leads to a quality of expertise that brings us products and approaches that help us address the challenges we face. We can find such specialization in many, many places. By adding a meta-theoretical perspective, however, my hope is that we can reduce the unintended consequences that lead to the destruction of the planet, its societies and its people.

Those I have interviewed represent interests in integral theory, management and leadership, conflict management and the work of defense organizations, art and the complexity of our world, and particle physics and transdisciplinarity. Each is interested in ideas and action, equally. One without the other is, well, full of hope, perhaps. I know of no other publication that would provide a home to such diversity and richness. Things I have learned from this process include that there are individuals out there who have been working from an integrative perspective for decades. This has led to pessimism on the part of at least one, to more creative work on the part of all, and the creation of an intellectual space intended to support the vision that I hold for engagement in a generative lifestyle and the purpose that *Integral Review* serves in support of this.

Thomas Jordan

It is probably impossible to summarize the criteria of good scholarly work in a way that the academic community would agree on. Here is, however, one view that might serve as a starting-point for discussions. There are many paths to meaningful knowledge, the path the scientific community has chosen is only one, but one that has certain strengths. These strengths come with limitations as well, which means that science should be seen as a particular genre in the broader quest for knowledge. The goal of science is to produce tenable knowledge. We are nowadays aware of the perishable nature of absolute truth claims, because we know that all such formulations depend upon the characteristics of the discourse in which they are embedded. Therefore we no longer think of science as step by step building an ever larger body of true statements about reality. But still, the task of science is to strive for knowledge that is as tenable as possible, which generally means that when we make assertions about anything, we are supposed to have good arguments for the validity of the assertions.

A lot of the criteria generally used to define the genre of science follow from this basic task formulation. We expect scholarly texts to be stringent in their use of concepts. We expect that authors take care in formulating the purpose and research questions of their investigations; to describe how they have proceeded in order to seek answers to their questions; we want to have explicit and precise statements about what conclusions the authors have made; and we expect the authors to support their conclusions by arguments that are transparent, stringent and reasonable. A very characteristic quality of the academic community's style of knowledge seeking is that we are very sensitive about validity claims. As soon as an author makes any kind of assertion, i.e., claims that a certain statement should be regarded as valid, the academic instinct is to check whether the validity claim is reasonable. Some assertions need not be supplied with supporting evidence or arguments, simply because nobody would challenge their validity. If I say that WW2 ended in 1945, I don't have to prove this assertion, because it is generally known and accepted as a fact. But as soon as a validity claim is not self-evident or generally accepted as valid, the author of a scholarly text should take care to specify what evidence or argument the author feels is strong enough to support the validity claim.

In a scholarly text, authors cannot simply make assertions about reality just on the basis that something seems plausible, sounds reasonable or is appealing because it conforms with the authors' values or expectations. We expect authors to be more critical, to discuss supporting evidence (e.g., empirical data or logical arguments) and alternative interpretations. A text that

formulates a theoretical framework mainly by formulating principles and specifying details by deductive reasoning may be a valuable contribution, but then the author should stick to the realm of theory formulating. As soon as a statement is made about reality, it is not sufficient that the statement sounds plausible or attractive; there must be reasonable arguments that support the validity claim.

We sometimes get manuscripts that seem to be the product of an author trying to make sense of a particular field by interpreting it through a theoretical framework. It seems that the main criterion used by the author when making validity claims is that the framework seems to make sense to the author him- or herself. Developing a theoretical model may be a perfectly valuable contribution in a scholarly community, but it is problematic when the author simply claims that the concepts used in the model explain or correspond to certain empirical phenomena without really examining whether there is supporting evidence for making such claims.

Bonnitta Roy

It seems to me rather unfortunate that the term *integral* has been associated with the notion of “A Theory of Everything.” In a recent dialogue hosted by *Integral Review*, a revision to “A Theory *for* Everything” was proposed—but even that seems to me to be problematic. While I consider the term “integral” to refer primarily to noetic enterprising, the notion of theorizing about everything seems somewhat at cross purposes to the integral embrace of body, mind and spirit. I believe that what is integral about *integral* is the capacity for integrating thinking, doing (including communicative acts) and being.

While an important critical component of *integral* is the articulation of distinctions, too much abstract theorizing results in the stratification of existence into a dizzying complexity of parts, and the hyper-intellectualization of the person at a loss for the whole being-in-Being. The product of this kind of hyper-intellectualization is the belief that reality is really composed of the discrete parts that we continue to identify. This puts us in the unfortunate position of having to create complex frameworks to explain how the parts fit together to retrieve a *really whole* reality.

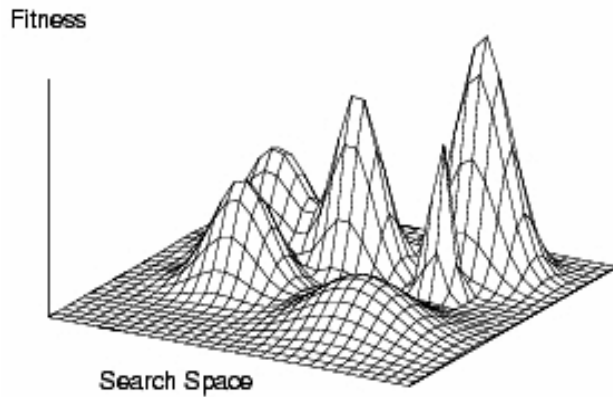
Humpty Dumpty fell off a wall . . . all the king’s horses and all the king’s men . . .

Rather, it seems to me that *integral* is the art of nuancing the whole—in teasing the creative flavors of our being from the whole of Being. It is as if we are children lying in the deep grass on a sunny day, watching clouds. I spy a rabbit and then you see it too. You spy a wizard, and then I see it, too. Joy.

Then again, it seems to me there is an inherent telos associated with the notion of *integral*—a *direction toward increasing view*. Here again, it is unfortunate that it is fashionable in some circles to imagine integral as the *one view* from 30,000 feet that captures everything else. This has created a kind of reality TV mentality in the integral community, where we get to vote people off our island until one guru remains. This can be quite ugly at times. If instead of thinking of view as a complex abstraction that contains everything and everyone—truly a great hubris that dogs the integral community—we imagine the telos of *integral* as being a direction

toward increasing degree of freedom. I have argued in this journal and in the dialogues hosted by IR, of just this notion of *view as degree of freedom*.

It occurred to me recently to think of *integral* in terms of a noetic *fitness landscape* where there are several views from 30,000 ft, and 25,000 ft, and 5,000 ft—and they are all equally relevant to the meaning of *all things integral*. This notion of fitness landscape has been used to understand evolution of all kinds of systems, including economic and biological. A graph of a fitness landscape looks like this:



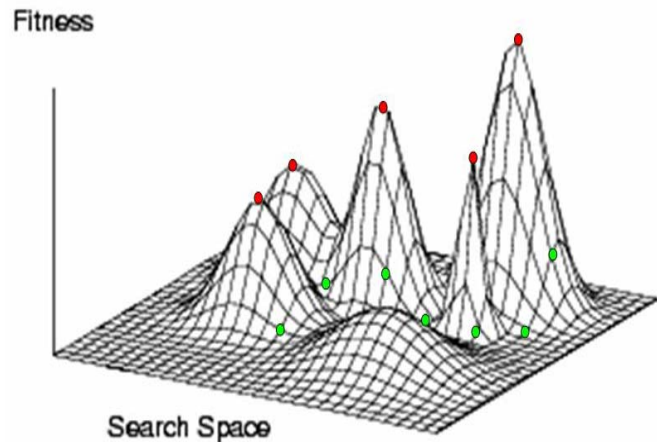
The hypothesis behind a fitness landscape is threefold:

1. The system seeks to maximize novelty.
2. The system is wholly auto-poetic, that is, inputs and outputs are coupled and co-generative.
3. Agents and environment (figure and ground) are co-creative.

When thinking about evolutionary dynamics, the tendency is to in-animate the environment and animate the activities of potential agents with respect to the environment. The environment becomes a passive and negligent ground of activities among agents. This is at odds with both the notions of a wholly autopoietic system and the co-creative process between agents and environs. Not surprisingly, such a system does not maximize novelty.

When we focus mostly on cognitive adaptations, or a single summit of knowledge—that is the mistake we are making. We are dispossessing the environment and the process of their role in maximizing novelty. When I think of the noetic enterprise, *integral*, in terms of a fitness landscape, I think of the search space as the ground of Being, the contours of the landscape as the ascents of our being, and the summits of the landscape as the novel noetic points that emerge in a wholly auto-poetic, generative process. If in this landscape, I plot specific noetic points (the red and green dots) as shown.

I can ask myself what are the kinds of relationships between the noetic points, the topographic scales and the relative heights of the summits. If *integral* is a noetic enterprise that emerges from a wholly auto-poetic process, then the red points represent the greatest novelty (most emergent ideas) in the system. I imagine these points collectively as *integral thinking*. I imagine the topographies as *integral doing* – the paths that takes being there. And I imagine the search space as the ground of Being.



But when imagining the telos of *integral* as degrees of freedom, my interpretation shifts. The red dots are actually older, more stratified noetic points, and the new forms are continually being renewed from the fabric of the search space. In other words, the up rush of the tectonics of freedom *are from the search space, the very ground of Being*.

As the word *integral* generates new meaning(s) for us, I think it would be helpful to be mindful of the whole of which *integral* is not any single summit, but an essential part of the landscape of being-doing-thinking from which its own creative novelties are emerging. As we speak.

Tom Murray

"My well written AQAL-based paper was rejected by *Integral Review*—what's up with that?"

In many circles the term "integral" is so strongly associated with Ken Wilber and the Integral Institute that it is worth taking some space here to clarify *Integral Review's* relationship to Ken Wilber, his work (particularly the AQAL model), and the Integral Institute which he founded, in part to help potential contributors understand how we evaluate submissions for publication. As I do so I will also discuss why we look for works that take a metasystematic perspective on one or more models, rather than simply apply a model.

Wilber's prolific, popular, and deeply insightful writing has been a major force of influence on the community of thinkers drawn to integral, holistic, trans-disciplinary, and systems-theoretic philosophical approaches. Following Sri Aurobindo and Jean Gebser before him, Wilber began using the term "integral" to describe his model around 1983, at the beginning of what some call the "Wilber-III" phase of his writing. Because some associate integral theory entirely with Wilber, it is worth noting that his approach is one of many approaches (the most widely known) that wrestle with the philosophical questions drawing the integral theory community together. *Integral Review* is "A Transdisciplinary and Transcultural Journal for New Thought, Research, and Praxis" and its editors are interested in a variety of interpretations and treatments of integral theories, provided they are of sufficient quality and originality. IR does not limit itself to pieces that explicitly deal with "integral," but this essay discusses our approach to evaluating submissions that do.

At the center of Wilber's work is his AQAL model of "quadrants, lines, levels, states, and types" (see "A Theory of Everything," 2000). We at IR sometimes receive submissions that illustrate rather straight-forward applications of AQAL theory to some domain (education, leadership, health, art, etc.). Such papers illustrate how the theoretical and practical elements of a domain can be conceptualized as conforming to the AQAL model, and note how insights from the AQAL framework illuminate key questions of their domain. We usually suggest that the authors of such pieces submit them to the Integral Institute's AQAL Journal (<http://aqaljournal.integralinstitute.org>), which specializes in applications of the model. IR and its editorial board have no official affiliation with the Integral Institute (or its many branches) or AQAL Journal. Though the IR editors owe a debt of gratitude to Wilber for his influence in defining many of the key issues of the field, and for galvanizing wide interest in them, none of us

see ourselves as working strictly within the AQAL model, and we each have our own critical intellectual relationship to the AQAL model.

IR publishes a variety of genres, including scholarly papers, artistic pieces, and opinion essays. For scholarly papers, one can make a rough distinction between those that share a new finding and use a model or framework to explain the finding, from those that reframe known material in some new way through the use of a model or framework. In both categories the scholarly submissions are of course evaluated in terms of rigor and originality, and (among other things, see <http://integral-review.org/submissions>) whether there is a clear indication of what the contribution is. For the former, it is the finding that makes the main contribution, and the model or theoretical framework constitutes the language used to communicate it. My comments here are mainly about the latter case, in which the main contribution relates to the model or theory itself, especially those offerings that promote or valorize a particular model. In such cases it is even more important to approach the model itself as an object to be examined.

In deciding what to publish we give preference to perspectives that employ what has been called vision logic, metasystematic thinking, integral-aperspectival reasoning, etc. (overlapping but non-identical post-formal reasoning signifiers with a range of meanings in the literature—I do not have the space to attempt to define them here). Though it requires this level of thinking to invent something like an AQAL model, the straightforward and uncritical appropriation of any model or theory does not exemplify this type of reasoning. This is not to say that such a work does not offer anything of value to the integral community, but only that it is less likely to be appropriate for IR. Integral or metasystematic treatments of abstract models or theories demonstrate an awareness of the epistemological and pragmatic limitations of such abstractions, and some reflection upon the limitations of the writer's context (though such awareness may be communicated implicitly or lightly).

Thus, submissions that are strongly based on a particular model (e.g., AQAL) should maintain a certain objective distance from that model. This level of reflection is one thing that distinguishes scholarly work at a metasystematic (or one could say "second tier") level from standard scholarly work, which often takes an embedded theoretical model for granted. Studies *exploring* a model should be constructed so that they can question, refine, or refute elements of the model. Treatments taking models as an assumed *starting point* should clarify how these assumptions might constrain the conclusions. *Applications* or case studies of models in realistic contexts should report "lessons learned"—i.e., what worked and what did *not* work as expected, with conjectures on the reasons and implications of failed expectations or refuted hypotheses. Papers proposing *new* models should supply ample support and clear examples.

Authors are encouraged to maintain or aspire to a certain objectivity, yet with an awareness of the "myth" of complete objectivity. That is, bias of various sorts is inevitable—authors work within the horizons of particular world-views and disciplinary paradigms, are subject to the "bounded rationality" ubiquitous in human reasoning, and come to their work favoring certain outcomes or valorizing certain beliefs. But each of these biases can be compensated for to some extent, or at least reflected upon. Integral forms of inquiry reveal subjective and intersubjective as well as objective factors that contribute to conclusions, to more fully contextualize these conclusions for the reader.

In closing I will mention that our formulation and application of article acceptance criteria is an evolving system. The explanations given above concerning publication acceptability are both in process and not straightforward to apply to each paper submitted. The journal is relatively new and exists to explore relatively unexplored territory with undefined boundaries and unclear standards for an emerging and equally nebulous community. Each submission has the potential to stimulate dialog among the editors about the interpretation or content of our acceptance criteria, and even about the makeup of our intended audience. In co-creating *Integral Review* we try our best, thrash, revel, and celebrate in the uncertainty of it all, and happen to enjoy the process very much

Sara Ross

I harbor high hopes for the contributions *Integral Review* (IR) can make to contemporary issues and fields of endeavor. Those hopes come with challenges to realizing them. I want to use this space to articulate some of the challenges I see because some seem steep. I think these challenges go hand in hand with IR's mission, and for that reason, warrant public discussion.

For the scope I want to treat here, IR's mission can be summed up in a few words: To disseminate—and encourage more of—the awareness, development, and application of high stage action-logics to contemporary issues. Applications may take a wide range of forms, anywhere from research, theory-building, and analyses, to reflections, evaluations, creative works, and process designs. “High stage action-logics” refers to measurably complex behaviors including reasoning at stages called, for example, Strategist and Alchemist in Torbert's framework¹ and correspondingly, Metasystematic and Paradigmatic in Commons' framework.² These and subsequent stages are capable of and necessary for generating “integral” work. In my usage, *integral* draws on the dictionary sense of *essential to completeness* for the task at hand.³ To me, in brief, such completeness means comprehensiveness that is both pragmatically contextualized and holistically so.

Given that scoping of the mission, what are the challenges that seem steep? I categorize them in terms of constraints. These constraints seem attributable to time, institutionalized demands, and conceptual assumptions. While these are interrelated in many respects, for the most part, I treat them only separately here.

¹ Torbert, B., & Associates. (2004). *Action inquiry: The secret of timely and transforming leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

² Commons, M. L., Rodriguez, J. A., Miller, P. M., Ross, S. N., LoCicero, A., Goodheart, E. A., & Danaher-Gilpin, D. (2007). *Applying the model of hierarchical complexity*. Unpublished manual, Dare Institute. Also available at commons@tiac.net.

³ It would be great fun, and challenging work, to develop this idea in its own article, particularly the task dimension. There is a practical need for methods to evaluate and even measure sufficiency or “completeness.”

Time

I recall a professor telling his class years ago that when he was writing a paper, he required, on average, only one half hour to generate each page of writing. He was a speedy writer whose reasoning, I had noticed, was quite linear. By contrast, some people I know report that it often requires two or more hours to craft one or two solid paragraphs. I have worked with authors who require many months, in some cases years, to bring their complex understandings, theories, and analyses into an articulated, written form. I recall a scientist telling me recently that he had finally solved a question he had been working on for 30 years.

I have read published works by high stage thinkers who are making major contributions to understanding and working in our complex world. I have invited some of them to contribute an article to *IR*. Much of the time, despite expressed interest, they say they must decline for lack of time to do so. I know some practitioners, non-academics, whose insights and approaches would benefit other practitioners and genuinely deserve dissemination, were they ever written up. The world of published writing is not in their normal orbit, and the prospect of responding to an invitation to submit any kind of written work feels too challenging to take on alone. They would need a mentor or assigned editor to work with them, thus requiring a great deal of time for both parties.

The purpose of this litany is to highlight that high stage action-logics typically find it very time consuming to make written contributions. Whether short or long in length, the types of contributions *IR* is eager to publish require time in a world where time is a precious commodity.

Institutionalized Demands

For those who are academics, there is tremendous institutional pressure to get articles published. One might think that would support motives to submit works to *IR*. In the “publish or perish” world they inhabit, however, it is not necessarily that simple. There seem to be two related challenges here. One is that academic disciplines operate much like silos, with their contents segregated from others’ to maintain their distinct contributions. To remove walls that compartmentalize disciplinary knowledge still seems to represent, in many quarters, a watering-down of the disciplinary boundaries. To publish work in a transdisciplinary journal could be “as if” one had not published at all, apparently for two reasons. The first reason is access-oriented, the second is assumption-oriented.

Particularly given the continually growing plethora of electronic journals, one’s work in a given discipline could be more difficult to find by others in that discipline, depending on where it is published. Huge numbers of journals now exist. Indexed databases make their articles easier to search and find: some journals are indexed in traditional databases, some are in nontraditional databases, and some are in no such databases. Many databases are not open-access, but require paid subscriptions. Databases, like universities and journals, are assigned status based on experience and usually long-standing assumptions. To publish in a journal that is not indexed in the discipline’s expected databases can mean relative invisibility to target audiences. To publish in a journal that is not dedicated to one’s discipline increases difficulty to be noticed in one’s discipline. Yet, once one is integrating multiple disciplines’ approaches in one’s work, it

becomes more difficult to be accepted for publication in the home discipline's often silo-like journals. More and more, of course, there are multidisciplinary approaches taken under one discipline's umbrella, and this is reflected in some journals' missions: a hopeful sign of things to come.

The parallel institutionalized demand in the publish or perish world is to get one's work published in the journals with the highest impact factors. For those seeking tenured status, this matters: the higher the impact factor, the more weight assigned a published article, and the more articles published in journals given such weight, the better the tenure application looks. The faculty tenure system is a major institutional influence in the world of publishing.

Not all who wish to submit works to IR are concerned with tenure issues. Some are not in academia, and some are already tenured. They still may wish that people in their home disciplines read their good work in journals that serve the discipline, but not necessarily exclusively. People who want to publish in IR may tend to seek out transdisciplinary venues when their home fields are more specialized. Given these and other institutionalized demands—not least of which is, again, time to produce and/or to find and read articles!—straddling the disciplinary *and* transdisciplinary publishing worlds makes generating articles for “both/and” publishing solutions difficult for people to operationalize.

Conceptual Assumptions

I suspect that realizing IR's mission in a fulsome way has challenges connected with particular concepts and assumptions about those concepts. The presence of a concept can present certain challenges just as much as the absence of a concept can present other challenges. To begin at the beginning, though, it is always advisable to define terms; a discussion of concepts is no exception. The dictionary meanings of “concept” are “something conceived in the mind (thought, notion)” and “an abstract or generic idea generalized from particular instances.” The dictionary does not unpack the significant social and developmental implications of those definitions. For example, the same concepts can *appear* to mean the same thing, yet at each stage of development, users can assign very different meanings to them.⁴ Assumptions about certain concepts, one of my stated concerns, also have social and developmental implications. However, though they could enrich the points I wish to make, space here is limited and I defer those explorations for another day. As an alternative, I propose those definitions are useful reminders that concepts are mental constructs, and mental constructs are not “real things.” They are used to *refer to* innumerable things. Some of those things may be rather concrete, such as the concepts “dirt” or “chair.” Others may be quite abstract, such as the concepts “concept” or “theory.”

Concepts and assumptions about them inherently matter to any publication. It is also true for IR's mission, not least because its very title is made up of many concepts. Of those, ones that I think especially warrant examination are *transdisciplinary*, *transcultural*, and *integral*. Here, I prioritize only one, to discuss conceptual assumptions surrounding *integral*. As works published in IR have indicated, for some, this concept is tethered to something called “integral theory.” I

⁴ There is more discussion of this in Ross, S. N. (2008). The challenges of postformal (mis)communications: Speaking different languages. *World Futures: The Journal of General Evolution*, forthcoming special issue.

will call this Group A. For others, it refers to high stage action-logics that show up in such ways as perspective-taking, worldview, reasoning, and/or general ways of being-in-the-world (and many different concepts have been used to describe these qualities). These behaviors are independent of and irrespective of something called “integral theory.” People with these behavioral action-logics are very often unaware of that and thus unaware of others linking “integral” to it. I will call this Group B. Others are familiar with both Group A’s and Group B’s respective meanings of “integral” and move fluidly across contexts that use either. I will call this Group C. For yet others, none of the foregoing concepts are relevant. I will call this Group D.

If these seem to be more or less facts of life, how do they present any challenges for realizing IR’s mission? I think some challenges surface if there are implicit assumptions—and the focus here is on conceptual assumptions related to “integral”—that IR’s mission pertains to only one of the groups identified above. If they exist, such implicit assumptions spill over into decisions about submitting work, reading, and referring others to IR. These decisions directly impact IR’s mission.

Thus, there are authors who want to submit work for publication somewhere they consider a good fit (I will call this Group 1), potential readers of IR (I will call this Group 2), and others who hear of IR and may refer others to it, whether or not they have read it (I will call this Group 3). People in these three groups may fall into any of the groups previously identified (A, B, C, or D). These three “decision groups” are arbitrary divisions that are not mutually exclusive (e.g., someone who reads IR may also submit work to it).

These groupings result in the sorts of relationships between decisions and assumptions indicated in the following two tables. Decisions may be based on possibilities or constraints pinned to various conceptual assumptions. In Table 1, people in Groups 1 through 3 assume there is only one relevant way to conceptualize “integral” (implicitly, “my way”). Taken as a given, it poses no constraints on deciding (“X”) whether to submit, read, or refer others. This set of conditions poses no challenges to realizing IR’s mission.

Table 1. Partial Portrayal of Decision Implications of a “Match” in Conceptual Assumptions

	I assume IR’s use of “integral” matches or includes “my way” of using “integral”		
	Group 1 Wants to submit work to a good-fit journal	Group 2 May read IR	Group 3 May refer others to IR
Group A Use of concept “integral” is tethered to “integral theory”	X	X	X
Group B Use of concept “integral” is unrelated to “integral theory”	X	X	X
Group C Use of concept “integral” is adapted to contexts of Group A and B	X	X	X

In contrast to the foregoing, Table 2 indicates some possible differences in conceptual assumptions, which would imply constraints in decisions to submit, read, or refer others to IR. Of course, anyone may be attracted to read an occasional article. But here, “read” means regular reading of IR issues. These combinations seem to pose challenges to realizing IR’s mission.

Table 2. Partial Portrayal of Decision Implications of a “Mismatch” in Conceptual Assumptions

	Decision if I assume IR means only Group A’s use of “integral” i.e., where Group A use of concept “integral” is tethered to “integral theory”	Decision if I assume IR means only Group B’s use of “integral” i.e., where Group B use of concept “integral” is unrelated to “integral theory”
Group 1 Wants to submit work to a good-fit journal	If member of Group A or C, may submit; If member of Group B or D, unlikely to submit.	If member of Group B or C, may submit; If member of Group A or D, may be less likely to submit
Group 2 May read IR	If member of Group A or C, may read; If member of Group B or D, may be less likely to read.	If member of Group B or C, may read; If member of Group A or D, may be less likely to read.
Group 3 May refer others to IR	If member of Group A or C, may refer others; If member of Group B or D, may be less likely to refer others.	If member of Group B or C, may refer others; If member of Group A or D, may be less likely to refer others.

Conclusion

The challenges identified and portrayed briefly above may be interesting to give much more attention in a variety of ways. These challenges are not likely to disappear any time soon, nor should they. My expectation and motivation for putting these challenges on our collective table is that they will benefit from public discussion. Such discussion may surface more such challenges, more clarity, and/or more concepts. All such discussion has potential to transform and re-frame challenges just as much as it has potential to broach possible ways to address them. I think we should welcome all of these potentials with hopeful anticipation!

Jonathan Reams

Reflecting on the evolution of my perception of “integral” over the past three years, I find myself guided by a sense of not knowing. Taking understanding to always be provisional helps me stay open and allows me to learn a great deal from my colleagues, authors, and reviewers. For me to define “what integral is” would feel in some ways like reification, a deadening that could lead to a mechanical advocating for integral dogma. One of the goals at IR is to support a space for the exploration of “what integral is,” and doing this from a fundamentally inquiry oriented approach has led to a broad set of literature touching on many aspects of integral, from theory to practice.

While holding this openness to inquiry and “not knowing,” we also are guided by a sense of “knowing” that while having a kind of fuzziness to it at times, also enables us to recognize what we are looking for when we see it. While we may not always agree upon everything, our

collective inquiry of discernment around each submission produces a degree of coherence to the journal, and a great deal of organizational learning!

From these engagements with my colleagues, authors, and reviewers, the work of IR has deepened my capacity to make finer distinctions about the nature of things integral. Often it is through a process of finding that what I thought it to be is not quite it, or that there are nuances to be gained from taking a variety of views munched together and disentangling the enmeshed threads of thought. Serving in this role has also enabled me to broaden the scope of what I perceive as falling under the umbrella of integral, recognizing it in an ever-widening set of domains.

In my contribution to this editorial essay, I would like to quickly overview some of the learnings that have emerged for me. I will focus on three areas; the map and territory issue, the relationship of states and stages, and notions of integral and integrity.

One common issue we find in a number of submissions is varying degrees of weakness in mapping from a theoretical model (such as AQAL, but others as well). This often shows up as a kind of checklist approach to how the model applies to a given topic. While such mapping can serve a useful purpose in illuminating aspects of a topic often neglected, or in aiming for a synthetic overview of the topic, the challenge of doing justice to this approach makes the task very difficult. I often recommend to authors to focus on a particular aspect of the topic that the model addresses, and go deep into that territory.

Another type of challenge arises when we attempt to write about things that are on the horizons of our awareness. By this I mean that ideas we are currently exploring and trying to sort out are very hard to take sufficient perspective on and communicate clearly to readers. This is more of an example of being lost in the territory, and not yet having created enough of our own map to enable us to describe where we have been. Thus we may end up relying too much on the maps of others, losing our voice in the process.

This issue also touches on another ongoing conversation with colleagues, around the conflation of intellectual appropriation of a theoretical model with a subtle identification with the view of the model. Keith Bellamy posits an integral awareness developmental line⁵ that identifies stages such as emergence, associating, proselytizing, rational, and discerning to note how our relationship to integral theory can grow over time. In addition to the time and experience it takes to go through such stages, there is also a factor in play related to the high degree to which we tend to equate intellectual activity with cognition and consciousness. From these (and likely other) factors, it appears that our ability to intellectually grasp a theory or model may lead us to also think that we are seeing things as the model (or the model's creator(s)) would. Yet reflecting on this in a number of conversations, it would seem that there is not yet enough widespread understanding of how stages of cognitive development or even states of consciousness will filter the theoretical model to fit within our already existing understanding. Thus we can fall prey to conflating our view with the view of the theory or model.

⁵ http://www.integralleadershipreview.com/archives/2006_03/2006_03_bellamy.html

This leads into the second area I want to discuss, the relationship of states and stages. It seems that there has been an emphasis in much of the integral literature on how structural stages or action-logics impact most everything. I think that this has been important, as the action-logics that we operate from will have a central influence on how we engage in the world. But as we study people and their behavior up close and personal, we recognize that there is more to the picture. Not everything can be accounted for by this method of slicing life experience. And of course an integral view explicitly includes many other elements. But how can we hold more of these elements in awareness at once?

One way of conceiving of the relationship between action-logics and states of consciousness has recently been put forward by Terri O'Fallon.⁶ In her preliminary offering on this topic, she describes how observation of course participants (whose sentence completion test scores were known) led to recognizing the role that access to deeper levels of state experiences play in shaping the space we engage the world in.

This space can be mapped in a simple manner by drawing a V, with one side representing structural stages of cognitive development, and the other access to various levels of states of consciousness. The two points available to an individual can be linked, and a space delineated from this. This space is the territory they can roam in so to speak. Thus the range of options for engagement available to an individual are now able to be mapped in a rudimentary way as dependent on a combination of these two aspects of their makeup.

Further conversations have also explored ways in which structured experiences can be used to enable people to gain at least temporary access to deeper states of consciousness. (My piece on Otto Scharmer's U Theory illustrates one example of this). There is then a further question of the impact of the capacity of the facilitator to utilize their own access to states to enable others to experience them. These factors can then be examined in relation to action-logics, leading to asking what degree can people operate "over their heads" while supported by these other factors? A further question that arises focuses on how such experiences can support stage development. Sara Ross' description of her work in issue #2 of IR is an example of research in this area. These and more questions offer exciting avenues of inquiry for future exploration.

Earlier I mentioned Keith Bellamy's notion of an integral awareness developmental line. In that article he notes that his preliminary finding "cautions against the overt teaching of theory and argues the need to practice what we preach." This speaks to the third issue I will discuss, that of integral as integrity. The two words appear quite similar to each other, and there is a simple way in which being integral should mean having integrity. After all, if we have managed to integrate all of these various aspects of our lives that we are now more aware of through this powerful map of the complex territory of human experience, we should be able to enact a kind of alignment of values and actions. Or in other words, what are integral ethics?

This is no simple question. There are of course vast volumes of literature dedicated to questions of ethics, and one question could simply be what could an integral perspective add to what has already been said? While this is also an area open for future exploration, I do have one

⁶ http://www.integralleadershipreview.com/archives/2007_11/2007-11-article-ofallon.html

thought about the demands that knowledge of an integral view of the world can make on us. It comes from viewing integral as transcending and including the rational analytical mode of consciousness (see Jennifer Gidley's thorough description of this in her article) predominant today. In the transcending, a different kind of view of truth can emerge. This has to do with a notion of truth not as a noun, a thing to be found, pinned down and defined as in a rational view, but as a verb, a living engagement with life.

I have found this concept discussed in a manner that resonates for me by Parker Palmer in his book *To Know as We are Known. Education as a Spiritual Journey*.⁷ Palmer talks of the ethics of knowledge by saying that it "begins not in a neutrality but in a place of passion within the human soul. Depending on the nature of that passion, our knowledge will follow certain courses and head toward certain ends" (p. 7). Palmer sees truth as troth, a living pledge. "We find truth by pledging our troth, and knowing becomes a reunion of separated beings whose primary bond is not of logic but of love" (p. 32). He illustrates this concept with a story of an early Christian desert father whose students came asking him to speak.

Some brothers . . . went to see Abba Felix and they begged him to say a word to them. But the old man kept silence. After they had asked for a long time he said to them, "You wish to hear a word?" They said "Yes, abba." The old man said to them, "There are no more words nowadays. When the brothers used to consult the old men and when they did what was said to them, God showed them how to speak. But now, since they ask without doing that which they hear, God has withdrawn the grace of the word from the old men and they do not find anything to say, since there are no longer any who carry their words out." Hearing this, the brothers groaned, saying "Pray for us, abba." (p. 41)

This story illustrates the integrity between knowing and truth, between self and our actions in the world. It allows us to conceive of knowledge as more than a static thing to be defined, but as something integral to how our essence manifests in the world.

Reflecting on this view, I find myself thinking that integrity is central to integral. As Keith says, we "need to practice what we preach" and what we are "preaching" or espousing as the value of integral stages of development is that they can enable us to better serve life. In looking for a marker for this, one could turn to Robert Greenleaf, who coined the term "servant leadership." For him, the test for such leadership was simple; are those served better off than before?

Why do we engage in this voluntary labor of love? Ultimately, it is to enable us to do as Greenleaf asks, to uplift those we serve.

⁷ Palmer, P. (1993). *To know as we are known. Education as a spiritual journey*. San Francisco, Ca: HarperSanFrancisco.