

# *Integral Review* and its Editors

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**Abstract:** In this introduction to *Integral Review's* inaugural issue, we explain the meaning we give to the title of this electronic journal which is open-access, both refereed and peer-reviewed, and why that meaning is important for us in today's world. The draft of the basic article, which was intensely discussed among the members of the editorial committee, was written by Sara Ross and Reinhard Fuhr,<sup>1</sup> and following it, other members of the editorial committee added their personal emphases in reference to the integral paradigm as well as their (critical) evaluation of the premises made in the basic article. Thus Thomas Jordan offers a set of categories and criteria for integral qualities which turned out to be most important in practice and evaluation processes. Michel Bauwens makes distinctions about the multi-perspectival nature of the integral paradigm, points out ways to avoid four different kinds of reductionism, and highlights layers of awareness. Russ Volckman emphasizes the connection between the diversity of worldviews and methodologies, which allow us to also integrate recent developments in behavioral approaches in his professional field of organization and leadership development. Jonathan Reams emphasizes the new, transcendent quality of an integral approach that enables us to use different qualities of "reflection" flexibly and - as we have a meta-framework of human perceptions and values - to recognize everybody's truth and feel compassionate with it. We then close with a discussion of the relationship between *Integral Review* and the mission of its non-profit publisher, ARINA, Inc.

**Key words:** change agents, complexity, consciousness development, Gebser, integral, integration, paradigm, research, social change, transformation, Wilber.

## **An Approach to the Integral Paradigm and the Meaning of the Journal's Title**

Sara Ross and Reinhard Fuhr

We have a lot we want to share with our inaugural readers in this space as we have charged ourselves with the task of conveying, in the clearest possible manner, what *Integral Review* (IR) is all about. To shine a brighter light on that, here and there we may briefly mention what it is not about. In other places, we introduce differences in the way we as individual editors interpret the terms that describe IR. The value in doing this transparently, here, is to model how IR can be a spacious-enough vehicle for our diverse processes of interpretation, which continue to change as we do. For the most part, however, we use this space to define the concepts used in the Journal's title. We expect IR will have relevant appeal across a broad readership of change agents around the world.

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<sup>1</sup>Sara Ross is president of ARINA, Inc. and coordinator of IR, Reinhard Fuhr is editor-in-chief of IR.



## The Integral Paradigm

### The Meaning We Give *Paradigm*

*Integral Review* represents an approach to the Integral Paradigm. We inherit the word *paradigm* from the Greek language, and a standard American dictionary<sup>2</sup> definition captures its simplicity: an example, a pattern, especially an outstandingly clear or typical example or archetype.

This simplicity can easily be clouded by forgetting that patterns and archetypes are not the concrete, tangible things we see or words we hear. We can only infer them. They are like our physical skeletons that shape our human form, but are not themselves visible to the eye. This means we have to infer the “patterns, examples or archetypes” from what we observe, by looking for the deeper structures.

In addition to this, “paradigm” has also come to refer to a specific scientific school’s or a discipline’s philosophical and theoretical framework (ibid.). IR’s approach is, however, not restricted to one special discipline or scientific school, it attempts to encompass many different disciplines and formulate meta-theoretical positions.

All these words to define *paradigm* are as revealing or unrevealing as looking at a shadow on the cave wall: we see some contours of reality but not reality itself. We make this attempt in order to invite you, the reader, to develop alertness to the paradigmatic patterns—particular approaches to reality—detectable across the broad range of subjects IR covers. As a whole, articles in IR will be highly diverse clothing under which, and through which, the integral paradigm can become evident. This is because the integral approach represents a philosophy, meta-theory and a general pattern with particular qualities that can show up in every subject, and we have an editorial commitment of our best efforts to assure that it does. At the same time, we are in an experiential learning process: we will learn how to pioneer an approach to the integral paradigm in journal form by doing it.

### The Meanings We Give *Integral*

#### Jean Gebser

The reasons this effort is important to us lie in the meaning we have for *integral*. We inherit this concept from Jean Gebser, an unconventional philosopher, who was born in Germany and finally settled down in Switzerland after many years of travel. He spent about 20 years examining virtually every field of human endeavor to discern the qualities of integral perception (Gebser 1985), acknowledging the challenge representing it, because “... this worldview goes beyond our conceptualization.” In our attempts to define the integral worldview we are confined by the limitations of our language reflecting layers from earlier worldviews that do not apply to the integral view.<sup>3</sup>

It is a challenge to describe a new and relatively rare worldview: its “birth-pangs” first came into evidence only a century ago (Keckeis, 1985, xx). Gebser built his concept of an integral paradigm (as we would say nowadays) on *structures of consciousness*, which determine the “lenses” through which we perceive reality right from the beginning. These structures of con-

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<sup>2</sup>Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed.

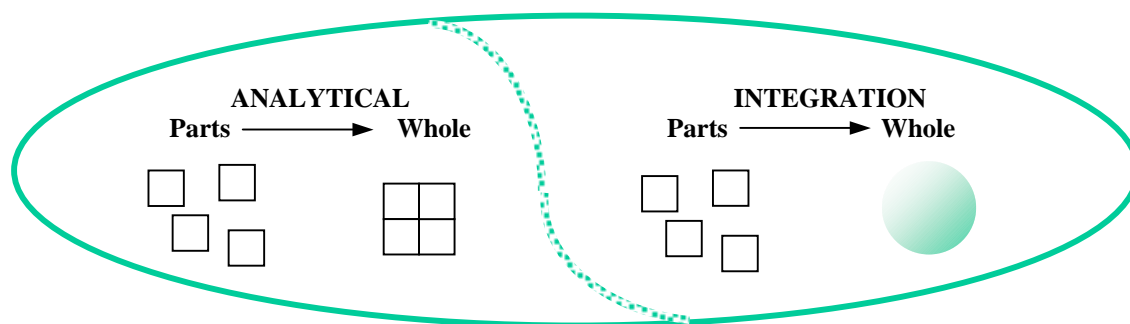
<sup>3</sup>See also Kai Hellbusch’s article in this issue.

sciousness are related to and shape virtually every human experience including our ways of reasoning. According to Gebser, they emerge from the universal mind or primordial consciousness (*Ursprung*), and form patterned structures that we would now call holarchies (according to Arthur Koestler's term): one stage of patterns building on the other, and through each more developed stage all the previous stages shine through and are available. Thus Gebser identified the five stages: archaic, magic, mythic, mental and integral.

The integral paradigm itself is characterized by Gebser mainly in that it allows us to reconnect to the primordial origin again, but in a conscious and differentiated way. The world is no longer an object, we can now gain an intimate relationship to the world, in particular as an integral perception is no longer restricted by a particular concept of time, of either-or dichotomies or of one perspective of reality only: it is holistic, multiperspectival and multidimensional.

We can see through the individual phenomena we perceive and discover the greater *gestalt*. This gestalt principle, which is also an essential concept of the theory of Gestalt therapy as it was founded by Frederick S. Perls, Laura Perls and Paul Goodman (Perls et al. 1951), says that we can understand the individual phenomena of life in their deeper meaning by grasping the whole gestalt. A gestalt is more and something else than the sum of the individual components that we can connect in linear progressions (see figure 1).<sup>4</sup> It is *becoming* a whole that integrates the different parts by intuiting their very essence. In order to perceive in this integral way it is important that we *experience* the phenomena concretely. And we can only experience them in the *here and now*, in real-time. This holistic way of perceiving and gaining knowledge is not possible without seeking within ourselves, too, in relation to our environmental field (Gebser 1985, 99, 141, 268). Thus we are able to see through the surfaces and discover the basic patterns, and thus to relate the world's external processes and behaviors with the internal worlds'.

These few remarks on a most unusual and unconventional thinker may already indicate what fascinating and yet difficult task lies ahead of us when we attempt to realize, implement and further develop these ideas in different fields of knowledge and practice – and also which kinds of resistance in ourselves and in others may be provoked by the integral way of thinking and experiencing.



**Figure 1:** Analytical and holistic thinking

### Ken Wilber and other Authors

Another approach to the integral paradigm – which is actually connected to Jean Gebser's theory – goes back to Ken Wilber. In spite of the fact that Wilber's work, widely spread in the world as it is, has been discussed very controversially, and in spite of the fact that he has been

<sup>4</sup>See also the German Handbook on Gestalt therapy (Fuhr, Gremmler-Fuhr, Sreckovic [eds.] or an English textbook (Woldt, Toman 2005 [eds.] 2005)

reduced to the leader of a new transpersonal or spiritual movement by quite a few “Wilber groups,” many of us who are engaged in editing and/or writing for this journal owe a debt of gratitude, especially to his main work *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality* (1995) or *Integral Psychology* (2001). Even though we may disagree with, have to digest, and/or modify some of his propositions, he offers some rich and inspiring thoughts and ideas. Wilber attempted to synthesize many developmental theories from East and West in order to conceive of an encompassing meta-theory on evolution and development and the integral paradigm. Like Gebser, he considers development as an unfolding of Spirit and as a continuous spiral process within the individual, biological, cultural and social units, as well as organizations throughout their life cycles. And this developmental process may be seen and explored from at least four perspectives: an individual and a collective perspective, both in terms of an internal and an external view, resulting in the four major perspectives of one and the same reality.

As this multiperspectivity opens new horizons for studying questions of personal and social significance in nearly all fields of life, practically and scientifically, we are also challenged to design and apply new research approaches and methods (connecting e.g. phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches with empirical studies and systems theory). There is no doubt, however, that the external perspectives strongly dominate in research, study, and praxis across the disciplines in our days. It will be a great challenge for those who form and contribute to IR to rebalance this lopsided view and if possible to *integrate* different perspectives when approaching professional fields. Probably there will be quite some controversial discussions on the scientific dignity of these different approaches. We may notice this, in particular, when we attempt to give the internal perspective (which concern human impulses and feelings, imaginations and beliefs or the cultural value systems, role taking and expectations in our societies) the same importance as the external approaches oriented towards empirical criteria only (see also Wilber 1998).

The evolutionary and developmental processes themselves have been explored in great depth by Ken Wilber and many other authors. These developmental processes can be studied in view of many different dimensions like emotions, reasoning, ethics, behavioral patterns, social competencies and structures, organizational and political structures, ways of living - to name but a few. All these dimensions are considered to be aspects of the whole gestalt as explained before, and they are correlated with one another. It seems to be one of the greatest challenges in individual and cultural life, including of course those engaged in making this journal, to integrate all these different aspects of development.

According to Wilber and many other authors like Maslow, Selman, Erikson, Piaget, Kohlberg, Kegan, Loevinger, Cook-Greuter, and of course also Gebser himself (including many developmental theories from the East), the developmental processes do not form a lock-step march in a linear continuum within every person or society, but rather show some variety in when, if, and how they manifest. Regardless of individual variety, these stage patterns in different domains of life can be distinguished. As a result, we can notice different paradigms operating in the double meaning of the word as explained before: distinct methods of gaining knowledge of reality on the one hand, and basic philosophical and meta-theoretical assumptions on the other hand. These dynamics develop as holarchies, (mentioned briefly, earlier), i.e. they transcend and integrate their previous basic structures as they become more complex. Thus we arrive at a spectrum of development which can be reconstructed and studied from different perspectives of reality.

The co-founder of the Club of Rome and founder of the Club of Budapest, Ervin Laszlo, adds another perspective to this on a well-founded scientific basis. After lifelong research he comes to the conclusion that the world's civilization quickly moves towards a bifurcation in the course of a “macroshift” we are actually in (Laszlo 2003). Whether a critical amount and quality of transformational shifts to new paradigms (and in particular to a new worldview he describes and

which we might call *integral*) in all fields of personal and public life can be initiated may, according to Laszlo, be an existential, though open question of survival in our global village.

One of the central topics in IR will at any rate be devoted to the further investigation of processes along the spectrum of development indicated above and to the possibility of supporting such transformational processes in research and praxis.

## The Meaning of the Journal's Title

In this section, we want to explain what we mean word by word by the title of the journal: "Transdisciplinary and Transcultural Journal for New Thought, Research, and Praxis." This affords us a nice opportunity to ease into the more concrete language that characterizes the rest of this article.

### "Integral"

Our perceptions of the world—our worldviews—are organic, whole-person dynamics that we operationalize in whatever ways we can to meet our purposes. As several of us editors discussed how to make the integral paradigm evident in the IR, and how to talk about it in this introduction, we surfaced multiple ways of *referring* to it.

One of us has particular appreciation for the simplicity of the dictionary definition of *integral*: essential to completeness; lacking nothing essential. This simple definition would refer to our hope that every IR article attempts to evidence the integral paradigm by covering its topic with the comprehensive depth, dimensional span, scales, and contexts necessary to convey its whole complex nature, to the extent possible in this medium. One of us would say the foregoing captures the meaning of "an integral approach," and another says we can avoid prescriptive problems if we use the notion of "integrally informed approaches."

We exchanged cautions that we need to beware of the natural human tendencies to make highly abstract concepts, such as "integral," into concrete "things." This can lead to confusing maps with the territories they point to. Yet it's helpful to model and experiment with new ideas in concrete ways: it is part of the process of integrating them as they make more and more sense to us through usage and peer review. Yet another editor wishes to avoid the perfectionism implied in the dictionary definition above, and prefers to stress the *intention* to be more complete, and the polarity of daring to take a clear perspective while also having the greater whole in view. He articulates a quality of *integral* that is implicit throughout this article, and deserves to be expressed. People find that integral approaches give them a completely new horizon of meaning making, defining a new existential sense of life by expanding the perceptions of connectedness; these approaches may make it much easier to make sense of our complex world.

Ultimately, all those words are meaningless if we don't get down to the practical matters of our real work in the world, and this is what we hope IR will be very much about. In that direction, IR has practical, integral criteria it applies to its work of journal production. Likewise, it has distilled from them the several general criteria we have agreed upon for works published in IR, as follows:

- They reflect or pay attention to the range of different worldviews and meaning-making processes that operate in people, and thus understand some of the processes and patterns that are evident in, and across, various phenomena.
- They demonstrate a sensibility for developmental dimensions and processes through-

out the human lifespan.

- They indicate some kind of orientation toward facilitating translative as well as transformative development in various domains of life. By translative, we mean enlarging the views, attitudes, and competencies of individuals, groups, communities, etc., within the level of their existing paradigms. By transformative, we mean catalyzing and supporting learning processes that facilitate the development of new paradigms and their qualitative capacities.

## “Review”

“Review” in IR’s title means the active verb form of *review* because this publication is not a passive instrument that produces reviews of what is going on in the world. We treat it as an active verb because IR as a whole must attempt to fulfill the third criteria above in its own presentation. It, too, has the intention of fostering translative and transformative experiences by the way it engages its readers in both content and dialogue.

Review as an action includes all the familiar meanings of the term: to view, examine again, to look back on something with a retrospective gaze, to examine critically or deliberately, to evaluate, etc. These actions help us make sense of our experience—the process of our meaning-making—so that we can adapt to and learn from it. They help us notice unique features that we want to make sense of. And they help us detect patterns and common processes that may appear across differently clothed human experiences. The diverse actions included in the process of review are fundamental for people engaged in change efforts of all kinds, from the self and other individuals, to the organizational and institutional, to the general social and political domains. This is because we are not just *acting upon* others and our world; we are *interacting with* everyone and everything.

To facilitate active review processes for readers, authors, and editors alike, IR may include a feature not typically found in journals: an Afterword. This will be a place where we can offer reflective observations and sometimes questions about the issue contents and how they inform each other. It will be an opportunity to point to patterns and archetypes at play within and across articles. It will be a creative space for emergence of whatever inspirations we might have to foster our individual and collective reflection on the reading experience. It will be one structural mechanism within the IR to encourage dialogue within ourselves and among all of us. Perhaps it will lead to a Letters to the Editors feature where such dialogue may take place publicly.


The Afterword for this inaugural issue will take an experimental, interactive form. When readers click the Afterword link in the Table of Contents, they will arrive at a public log-in portal to one of ARINA’s forums. There, readers will find an Afterword discussion space ready for discourse about this issue, issues it raises, etc. In addition to the Afterword, there are Author Roundtable forums for discussion of specific articles, and various authors will participate to varying degrees or at least “drop in” and visit.

There are more meanings we give IR’s use of the action verb, review. The familiar meanings we listed above tend to orient us to looking at things “outside” ourselves. In the spirit of fostering concrete experiences to feed our integration processes, we always encourage the attention directed outward to flow back around to ourselves. This can remind us to examine how processes going on inside of our own skin are similar to processes going on “out there.” Without the essentials of self-reflection and reflexion, we would miss the prerequisite of integrating: *experiencing* our experiences in their very essence. Just reading about things in the abstract does not contribute to integration; the subjects we read about need to be engaged reflectively and reflexively, at

minimum. Thus, *review* in this journal's title is an activity to engage.

We are aware that this wide-ranging discussion of our approach to the integral paradigm does not result in any crystal clear definitions, and may even invoke some frustration in a reader. Concrete experiences of frustration are natural responses to polarities we tend to experience when we want to understand something new and it does not fit neatly into familiar categories: they are natural catalysts for self-reflection, a way to re-view. The foregoing explication of the meanings we give the *Integral Review's* main title goes well beyond just our meanings and a title. We hope it gives you, as our reader, a concrete flavor of what the activity of an integral review can include.

## “Transdisciplinary” and “Transcultural”



We deliberated long and hard about how much of a mouthful we wanted to allow IR's subtitle to become, and why. In the end, we decided each of its individual bites was necessary to augment the main title and convey our intentions for the nature of the Journal in a meaningful way. Predictably, we begin by defining what we mean by *trans-*. The first dimension of its meaning is traditional: across, beyond, and/or through. It can evoke images of humans' first transcontinental trading routes centuries ago, or railroads, or air flights. They crossed through geopolitical boundaries and spanned great distances across land, and above and beyond both those social and natural boundaries. The second dimension of *trans-* is that by its boundary- and scale-spanning nature, it changes how we customarily think about and do things. Its essential nature is transformative. Thus, we mean *trans-* in the dictionary sense of across, beyond, and through, so as to change. The next question is, change what?

First, as we begin to address that question, it will be useful to refer to Figure 1, where we illustrated a whole as “seen through” by an integral perception. A sphere like the one in this section's heading symbolizes it. In this discussion, the sphere can represent the whole problem or issue that needs to be addressed, for example, by a change agent. What is *changed* by a transdisciplinary approach is how we see the problem or issue, and where we stand in relation to it. A transdisciplinary approach is pragmatic, making the real world problem or issue the anchor that grounds efforts to address it. The problem or issue will be defined in terms of what it needs, regardless of geopolitical and institutional boundaries, and discipline, expertise, or biases of change agents or agencies, who will use and draw upon whatever resources, disciplines and knowledge bases are available and appropriate.

IR's transdisciplinarity is suggested by the range of articles' subjects covered in this inaugural issue. With the possible exception of any given special issue we may publish, every issue of IR will span multiple traditional categories and boundaries, to foster in all of us an integral perception of the wholes we are all trying to address as change agents.

The IR is intentionally transcultural in two ways. The first is most readily apparent, by its international editorial staff, its multi-language inclusion of articles, and its world-wide availability as an open-access electronic journal. We hope this quality will improve all our capacities to notice and work with difference arising within and from our cultural milieu. This does not refer only to group, national, and regional differences. IR's transcultural orientation may also illustrate that we often exist in a variety of cultural milieus, one at home, another at work, another at a place of faith-meeting, and another in our civic life. Developing a conscious awareness of the transcultural qualities in our own lives can inform how we notice and work with other kinds of cultural differences, *so that* we can surface new ways to work with them.

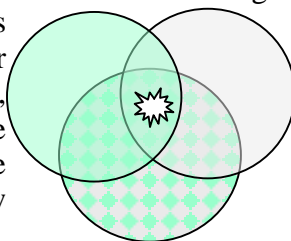
Sometimes this means we adopt more than one approach to accomplish an objective. That was our editorial decision as we considered the two different norms in use for producing peer-reviewed journals, as IR is. In Europe, a frequent custom is that the reviewers' and authors' identities are not anonymous to the other. In the U.S., the norm of academic journal publications is that the authors' identities are stripped from the manuscripts in a "blind" review process, in an effort to remove certain sources of bias on the part of reviewers, and the reviewers' identities are likewise anonymous to the authors. These two schemes are founded on very different assumptions, and IR has adopted the policy that it will accommodate both, based on author request.

At other times, there may be more challenging issues that require more creativity, adaptation, and a deliberate process to apply integral criteria. Such was another transcultural question we encountered as we prepared this issue of IR: What is an integral approach to the different cultural values placed on language that is variously called gender-neutral or inclusive? What is the integral approach when the very structures of some languages are inherently shaped around masculine- and feminine-gendered nouns (e.g., German and French). Several of us living in North America have lived through and been changed by the decades of inclusive language becoming the cultural norm, to the point of being broadly institutionalized in many contexts. In Western Europe, sensitivity about the use of inclusive language also exists, it has not been made a staunch cultural norm that pervades the spoken and written word everywhere and is therefore used more flexibly, especially given the constraints of some languages. How this question was resolved editorially will become evident to readers of IR in the course of reading it.

Secondly, IR is transcultural by its orientation to drawing attention to the individual and social patterns evident across cultures. Such attention is a resource for noticing and working with and within different cultures when it can discern the universal patterns that may be operating *beneath* apparent surface differences. This orientation echoes our earlier discussion of abstract patterns and paradigms. The ability to see and work with cultural difference is complemented by the ability to also see where there are additional human patterns operating in conjunction with them. This is a contribution often made by cross-cultural studies, and there are additional ways to study patterns that can significantly inform change agents' work. Both abilities are complemented by the pragmatic orientation discussed earlier, that of designing efforts that address the whole complex problem or issue as the anchor that grounds our work.

## “New Thought, Research, and Praxis”

Rather than discuss our meanings for these terms—thought, research, and praxis—we will take a different approach in this section, and explain why. Integral Review is a transdisciplinary resource where all articles attempt to reflect to some degree the main criteria mentioned earlier. Those criteria apply whether authors discuss extensions, critique, or kind of socially significant research, tackle a particular problem. To the criteria, we expect that every article thought, new research, and new approaches are yet rare in our world, solicit, and publish authors who take an integral approach to today's complex challenges.



share reflections on experience or applications of a theory, report any or describe practical methods to extent that articles can approach the will be a contribution to new praxis. This is because integral and IR's mission is to encourage, and IR's mission is to encourage, We have inherited the three separate, abstract categories of thought, research, and praxis through the language of compartmentalized worldviews that developed them in times past. They are useful to employ in IR's subtitle for at least two reasons. First, they are familiar terms and in



wide use, and thus they easily communicate the scope of the Journal's coverage. Equally important, they keep in the front of our attention the ongoing invitation to increasingly perceive, practice, experience, and write and read about them as the whole they can be through an integral perception. Rather than explicate this notion with another abstract discussion that has no integrative benefit, we make two open invitations to our readers. The first invitation is to engage in your own active, self-reflective inquiry into the meanings you assign each of these terms. Beneath those first-layer meanings, what assumptions are supporting them? How do you describe to yourself the nature of each concrete activity—thought, research, practice—and where you find their intersections? We invite you to test with your own lived experience our hypothesis that these are—at the level of their most basic essence—parts of a whole that is awaiting integration.

The second, equally open invitation is to write a short or long reflective story about how you tested this hypothesis we offer, and what you found out from your own experience, whether or not it happens to support our hypothesis. Share with all of us what you learned from the process, and how you think it might be useful—or has since been useful—in your approach to life and work. Whether in an issue of this Journal or on its publisher's website, we want to publish your personal research testing this proposal, and be able to report on a collection of such stories. It is one of the foundational research questions for an integral approach, and part of IR's mission is to publish socially significant research for the sake of the common good. We invite you into the co-creation of new thought, research, and praxis.

## Defining "Integral"

Thomas Jordan

Four years ago I made a serious effort to define the meaning of "integral" in terms of a set of criteria that could be used to assess whether a perspective is integral or not. My point of departure was the field of integral politics and the need to describe the characteristics of an integral political perspective. I came up with nine items on a checklist. Some fellow "integralists," in particular Jim Turner and Sara Ross, offered constructive comments and alternative formulations of some of the items. The resulting product is ARINA's "integral evaluation process." I still feel it captures the essence of integral meaning-making, i.e. integral as a consciousness structure, rather than as the name of a particular kind of theoretical framework. So my contribution to a conversation on defining what we mean by the word "integral" is this checklist. I do hope the checklist will be a fruitful starting-point for an *integral* discussion about the meaning of "integral," rather than as a final statement.

## The Integral Evaluation Process

### 1. Motivations

Do goals and aspirations reflect a mindset that is committed to the well being of "the whole," where even appropriately-focused specific interests and allegiances are always situated and pursued within a consciously overarching world centric frame?

## **2. Visions and Strategy**

a. Is the strategy free from dualistic thinking in the sense of pitting an idealized vision of what ought to be, against a depreciating image of what is, in favor of a processual and integrative approach to learning, social change, etc.?

b. Does the perspective underlying the strategy view others as “objects” of the strategy's action, or does the strategy's design treat them consistently as the subjects of their own experience?

c. Does the strategy incorporate first-, second-, and third-person research and practice where possible?

## **3. Self-awareness**

a. Is there a well-developed awareness of the nature of the perspective used in the process or task being undertaken, with awareness of the characteristics of this perspective in relation to other perspectives?

b. Is there evidence of non-attachment to one's own identifications with standpoints, i.e., an absence of defensiveness in relation to other views?

## **4. Identifications (self-embeddedness)**

a. Is the meaning-making free from an adversarial stance, i.e., the tendency to regard other parties as the cause of significant problems who must therefore be defeated or brought under control?

b. Is there a fluid and open-ended relationship to identifications with collectives on the whole scale from one's own family, organization, faith community, professional practice or discipline, ethnicity, etc. to humanity as a whole, sentient beings in general, and the physical environment?

## **5. Interpretations of the world around us and in us**

a. Does the worldview (the narrative describing the situation(s) of concern and causal relationships in its environment) reflect a profound awareness of the existence of complex systems, contexts, and causal layers and webs that influence the behavior of individuals and groups and explain the specific forms of events and conditions in society?

b. Does the worldview draw on an understanding of the limitations and dynamics of prevailing levels of development in the social systems and leadership that are related to the focus of concern?

c. Are proposals adapted to existing levels of development or meaning-making, so that any social processes or structures that are recommended will have good chances to function as intended, given where the people and culture are?

d. Is the perspective sensitive to the dialectic between (1) the need to create stable and well-adapted holding environments for existing meaning-making systems, so that these can be expressed in benign forms; and, on the other hand, (2) the facilitation of transformation to levels of meaning-making that are more competent in solving problems?

## Beyond Perspectives, Reductionisms and Layers

Michael Bauwens

As indicated before, the concept of integral is an umbrella term that can encompass different interpretations, though I believe that they share a commonality: that they are multi-perspectival, i.e. aim to combine not just one worldview, but several, or is meta-paradigmatical, incorporating more than one just one paradigm. The term transdisciplinarity is also closely related: it is not only the juxtaposing of different disciplines in one research project, but an attempt to transcend the partial approaches into a unity, an attempt to go “beyond” the different disciplines.

As my own contribution, I would like to offer some more perspectives on the concept of integral.

### The Place of the Integral Approach

Let’s have a look at the first table:

	<b>Parts</b>	<b>Whole</b>	<b>Includes</b>
<b>Difference</b>	Postmodern approaches		Subjects and Objects
<b>Similarity</b>		Integral Approaches	Subjects and Objects
<b>Similarity</b>	Analytical Sciences	Systemic Sciences	Objects Only

This table is an attempt to show how the integral approach is related to other approaches. We can recognise two axes: one distinguishes attention for the ‘whole’ from attention to the ‘parts;’ the other distinguishes attention to similarities and ‘structural unity’ between different phenomena, from attention to difference.

All four approaches are valid in our attempt to understand ‘reality.’ The classic materialist approach is based on the reduction of any phenomena to its constituent parts, which are then studied separately. The idea of course is that such analysis is eventually followed by a synthesis, but the synthesis is always secondary, and for all practical purposes is often abandoned, since scientists have become hyper-specialised in their disciplines, and have difficulty understanding other specialised domains. It is still the mainstream approach in the hard sciences, and very important in the social sciences as well. The result is a fragmentation of our knowledge and worldviews.

Current emphasis on the whole gives us the systemic sciences such as cybernetics, the system sciences proper, self-organization theory, chaos and complexity theories. In such an approach, a part is only considered through its function for the whole. Furthermore, it is always objective, there is no attention for its separate subjectivity, intention, will, etc...

From the world of philosophy have come the postmodern approaches. These approaches stress that any worldview is dependent on perspective, that no part of a system can understand the whole. Therefore, it rejects ‘grand narratives’ for their hubris of taking an imagined godlike position of a part claiming to be able to know the whole. Postmodern approaches, also called post-structuralist, reject structuralist approaches, which look at structural unity, and like the systemic sciences, forget the subject. Postmodern approaches stress ‘difference,’ no ‘thing,’ no ‘object,’ no ‘subject’ exists apart from the field or system it is part of, and in fact, is defined by its differ-

ence from the other things in the same field.

The Integral approach can be seen as a reaction against the limitations and unforeseen effects of the previous methods. Unlike analytical science, it focuses on the whole. Unlike systemic approaches, it always includes the subjective component. Unlike postmodern approaches, it does not shy away from integrative ‘grand narratives.’ But it has also learned from the other approaches: that no attention to the whole can violate the truth of its parts, from the systemic sciences, that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, from the postmodern, that the integral is just another limited perspective, albeit a useful one. Integralism should therefore never be seen as a totalising, ‘imperialistic’ approach, but as another, integrative, multiperspectival way to look at the world. In fact, it can be said that any individual is an integrator, is a different composite, of his/her understanding of reality. But the specific effort, methodology, of the integral forces its practitioner to a more conscious effort to integrate as large a portion of truth as possible. Moreover, because it also knows the limitations of any individual perspective, it stresses that dialogic methods, involving intersubjective meeting of minds, can yield greater relative truth still.

## Avoiding Reductionisms

Let us now look at the next table:

	<b>Individual Aspects</b>	<b>Collective Aspects</b>
<b>Interior Aspects</b>	Subjective field: The subject / the self	Intersubjective field: Spirituality / Worldviews
<b>Exterior Aspects</b>	Objective field: Technological artifacts as extensions of the body	Interobjective field: Natural Systems / Political, economic, organizational systems

As explained before, Ken Wilber has offered a synthesing way of looking at reality, by stressing the need to cover the following aspects of reality; subjective, intersubjective, objective, interobjective.

An advantage is its comprehensiveness. There are few other integrative approaches of such a large encompassing scope. Looking at any phenomena from those different angles is a very comprehensive way of looking at the world. It is also a tremendous way to avoid different kinds of reductionisms:

- The objective reductionism of the analytical sciences, reducing any whole to its material parts, in a permanent attempt to explain the more complex by the less complex, the immaterial by the material, the subjective by the objective. While such a reductionist and analytical approach yields tremendous value, it is also at the same time an impoverishment.
- The interobjective reductionism of the system sciences, which also do not integrate the subjective component, again reducing reality to its materiality, or rather to its ‘functionality.’
- The subjective reductionism of any ‘idealistic’ approach that takes the human will, or divine will, as paramount, without sufficient attention to its grounding in intersubjective and interobjective systems and in materiality. More recently this tendency emerges as cognitive reductionism, where reality is reduced to the cognitive apparatus of the human.
- The intersubjective reductionism of some postmodern approaches, where everything is reduced to its constituent fields, for example language. In such an approach, materiality is often forgotten, everything becomes a ‘discourse.’

## Recognizing Layers

This is an interpretation of the integrative that resonates particularly in the context of my personal evolution.

Humans are layered persons. We have an instinctual apparatus and corresponding reactions, we have an emotional apparatus, a mental apparatus, a transmental ‘witnessing’ apparatus, at the very least. But because of our civilisational evolution, these different layers are far from well integrated. There has been a lot of unconscious ‘repression’ of our earlier layers, especially by mental layer, resulting in many individual and collective pathologies. As I see it, every human being should at some point in life, undertake a ‘regression in the service of the ego,’ i.e. make a voyage of discovery into the repressed aspects, undertake a ‘dark night of the soul.’ An important aspect of the integral approach is its developmental aspect, a focus on the fact that humans, societies, systems, evolve from the simple to the complex, from one historical formation to another. By uncovering this development, making the unconscious conscious, we become more whole, more integrated. Thus an integral approach obtains a ‘transparency’ in terms of our functioning, an ability to recognize ‘where we are coming from,’ not only historically, but ‘here and now:’ which layer is active, and ‘is it appropriate.’ In our particular civilisation this means a growing capacity to grasp reality as ‘a whole,’ and understanding how our different layers operate simultaneously. We can go beyond the ‘cognicentrism’ that is our common cultural lot. This is how I interpret Thomas Jordan’s contribution as well: through our own comprehension of our perspective, we can better understand other perspectives, and thus achieve a growing meta-perspective.

## Conclusion: The Integral defined

To conclude, in my understanding, an integral approach is one that;

- respects the relative autonomy of the different fields, and looks for field specific laws,
- affirms that new levels of complexity cause the emergence of new properties and thus rejects reductionisms that try to explain the highly complex from the less complex,
- tries to formulate level-specific laws that relate the objective and subjective aspects, refusing to see any one aspect as a mere epiphenomena of the other,
- is subjective-objective in that it always relates the understanding of the objective, through the prism of a recognised individual perspective in general,
- and attempts to correlate explanations emanating from the various fields, in order to arrive at an integrative understanding; in this sense it is a hermeneutic discipline focusing on creating meaning.

## Diversity in Worldviews and Methodologies

Russ Volckman

I would like to elaborate a bit on the notion of paradigm and its implication for my own interest(s) in presenting within these pages, as well as working with others whose contributions will surely enrich our explorations. Paradigm may be identified as a worldview of a particular school of thought. It has also been suggested to imply a methodology associated with that worldview.

This link between worldview and methodology is key to linking thought, research and praxis.

The behavioral school that dominated academic psychology and other social sciences in the 1960s and 1970s held a particular worldview that we can only study what we can measure. This led to the use of methodologies that provided opportunities for measurement, including experimentation with animals, laboratory experiments with human subjects, and the use of tools such as games, electronic devices and self-assessment instruments.

In academia this gave way to postmodernism and the relativism of its extreme expression, a topic amply discussed by Ken Wilber. There can be little doubt that an integral perspective is one that intends to draw on the validity of postmodernism and other philosophies and perspectives while leaving behind those elements that can be transcended and not included. And, while the term integral can be interpreted in a variety of ways, I assume it to mean a theoretical approach that seeks to examine what can be observed and what cannot, what can be measured and what cannot. Further, it is an approach that is concerned with development. My familiarity with it is based on reading the work of Ken Wilber and those who have built on his contributions.

Personally, as a graduate student and, later, faculty member in universities I found myself resisting and even reacting against behavioral approaches. I focused my energy on personal awareness and change through various humanistic psychologies, including gestalt therapy, body therapies and various other workshops and training. I demeaned the behaviorists and ignored their work — until I began looking at and working with organizations, teams and leaders.

In learning to become a change agent in the field of organization development I found that there had been a robust use of behavioral approaches to understanding change in organizational systems. The leading journal in the field was even titled, *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences*. This journal continues to be published in association with the National Training Laboratories, an historic leader in the development of organization development practitioners (in Arlington, Virginia, and Bethel, Maine, USA) and describes itself as follows:

With diverse audiences in mind, *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* publishes a variety of material designed to help individuals and organizations promote positive, successful change. The specific goals of the journal are to

- Present a range of conceptual frameworks that explain, predict, and illuminate the implications of action
- Describe social inventions, intervention techniques, consultation activities, emergent innovations, and educational practices
- Employ the full range of social science
- Examine underlying values, assumptions, biases, and beliefs associated with various forms of change...

The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science's articles keep up with the evolution of the field, ensuring that you'll receive the best and latest analysis on the spectrum of social change. (<http://www.sagepub.com/journal.aspx?pid=217>)

This statement is a far cry from what I thought about narrowness of the behavioral sciences forty years ago. I am struck by the similarities in missions of that—and probably other—journals that are equally interested in the marriage of theory and methodology. What JABS and IR have in common is commitment to the discovery of approaches that both broaden and deepen our understanding of the dynamics of change in human systems. How they may differ is in the hypothesis that there is an approach, which can integrate diverse worldviews and methodologies.

Organization Development and related fields continue to hold as important that which can be

measured. The field (theory and practice) has focused on what can be directly observed. Nevertheless, organization development practitioners have had a long interest in that which cannot be measured. I am reminded of Bob Tannenbaum's presentation at the 1982 OD Network Conference in reference to consultants' reliance on tools: "The most important tool you bring is yourself." In this sense, organization development has been a leader in looking at multi-disciplinary approaches to organizational and individual development and change.

It is from this field that we find concepts and methods related to culture and spirit at work. Practitioners have long sought methodologies that promote awareness and learning, working with diversity, promoting ethics and the capacity of organizations to create cultures in which individuals could be whole, healthy, creative and capable human beings while being productive and engaging actively with change. As such, it has been a field of study and practice that has reached out to many fields for inspiration and guidance: psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, history, philosophy, ethics, biology, ecology, physics, mathematics, art, music and theater. Consequently, it is likely that an integral perspective will be embraced by this eclectic field of study and practice and that there is evidence that it already is by some.

I do not anticipate that Integral Review will become or be seen by others as just another journal about change. I believe we are challenged and committed to making the Integral Review relevant to theory and practice and to the world in the way described in this article. As such we will need to be able to address an audience and fellow explorers who have not only cultural diversity and diversity of world view, but diversity of capacity to engage with and learn from what we present. This is an extraordinary challenge of relevance and I suspect this will be a significant element of our own learning curve.

It is with this spirit of inquiry, openness and exploration in practice that the Integral Review offers a focus on change in human systems and for each of us as individuals. It is with this commitment to inquiry and discovery on every level of our endeavors that we provide opportunities to focus on development and change from an integrally informed perspective, as my friend and colleague Jonathan Reams likes to say. My own interests are on the application of this approach to the field of leadership studies. We have a wonderful opportunity to discover and demonstrate the relatedness of integrated, that is integral, approaches to change and development in how we understand what it is to be a leader and in how leadership emerges in human systems. To include ourselves as whole beings, with our own worldviews, behaviors that emerge in the context of how we hold cultural values and engage with systems provides us with an opportunity for a gestalt that will emerge no matter what our particular focus. That challenge is as much for me as it is to the readers and other writers of this journal. It is exciting to be part of this.

## Transcendence and Compassion

Jonathan Reams

In reading over the introductory text of this article, I was struck by one passage that captured the heart of my interest in the so-called "integral paradigm." In discussing Jean Gebser's opening of the field, he is quoted as characterizing the difficulties in representing integral by saying that "this worldview goes *beyond our conceptualization*." I wrote my dissertation on the *Consciousness of Transpersonal Leadership*, and in it I explored the limits of rational analytical thought. Being exposed to a hermeneutical view of understanding, which recognizes the inherently reflex like action of thought as it reflects on lived experience, I came to see rational analytical thinking as a secondary process rather than a generative one. Thus the process of conceptualizing as a

form of analytical thinking is inherently removed from, or less than the integral world view Gebser points to.

For me, this implies that the integral way of looking at things is generated from a level of consciousness, or paradigm beyond those elements which it aims to integrate. This is important, as trying to integrate conceptual frameworks with a meta-framework in the way integral theory does cannot be done with the same conceptual process. This notion comes from many sources basically stating that in order to change, comprehend fully, or make meaning out of something, one needs to engage this process from a level qualitatively beyond that of the object of attention.

So my understanding of the value of the integral paradigm emerges from this view of its central operating premise pointed to by Gebser. How that value is expressed or utilized by proponents of the integral paradigm varies, but from what I have read about it, I have found it to be the most comprehensive way of integrating all strands of inquiry. At the same time, I have also experienced that its complexity and sophistication lend to its being misunderstood, misrepresented, and reduced to that which the user can grasp. This is the proverbial not seeing the forest for the trees, and seems to me to stem from moving away from the core of integral beyond conceptualization into trying to ground integral in the concepts that arise from it.

It is in this sense that I resonate with the “trans” in the subtitle of the journal. I tend towards the connotation of trans that fits with “meta,” as in a meta-framework, or a meta-conceptualization. This is the transcendent aspect, that for me is the ground, the starting place of the unmediated immediacy of our lived experience. Out of this source we can generate conceptualizations, as we utilize rational analysis to reflect on this experience. The mindfulness an integral approach points to is to keep our attention from being trapped within the confines of the models or images these conceptualizations create, and then mistaking them for the thing they represent.

Thus the notion of being “integrally informed” appeals to me in this way. I recognize that my grasp of integral theory in all its glory is limited - both inherently in that it is beyond conceptualization, and in a more pragmatic way that it is not the sole focus of my life’s work. So I like to see that what I do and how I think is informed by this integral paradigm rather than that I have somehow grasped it and can design integral interventions and such. This is not to say that these things are not possible, and it is my hope that this journal will provide a vehicle for engaging in a common discourse to explore how people are applying this paradigm in their activities in the world. It is just for me to recognize that this view is still very much new and emerging, and in a state of open flux and experimentation to find out how to make use of it in practical ways.

One practical way this has shown up in my life was triggered by distinctions we can make between reflection, self-reflection, and reflexion. The layers of taking something experienced as implicit, tacit, or the self as subject, and using these methods to allow perception, assumptions and image/world view to be made explicit, or an object of awareness, has been an important and valuable process in my life. It has enabled me to move the ground of my actions in the world. I would say that I began (in my adult life) acting from a non-reflective place where my actions emerged primarily as an automatic reflex, conditioned by factors such as upbringing, culture, education and even genetics. Gradually, I was able to reflect on the external conditions of my life in a way that brought about a desire for change. This led to self-reflection and eventually having action and choice emerge from examining the links between attitudes and their effect on the way the world showed up for me. Later on, I began to be more grounded in reflexion, in an ongoing witnessing, experimenting, and inquiry about how I can make better choices about utilizing this dynamic.

What that has led me to is how I experience the integral paradigm. I experience it as a heart of compassion. This compassion shows up for me in the ability to see that everyone is living some



truth. Having a ground beyond the inherently limited conceptualizations of these truths enables me to see past my own projections about those truths. Having a meta-framework allows me to see the context within which that truth has validity, and its limitations or boundaries. These things enable my rational analytical processes to act in service of this heart of compassion. It is my aim to have this journal serve as a vehicle for the ongoing unfoldment of collective capacity to operate in the world from this heart of compassion.

## Conclusion

We have now reached the end of this present explication of our meanings, not only of the journal's title, but also this article's. Through each article herein, this inaugural issue, itself, is a further explication of meanings we have shared; we expect it may add depth and contrast as grist for the mills of your integral reviews. Over the course of time, we hope the abstract notion of the integral paradigm will gradually result in new concrete, essential experiences, and thus foster further integration. We hope new concrete meanings of *re-view* take root in all of us during our authoring, editing, and reading experiences of engaging each IR issue. And we're hopeful that as IR attracts a wide range of authors and readers, and additional competencies and diversity on an editorial board, that we co-create a substantive contribution to support translative and transformative change in our shared world. We anticipate that we all will gradually realize more and more of the transformative potentials of transdisciplinary and transcultural approaches, right down here on the ground where complex social change occurs and more of which is sorely needed.

## IR's Relation with its Publisher's Mission

Integral Review is the formal publishing arm of ARINA, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that was organized in 2004 in the U.S. to carry out its global mission. ARINA's mission is to model, teach, research, publish, promote, and institutionalize holistic, integral understandings and processes that are incorporated into efforts to address complex issues within individual, social, and global needs. Its service area is the planet, and its tax-exempt purposes are the public good (charitable), educational, and social scientific research. Integral Review will be the site of original publication of integral research and project evaluations carried out under ARINA's auspices. IR furthers ARINA's mission by publishing the just-mentioned work along with other works that meet its criteria, resonate with its philosophy, and fulfill its publication purposes.

The acronym ARINA stands for some core ideas that we have explicated in this introduction to IR: Acting / Researching / Integrating Associates Network. Please visit ARINA's website at [www.global-arina.org](http://www.global-arina.org) to learn about its range of resources and activities and to associate with us.

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