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Editorial

IR’s Advances

As we welcome you to the sixth semi-annual issue of *Integral Review* (IR), I would like to point to further signs of maturity for IR, some hinted at in the December 2007 issue’s editorial, some new. The most important of these is the restructuring of IR. We have moved to a more traditional academic journal structure that builds capacity for taking our work to another level. This has meant that the small group of us who were previously referred to as the editorial board is now listed as associate editors. We thank Christine Harris for her service to IR, dating from its inception in 2004. Her life has taken her in new directions, which have led her to depart her IR editorial role. We wish her all the best in the future!

This restructuring makes our external review process more obvious and transparent. It involved enlisting new faces and competencies, forming a traditional editorial board to serve as the primary pool of peer reviewers. Some of those appointed to this new editorial board have already done reviews for IR, while others were recruited based on their academic qualifications and scope of work. Thus we are happy to formally welcome to the *Integral Review* Editorial Board Rosemarie Anderson, Roland Benedikter, Richard Couto, Mark Edwards, Nancy Glock-Grueneich, Sean Esbjorn-Hargens, Nathan Harter, Carol Hoare, Michael F. Mascolo, Richard McGuigan, Alfonso Montuori, Raymond Reyes, Judy Stevens-Long, and Gregory Wilpert. These appointments officially began in May, when board member names and institutional affiliations were uploaded to IR’s website. At a later date, we will augment their listings with more information.

Another sign of maturing for IR was its acceptance in two academic arenas. The first is IR’s listing in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ; http://www.doaj.org/). This service evaluates journals that apply for inclusion in it against a set of access and quality criteria. DOAJ aims to cover all subjects and languages; its directory currently includes 3,401 journals. From its website:

The aim of the Directory of Open Access Journals is to increase the visibility and ease of use of open access scientific and scholarly journals thereby promoting their increased usage and impact. The Directory aims to be comprehensive and cover all open access scientific and scholarly journals that use a quality control system to guarantee the content. In short a one stop shop for users to Open Access Journals.

In addition to this listing, in spring 2007, *Integral Review* was submitted to the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions for consideration. The NAHEI maintains a list of journals that it determines have met appropriate scientific and academic quality criteria. A review committee oversees the addition of journals to this list. The majority (90%) of journals on this list are on level 1; 10% are allowed to be nominated to be advanced to level 2, which is a more prestigious placement. Journals that do not meet criteria for these two lists are categorized simply as “other.” Earlier this year, we received the good news that IR was awarded a place on
the level 1 list of journals. We are pleased to have IR’s quality validated by this external review process. These signs of academic acceptance are symptomatic of the growing maturity of IR.

In line with these advances, we also draw your attention to another change, effective this issue. Consistent with our move to more traditional academic structure, we have converted to the volume and issue numbering system. Thus, rather than this current publication being called Issue 6, it is Volume 4, Issue 1.

Earlier this year, we made a technical upgrade to a new platform for IR article forums. This week, we launch the invited forum with author participation on Martin Matuštík’s essay on Towards an Integral Critical Theory of the Present Age, published in IR Issue 5, December 2007. Another invited forum with author participation will start in the near future: Jennifer Gidley’s The Evolution of Consciousness as a Planetary Imperative: An Integration of Integral Perspectives. Already going is the open forum on the collective editorial in Issue 5; it is a platform for anyone who is interested to discuss the issues raised by the associate editors in that collective effort. The IR Occasional Newsletter (which you can receive by signing up here – http://integral-review.org/email_issue/index.asp) and this website continue to be the way to stay informed on IR forum activity.

The further fertilization of discourse in the field of integral studies and theory is also getting a boost from John F. Kennedy University and the Integral Institute’s first bi-annual integral theory conference – http://www.integraltheoryconference.org/page/page/5594264.htm. This event will see 500 participants, 100 individual presentations, 12 panels and 30 poster presentations gather August 7-10th at JFK University. All of us at IR are very pleased to see a dozen editors, editorial and advisory board members as well as author-contributors from IR presenting at this conference, where a number of us are also participating in panel presentations. IR will host an opening evening reception in the conference hotel, and have an IR information table at the university during the conference. We look forward to meeting more of IR’s audience at this event!

On the Contents of Volume 4, Issue 1

We open this issue with Sean Kelly’s Integral Time and the Varieties of Post-Mortem Survival. This article covers a panoramic scope of philosophical thinking to explore questions of survival after bodily death. Kelly takes a novel path in exploring this topic, focusing on our conceptions of time. He draws from the works of Nietzsche, Barbour, Fechner, Whitehead, Hegel, Jung, Morin, Gebser and Aurobindo to present an alternative view of notions of the soul and reincarnation. In doing this he also models an integral way of thinking and inquiring. This article represents immense possibilities for future dialogue and inquiry on this subject, and we are pleased to open this up with the publication of Kelly’s article.

This is followed by Sara Ross’ Using Developmental Theory: When Not to Play Telephone Games. This article explores some of the challenges that arise from the application and use of developmental theory by non-experts in the field. Pointing to an error in a publication using developmental theory, Ross traces how this error has been passed along in telephone game style, leading to a wide range of ripple effects. She untangles the complex nuances involved in the
process of using formal theory in casual fashi ons, and calls for a response to help facilitate improved usage of developmental theory in the form of an Institute for Applied Developmental Theory.

These two peer reviewed pieces are followed by two interviews. The first is by Markus Molz, who engaged with Jennifer Gidley in *A Transversal Dialogue on Integral Education and Planetary Consciousness*. This fascinating conversation covers a brief summary of Gidley’s project of integrating the integrals, an overview of large macro-historical evolutionary patterns in education, the introduction of five—mostly new—terms to integral theory, then explores some of the wide range of approaches to “third wave,” postformal education across cultures. They conclude by transcending the conceptual distinctions used for their dialogue, illustrating the power of such dialogues to evolve consciousness.

The second is Russ Volckmann’s interview with Steve McIntosh, *An Approach to Integral Consciousness and Politics*. McIntosh’s new book, *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution* has been getting a lot of attention since its publication, and Volckmann’s interview draws out many interesting aspects of McIntosh’s thinking. Beyond exploring some of the usual topics of development and evolution, they also delve into faith, theology and spirituality in relation to the integral framework. There is also a robust exploration of critiques of Wilber’s work and the realm of integral politics.

An artistic interlude follows with Andrew Campbell’s *Central Fire*. Inspired by his reading of a draft of a submission to IR (that is yet to be published), Andrew invites us into the world of bold and expressive images that his art conveys with brief instructions to engage us in our own explorations of his art.

Andrew Campbell also contributes his art to Sara Ross’ *A Lesson to be Writ Large?* This amusing personal story shows how easy it can be for any of us to be taken in by the interpretations we give to our experiences. When perception becomes reality, how do we limit ourselves? Ross’ story closes with reflections on what transformations might be possible if we were able to apply the kinds of insights she gained through this humorous experience.

Another question is posed in Jan Inglis’ essay *How Then Do We Choose to Live? Facing the Climate Crisis and Seeking “the Meta Response.”* Here she examines how our culture is going through marked stages of reaction to climate change similar to how people react to life threatening illnesses. She advocates for using what is known from going through stages of development in crafting a meta response to the issue. Her essay poses a number of thoughtful questions that can aid individuals in their personal reflections as well as guide collective public reflections as we move ever deeper into facing the realities of a changing climate.

*Appreciatively Critical Reflections on a Retreat with Adyashanti* is a reflective essay by Grady McGonagill (with a foreword by Bill Torbert and art by Andrew Campbell). This piece takes us on a personal journey that engages multiple levels of reflection and learning about Grady’s experience at this retreat. With his action-research orientation, he articulates some of the paradoxes, challenges and perceived incongruities of those who take on guru roles in our society.
A similar theme arises in L.D. Gussin’s novel *The Seeker Academy*, which I review. Gussin uses the experiences and narrative of his main character to explore themes, issues and opportunities of the New Age movement. This review describes the basic story line and then the ways in which Gussin manages to deftly portray the intertwined nature of people’s motivations and ideologies for pursuing the kinds of beliefs that are prominent in the New Age movement. It closes with some reflections on why others have been unwilling to review the novel, which relate to the perspectives Gussin reveals.

Then we have a short review by Bonnitta Roy of *Consciousness-in-Action: Toward an Integral Psychology of Liberation and Transformation* by Raul Quiñones Rosado. Roy describes it as a useful and purposeful manual for people interested in social activism, and a wonderful *integrated* personal narrative that expands existing integral models into process versions.

Our final review for this issue comes from Sara Ross. *Integrative oncology: Principles and practice* edited by M. P. Mumber. Ross provides a thorough review and evaluation of this recent scientific text book, the first in the field of integrative oncology. Her chapter by chapter review essentially abstracts the entire text to provide a clear picture of the book’s contents. Ross applies IR’s evaluation criteria to the book, and offers a number of suggestions for areas in which the book or subsequent texts could further advance the stated aims of the field.

With this we close another issue of *Integral Review*. We hope that you will enjoy its contents as much as we have enjoyed working with the authors who created it.

Jonathan Reams  
Editor-in Chief  
*Integral Review*
Integral Time and the Varieties of Post-Mortem Survival

Sean M. Kelly

Abstract: While the question of survival of bodily death is usually approached by focusing on the mind/body relation (and often with the idea of the soul as a special kind of substance), this paper explores the issue in the context of our understanding of time. The argument of the paper is woven around the central intuition of time as an “ever-living present.” The development of this intuition allows for a more integral or “complex-holistic” theory of time, the soul, and the question of survival. Following the introductory matter, the first section proposes a re-interpretation of Nietzsche’s doctrine of eternal recurrence in terms of moments and lives as “eternally occurring.” The next section is a treatment of Julian Barbour’s neo-Machian model of instants of time as configurations in the n-dimensional phase-space he calls “Platonia.” While rejecting his claim to have done away with time, I do find his model suggestive of the idea of moments and lives as eternally occurring. The following section begins with Fechner’s visionary ideas of the nature of the soul and its survival of bodily death, with particular attention to the notion of holonic inclusion and the central analogy of the transition from perception to memory. I turn next to Whitehead’s equally holonic notions of prehension and the concrescence of actual occasions. From his epochal theory of time and certain ambiguities in his reflections on the “divine antinomies,” we are brought to the threshold of a potentially more integral or “complex-holistic” theory of time and survival, which is treated in the last section. This section draws from my earlier work on Hegel, Jung, and Edgar Morin, as well as from key insights of Jean Gebser, for an interpretation of Sri Aurobindo’s inspired but cryptic description of the “Supramental Time Vision.” This interpretation leads to an alternative understanding of reincarnation—and to the possibility of its reconciliation with the once-only view of life and its corresponding version of immortality—along with the idea of a holonic scale of selves leading from individual personality as we normally experience it, through a kind of angelic self (a reinterpreted “Jivatma”), and ultimately to the Godhead as the Absolute Self. Of greater moment than such a speculative ontology, however, is the integral or complex-holistic way of thinking and imagining that is called for by this kind of inquiry.

Keywords: Aurobindo, Barbour, complex holism, complexity, death, Fechner, Gebser, integral, Morin, Nietzsche, reincarnation, soul, survival, time, Whitehead

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1 I would like to thank Michael Murphy and Frank Poletti for inviting me to present these ideas, which have been incubating for a long time, at the Esalen conference on Survival. I am also grateful to Eric Weiss for the many hours, over many years now, of shared deep metaphysical inquiry, and also to Cynthia Morrow, Jorge Ferrer, Robert McDermott, Lisa da Silva-Ward, and to the editors and reviewers of Integral Review for their helpful feedback on earlier drafts of this paper.
Introduction

What is it that gives ultimate value to a life? What is it that makes anything in life, and the whole of a life, really matter? If all is impermanence (Heraclitus, Buddhism), if to be is to be finite—a “being-towards-death” (Heidegger)—with, as James puts it, “the great spectre of universal death, the all-encompassing blackness” (2002, p. 139) as the constant back-drop of every hour of life, what difference could it make how well we live our lives? What difference, in short, whether we live in love, wisdom, and beauty, or in their dark but presumably equally transitory counterparts? The natural human, which feels its kinship with the larger cycle of life, is perhaps content with the fact of biological continuity, with the sense of its insertion in an unbroken line of ancestors and descendants, and even with the genetic and biochemical solidarity shared by all forms of life. A more philosophically elevated view is represented by the idea of participation in the Heraclitian or Stoic Logos or the Chinese notion of the Tao. The person of culture, similarly, will find solace in the thought of participating in the history of ideas, will recognize spiritual ancestors in the realms of intellectual, ethical, or esthetic endeavor and will perhaps aspire to their own cultural progeny. The natural and cultural dimensions of the human experience, however, cannot of themselves circumvent the fact that this Earth and all of its life forms, as indeed our sun and the entire physical cosmos within which they are embedded, are finite beings, with beginnings in time, and bound to inevitable death.

Religious or spiritual traditions, of course, have always provided answers to the above questions, answers which are either ignored or denied by the perspectives of a strict naturalism or a restrictive humanism. There is a general consensus among these religious traditions, despite significant differences in other respects, concerning the belief that physical death does not spell the end of the personality or soul. Whether or not it is thought to have pre-existed the birth of the body, the personality or soul is more often than not pictured as surviving its death. It is with the particulars of survival, however, that the significant differences among traditional teachings become apparent. For the traditions of the Indian subcontinent, as for Buddhism, many indigenous traditions, and most religions of antiquity, the soul is believed to reincarnate. In this view, the value of any one life, and the value of any element of a given life, can only be determined through consideration of the series of lives to which the individual life belongs. What you do in this life for good or ill matters because your actions flow from choices made in previous lives and will determine, or at least set the parameters for, choices to be made in future lives. The series of lives is said to be bound together by the law of Karma or its analogue, which, whether or not one believes in a transmigrating soul, provides continuity both before and beyond an individual life, and therefore also gives a ground for its value and meaning.

While some ancient Christians may have believed in reincarnation, the vast majority have, for the better part of two millennia, believed that we are given only one life. Or at least, we are given only one life on Earth—I leave aside the belief in the resurrection of the body—which is to be followed by some form of Eternal Life. The quality of this second Life—in its most dramatic form, whether in Heaven or Hell—is in some way directly linked to the manner in which one lives the first, and only, earthly life. The value or meaning of this life, therefore, as of any

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2 I will not always repeat “soul or personality,” though I am aware of the problems associated with the term soul in connection with Buddhist traditions in particular.
significant action or experience within it, rests in the fact that it is of potentially eternal consequence. What happens now, though itself transitory, is an opening to the everlasting.

These two views of life and survival—the traditional reincarnationist and the once-only with its afterlife—appear to be highly incompatible, and I have yet to encounter any attempt to reconcile them. The bulk of the relevant literature is devoted to arguing the case for one or the other of the standard views (for a compelling philosophical argument in favor of reincarnation, see Aurobindo, 1991; for a Christian-based refutation of reincarnation, see Valea, 2007). Ervin Laszlo (2004) has expanded upon Rupert Sheldrake’s theory of morphic resonance (of which I will have more to say below), arguing against reincarnation but for the reality of past-life recall. Christopher Bache’s understanding of the soul as “higher form of individuality” that “integrates many lifetimes, many ‘persons’ into a meta-personal consciousness” (2006, p. 125), while not explicitly concerned with the kind of reconciliation I am envisioning, is friendly to my proposal. Peter Novak’s (1997, 2003) “division theory” claims to reconcile reincarnation with the Christian belief in Heaven and Hell, but not the traditionally opposed views of one life versus many (and in any case, his “reconciliation” comes at the cost of the postulation of two autonomous souls, only one of which reincarnates; as his theory suggests, the reconciliation is predicated on a “division”). It is of course possible that one, or both, are mistaken. In what follows, I suggest that both views are true in essential respects, but that to see them as such demands a more integral view of time than the one, or ones, normally associated with either view of survival. To articulate such an integral view is, to say the least, very challenging. “It is impossible,” as Whitehead (1920, p. 73) reminds us, “to meditate on time and the mystery of the passage of nature without an overwhelming emotion at the limitations of human intelligence.” I will, accordingly, proceed in what might appear as a somewhat indirect or circumambulatory manner, hoping that, by the time I come to the last section that deals explicitly with a more integral or complex view, what will begin as an indeterminate—though to me, at least, compelling—intuition will have taken on a more palpable and communicable form. While the intuition in question—namely, that of time as an eternally occurring—becomes grounded in my own experience and many years of contemplative inquiry, instead of jumping immediately to my suggestions for a possible reconciliation of both views of survival, I approach the problem by first considering some positions on the nature of time (Nietzsche, Barbour, Whitehead) and the afterlife (Fechner) which offer fruitful if partial approaches to the core intuition. The more explicitly integral and complex view that I explore in the final section draws from close readings of Aurobindo, Gebser, Jung, Morin, and to a lesser extent, Wilber, all of whom advocate and (at least attempt) to enact various forms of postformal thinking which not only recognize the limits of the principle of contradiction, but remain open to the promptings of intuition and the value of metaphor.

From Eternal Recurrence to the Eternally Occurring

Discussions of the possibility or nature of survival often focus on the question of whether a different (subter) kind of substance or body survives the decay of the physical body, or on the question of “where” the soul or personality goes after death. These are important considerations. What is generally not recognized, however, is that to think of survival in terms of place or extended substance, however subtle, is to appeal to only one of two complementary forms of intuition—the spatial—at the expense of the temporal. Without denying the truth or fruitfulness
of approaching the matter from the side of our spatial intuition, it seems to me that an integral view of survival would include a full consideration of the temporal intuition as well. From a philosophical, and specifically Kantian, point of view, the temporal intuition is germane to the internal sense or the experience of consciousness—and therefore to notions of soul and personality—whereas the spatial intuition is associated with the experience of an external world, and therefore also of matter or extended substance. So while the spatial intuition is certainly appropriate and even necessary in any talk of subtle “bodies,” the experience of self-consciousness, of personality or soul, can only be approached or described spatially from the outside, as it were. To approach the question of the soul and survival directly and from the inside, therefore, is to grapple with the mystery of time.

And so I begin with Nietzsche, whose theory of eternal recurrence he considered the central insight of his life’s work, and indeed of the age that he helped to inaugurate. Though his relationship to Christianity is complex, there is no doubt that Nietzsche rejected the traditional Christian view of personal immortality, which he saw as arising out of a hatred of, and revulsion from, life. The belief in any form of after-life was to him an expression of anti-life, a flight from nature and becoming to a lying fantasy of individual imperishability. Having absorbed the full impact of the modern project of disenchantment that began (however unintentionally) with Copernicus, Nietzsche was compelled to reject the possibility of any kind of transcendent “beyond.” What, then, could constitute the ground of value? What is capable of granting meaning and value to our individual endeavors and to life as a whole? His answer was: Life or the cosmos itself—beyond which is nothing—in the form of self-conscious and therefore liberated Will-to-Power.

Earlier in the century, Schopenhauer (1966) had articulated his vision of an infinite though blind and unconscious Will as the ontological ground of reality—a vision in keeping both with the darker side of the later Romantic movement and with a certain reading of Buddhism. The suffering caused by the impossibility of satisfying the Will’s boundless craving could only be countered, according to Schopenhauer, through a systematic negation of the Will in the form of a sublimation of the life-impulse (particularly, through esthetic contemplation). This vision was transformative for Nietzsche. He soon rejected Schopenhauer’s pessimism, however. And while he retained the centrality of the Will, he came to see the life-impulse—with which, for Schopenhauer, the Will was more or less identified—as itself a manifestation of the Will-to-

3 Kant’s understanding of the inner sense and its relation to time, though influential in the subsequent history of philosophy, is anything but crystal clear. The key statements from the Critique of Pure Reason are as follows: “By means of outer sense, a property of our mind, we represent to ourselves objects as outside us, and all without exception in space” (1929, p. 67). “Inner sense, by means of which the mind intuits itself or its inner state, yields indeed no intuition of the soul itself as an object; but there is nevertheless a determinate form [namely, time] in which alone the intuition of inner states is possible, and everything which belongs to inner determinations is therefore represented in relations of time. Time cannot be outwardly intuited, any more than space can be intuited as something in us” (p. 67). As I understand it, the basic idea seems to be that, experience as such—“the mind [which] intuits itself or its inner state”—necessarily involves the fact of succession (what James will later call the “stream of consciousness”), and so the form of time. There is also, to my mind, the mysterious role of the will which Schopenhauer (1966), in his revisioning of Kant, considered the true noumenon and which, as I suggest later in this paper, might play a crucial part in the manifestation of time.
Power, that is, the drive of every being to extend or magnify its proper domain or sphere of influence. According to Nietzsche, this drive is as manifest in the life-affirming worldview of classical paganism as in the life-denying spirit of late-antiquity and historical Christianity. Ignorance of the nature of life—and indeed, of all human striving, however idealistic or spiritual—as an expression of the Will-to-Power constitutes a form of bondage. The bondage is doubly oppressive in the case of the world-deniers, whose illusory “beyond” serves not only, as Marx would put it, as the opium of the people, but as a vampiristic drain on life’s nobler impulses and possibilities for authentic happiness.

By contrast, the liberated, because self-conscious, Will is portrayed as manifesting an unconditional blessing or affirmation of life, of what was, is, and shall be—an unqualified and joyfully uttered “Yes!” to the whole causal nexus, the entire sequence of moments within which the present is embedded. This blessing is a radically free act, which at the same time is yoked to an awareness of a universal and inexorable fatalism (a yoking which Nietzsche expresses with the phrase, *amor fati*, the love of fate). That this awareness does not lead to a sense of oppression or despair, but instead is, or can be, accompanied by a boundless joy, is the result of his insight into the nature of time as eternal recurrence, an insight which he nevertheless characterizes as “The greatest weight.”

What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: “This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!” Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: “You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine.” If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 273)

The more general idea of recurrence is of course ancient and wide-spread (see Cairns, 1962), beginning with what might be described as a naturalistic cyclism (e.g., most indigenous cultures, ancient Taoism) inspired by the repeating pattern of the seasons and the periodicity of the sun, moon, and stars. Next, and presupposing the latter, there is an ideal-formal cyclism (Plato, Aristotle, Shankara) which sees the natural or cosmic cycles as embodiments of subtler archetypal patterns. Then there is the stronger form of the belief in eternal recurrence, which involves not only seasonal patterns or ideal types, but every last detail of the cycle of becoming. This strong view of recurrence, which Nietzsche adopted, is in fact very close to that of the ancient Pythagoreans, Stoics, and Epicureans, and especially the latter two, since they too were materialists. Though I suspect there are unknown sources in Nietzsche’s own immediate

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4 According to Nemenius, the Stoics believed that “in stated periods of time a conflagration (*ekpyrosis*) and destruction of things will be accomplished, and once more there will be a restitution of the cosmos as it was in the very beginning. And when the stars move in the same way as before, each thing which occurred in the previous period will without variation be brought to pass again. For again there will exist
experience, a feeling for which we can glean from the passage above, he also articulated a version of the Epicurean argument based on the assumption of a finite set of possible material or formal combinations in a temporally infinite universe.

If the world may be thought of as a certain definite quantity of force and as a certain definite number of centers of force--and every other representation remains indefinite and therefore useless--it follows that, in the great dice game of existence, it must pass through a calculable number of combinations. In infinite time, every possible combination would at some time or another be realized; more: it would be realized an infinite number of times. And since between every combination and its next recurrence all other possible combinations would have to take place, and each of these combinations conditions the entire sequence of combinations in the same series, a circular movement of absolutely identical series is thus demonstrated: the world as a circular movement that has already repeated itself infinitely often and plays its game ad infinitum. (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 549)

No one, of course, is swayed by such an argument who is not already predisposed to the worldview it is meant to prove. I, for one, do not find it convincing, though I do find it sometimes compelling and can appreciate the elegance of its logical structure. And while my rejection of eternal recurrence, at least as formulated by Nietzsche, is doubtless grounded in infra-rational, and perhaps also supra-rational, promptings, I also object to the doctrine on logical and phenomenological grounds. Phenomenologically, if each life, each moment, and ultimately the entire history of the cosmos, is one instance of an infinite series of (factually or ontologically) identical instances, then the experience of each instance would also be identical. There would be no way, empirically speaking, of telling one apart from any other in the series. Logically, according to Leibniz’s Law or the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, we are driven to the conclusion that, in fact, there can only be one of each given instance, whether a moment, a life, or the history of the cosmos as a whole. Still, there is something behind Nietzsche’s insight, something in the quality of the experience as the demon whispers in his ear with the moonlight between the trees, that resists the application of Leibniz’s Law. It is the sense that, though he could not believe in a redeeming afterlife, nothing of value in this life is ever lost—for, as Nietzsche’s (1969, p. 333) Zarathustra proclaims, “all joy wants eternity —/ Wants deep, wants deep eternity.” The moment, however, must not only be simply preserved in the manner of a dried flower or even a particularly vivid memory, but must somehow sur-vive, blessed as it flies, in Eternity’s sunrise.5

The best illustration I can think of at this point to express what I am trying to get at comes from a dream I used to have periodically. I would discover a secret room in my family’s house, filled with all kinds of objects from my childhood. Among these was a stack of the most amazing kind of photographs. Seen from the corner of the eye, as it were, nothing seemed out of the ordinary, but as soon as I focused my attention on one, the scene would come to life. I remember Socrates and Plato and every man, with the same friends and fellow citizens, and he will suffer the same fate and will meet with the same experiences and undertake the same deeds...And there will be a complete restoration of the whole, not only once but many times, or rather interminably, and the same things will be restored without end.” (Nemenius, as quoted in Cairns, 1962, pp, 220-221)5

Blake’s lines in “Eternity” run: “He who binds himself to a joy/Does the winged life destroy:/But he who kisses the joy as it flies/Lives in eternity’s sunrise” (1988, p. 56).
one in particular, where I am splashing happily in the shallow, sun-sparkled water at the lake where we used to spend our summer vacation. It is perhaps a five to ten second scene, almost like a video clip. As long as you attend to it, it is “playing.” Not in the manner of a loop tape, however—and here the analogy breaks down—since nothing in the scene is repeated. Not the eternal recurrence of the same, in other words, but the scene as somehow eternally occurring.

**Journey to Platonia**

Despite Nietzsche’s prominent role in initiating the post-modern turn, his cosmology retains a more or less Newtonian view of space and time, in the sense that they are conceived of distinctly as infinite container and continuous forward flow, respectively (the circular character of the eternal return involves the patterns or configurations of matter rather than the temporal flow itself). All of this changes with the new physics. The dominant tendency, with respect to time, has been to consider it in some fundamental sense an illusion, “even if a stubborn one,” as Einstein said (referring to the distinction between past, present, and future). “Since Einstein,” Paul Davies notes, “physicists have generally rejected the notion that events ‘happen,’ as opposed to merely *exist* in the four-dimensional spacetime continuum” (1995, p. 253). The germs of this tendency are actually already hidden in Newton, Descartes, and Galileo with the formal geometrification of nature and has its roots in the Parmenidian/Pythagorean/Platonic stream of the Western philosophical tradition and its preoccupation with the geometrical and mathematical ideals of stasis and symmetry.

Julian Barbour has recently produced a fascinating and substantial argument for the dominant post-Einsteinian view—or perhaps, more accurately, for an original direction that is consistent with this view—in his book, *The End of Time: The Next Revolution in Physics*. At the core of the argument is an extension of Machian mechanics, which is to say, a vision which does away with space and time as the “ultimate arena” of matter and instead conceives of motion and inertia purely in terms of differences between relative configurations of the totality of objects which constitute the universe. To get at the essence of this vision, Barbour asks:

> What is the reality of the universe? It is that in any instant the objects in it have some relative arrangement. If just three objects exist, they form a triangle. In one instant the universe forms one triangle, in a different instant another. What is to be gained by supposing that either triangle is placed in invisible space? The proper way to think about motion is that the universe as a whole moves from one “place” to another “place,” where “place” means a relative arrangement, or configuration, of the complete universe. (Barbour, 1999, p. 69)

Much of the book is devoted to demonstrating the compatibility of Relativity and Quantum Mechanics with Mach’s vision. I will not attempt to rehearse the main steps of the argument, which are not only challenging in their details but include original interpretations of many standard and some highly speculative episodes in the history of physics (from Newton’s bucket experiment around the principle of inertia to the stationary Schrödinger and Wheeler-De-Witt equations).
Barbour’s main contribution to the Machian project is the formulation of his concept of “Platonia,” which is conceived of as an n-dimensional phase-space, “each point of which corresponds to one relative configuration of all the particles in the Newtonian arena” (Barbour, 1999, p. 273). The invocation of Plato indicates that the phase-space, or configuration space, as Barbour prefers to call it, is to be conceived ontologically on the analogy of the realm of eternal and unchanging Forms or Ideas. Platonia is “the collection of all possible Nows” (p. 177), the totality of instants of what we call time. Despite the use of “Now” and “instants,” however, Barbour maintains that time as such does not exist. “[I]ntant of time,” he writes, “simply means configuration of the universe” (p. 266).

Barbour’s is perhaps the most sophisticated defense of the “block universe” theory of time, where “[e]verything—past, present, and future—is there at once” (p. 143). To do full justice to his argument, I would have to say something about his ingenious theory of “records” or “time capsules,” by which he accounts for our experience of the past and of apparent histories, but I must leave this to interested readers to pursue on their own. For my part, while I am very sympathetic not only to much of the reasoning presented, but also to what I take to be the experiential and motivational backdrop to the theory—which I will turn to in a moment—I think at the very least that Barbour has overstated the case, if he is not simply wrong, in asserting the “end” or non-existence of time. It is one thing to demonstrate the formal possibility of an essentially geometric (and therefore already spatialized) model of both motion and the phenomenon of histories in a way that reduces the experience and reality of time to points in configuration space (however high or complex the dimensionality). But to say that, in his model, time is simply “reduced to change” (p. 70, my emphasis), merely begs the question of time. The experience or phenomenon of passage between instants indeed involves the concept of change (as do lived histories), but change itself presupposes the reality of time. Even if one wants to avoid the notion of motion, change in configuration is impossible without some form of dynamic principle that selects the new instants, frames the group, or traces the path or trajectory through Platonia. There is choice or agency involved, in other words, which effects the transition between configurations.

What is this dynamic principle behind change, motion, passage, transition, and therefore time? It is, I would maintain, the Will, or something closely analogous to what we experience and call by that name. I am not thereby necessarily endorsing Nietzsche’s version of the Will-to-Power, but perhaps we can speak of a Will-to-Time that blows across the topography of Platonia. While the block universe—insofar as it draws from platonic idealism—can be considered antithetical to Nietzsche’s positive valuation of life and becoming, Barbour at least seems to share key elements of Nietzsche’s outlook. “I also feel strongly,” he writes, “that this created world is something to be marveled at and cherished, not dismissed as some second-best version of what is yet to come” (p. 327). Barbour’s Platonia is after all a physics of this world, the whole point of which is not to lift us into a contemplation of immaterial forms, but to help us see how the fleeting world of appearance, which for the traditional Platonist is insubstantial and in a sense

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6 Surprisingly (if I am not myself mistaken), Barbour misreads, and inverts, the famous analogy of the cave, placing the Idea-sensitive mathematician in the cave contemplating the projected images on the cave wall instead of in the clear light of day above-ground.
unreal, is in fact eternally abiding. Though, in my opinion, unable to account for the experience of time as lived, Barbour does offer an approach to the same kind of insight that we have seen lies at the heart of Nietzsche’s vision—namely, that the now which passes in some sense lives on, as does the now which, from any given perspective, has yet to be. Instead of the (complexified) block universe of Platonia, we are brought once again to the idea of the world as eternally occurring.

Holonic Survival

“The desire for an afterlife,” Barbour writes in his concluding pages, “is very understandable, but we may be looking for it in the wrong place” (p. 331). Perhaps—or at least we may need to look with different eyes, ones that are sensitive to the subtle hues and fine shades of the afterlife. So far, my readings of Nietzsche and Barbour have yielded the possibility of the survival of a life—and each of its constitutive moments or instants—that does not necessarily involve the common idea of the persistence of the soul or personality beyond the death of the body. In this section I will turn to the more common idea, drawing on the insights of Fechner and Whitehead—two great souls whose theories have much to offer towards what might be called an organic or holonic theory of survival.

Though rightfully recognized as one of the founders of experimental psychology, Fechner (1906, 1946) was also one of the great philosophers of nature (Naturphilosophen) in the tradition of Schelling and Oken. What is also generally ignored in the textbooks is the degree to which Fechner’s life-work centered on the transpersonal nature of the soul and its likely post-mortem fate. According to Fechner, everything that lives has a within, an inner radiance of consciousness or soul. The soul, or psyche, is in fact nature seen from within, just as nature is soul seen from without. This is the fundamental insight behind Fechner’s theory of psychophysical parallelism. On the analogy of the human being, whose consciousness or soul is associated with a body manifesting a certain level of organizational complexity, Fechner reasons that the living Earth, which is equally if not more complexly organized than the human body, must also possess its corresponding consciousness or soul—the anima mundi of the ancients and the philosophers of nature. Blindness to the anima mundi is result of what Blake called “single vision and Newton’s sleep,” or of the dominance of what Fechner referred to as the “night-time view” of the world.

7 We see here the effect of the intervening two millennia of western cultural history and the evolution of consciousness, and especially the last five hundred years. The central symbol of the Incarnation which guided the western religious imagination, followed by the modern process of secularization (itself in many ways an organic expression of the symbolic world it was to negate), both involved a radical revaluation of the cosmos (and especially this “sublunar” realm of becoming) in a direction in many ways antithetical to the otherworldly orientation of Platonism, which, in other respects, has come to dominate the spirit of modern physics.

8 In his Zend-Avesta, Fechner (1906) reasons to the World Soul as follows: “Examining the various points of resemblance as well as of difference between man and earth, we discover on the one hand an agreement between them in every point which in any theory of the relation between body and soul has been established as characteristic of a spiritual individuality connected with a material organism, whereas their undeniable differences make it evident that the earth is an individuality of higher and more independent life than man’s lower and more restrained life” (p. 16).
A master of what was known by the Romantics and idealists as “intellectual intuition” or what, more recently, David Bohm has called “intuitive reason” (Bohm & Kelly, 1990; Bohm & Peat, 1987), Fechner explores a series of finely drawn analogies, moving from the bottom up, from the microcosm to the macrocosm, which facilitate a deepening apprehension of the within of things, from the souls of plants to the anima mundi and the Divine Mind, or rather Personality, whose body is the cosmos itself. In so doing, he initiates us into the “daylight view,” which is to say a way of “seeing” the inherent luminosity or self-radiance of being which we are, and which surrounds and permeates us. This world soul, at least as far as our earthly life is concerned, constitutes at once the psychic ecosystem of all living souls, and also in some sense a relatively autonomous personality in its own right, with its own memory and biography, its subpersonalities or complexes. At the same time, the world soul is itself a distinct member of the community of souls which together constitute the soul of the cosmos or the mind of God.9

Fechner believed that, after the death of the body, the soul awakens to its participation in the life of the world soul. His central analogy for the passage from life to afterlife is the transition from perception to memory or reminiscence. My favorite method of witnessing the peculiar character of this transition involves ringing a bell or bowl, with a single stroke, and tracking the experience of the sounding tone or tones until the very moment one is conscious of not hearing any more of the original sound. Immediately—and by this I mean, without a discernible interval—there is the memory of the sound. I find this lack of distinct border between the two experiences or occasions fascinating to experience, particularly in the context of a sustained meditation on the nature of time and its relation to experience or consciousness, to the continuity of personal identity, and of course the question of survival. In this context, pursuing the analogy, Fechner writes:

When then my eyes are closed in death, and my sensible life of perception is extinct, may there not awake instead of it a life of memory in the higher Spirit? And if through me during my life of sense-perception that Spirit saw clearly and vividly...what is there and in precisely the way it presents itself, will not now the memory of everything that was comprised in the duration of the moment of perception...begin independently to live and stir, and to get into relationship and communication with the circle of memories which the greater Spirit has gained by the death of other men? But just as truly as my life of sense-perception was that of a being sensible of independence and of separateness within that Spirit, just so truly must this be the case with my life of memory...[and therefore with personal consciousness in the afterlife]. (Fechner, 1946, p. 256)

As Fechner sees it, therefore, the individual soul survives the death of the body in the form of a continuing experience of personal identity which, without losing its specific individuality, nevertheless finds itself in a more “clear and conscious” (Fechner, 1906, p.18) relation to the “divine spirit” of the cosmos. Similarly, and again on the analogy of the relative gain in imaginative freedom in the passage from perception to memory or recollection, the “means of our mutual intercourse” as awakened soul-beings increase “in intimacy, variety and consciousness” (Fechner, 1946, p. 20).

9 Fechner imagines that, intermediary between the world souls and the mind of God, are the souls of the various solar systems. Presumably, had he the benefit of our telescopes, he would have added the galaxies to the scale of cosmic beings.
Though some theologians might question his inclusion of the individual soul within the world soul, Fechner’s vision of survival—and I have presented only a kind of line drawing as compared to the richly painted canvas of his many texts dealing with the matter—is consistent with the traditional Christian view of both the uniqueness (“once only”) of the terrestrial life and of the persistence and immortality of personal identity. This vision of survival relies heavily on a fine use of the spatial intuition, in the first place with the theory of psychophysical parallelism, where the psyche is characterized as the “within” and the physical as the “without;” and secondly with the idea of organic or holonic inclusion (the notion of systems within systems, as with the relation of cells < tissues < organs < bodies < ecosystems), made parallel to the temporal relation of this life to the after-life by means, as we have seen, of the central analogy of the transition from perception to memory. The time factor enters the picture here with the experience of transition, as also in Fechner’s characterization of death as a second birth (that is to say, as a passage to a new and higher life).

Anyone familiar with Whitehead’s philosophy of organism will have no trouble in seeing its profound affinity with Fechner’s vision. In contrast with the latter, however, which relies so heavily on the spatial intuition, Whitehead focuses on the nature and, as he sees it, the pervasive reality, of process. Correlatively, while Fechner’s cosmos—despite its thoroughgoing organicism in other respects—is still more or less Newtonian in its view of time (which, independently of matter, “flows equably without relation to anything external” [Newton, 1846, p. 77]), Whitehead’s view of both space and time are fully consistent with the cosmology of the new physics. These contrasts have profound, if decidedly complex and by no means unambiguous, implications for our understanding of survival.

If I could only present a poor sketch of Fechner’s vision, my rendering of Whitehead’s insights, couched as they are in such challenging language and dealing with the most abstruse of scientific and philosophical preoccupations, must be considered as a kind of hurried silhouette, though hopefully one that captures the likeness. “One all-pervasive fact,” writes Whitehead, “inherent in the very character of what is real is the transition of things, the passage one to another” (1969, p. 93). This fact is highlighted by the idea of nature or reality as process (hence the reference to Whitehead’s system as “process philosophy”), and is consistent with the dominance, beginning with and continuing throughout the modern period, of the experience of change, whether in the form of social or political revolutions, the ideology of progress, the theory of evolution, or scientific and technological advance. In keeping with this experience, Whitehead characterizes the nature of reality as consisting not of things, stuff, or abiding substance, but rather of “actual occasions” or “events.” From the point of view of more recent science, matter, he notes, “has been identified with energy, and energy is sheer activity; the passive substratum composed of self-identical enduring bits of matter has been abandoned, so far as concerns any fundamental description” (Whitehead, as quoted in Datta, 1961, p. 429). In a direct challenge to the Cartesian dualism, actual occasions are said to emerge through and as a process of “prehension” and “feeling,” which not only grants an irreducible subjectivity or interiority to the world’s constitutive elements, but points as well to the essential fact of relationship in the definition of these elements. Equally challenged is the Newtonian view of “simple location,”

10 “To say that a bit of matter has simple location,” writes Whitehead (1969, p. 58), “means that, in expressing its spatio-temporal relations, it is adequate to state that it is where it is, in a definite finite
since the pervasiveness of process prohibits the setting of fixed boundaries between occasions or events. This fact is only amplified, of course, when Relativity and quantum non-locality are brought into the picture. “In a certain sense,” Whitehead therefore feels free to say, “everything is everywhere at all times. For every location involves an aspect of itself in every other location. Thus every spatio-temporal standpoint mirrors the world” (p. 91). Here we have a particularly vivid expression of the organic or holonic (or holographic) quality of Whitehead’s vision—which explains why, along with “process philosophy,” it is referred to as the philosophy of organism.

The organic or holonic quality expressed in the above quotation appeals primarily to the spatial intuition (with the words “everywhere,” “location,” and “standpoint”), despite the reference to “times” at the beginning and to “spatio-temporal” at the end. The same quality, however, is evident through a more direct—though, as we shall see, somewhat paradoxical—appeal to the temporal intuition with Whitehead’s notion of the “satisfaction” of an actual occasion and its passage into the state of “objective immortality.” “The final phase in ... constituting an actual entity,” writes Whitehead,” is one complex, fully determinate feeling. This final phase is termed the ‘satisfaction’” (Whitehead, 1978, p. 48). The entity or occasion “terminates its becoming in one complex feeling involving a completely determinate bond with every item in the universe, the bond being either a positive or a negative prehension” (p.44, my emphasis).

What is described here from the point of view of the actual occasion as a culminating “complex feeling” can also be understood as “the attainment [which] halts its process, so that by transcendence it passes into its objective immortality as a new objective condition added to the riches of definiteness attainable, the ‘real potentiality’ of the universe” (Whitehead, 1978, p. 223).

I am reminded here of Fechner’s analogy of the transition from perception to memory, though of course Fechner has in mind the immortality of the soul or personality (and not an elementary occasion), and envisions a subjective rather than an “objective” immortality.

I said above that Whitehead’s appeal to the temporal intuition is paradoxical because the concepts of an actual occasion’s “satisfaction” and “objective immortality” involve the “termination of becoming” and the “halting of process.” The difficulty here has to do with the fact that any talk of “termination” or “halting” presupposes a backdrop of time—or, which comes to the same thing, a perception of continuous motion as measured against a stationary and extended background. Although Sherburne, who speaks authoritatively for Whitehead, speaks of a “succession of phases” in the “genetic process” or “concrescence” of an actual occasion, he claims that concrescence itself “is not in time; rather, time is in concrescence in the sense of being an abstraction from actual entities” (Sherburne, 1966, p. 36). I cannot claim to resolve these seeming paradoxes, and in this respect I am no further along than Augustine, who was the region of space, and through a definite finite duration of time, apart from any essential reference of the relations of that bit of matter to other regions of space and to other durations of time.”

11 Concrescence “is the name given to the process that is any given actual entity; it is ‘the real internal constitution of a particular existent’…. Concrescence is the growing together of a many into the unity of a one” (Sherburne, 1966, p. 212).
first to point them out. Though perhaps irresolvable, however, they are nevertheless potentially
generative of a higher or more complex kind of insight, the nature of which we shall consider in
more detail in the next section.

The idea that time is “in” actual occasions rather than the reverse is an expression of the
“epochal” theory of time. In this theory, time is said to be structured or generated by the
configurations of actual occasions as “drops of experience,” which, though themselves the
“atoms” of time, also have “duration.” These temporal occasions can be arbitrarily divided
according to various abstract metrics, though not without destroying the concrete depth and
texture of the occasion’s duration (and hence its subjective immediacy or experiential integrity).
One can imagine such occasions as subsumed in more complex temporal occasions (or
“events”)—for instance, this moment as I hold the thought while typing this sentence is integral
to the period I spend at the computer working on this particular section of the paper. Since this
period, however, though distinguishable as a kind of gestalt from what came before it and what is
to follow, is nevertheless continuous with the same, the division into higher-order temporal
occasions is somewhat arbitrary. As I see it, perhaps the only natural boundary one encounters
in the scale of temporal occasions, apart from the proposed atomistic “drops,” is a completed
life. The point I want to make, however, is that the drops of experience, as atoms of time, are not,
as we have seen, themselves “in” time. Their duration is qualitative and not subject to the same
kind of metrical mapping (by coordinate grids) as is possible in the comparison between
occasions. By the same token, a complete(d) life, as a complex or higher-order temporal
occasion, is also not “in” time, which doesn’t mean that, from the perspective of the life as in-
complete, time does not flow. What this does mean is that, appearances to the contrary, there is a
sense in which, or a (meta-) perspective from which, a life is both complete and fully present
(not merely passed or yet to be), along with all of its constitutive moments or “drops” of
experience.

Such a meta-perspective, of course, can only be that of God (by any other name). That
Whitehead’s position suggests what Hartshorne (1951, p. 543) describes as “the unfading
everlastingness of all occasions in God” is supported by Whitehead’s claim that “[e]ach actuality
in the temporal world has its reception into God’s nature. The corresponding element in God’s
nature is not temporal actuality, but is the transmutation of that temporal actuality into a living,
ever-present fact (Whitehead, 1978, p. 350).” Questions remain, however. There is no consensus
among process theologians as to whether or not this immortality or “everlastingness” involves
the persistence, in the form of the continuing experience, of personal identity—which is normally

12 See Augustine’s unparalleled (in insight and beauty) treatment of time in Book XI of the Confessions
(1979) where, along with the idea of that the past and the future (as memory and anticipation) exist only
as inflections of the present, he treats of the paradox of time as, on the one hand, the present or the now
which is discrete and not extended (spatium), and on the other, the association of time with measurement
(longer and shorter, before and after) which implies continuity and extension.
13 This is the idea of the “specious present,” most notably associated with James, which argues against the
identification of the experienced present with the non-extended or one-dimensional “instant.” James’s
understanding of the matter was influential in Bergson’s idea of “duration” and Whitehead’s idea of
actual entities as “drops of experience” and “atoms of time.” On the specious present, see Robert de
Poidevin’s article in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, @ http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/time-
experience/ (3/6/04).
understood by the term “soul”—or merely the essence, everything “that can be saved” (Whitehead, 1978, p. 346), of the world’s becoming or “fluency,” as Whitehead calls it.\(^{14}\) An intermediary position, the gist of which we have already seen with my reading of Nietzsche’s eternal return and with Barbour’s notion of Platonia, would be that what to us are past occasions—including, for instance, your subjective experience of waking up this morning or of greeting your neighbor in the street, with all of its phenomenological particularities—remain as vivid and livingly present, or eternally occurring, actualities for God. According to Bergson, we ourselves could, in principle, experience what this might be like. As Richard Field points out in his paper on “William James and the Epochal Theory of Time:”

> It is not … inconceivable, according to Bergson, for the whole of a person’s past to be thrust into the immediate awareness of the present…. for Bergson attention is directed by interest. Remove practical interest, and it becomes quite possible that our normal distinction between the past and present would cease to be a psychic fact. If such an eventuality actually took place, experience "would . . . include in an undivided present the entire past history of the conscious person, not as instantaneity, not like a cluster of simultaneous parts, but as something continually present which would also be something continually moving.” (Field, 1983, pp. 260-274)\(^{15}\)

Also at issue is the question of the future, and more generally, of the ultimate significance of time from the point of view of God or the Divine. According to Kraus in her Metaphysics of Experience, A Companion to Whitehead’s Process and Reality, not only is it the case that, “from the divine vantage point, the endless fruitions of the creativity are simultaneously co-present in the immediacies of their self-creative activities,” but the divine concrescence is always already in some sense “complete insofar as past and future are not relevant terms….” Again: “From the divine perspective, time becomes space in the sense that all ‘times’ are co-present in divine feelings…. At the same time, however, Kraus also recognizes that “God’s physical feeling” is “incomplete, in that the future from any perspective is not yet actual and is perpetually actualizing itself” (Kraus, as cited in Edwards, 1981, pp. 30-34). Edwards, for one, strenuously objects to what he describes as Kraus’s Boethian and Thomistic reading of Whitehead. “The view that the future is incomplete and indeterminate only from our finite perspective,” he writes, “whereas it is complete and determinate from the divine perspective is just the view which

\(^{14}\) Whitehead seems to have left the matter open, through lack of both compelling evidence, on the one hand, and of a sufficiently coherent theory, on the other. In Religion in the Making he notes: “Also at present it is generally held that a purely spiritual being is necessarily immortal. The doctrine here developed gives no warrant for such a belief. It is entirely neutral on the question of immortality, or on the existence of purely spiritual beings other than God. There is no reason why such a question should not be decided on more special evidence, religious or otherwise, provided that it is trustworthy. In this lecture we are merely considering evidence with a certain breadth of extension throughout mankind. Until that evidence has yielded its systematic theory, special evidence is indefinitely weakened in its effect.” Retrieved February 29, 2004 from http://website.lineone.net/~newthought/ritm1.htm

\(^{15}\) Two realms of contemporary research provide analogues to Bergson’s imagined scenario: the experience of the “life-review” in Near-Death-Experiences (NDEs), and a certain class of non-ordinary experience (potentially present, for instance, in psychedelic work or other, non-drug, engagements of the deep psyche or “mind-at-large”) which could be characterized as transpersonal, in that it involves the transcendence of the temporal constraints that help to define the personal ego in its ordinary state of consciousness (see Grof, 1988).
process theology rejects rather than affirms, though there may be more than one way of developing an alternative metaphysic available to process thinkers” (Edwards, 1981, pp. 30-34).

I would like to consider such a metaphysical alternative in the following section. To conclude this one, however, I will simply say that my own metaphysical musings have led me to side more with Kraus than with Edwards as far as the above seeming paradox is concerned. For, as Whitehead puts it: “All the opposites are elements in the nature of things, and are incorrigibly there. The concept of ‘God’ is the way in which we understand this incredible fact—that what cannot be, yet is” (Whitehead, 1978, p. 350).

**An Integral or Complex-Holistic View**

The metaphysical alternative that I will focus on in this last section is based largely on the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Hegel, though I will draw as well from the work of Jean Gebser and Edgar Morin when I turn to more specifically epistemological considerations. So far, with the possible exception of Fechner, the theoretical schemes we have entertained have brought us to the threshold, without fully crossing over, of what I would consider an integral view of survival—a view, that is, which is capable of accommodating, through the consistent application of a single generative principle, apparently mutually exclusive views (including in particular the mainstream Christian, or “once-only” view, and the idea of reincarnation). The articulation of such a view, I have suggested, must involve a correspondingly integral view of time. Aurobindo and Gebser, as we shall see, each have very suggestive things to say in this respect. As for a potential candidate for the generative principle that might exemplify the meaning of “integral,” I have proposed in other contexts the principle of “complex holism,” which I derived primarily from a sustained dialogue between Hegel and Jung (see Kelly, 1993) but which has since been significantly inflected by Edgar Morin’s work on the principles of complexity (see Morin, 1977, 1980, 1981, 1982). The principle itself involves the recognition that:

such terms as nature and spirit, the finite and the infinite, the universal and the particular, the individual and the collectivity, are dialectically related or mutually implicative. Any position which maintains the absolute priority of either term is necessarily abstract and, therefore, ultimately false. The only concepts not subject to the same constraints are those of the Whole or the Absolute which, though normally contrasted with the notions of the parts and the relative, include these, their apparent opposites, in their very concepts. That the holism advocated… is complex points to this necessary inclusion of particularity, differentiation, and relativity within the whole under consideration. The complexity in question also involves… the elements of dynamism and process. “The True,” as Hegel says, “is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development.” (Kelly, 1993, p. 2)

The friendliness of this principle to Whitehead’s overall approach (and specifically with respect to his central insight into the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness”) should be obvious. To my knowledge, Aurobindo’s understanding of “integral non-dualism” represents the richest, most creative, and far-reaching application of the principle of complex holism. One advantage of my terminology is that it is not necessarily associated with any particular metaphysical position.
Secondly, it allows for a more easily established rapport with contemporary scientific and philosophical developments. Still, it will sometimes be sufficient, or more precise, to use “integral” or “complex” instead of the more awkward “complex holistic.”

Along with his commitment to a metaphysical Absolute—which, aligning himself with the Vedic tradition, he calls Brahman and describes as Sat-Chit-Ananda, or infinite Being-Consciousness-Bliss—Aurobindo argues forcefully against the once-only view of life and in favor or the doctrine of reincarnation. At the same time, however, his eloquent plea (Aurobindo, 1951, p. 295) for a “logic of the Infinite” which rejects the “closed system” and “rigid definition” and instead looks for the “complete and many-sided statement” ought, in my opinion, to allow for the peaceful coexistence of both views. The possibility, and even the necessity, for such coexistence becomes even more apparent if one places the question of survival in the context of Aurobindo’s statements about what we might call integral time. In the Life Divine, Aurobindo speaks of three “states of consciousness with regard to its own eternity” that the “Being” can assume (p. 327). The first he describes as the “timeless eternity” of the “Self in its essential existence,” a state “without development of consciousness in movement or happening.” The second is the “stable status or simultaneous integrality of Time,” where “what we call past, present and future stand together as if in a map or settled design or very much as an artist or painter or architect might hold all the detail of his work viewed as a whole.” The third is the “Time movement,” that is, a “progressive movement” and “successive working out of what has been seen...in the static vision of the Eternal” (pp. 327-328). While he speaks of three states, or a “triple status,” he also refers to the first and third together as the “two powers of the self-awareness of the infinite and eternal Reality,” or to “the same Eternity viewed by a dual self-awareness” (p. 329). This leads me to suggest that a more coherent sequence would put the third “state” (the “Time movement”) second, and that the “simultaneous integrality of Time,” as the new third, would correspond to the “simultaneous integrality of Time” proper to the self-awareness of Brahman as the truly “infinite and eternal Reality.” My suggestion is borne out by the concluding paragraph of the section of the Life Divine from which I have been quoting where he writes that the “coexistence” or “simultaneity” of these two moments or “powers”—“a power of status and non-manifestation [the first moment], a power of self-effecting action and movement and manifestation [my second moment]:

however contradictory and difficult to reconcile it might seem to our finite surface seeing, would be intrinsic and normal to the Maya or eternal self-knowledge and all-knowledge of Brahman, the eternal and infinite knowledge and wisdom-power of the Ishwara, the consciousness-force of the self-existent Sachchidanada. (Aurobindo, 1951, p. 329)

There is a fascinating parallel here with a brief and undeveloped passage in the closing section of Process and Reality on “God and the World” where Whitehead refers to the “threefold

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16 Aurobindo’s main argument can be summarized as follows: The universe is engaged in the evolution of consciousness. This evolution depends upon the emergence of ever more realized individuals who carry the process forward. If the spiritual gains of individual lives were lost at death, evolution could not proceed. Therefore, “the rebirth of the soul in the body becomes a natural and unavoidable consequence of the truth of the Becoming and its inherent law. Rebirth is an indispensable machinery for the working out of a spiritual evolution; it is the only possible effective condition, the obvious dynamic process of such a manifestation in the material universe.” (Aurobindo, 1951, p. 672)
creative act” of the universe. The first moment of this act is “the one infinite conceptual realization,” by which I understand the infinite potential of the “primordial nature” of God. This corresponds quite nicely to Aurobindo’s first moment of “timeless eternity.” Whitehead’s second moment is “the multiple solidarity of free physical realizations in the temporal world”—a clear match with Aurobindo’s “Time movement.” The third is “the ultimate unity of the multiplicity of actual fact with the primordial conceptual fact” (Whitehead, 1978, p. 346), which again is a very good match with my suggestion for Aurobindo’s third moment, the “simultaneous integrality of Time” (the earlier qualifier—“stable status” is perhaps less compatible with Whitehead’s insistence on divine process, though this is a matter of interpretation).

Now, anyone familiar with the history of philosophy will immediately see, if not the influence, then certainly the shadow of Hegel on both of these threefold formulations of the nature of time and its relation to the Absolute or to “God and the World.” As to the question of influence, Whitehead claims not to have been able to read Hegel, which is ironic, given the same claim so often made by those who try to approach Whitehead. While the “logic of the Infinite” which pervades all of Aurobindo’s work is clearly Hegelian in spirit, there are no references to Hegel (other than to him being a “great philosopher”) in his voluminous works. Both Aurobindo and Whitehead, of course, were educated in England during the ascendancy of the British neo-Hegelians and so would have absorbed much of Hegel’s spirit without necessarily even being conscious of the fact. Influence or no, however, it remains the case that Aurobindo’s integral non-dualism and Whitehead’s philosophy of process or organism are both profoundly resonant with key features of Hegel’s speculative vision. Along with the dominant stress on holism, there is, as the above correspondences clearly indicate, the idea of a threefold dialectical structure or organizational pattern with respect to time and its relation to the divine and/or the cosmos. In place of the hackneyed, though still in some ways helpful, sequence of thesis, antithesis, synthesis, it is more revealing to contemplate such categorial triads as identity, difference, and the identity of identity and difference; universal, particular, and individual; essence, appearance, and actuality. All of these triads map onto Aurobindo’s (in my reconfiguration) and Whitehead’s threefold distinctions in a way that clarifies their shared deeper meaning. From a Jungian point of view, these triads are all expressions of the dialectical relations between the archetypal sphere of the collective unconscious (first moment) and that of the conscious ego (second moment), relations which constitute the nature of the Self as complex whole (third moment) (see Kelly, 1993, especially Chapter One: Logical Categories and Archetypes).

Putting aside the question of influence, Aurobindo claims that his logic of the Infinite is an expression of the deeper truth of the Vedas and their philosophical elaboration in the tradition of Advaita Vedanta. In contrast with the classical Advaita (“non-dualism”) of Shankara, however, Aurobindo’s is qualified by the term “integral” (pūrṇa) so as to avoid not only the typical advaitan “negation” of the world (and therefore of time) as illusion, but also that of the modern West which has tended in the direction of the denial of transcendence and the reality of Spirit. Whitehead gives no explicit pedigree for his notion of God as the harmony of “antitheses” or “ideal opposites” (including, at their head, that of permanence and flux, and then one and many, transcendent and immanent, potential and actual). He does, however, use Christian allusions, most notably the phrase “Kingdom of Heaven” (Whitehead, 1978, pp. 348-350), but also with

17 The “identity of identity and difference” was Hegel’s first definition of the Absolute (see Hegel, 1977).
reference to the "judgment," "patience," and "love" of God. Notably absent in the writings of both figures are any references to the Christian Trinity. I say notably since, according to Hegel, the Trinity is the mythic or symbolic source of the idea of the dialectic, which is certainly the case for Hegel's foundational articulation of the idea. The point I want to make here is that, regardless of possible routes of influence, the integral or complex holistic view of time that I am envisioning, given its clear compatibility with both Aurobindian non-dualism and Whiteheadian organismism, should be able to accommodate the simultaneous truth of the (predominantly eastern) reincarnationist and (dominantly Christian) once-only views of life and survival.

Before pursuing this compatibility any further, I want to give the reader a better idea of what an integral or complex-holistic time-sense, in its most developed form, would look like by quoting an extraordinary passage from the last chapter of Aurobindo's *Synthesis of Yoga*, which he calls "Towards the Supramental Time Vision." The passage is striking not only because of the flow and rhythm that seem to mirror the manner in which the insights appear to have come to him, but also because of the way the insights themselves challenge us to remain open to the possibility that, as Whitehead says, "what cannot be, yet is." "All intuitive knowledge," writes Aurobindo,

comes more or less directly from the light of the self-aware spirit entering into the mind, the spirit concealed behind mind and conscious of all in itself and in all its selves, omniscient and capable of illumining the ignorant or the self-forgetful mind whether by rare or constant flashes or by a steady instreaming light, out of its omniscience. This all includes all that was, is or will be in time and this omniscience is not limited, impeded or baffled by our mental division of the three times and the idea and experience of a dead and no longer existent and ill-remembered or forgotten past and a not yet existent and therefore unknowable future which is so imperative for the mind in the ignorance. Accordingly the growth of the intuitive mind can bring with it the capacity of a time knowledge which comes to it not from outside indices, but from within the universal soul of things, its eternal memory of the past, its unlimited holding of things present and its prevision or, as it has been paradoxically but suggestively called, its memory of the future. (Aurobindo, 1999, p. 897)

18 Significant for a deeper exploration of this matter would be a consideration of the traditional distinction and relation between the so-called "immanent" and "economic" Trinities (that is, God in eternity and God in time, respectively). In "Eternity, Time and the Trinitarian God," Wolfhart Pannenberg provides a contemporary Christian reflection on the relation of the Trinity to time: "[T]he presence of God is different, since it is no other than his future. Furthermore, it is important that this statement refers to the trinitarian God as a unity, not to the three persons in their distinctiveness, except as they participate in the one divine essence. Concerning their mutual relationships it may be said that the Son is the future of the Father, because it is the Son who establishes the kingdom of the Father on earth. Similarly, the Spirit is the future of the Son since it is the Spirit who raises Jesus from the dead. But again, the Father is the future of both, the Son and the Spirit, since it is the Father's kingdom they bring about by their joint activities. As they all share in the communion of the one living God, however, they share in his eternal life that has no future outside and beyond itself to occur to it. The trinitarian God has eternal life within himself." Retrieved February 28, 2004 from http://www.ctinquiry.org/publications/reflections_volume_3/pannenberg.htm
Obviously, if one has not been graced with the kind of “intuitive knowledge” Aurobindo alludes to here, the supramental time vision that he describes will be more or less credible or coherent, depending not only upon what one has been able to ascertain through conceptual analysis, but doubtless as well upon all kinds of unconscious or pre-reflective beliefs and assumptions. I will not argue the case here. Granting for the moment the authenticity of Aurobindo’s experience and the conceptual coherence of integral time, what are the implications for the notion of reincarnation, the truth of which Aurobindo so strongly advocates?

To begin with, if it is the case that all of what to our ordinary consciousness is conceived of as lives yet to be lived, from the integral perspective of the intuitive mind “stand together,” in Aurobindo’s analogy, “as if in a map or settled design” along with the present life and those of the past (one is reminded here of Barbour’s Platonism), one cannot cling too firmly to the idea of a soul which migrates from body to body, from life to life. We have seen that, for Whitehead’s God, all (to us) past occasions are experienced in their “unfading everlastingness.” For Aurobindo, at least, this is true as well for all future occasions, so that, despite the analogy of memory that is commonly invoked, it is more a matter, from the point of view of the Divine, of a living supersensory presence. Each life, in other words—however seemingly distant in our past or future—is always and already ensouled, is inalienably associated with its own soul, whose personal and singular drama is ever unfolding in the Eternal Now. And just as on a map—or better, in the actual experience of the territory—one cannot conflate two distinct locations and still know where one is, so one cannot conflate or identify, without significant qualification, any two lives, whether yours and mine in this shared present, or this life (yours or mine) and another in the apparent past or future. All of which seems to support the traditional Christian view of the soul as linked to only one life (and my reinterpretation of Nietzsche’s view of the eternally occurring quality attaching to each individual life).

What then of reincarnation? To begin with, it is important to distinguish between the belief in a soul substance—which, at least in the way it is normally pictured, exists in the same space-time as the body with which it is associated and which, having “left” the body at death, “enters” a new one in a future life—and the experience of past-life recall and associated phenomena. Rupert Sheldrake (1989), in his book *The Presence of the Past*, suggests that his theory of morphogenetic fields provides a way of modeling what is experienced as past-life recollections without having to assume the literal belief in a transmigrating soul. The idea would be that, through the process of “morphic resonance,” aspects of a current life (whether specific events acting as triggers, or more deep-seated structural or organizational patterns of a life or personality) call up memories stored in the non-local, immaterial, and potentially everlasting field associated with the previous life (or lives). Aurobindo’s “supramental time vision” implies something very similar, only that it is not merely a question of residual fields but, as we have seen, of continually unfolding and fully present lives—a vital presence, not only of the past, but of the future as well in the “simultaneous integrality of Time.” Given this presence, one can even more readily imagine how all the phenomena associated with the idea of reincarnation could be attributed to a kind of resonance between (from the perspective of the Divine) mutually present lives.

It is of course possible that the distinct souls I have evoked in association with all of our eternally unfolding lives are not the souls that people who believe in reincarnation have in mind,
are not the “I” that says, “I was such and such in a past life,” but are rather mere egos or personalities. Even if we grant these personalities the kind of vital immortality I am suggesting, and even if we can account for past-life phenomena without appealing to anything beyond them, how are we to answer Aurobindo’s claim that, without rebirth, there is no way to provide for the evolution of consciousness—that is, for the “return” of Brahman from the scattered multiplicity of His self-induced involutionary trance? But Aurobindo has already supplied us with most of the necessary elements for an alternative formulation of this admittedly highly complex and speculative issue. In the first place, he himself, despite the premium he attaches to universal evolutionary process, speaks from a noetic certainty of the supramental realization, which he invites us to intuit, of Brahman as Infinite Being-Consciousness-Bliss, which means that the trance is not only self-induced but always and already broken. Or we could say that, as paradoxical as it might sound, Brahman or the Divine is simultaneously in the deepest of hypnotic slumbers and completely wide-awake. Without denying the reality of evolution, or more generally of time as passage (the second of our three “moments” above), therefore, we must be able—and indeed are called upon to do so given the complexity of the matter—to conceive of the nature of the soul and its relation to life and the after-life or survival in a way that does not depend solely on the image of a single soul substance journeying through time from body to body.¹⁹

The second element to consider is the notion of the Jivatma or “spiritual Person” who “is one in his nature and being with the freedom of Sachchidananda who has here consented to or willed his involution in the Nescience for a certain round of soul-experience, impossible otherwise, and presides secretly over its evolution” (Aurobindo, 1951, p. 680). This “Person” does not itself evolve but is “unborn and eternal although upholding the manifested personality from above” (Aurobindo, 1972, Letters).²⁰ It is to this Jivatma that I take Aurobindo to be referring, in the passage I quoted earlier on the supramental time vision, when he speaks of “the spirit concealed behind mind and conscious of all in itself and in all its selves.” It is this Person too who stands in full possession of “its eternal memory of the past, its unlimited holding of things present and its prevision or, as it has been paradoxically but suggestively called, its memory of the future.” Given this, to us, paradoxical relation to time, could we not conceive of the many “selves” which, from one perspective (that of the second “moment”), manifest sequentially as a number of karmically related lives, as (from the third, integral or complex holistic moment) also so many co-existing sub-personalities of the more complex Person? Would we not have here an analogue to Fechner’s understanding of World Spirits or Angels?²¹ A scale of beings or selves begins to

¹⁹ As Bache (2006, pp. 120-121) points out: “There is nothing inherent in the theory of the soul that commits us to the atomistic isolation of previous theories. The soul is a quantum-like phenomenon, an open field suspended in dynamic tension with surrounding fields.”

²⁰ Aurobindo calls the evolving soul the “psychic being,” the caitya purusha. It is the representative of the Jivatma or “soul essence.”

²¹ In the fourth volume of his Vehicles of Consciousness, Poortman asks: “What, then, is the world-mind? Is it the sum total of the whole scale of the units of consciousness embracing each other? In that case, there must be an increasing—and perhaps also decreasing—degree of unity or perfection. What in fact it comes down to is that we are concerned here with concrete, superposed units which are at the same time limited, in which case we can never come to the point where we have a transcendent unit which really embraces everything. These limited units may, in their own way, be quite venerable...as were Ishvara in Indian thought and Plato’s Demiurge, but they remain what I have called infrasubjects. It is even possible
suggest itself, in order of increasing complexity and—with certain qualifications—wholeness, each with its own constraints and freedoms with respect to the experience of space and time. At the highest or most inclusive level there would be the Godhead (Aurobindo’s Brahman or Sachchidananda), the Whole or Absolute by any other name. Next would be the cosmic Deities, of which there might be an indefinite number, and which might include the God of Fechner and Whitehead. Whether or not such Deities experience themselves in their own kind of time with an unknown future is, as we have seen, open for debate. Presumably the World Souls would exist as sub-personalities or part-selves of the Cosmic Deities (again, not knowing if solar systems, galaxies, or even larger cosmic structures have corresponding selves), just as individual soul-personalities would be members of the community of selves that constitute, or are gathered together in, a given World Soul. In this logic, the Jivatma would be a Self intermediary between a World Soul and the soul-personality or “Psychic Being,” as Aurobindo most often calls it.22 As for the Jivatma’s time sense, there is no reason why it could not, while being simultaneously conscious of standing “outside” or “above” time as experienced by its many part selves (that is, as you and I experience it most of the time), also be capable of novel experience and so, even if it doesn’t evolve, has something at least analogous to our experience of an unknown future. Whatever the likelihood or specific nature of such a scale of selves, it ought to be clear in any case that there is no reason to accept a forced choice between one life or many, or indeed, as we have seen, between the members of any number of categorial oppositions that present themselves to the metaphysical imagination.

What is needed above all in such matters is the cultivation of a way of thinking, a way of “seeing” and “hearing” that is sensitive to the wholeness and complexity of the things we name self or soul, life, and time, and knowing that the naming in no way diminishes the mystery we are trying to fathom. Two of my great allies in this respect have been Edgar Morin and Jean Gebser. From Morin I have learned to see the complexity of wholeness in terms of such principles as the dialogic and recursivity. Like Hegel’s dialectic, the dialogic concerns the relation between antitheses or incompatibles. Muting somewhat Hegel’s stress on the reconciling potential of the third moment, Morin defines the dialogic as the “symbiotic combination of two [or more] logics [that is, discourses or dominant categories] which remain both complementary and antagonistic” (see Morin, 1977, p. 80; 1980, p. 82). Recursivity refers to the circularly causal relation between structural elements or categories that constitute a complex system. A process is recursive when it “causes/produces the effects/products necessary for its own regeneration” (Morin 1977, p. 186; 1981, p. 162). It is "the circuitous process whereby the ultimate effect or to imagine these demiurges—however central or exalted their status might be within their own sphere—coming together from time to time on a friendly basis and perhaps even… making mistakes. This is a clear example of their infrasubjectivity and I can only say how right Heymans was to refuse to place the world-consciousness of psychical monism, with all its sub-divisions..., on the same footing as the traditional concept of God.” (Poortman, 1978, p. 110).

22 See Frederick Myers’s suggestive conclusions: “I hold that ... it is possible that other thoughts, feelings and memories, either isolated or in continuous connection, may now be actively conscious... in some kind of coordination with my organism, and forming some part of my total individuality. I conceive it possible that at some future time, and under changed conditions, I may recollect all; I may assume then various personalities under one single consciousness, in which ultimate and complete consciousness, the empirical consciousness which at this moment directs my hand, may only be one element out of many.” (Cited in Taylor, 1996, p. 66)
product becomes the initial element or first cause” (Morin, 1977, p.186). With the help of Morin I see how the relation of the one to the many (whether of lives or of selves), of stasis to flux, or the eternal to time, is to be conceived dialogically and recursively, giving up the need for what Hegel calls the “fixed determinations” of merely intellectual knowing (Hegel’s Verstand, Aurobindo’s “lower Mind”). The One both produces and repels the Many, which produce and repel the One. “Eternity is in love with the productions of Time,” says Blake. Yes, but there is also enmity, strife, or opposition. Blake again: “Without Contraries is no Progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence” (from The Marriage of Heaven and Hell).

From Gebser (1985) I get the suggestive coupling of “integral” (which he derives from Aurobindo, without, however, adopting his metaphysics) with “aperspectival,” which to him means the overcoming of the kind of spatial-perspectival mindset now commonly associated with the Cartesian-Newtonian worldview. The “single vision” of this mindset is more or less locked in the second “moment” of difference and forced alternatives (transcendence or immanence; many lives or one, etc.). For the integral-aperspectival consciousness, by contrast, incompatible categories are “transparent” or “diaphanous” to one another, as are the structures of consciousness (in this case, especially the mythic—which is “preperspectival”—and the mental, which is perspectival) within or in relation to which the categories are variously inflected. According to Gebser’s characterization of the structures of consciousness, the traditional view of reincarnation—with its associated view of cyclical time, and with its more symbolic or imagistic and narrative qualities (the soul as a migrating entity)—would seem to be more at home in the mythic structure. The Christian once-only view—with its associated view of linear time, and despite its mythical elements (view of last Judgment, of Heaven and Hell)—could only arise after the emergence of the mental structure. The modern secular view—linear time, materialistic, and therefore no real survival—is firmly embedded in the late or “deficient” mental (where a more contemplative and qualitative reason is increasingly reduced to a more instrumental and quantitative rationalization; see Gebser, 1985, p. 93f). Whereas a merely or predominantly mental approach (and particularly in its deficient mode) to the question of survival will tend toward an exclusive identification with one of the possible alternatives—say, the (seemingly more “scientific,” and therefore mental) view of a single life that “resonates” with the fields of past lives versus the more traditional (and originally mythic) view of reincarnation as transmigration—an integral-aperspectival view will see the virtues of both alternatives, along with their limitations, and will feel free to shuttle from one to the other as the context demands. What I have stressed in this paper is that such an integral-aperspectival view will require a suitably complex rethinking of the nature of time. “The coming to awareness of ‘time’ in its full complexity,” as Gebser says, “is a precondition for the awakening consciousness of time-freedom [that is, freedom from mental-perspectival, and therefore spatialized, time]. The freedom from [perspectival] time in turn is the precondition for the realization of the integral

23 The ancient Stoic view of eternal recurrence—which is both cyclical and materialistic, imagistic (the universal fire) and rationalistic (determinism)—is typical of a period (late antiquity) where mythic and emergent mental elements coexist in various syncretistic forms (the Christian view represents another such form). Nietzsche’s version of eternal recurrence, though so close to the Stoic view in many respects, also manifests the dawning of the integral-aperspectival. This is evident in Nietzsche’s stress on openness and freedom, and in the transparency between myth and philosophy, between the symbolic and the conceptual, in his major writings (especially Thus Spake Zarathustra).
consciousness structure that enables us to perceive the aperspectival world” (Gebser, 1985, p. 289). The integral-aperspectival can therefore be interpreted not so much a structure of consciousness (like the mythic or the mental) as it is an “opening” or clearing, as Heidegger might put it, between or in the midst of the various structures and their associated categories.

Jennifer Gidley summarizes Gebser’s position as follows:

Gebser’s nuanced concretion of time does not represent a linear developmental endpoint like that of the modernity project, nor is it endlessly recursive in non-directional cyclical space as in Eliade’s “myth of the eternal return”…. Integral consciousness as understood by Gebser does not place mythic and modern constructions of time in opposition to each other, as both modern and traditional approaches tend to do. Alternatively, Gebser’s temporic concretion is an intensification of consciousness that enables re-integration of previous structures of consciousness—with their different time senses—honoring them all. It opens to new understanding through atemporal translucence whereby all times are present to the intensified consciousness in the same fully conscious moment. (Gidley, 2007, p. 176)

This integral “moment” where “all times are present” resonates well with my proposal for all lives as participating in an ever-living present. I also applaud Gidley’s insight that Morin’s paradigmatic notion of “RE” (which is primarily associated with the notion of recursivity or circular causality, as epitomized in all living or self-organizing processes)24 “appears to align with Gebser’s concretion of time” (p. 183). In this context, however, the recursion in question is not that of evolutionary processes, though neither does it contradict these processes. Rather, here it is question of a theoretical and methodological recursion between different “temporics” or time perspectives (see Gidley, 2007, p. 174) and their related conceptions of the soul and its associated life/lives. In contrast with an integral or complex-holistic (meta-) point of view, these conceptions are generally embedded within the mythical and (sometimes deficient) mental structures. The latter’s perspectival ordering, in particular, militates against a generative encounter among competing views and conceptions.

While through the glass of merely mental consciousness we see ourselves and our world but darkly, in the clearing of the integral-aperspectival we can wander freely in worlds without borders and behold one another face to face.

**Concluding Remarks**

In contrast to most reflection on the nature of the soul and its relation to the afterlife, this study’s focus on the dimension of time has led to several novel proposals:

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24 For Morin, living processes are not only self-organizing, but auto-eco-re-organizing, where “eco” refers to the necessary coupling of the organism or system with its environment, and “re” indicates that, as living, the organization is ever renewed. This renewal involves a cluster of related processes, including repetition, regeneration, and reproduction. At the heart of RE is a dialectic—or dialogic, as Morin prefers to call it—between the “retro” (preservation or reestablishment of the same) and the “meta” (the emergence of novelty). See Morin (2005).
1. A neglected possibility for the nature of survival: the “past” (along with all moments, all lives) as “eternally occurring” in an “ever-living present.” This is suggested through the pursuit of an intuition through encounters with Nietzsche, Julian Barbour, Whitehead, and Aurobindo. This leads to:

2. A (modified) resonance model of past life phenomena (modified since, in contrast to Sheldrake and Laszlo, it is not merely a question of resonance between a given presently embodied life and the residual fields of past lives, but of resonance among the fields of so many mutually present lives); and

3. The possibility of harmonizing the traditional Christian (and Jewish and Muslim) “once-only” view with the many lives view normally associated with belief in reincarnation. Provided, that is, we work with:

4. A more integral, complex-holistic model of personality: including the possibility of a higher-order personality (jivatma; daimon? angel?) as an intermediary between human personality and the Godhead as the Absolute Person. Here we are guided by Fechner (anima mundi), as well as by the analogy of sub-personalities (Myers) or complexes (Jung). The suggestion here is that what to us appears as a series of lives arrayed in a line leading up to the present might, to the higher-order personality, be experienced as so many mutually contemporary dramatis personae. (Given the properties of resonance, we need not imagine that the “cast” of any given higher personality be fixed. By the same token, we can imagine that any one life might belong to several different “casts” simultaneously. There is no reason, moreover, not to consider the possibility of more than one person sharing the same past life).

5. This kind of inquiry and research demands the articulation and enactment of an integral or complex-holistic method/way of thinking and speaking/writing, especially when dealing with such difficult issues as the possibility of survival. The model here is Hegel and Aurobindo’s “logic of the Infinite,” which I read through the lens of Morin’s principles of complexity and Gebser’s notion of the integral-aperspectival. Such a logic allows us to hold in creative tension what otherwise appear to be mutually exclusive points of view.

For this kind of logic—whether we call it integral-aperspectival or complex-holistic—the question of time and the nature and fate of personality or the soul is an occasion for subtle musings and intuitive leaps, which to the uninitiated (or simply uninterested) seem both wild and gossamer thin. “It is not indispensable to formulate mentally to oneself all this,” Aurobindo once counseled one of his disciples,

one can have the experience and, if one sees clearly with an inner perception, it is sufficient for progress towards the goal. Nevertheless if the mind is clarified without falling into mental rigidity and error, things are easier for the sadhak of the yoga. But plasticity must be preserved, for loss of plasticity is the danger of a systematic intellectual formulation; one must look into the thing itself and not get tied up in the idea. Nothing of all this can be really grasped except by the actual spiritual experience. (Aurobindo, 1972, pp. 265-287)

Even awaiting the experience, we can take his good counsel and strive, since we cannot escape the bodily death, to avoid that all-too-common intellectual rigor mortis which would pronounce the matter closed and settled one way or another.
References


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Using Developmental Theory: When Not to Play Telephone Games

Sara Nora Ross

Abstract: As a powerful way to help understand the behaviors of people and social groupings of all kinds, developmental stage theory attracts attention and use outside of purely academic environments. These uses take the form of written materials and many kinds of interventions. The level of accuracy of developmental theory information generated and used outside of academe demonstrates wide variety. This variety is reflected in materials and interventions. The information used in materials and interventions becomes increasingly distorted as it becomes further removed from original theoretical sources. This has major implications for the ethics and expertise issues that are inherent in applied developmental theory. A classification scheme of information-use behaviors, many of which contribute to distortion processes, is used to code actual cases of creating and disseminating distorted developmental theory information, invoking the metaphor of telephone games. Case evidence indicates that casual, illustrative figures in a 2006 book by Wilber were used by others for various serious and theoretical purposes, and resulted in major distortions of developmental theory. Wilber’s figures represent problematic issues and errors, including distortion of theory, if they are used—as they indeed were—for any purpose more serious than his original purpose. Stemming from those issues and errors, a highly distorted picture of cognitive development and a pseudo-version of Commons and Richards’ Model of Hierarchical Complexity theory emerged, telephone game-like, in the cases discussed. Errors were widely propagated on the internet. Because outside of academe, specialized expertise in developmental theory is difficult to acquire, the sub-field of applied developmental theory requires not only accurate information but also strong communication ethics to govern behaviors of information providers. Such providers need to protect themselves at the same time they protect and inform consumers of their information. This process of knowledge sharing and knowledge building can be shaped by adopting guidelines and a basic operating principle proposed here. Guidelines and principles, without institutionalization, are insufficient support. A new Institute of Applied Developmental Theory could provide the supports, standards, and effectiveness the sub-field of applied developmental theory needs if its power to address 21st century challenges, which sorely need it, is to be realized.

Keywords: applied developmental theory, behaviors, classifications, Commons, communication ethics, developmental theory, Institute for Applied Developmental Theory, knowledge-building, Model of Hierarchical Complexity, Richards, stages, Wilber
Introduction

Known by different names around the world, the telephone game is one in which the starting player whispers a sentence or phrase to the person next to him or her. That person, and each successive person in the circle or group, whispers the sentence or phrase to the next person, each time like passing a secret no one else should hear. When the secret has made its way around the entire group, the last person to hear it announces the secret aloud for all to hear. Typically, all participants are surprised to hear how different the final version is from the version they heard. This motivates the other participants to report out loud the version they “got.” More differences appear. When originators of the sentence or phrase eventually announce the version they launched, it becomes possible to trace the path of the inevitable distortion.

The telephone game is a metaphor for the distortion process of acquiring first, second, third, or even fourth-hand information when writing or publishing. With respect to this essay, my specific concern is with distortions in developmental stage theory that appear and then re-appear in various written forms. In addition, I concern myself primarily with distortions that can be traced to a book by Ken Wilber, which emerged as a significant source in recent instances when it came to dissemination of both accurate and inaccurate information.

To address that concern, I set three goals for this essay.
- Post an “advisory alert” about the widening propagation of particular errors in representing, describing, and applying developmental stage theory.
- Raise awareness about various sources of errors.
- Contribute constructive solutions to deal with responsibilities to “let the information-users beware” and “let the information-providers beware.”

To accomplish those goals, this essay has the following objectives:
1. Discuss the appeal and the importance of developmental stage theory and why errors and any propagations of errors matter;
2. Describe some sources of errors;
3. Portray a case of telephone game-like information sharing about developmental theory;
4. Point to dynamics and impacts of the game’s distortions;
5. Articulate guidelines for reading and writing to prevent such problems; and
6. Propose some concrete ways forward.

Developmental Stage Theory

Why Accuracy Matters

From its home in academic specialties under the umbrella of psychology, developmental stage theory is spreading beyond such oversight to the world of practical applications. As one of the most useful dimensions of individual and social behaviors to understand, this is an important trend. Developmental approaches are finding their way into increasing numbers of personal, organizational, leadership and other social development books, trainings, and consultation efforts.
This means that people recognize the value of developmental theory in general and begin to have ideas about how it can be used to understand themselves, other people, organizations, and larger social groupings. Once we believe we understand something, we may be motivated to develop interventions using it. Interventions may take such forms as education, training, and related materials, or consulting, advising, and even activism. Interventions, by definition, are efforts to impact others. When we aim to impact people’s lives, organizational strategies and sustainability, how issues are addressed, and other social affairs, we tread in the territory of expertise and ethics. These are two sides of the same coin, and both are serious business. The governing principle in any kind of serious business is first, do no harm.

How could the use of developmental theory cause any kind of harm? Harm would vary by how theory was used in specific contexts, but some generalizations are possible.

1. An obvious one is that if theory or its related information is taught incorrectly, it will be learned and used by others incorrectly.
2. Another is that if it is incorrectly used to 1(a) assess situations, 1(b) analyze individual, group, or organizational performance, 1(c) be the basis for giving advice on growing edges to develop and changes to make and/or 1(d) design interventions, it can cause confusion, resistance, and/or conflict if such interventions “shoot too high” by introducing inappropriately difficult challenges, expectations, or organizational procedures or structures. These undesired results would be because 2(a) the capacities and possibilities for performance at each stage of development are radically different, 2(b) developmental performance does not change overnight, 2(c) the developmental change process involves different elements at each stage (Commons & Richards, 2002), and 2(d) individuals, groups, and organizations cannot skip stages of developmental performance (Commons, Trudeau, Stein, Richards, & Krause, 1998; this paper by Commons, Trudeau et al. includes a theoretical explication of these and other relevant points).
3. Another general example is if developmental theory-based interventions “shoot too low” in setting expectations because existing performance is inaccurately judged as already at a higher stage. Such a misdiagnosis could lead to false complacency about the nature of challenges that would actually be required to meet stated goals.

The overall message here is that humans and their social groupings are extremely complex and variable, and uses of developmental theory could do harm if they are not based on sturdy foundations.

**Issues and Errors in Integral Spirituality Figures**

If I or other specialists in developmental theory had read Wilber’s (2006) *Integral Spirituality*, I expect its errors in representing developmental stage theories would have come to the fore sooner than this, perhaps resulting in correction before further dissemination and repeating it in his *Integral Vision* booklet (Wilber, 2007). As it is, I came to this only in the process of figuring out how others’ problematic representations, comparisons, and uses of developmental theories had emerged. The process meant tracing backwards through a short series of written works, and finding that *Integral Spirituality* played a role akin to the first speaker of the sentence launching
a telephone game. That “originating sentence” had technical errors. One of them in particular has been widely propagated and built upon, as described later in this essay.

Six years before publishing Integral Spirituality, Wilber published Integral Psychology (2000). In the latter was reflected the significant amount of work he did to produce many developmental stage correlation charts. He clearly had investigated theories and research projects sufficiently to chart them and offer the series of charts as a resource to people.1

Since then, in the two more recent books mentioned above, his representations of “major developmental lines” lack coherence with that earlier work and certain figures contain errors. The first point to make, however, is that the task and purpose of referring to major developmental lines is different from the earlier task and purpose of the extensive charting of individual stage theories. This more recent use of developmental theory is to indicate Wilber’s concept of different lines of development (Wilber, 2006, 2007), and his discussions indicate that purpose. In putting developmental theory to this use, his earlier straightforward approach of identifying an individual theory and its stage categories has largely, though not entirely, been replaced by grouping disparate theories together if they represent to Wilber a particular “line.” This shows up in the form of table-like figures. In Integral Psychology (2006) it is the two full-page Figures 2.4 and 2.5, inserted between pages 68 and 69 (in Integral Vision a nearly duplicative representation is Figure 14, pages 112-113). As should become clearer below, I suggest a first source of potential errors is if users assign purpose to such figures beyond the limited one of referring to Wilber’s concept of major developmental lines. I say this for two reasons: (a) there are no sources cited for where the represented development theory information came from, and (b) classifying theories is different from describing, explaining, or applying them.

As the telephone games portrayed later in this essay indicate, the figures have been put to different purposes than just referring to Wilber’s concept of major developmental lines. They became a significant source used by others for classifying, describing, and applying developmental theory. This figures-as-source has errors if it is used for anything but the limited purpose of referring to Wilber’s concept of major developmental lines. Because it has been used for other purposes, it seems important to identify issues and errors that already have, or could, continue to propagate through others’ reliance on them. These are outlined below.

**Issues**

**Issue 1.** Wilber classifies into one group the author names “Commons/Richards Piaget/Aurobindo” (Wilber, 2006, Figure 2.4, p. “68a”). A more communicative way to indicate these separate names could be “Commons & Richards; Piaget; and Aurobindo,” to indicate the names are associated with three different developmental frameworks. The group is labeled by Wilber as “cognitive.” There is actually a fourth framework embedded in that group’s representation. This shows up via the overlay of “vision logic” categories, which are Wilber’s

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1 Unfortunately, the charts do not include citations of the works used to develop the charts. As a result, only a person who is already intimate with a given theory would likely be equipped to identify if or where errors and omissions occurred in presenting it (e.g., in charting Torbert’s work, p. 636; for correct stages, see Torbert & Associates, 2004).
(see, for example, the text and aforementioned charts in Wilber, 2000), although Wilber’s name is not included in that “cognitive” group. If people use this classification scheme’s labels to help them describe, explain, or apply developmental theory, the following indicates at least one ramification.

The scheme does not accurately represent the stage category names used by the indicated authors, nor all of their stages, and in some cases, even their stage placements. This is because it conflates three different frameworks for the purpose discussed above of suggesting a developmental line. Thus, the figure’s resulting stage list cannot not fully agree with any of the original authors’ lists of stages and names for them because they used different terms and methods to identify the sometimes different places to “notch the stage measuring stick” they used in describing human behaviors. Wilber’s (2000) charts indicate such differences.

My focus in this issue is on the “cognitive” group for reasons indicated below. However, the general issue pertains to the other “lines” into which he groups multiple authors’ work: those labeled “values” and “self identity.”

**Issue 2.** It is misleading to classify the developmental framework of Commons & Richards as only the “cognitive.” Whether referring to their work dating from the 1980’s (e.g., Commons & Richards, 1984a, 1984b) or their more recent work (e.g., 2002), the work does not represent a cognitive development framework. As a developmental behavioral framework, it is broader than that, i.e., it is applicable to every such “line” of development. This broad applicability is because the Model of Hierarchical Complexity (Commons et al., 1998; Commons, Goodheart, Pekker, Dawson, Draney, & Adams, 2007) is a content-free, domain-independent general theory of orders of hierarchical complexity and stages of task performance at such orders, providing universally applicable, mathematical axiom-based measures thereof. “Task” refers to actions performed by machines, neural networks, animals, humans, or larger social groupings (Commons, 2006). Thus, while the theory applies to any activity in the classification commonly called “cognitive,” it is not confined to only that kind of activity: it transcends and includes categories that are based on specific content. In this and other respects, this paradigm is qualitatively different from developmental stage theories based on content even while it describes and measures developmental performance in such content categories as various stage theories are concerned with. I recommend Dawson-Tunik (2006) as an excellent resource for explicating these concepts and citing a range of studies related to them.

**Errors**

In the column designated the “cognitive” developmental line (Wilber, 2006, p. “68a”) Commons & Richards’ systematic stage is omitted. This stage follows the formal operations stage recognized by them (Commons, Richards, & Kuhn, 1982) and Piaget (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958, as cited by Commons, Richards, & Kuhn, 1982). When presenting a list of developmental stages, to omit one stage can result in domino effects from that single error. In this case, the effect was to “fill the gap” left by the omission: lowering by one stage the presentation alignments of the metasystematic, paradigmatic, and cross-paradigmatic stages (note: the metasystematic stage is incorrectly portrayed as “meta-systemic”). Table 1 indicates the correct stage names and the entire stage sequence formalized in the Model of Hierarchical Complexity.
When entering a score into an analysis, the ordinal numbers shown in Table 1 are used. See Commons (2006) for a description of the stages that includes for each stage a generic description of what kinds of tasks are done, how they are done, and the end results of doing them.

**Table 1. Stages of Hierarchical Complexity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage Name</th>
<th>Stage # and Task Score</th>
<th>Stage Name</th>
<th>Stage # and Task Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computational</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory or Motor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circular Sensory Motor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory-Motor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Systematic</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Metasystematic</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentential</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Paradigmatic</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoperational</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cross-paradigmatic</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted with permission from p. 89 in M. L. Commons (2006), Measuring an approximate g in animals and people. Integral Review: A Transdisciplinary and Transcultural Journal for New Thought, Research and Praxis, 3, 82-99.

To summarize this compound error: in Wilber’s (2006) Figure 2.4, one stage is missing, and the three that follow it are “moved down” to fill its missing place in the stage hierarchy. Along with the conflation of theories and their other stages, this error shows up as a key player in the telephone game problems discussed below.

Possibly relevant to those who use Wilber-unique “vision-logic” terminology, in Integral Spirituality’s Figure 2.4, (and in Integral Vision’s Figure 14), low vision logic is stage-associated one stage higher than in Integral Psychology (2000) charts. There could be various explanations. It may be directly related to the Commons & Richards representation error described above, because the vision-logic overlays use the terminology of Commons & Richards. It may be connected with eliminating “middle vision logic” from the more recent figures without making corresponding adjustments. And/or, it may be related to eliminating in these recent figures the use of the “transition” stage category used in structuring the Wilber (2000) charts.

Kegan’s 5th order/stage is represented one stage higher than Kegan (1982, p. 86) situates it; he aligns it with Loevinger’s autonomous stage.

Integral Spirituality’s Figure 2.5 (and Integral Vision’s Figure 14) shows an incorrect insertion of a “pluralistic” stage as part of Gebser’s framework (see Gebser, 1949/1985). In addition to Gebser, also see Gidl ey (2007) for discussion of the classification error involved in treating Gebser’s work as if it applied to individuals in the way developmental stage theories do.

**Summary**

This discussion of developmental theory made the following major points. Developmental theory is a powerful, much-needed, and therefore attractive dimension to employ in any kind of
work related to human behavior and social issues. Such work goes beyond strictly academic study to the other worlds of knowledge sharing, practice, and interventions. Accuracy in understanding and using developmental theory matters because its use has impacts on other people, their efforts, their organizations, and even their institutions and societies.

Developmental theory can be used to illustrate or make points that have different purposes. In recent years, Wilber (2006, 2007) used various groupings of developmental theory to illustrate and briefly discuss his concept of major developmental lines. The discussions of such lines were not the focus but rather one aspect within the books in which they appeared. The table-like figures used to support his discussion raise certain issues and represent errors if they are used by others for any other purpose than Wilber used them, i.e., to illustrate his concept of developmental lines. The figures in Integral Spirituality were cited in work that used them for a different purpose. The purpose was theoretical and the work propagated to others. One issue and one set of errors, above, thus showed up in telephone games portrayed below. Therefore, this section listed the main issues and errors for two purposes: (a) to alert possibly-affected people to them, and (b) to present enough detail to serve as bases for additional points and indicate the content referred to later when portraying the telephone game dynamics.

**Ethics and Expertise**

As I wrote more than five years ago (Ross, 2003), outside of those who specialize in it, developmental theory seems susceptible to casual uses and abuses. One way this seems to happen is by believing that if one knows the names of the labels used to designate stages of development in a given theory, and has read some sort of description about the stages, that one knows developmental theory. This can result in mistaken beliefs about how much knowledge is enough and perhaps mistaken assumptions about possessing expertise. If we have mistaken assumptions about our expertise, and have less than we believe, we may generate and share work that may not be reliable enough for others to rely upon.

Without a great deal of support—such as experts to learn from or work with directly and/or some system in place to review, correct, advise about, and otherwise evaluate our performance in describing, explaining, or applying theory—we can risk believing we have knowledge we may not have. When we enter the territory of using our actual or presumed knowledge to impact others’ lives, our ethics and our expertise can be on the line. Specialized expertise is not a costume we would want to don casually to represent ourselves, for example, as educators or advisors. This has a lot to do with communication ethics. In communication ethics, a discipline in its own right, “the value of care is considered of central concern” because “ethics encompasses issues of care and trust, social responsibility and environmental concern and identifies the values necessary to balance the demands of performance today with responsibilities for tomorrow” (Institute of Communication Ethics, 2008, emphasis added).

The universal point throughout this essay is that care-full ethics in our work and communications about our work apply to all of us. Especially—but not only—in these years of ubiquitous internet information inputs and outputs and self-publishing options, an ideal communication ethic would include being transparent about sharing whatever information about
our work could possibly impact the amount of reliance placed on it by our peers, clients, students, or other users. This is particularly vital when using developmental theory.

Finally, being care-full about readers’ possible interpretations of this section, I emphasize that just because Wilber’s work is the only specific work discussed thus far does not mean that this brief discussion of ethics and expertise singles out him or his work in any particular way. Presenting the range of developmental theory concerns, which involve his work, comes first for the sake of coherent organization to accomplish the essay’s objectives.

Casual or Formal?

From the abstract stage of developmental task performance onward, adults do a very good job of classifying things (Commons et al., 1998). Most classifications evolve casually, e.g., from talking about individual chairs and tables to classifying them as furniture. Once there is a new classification, it engenders further refinements into more classification schemes, e.g., office furniture, living room furniture, dollhouse furniture. It is efficient to classify things. All types of classifying enable us to generalize. When we can generalize, we do not have to show or talk or write about specific examples, but rather, just refer to a class of things that share similar features. Casual classifications come so easily to most adults that it can be easy to overlook the fact that other classifications are not casual at all.

Some classifications are formal. This is because they are based on rigorous theoretical and empirical research. Formal classifications are motivated by the need to organize and share knowledge. Thus, they have specific uses and special definitions and concepts. Generally, they are used in formal, not casual, applications. Much of what happens in a society is through applications that grow out of theoretical and empirical research. Such applications can range from teaching, consulting, and publishing to the creation of organizations, services, technologies, and products. This suggests that regardless of their settings, formal applications always have some importance: they mean serious work, intended to inform or otherwise impact those who use them. When people apply and use formal classifications and concepts as if they were casual, confusion can result. Sometimes unintended damage to others can result, too (discussed further below).

Sometimes people who are not experts in a formal academic field develop interests in subjects addressed by that field. Equally possible, experts in one formal academic field may want to work on subjects that call for information from outside their discipline. Sometimes non-experts want to write about their interests in such a subject and share it with others. Sometimes they try to develop their own comparisons of experts’ formal classification schemes. Regardless of different scenarios, subjects of formal study include many formal classification schemes, concepts, and comparisons among them. When non-experts in an area use its formal classifications and concepts, or develop casual comparisons of formal classification schemes, confusion can result. Again, sometimes unintended damage to others can also result.

The expanding range of approaches to interdisciplinarity, e.g., those mapped by Stein (2007), suggest such approaches may be particularly vulnerable to such specialist/non-specialist related problems. As Stein indicates, collaborative knowledge-sharing and -building (see Murray, 2006)
are even more essential when there is no single authoritative discipline or expert over an application of knowledge.

To summarize and further apply these classification notions, Table 2 suggests the kinds of behaviors that may show up, ranging from classifying, comparing, analyzing, and using. This scheme cannot be all-inclusive of possible variations, nor does it attempt to define criteria. The hope is that the general scheme may raise awareness of different classes of work. This in turn may help people investigate credibility and try to classify their own or others’ work when needed.

### Table 2. Classification of Casual and Formal Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Behaviors</th>
<th>Casual Behaviors</th>
<th>Casual-Casual Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1. Formal classifications and concepts</td>
<td>C1. Casual uses of F1 formal classifications and concepts</td>
<td>CC1. Casual classifications and concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2. Formal uses of formal classifications and concepts</td>
<td>C2. Casual comparisons of F1 formal classification schemes</td>
<td>CC2. Casual uses of any C-classes of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3. Formal comparisons of formal classification schemes</td>
<td>C3. Casual uses of F2 work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4. Formal analyses of F3 work</td>
<td>C4. Casual uses of F3 work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C5. Casual uses of F4 work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Confused Formal Behaviors**

CF. Attempted Formal uses of C or CC classes of work assume they are F classes of work.

### Telephone Games with Developmental Theory

Preface: Over the last 60 or so years in the Western world, empirical researchers, along with theorists who do not perform such evidence-based research, have described stage theories of human development in textbooks, trade books, edited collections in books, and peer reviewed journal articles. (Trade books are the type commonly found in bookstores that serve the general public.) Authors use such methods to publish updates to their work when they have new research findings to report, particularly journal articles. Their published work is *primary source* material. It is primary because it “comes straight from the original horses’ mouths,” as the saying goes. Except for work published in trade book form, it has been critically reviewed by other experts before publication. People who want to be sure they have credible information about developmental theories use up-to-date, first-hand, primary source material generated by such Formal Behaviors as those listed above.

I did not know there was a distortion of developmental theory circulating until we happened to encounter some of its results in written forms. “We” refers to some *Integral Review (IR)* editors and a board member of ARINA, its publisher. Some months ago, IR received a manuscript that used developmental stage terms and descriptions in erroneous ways I had never seen before. The paper had no citations of the developmental information source, but did identify someone who was a source of advice in writing the paper. Some time later, an ARINA board
member and I received, respectively, one and two different email-broadcasted notices about a new internet-published product; it had different authorship than the earlier manuscript had. The board member read it before I did, and commented on an error evident in it. I then prioritized reading it.

I found it quite curious to see that the same developmental stage-related errors in the earlier manuscript were not only showing up in the publication but more were showing up too. These were used to build a substantive discussion in that product. The product cited its sources of information. I wrote to the source cited in relation to the errors. I pointed out the errors and discussed them in an email. Subsequently, I requested and received the material cited as source information. It was not formally published (e.g., in a journal or book) but, the author told me, it was considered by the author to be in draft form, in the public domain, and free to share. That material cited and used Wilber (2006) figures’ information to organize and describe developmental theory. This use was different from just discussing the concept of major developmental lines, the use to which Wilber put the figures.

Each written product encountered above was of a different genre, and all of them clearly indicated their authors’ expectations for them to be regarded as serious work. In the process of putting pieces together to understand how the same and further errors were showing up in such disparate places, evidence of telephone game dynamics showed up. The spread of distortions is outlined below via Figure 1, using the behavior codes in Table 2 to represent specific behaviors.

These dynamics resulted in circulating incorrect answers, incorrect analyses, or incorrect advice. This dissemination system has caused perhaps-unrecognized confusion and in some cases, actual and potential damage to self (e.g., reputation and cost to correct information) and others (e.g., reliance upon incorrect information in writing, advice-giving, or practice). We did due diligence by advising the authors of the several known casualties of this game. This essay is public due diligence, in case others have been confused or damaged along this path or perhaps by playing some other version of the telephone game with developmental theory.2

Wilber is not responsible for how other people used, or will use, his figures in Integral Spirituality (or in Integral Vision). Even so, given the diffusion process portrayed in Figure 1, there is a problem. This is because (a) at least one individual node in the network depicted above used figures from Wilber—which served a limited purpose for Wilber—for much different purposes, based some work on them, and disseminated the work, and (b) others treated that person’s work as serious formal work, made the same and in one case further mistakes when relying on it to describe related theory, and passed the results along to others to use. Note that the further mistakes are not specified here because I believe this discussion is sufficient to accomplish stated objectives while keeping all possible identities anonymous.

2 Of course, it should go without saying that any kind of theory, not only developmental, may be subject to erroneous or casual uses.
A column in Wilber’s (2006) figure 2.4 ended up being used as if it portrayed cognitive development and Commons & Richards’ developmental framework. The distorted portrayals of cognitive development and Commons & Richards’ work resulted in purposes, descriptions, and applications that were well beyond Wilber’s purpose for the figures. The pseudo-theory that was disseminated (Figure 1) was practically unrecognizable when compared to Commons & Richards’ own formal, empirically-based research and hierarchical complexity theory.

The primary source material of the original authors’ work could have been cited in Wilber’s figures, and/or a disclaimer or other sort of caveat could have accompanied the figures so people would know they should not rely on them for any purpose other than Wilber’s limited purpose for them. If such care had been taken in preparing the figures, perhaps the “originating sentence” in the kick-off game would not have come from his figures at all. Perhaps it would have had Formal Behavior origins and reduced the amount of distortion that is circulating.
Rules of the Reading and Writing Road

I propose some rules of the road to guard against the kind of confusion and damage this case of telephone games illustrates. I recommend these guidelines to those who do not specialize in a particular discipline but wish to use its formal classifications and concepts.

1. Use formal classifications and concepts seriously, befitting the formalities they are.
2. Cite the sources, in writing, of any information you did not personally originate so users can assess the information’s reliability.
3. Remember that formal classifications and concepts are unwise fodder for playing the telephone game with reading and writing about theoretical matters.
4. Therefore:
   a) If you are unsure what the formal classifications actually mean, or how they relate to similar classification schemes, consult the primary source or find an expert in that field to ask.
   b) If you do not have formal expertise in the field that produced formal classifications you want to use, ask an expert in that field to review and possibly help you correct your work before you disseminate it.
   c) If you rely upon hearsay, casual work, and/or second, third, or fourth-hand sources for any but the most casual of purposes, realize that this is risky behavior that can cost the loss of credibility and other forms of damage to you and to others.
   d) If you learn that you have made an error in written or spoken information or advice that you disseminated, do whatever you can to correct the error and get the correction into the hands of those who may have relied upon you.

Concrete Ways Forward

In an ideal world, these rules of the road should apply equally to those who read and use information and those who produce information. Taken as a whole, they convey the “value of care.” This encompasses both the responsibilities to “let the information-users beware” and to “let the information-providers beware.” If left at that, one could walk away with an individualist impression that this is just about taking responsibility for one’s own actions. But it is about far more than that, as the following perspectives indicate.

A. Users without expertise in a subject do not have the background to judge the accuracy of information supplied by others on that subject.

B. Providers of information have two responsibilities: (a) to ensure their work is accurate by using standard documentation methods (e.g., citing sources) and obtaining adequate review by competent persons or processes, and (b) to transparently communicate to users the degree of rigor in the preparation and peer review processes applied to a given work.

A1. If earlier users of information (Item A) later become providers of information, and rely on information from other providers as well as themselves, then they become Item B Providers, who have responsibilities to perform the same provider responsibilities.
B1. If providers of information perform both responsibilities, they address the needs of less-qualified consumers to judge the work as reliable. This coordinates the two systems: (A) users’ needs and their gaps in expertise to judge quality without supportive information, and (B) information providers’ responsibilities for quality, review, and transparent communications.

The foregoing metasystem can be summarized as an integral principle, as follows.

Neither users nor providers of information should rely upon only their own judgment. Each role (user and provider) is responsible to protect itself and others from harm in the course of information exchanges and uses. When implemented, (a) systems for ensuring accuracy and (b) communications about the systems for assuring accuracy, together can reduce the frequency and impacts of users and providers acting like independent agents in an interdependent world of information exchange.

If such a principle were adopted as a Standard Operating Principle (SOP), the SOP would go beyond current, traditional systems, both formal and casual. As it implies, we need new systems to augment traditional ones and accommodate realities of internet-based 21st century information flows. I believe this argument holds true if we see merit in implementing such a principle for our own and the greater good. To implement it, however, means developing a new kind of system or systems.

I propose we open discussion about developing an institutionalized approach, a new system, to help accelerate developmental theory’s impacts in the 21st century. Such a new system could be a solutions-based way forward, one that respects such realities as this essay highlights:

1. The need for expanded and reliable applications of developmental theory by non-experts;
2. The current accountability and communication gaps among people who want to do good work but cannot specialize in developmental theory;
3. The variety of forms and classes of work that developmental theory applications may span;
4. The need for faster tracks to get non-academic work evaluated by competent experts;
5. The need for language consistency in communicating about the levels of rigor employed in work preparation and in evaluative reviews;
6. Perhaps some “good housekeeping seals of approval” to apply to various forms taken by non-academic work with developmental theory.

Ultimately, I believe this is about is developing the mechanisms to support the growing sub-field of applied developmental theory. As a starting point to consider such mechanisms, Integral Review will open a public forum for discussion of needs identified here and elsewhere. Ideally, it will attract people who are interested to roll up their sleeves to contribute in a variety of ways toward discriminating the range of needs, and conceiving and designing an institutionalized approach to address such needs, including those outlined above. Forum participants could be anyone with an interest, e.g., current or emerging practitioners, academics and other theorists and researchers, or end-users of developmental applications.

3 E.g., in addition to those identified here, see Inglis’ essay, this issue: How then do we choose to live? Facing the climate crisis and seeking “the meta response.”
Reflecting on all of the above, I believe the time has come for an Institute for Applied Developmental Theory. I think this idea is worth pursuing and operationalizing. It could be designed to respond to and grow with needs and contexts that are already arising and becoming evident in such organic, unpredictable fashions as this essay portrays. And, at the same time, it could respond to additional needs in fields of endeavor not yet benefiting from insights and applications available from using development theory.

**Conclusion**

Although the catalyst for this essay was the use of information about developmental theory, it applies to all information that relates to or originates in serious theoretical work. I hope that discriminating among the classifications of written work and providing a scheme to organize them proves to be a useful reference. Most of all, I hope the take-away message is that consumers, users, and providers of information all have responsibilities to self and others when information is, or could be perceived to be, anything but casual. When we hold in mind the perspectives and especially the assumptions of others who may use information we generate, we are more likely to follow the rules of the road and attempt to implement integral principles as standard operating principles. One is proposed above; additional principles are possible. May such items inform, support, and motivate us to take the necessary steps to ensure accuracy and credibility for the benefit, not detriment, of all those coming in contact with our work.

As a pragmatist, I do not believe such urgings will have any meaningful impact unless there is an institutionalized method to realize them. To realize them, we need to concretely support people in their endeavors with developmental theory. To concretely, accurately, and effectively support people means putting in place a system to do so.

Creating new systems with high credibility is hard work that requires developing partnerships and human and financial resources. So be it. Let us do what is necessary to help ensure that reliable uses of developmental theory are brought into the 21st century applications that so sorely need them. If we rise to meet this challenge, we will see more developmental theory effectively applied, which is what these telephones games have been trying to do, after all. I propose that institutionalizing the sub-field of *applied developmental theory* is a better “game” to play with developmental theory, with better odds than telephone games, yes?

**References**


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A Transversal Dialogue on Integral Education and Planetary Consciousness
Markus Molz speaks with Jennifer Gidley

Markus and Jenny walking and talking, September 2007 in Luxembourg

Markus Molz: Jenny, many thanks for offering your time and insight to the readers of Integral Review. I would suggest to have a couple of e-mail exchanges during the next two weeks or so, unfolding as it will want to go. Your multi-faceted experience and writings make you the perfect partner to get the broad picture of the potential and the challenges of integral education, today and in a historical perspective. Before going into some theoretical considerations, and later into practical questions, let me ask you first why, how and when, biographically, you became interested in connecting those outstanding figures of an integral worldview - Wilber, Gebser, Steiner, and Aurobindo - to each other, and to the concerns of education in our world in profound transformation. This is such a remarkable and demanding endeavour nobody has ever undertaken before, as far as I know.
Jennifer Gidley: Markus, first let me thank you and the journal *Integral Review* for inviting me to participate in a dialogue with you on integral education. You are interested in why, how and when I became interested in my current research project, which I call "integration of integral views". My first involvement with integral philosophies was around thirty years ago when I first encountered Rudolf Steiner's writings. The 1970s were exciting times intellectually and culturally as there was an influx of new ideas and cultural movement. As a young psychologist-educator I was influenced by humanist and transpersonal psychology and particularly by critical pedagogy theories, e.g., Paolo Freire (1970) and Ivan Illich (1975). I was also drawn to various postmodern and feminist philosophers, such as Nietzsche, Foucault and de Beauvoir. There was a powerful shift of consciousness beginning to break into the formal academic world from the periphery at this time. My professional work in educational psychology already focused on the marginal voices. I worked with teachers of young people who did not "fit into" mainstream education, and ran a women's community learning centre empowering "house-bound" women to re-enter employment or tertiary education. I was also beginning to study traditional Eastern spiritual philosophies as a balance to my background.

So when I came to Steiner education, in the 1980s, I was already enacting critical theory, though with limited conceptual framework for it. As a professional, I was aware of serious limitations of the factory-like model of mainstream education and, as a mother, did not consider it suitable for my children. I decided to found a Steiner school, but sought to transcend the conservative, cobweb-covered, 19th century version of Steiner education (Gidley, 2008a). The school I founded and pioneered for ten years was a contemporary, creative adaptation of Steiner's work (Steiner, 1894/1964, 1901/1973, 1904/1993, 1909/1965, 1932/1966, 1967, 1971, 1981, 1982, 1990) to late 20th century, sub-tropical rural Australia. I was aware intuitively and experientially of what a powerful and positive educational approach this was but was frustrated to realise that it was completely marginalised by the mainstream academy.

In the 1990s I decided to re-enter the academy, with the aim of both testing my intuitions and finding appropriate language to create dialogue between Steiner's integrative pedagogy and the academy. My Masters research indicated that Steiner-educated students, while holding similar fears and concerns about the future to other students, had a stronger sense of empowerment and capacity to envisage positive preferred futures (Gidley, 1998). Over the next ten years I continued to broaden and deepen my reading, researching and writing about educational and youth futures (Gidley & Hampson, 2008; Gidley & Inayatullah, 2002; Inayatullah & Gidley, 2000), post-colonial alternatives to the factory model of schooling (Gidley, 2001a), the impact of globalisation on young people (Gidley, 2001b, 2004), and the evolution of culture and consciousness (Gidley, 2006, 2007a, 2007b). My doctoral research, which I have just completed, is a culmination and maturing of three decades of research and practice in integral forms of education.

This is a rather long answer to your question, Markus, but around 2000, I rediscovered Wilber's writing (1996a, 1996b, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001) and found that it really resonated with my internalised Steiner philosophy. The more I read of Wilber the
more I was amazed about the similarity between Wilber's ideas and what Steiner was writing a century earlier. I was stunned that in spite of Wilber's claims to be creating an "integral theory of everything" he had pretty much ignored one of the most integral figures of the 20th century —Rudolf Steiner. I decided that I would start a doctoral research project on the relationships between their works. But as I began to follow-up on some of the sources that Wilber referred to, such as Gebser (1949/1985, 1956/1996, 1970/2005, 1972, 1996a, 1996b) and Sri Aurobindo (1909, 1914/2000, 1997), I became drawn into their original writings as well.

As I began to search the literature for others who may have brought these pioneers together academically, I realised that apart from Roland Benedikter's research on Steiner and Wilber (Benedikter, 2005) (most of which is in German) no one else seems to have undertaken any major research project that integrate Steiner's, Gebser's and Wilber's integral contributions. Although I do bring Sri Aurobindo's writing in to some degree, I have not studied his work as intensively as the others, so I am a little more cautious with claims about his work.

MM: You are mentioning that you were amazed about the similarities you discovered between Wilber's and Steiner's approaches, and you dropped a lot of ink since then to make this evident, including Gebser in the comparison as well. Could you try to summarize where exactly the common ground between these three eminent figures of integral thought can be found according to your research?

JG: The first thing I need to say as clarification is that the research I have undertaken on the relationship between Steiner's and Wilber's writings is primarily in relation to the evolution of consciousness, with an emphasis on the present and future emergence of a new type of consciousness. Although I started my research as an even broader comparison between them, because of the vastness of their works—especially Steiner's—I decided it was better to focus on this key issue, which I believe is of great relevance for our times and for education in particular. Although I see a lot of other similarities between their works, I have focused my intensive hermeneutic analysis on their evolutionary works. I have then drawn from this analysis to look at the educational imperatives of the evolution of consciousness. But let's put the educational issue aside for a moment until after I have explained my other findings.

My focus on the evolution of consciousness, and particularly the current emergence of a new movement of consciousness led me to a deeper focus on Gebser's work. For Steiner and Wilber, evolution of consciousness was one of several major themes they each wrote about. Gebser on the other hand was a cultural historian whose best known work *The Ever Present Origin* was primarily an elucidation of the unfolding throughout history of five structures of consciousness (archaic, mythic, magic, mental and integral). I felt that it would add to the objectivity and rigour of my research to use Gebser's five structures of consciousness as a third lens from which to view Steiner's and Wilber's narratives, since Gebser had spent almost two decades researching and substantiating his insights. Even though Wilber has compared Gebser's structures of consciousness with his own stages drawn from other literature, he has also misrepresented Gebser's work in
some of his later writing, by adding another stage (pluralism) between mental and integral, which Gebser did not use. Because of this and other anomalies in Wilber's work, I decided to go to Gebser's own text so that my "third lens" would be objectively drawn from Gebser's actual writing, not Wilber's interpretation of it.

I developed a long interwoven hermeneutic narrative from the writings of these three "eminent figures of integral thought" as you call them. I have worked very closely with their actual texts to try to arrive at their authentic messages. For those who are interested in more detail this has been published in the previous issue of *Integral Review* (Gidley, 2007b). I will try to briefly summarise here some of the key areas of common ground between the three.

Perhaps the most obvious similarity between their ideas on evolution of consciousness is that they have all put forward a more spiritually oriented view of evolution than the mainstream classical Darwinian view. In this regard all three use the term *involution* as well as *evolution*, which connects their ideas with those of Sri Aurobindo. There are some deep and complex philosophical issues underlying these different evolutionary positions, but the idea of involution—or emanation—goes back at least to Plotinus in the third century CE. From Sri Aurobindo's (1914/2000) perspective the notion of involution—that Spirit or consciousness is primary to matter—is as old as the ancient *Vedas*.

A second similarity between all three is that they all identify previous stages in the development of human consciousness up to the intellectual-mental-rational consciousness that is often regarded today as the highest form of thinking that humans are capable of. This can be equated with Piaget's "formal operations." There are strong convergences in the earlier stages they identify, although Gebser rejects words like "stages" and "levels" because of how they were abused in various hegemonic European grand narratives in his time. Significantly, all three refer to the emergence of a new movement of consciousness, which Steiner called "consciousness soul, or spiritual soul," Gebser called "integral-aperspectival," and Wilber calls by various names such as "integral" "vision-logic" and "centaur." Both Steiner and Gebser claimed that the new consciousness began to emerge in Europe in the 15th century and would continue to gather strength in the 20th century and beyond. This is in agreement with Edgar Morin's idea of the emergence of "planetary consciousness" in the 15th century. Wilber's focus is perhaps more strongly on the postformal and transpersonal psychological models of stage development and his cultural historical detail is less consistent.

**MM:** Jenny, can I stop you there for a moment to clarify what you mean that Wilber's "cultural historical detail is less consistent"?

**JG:** Yes, sure, Markus. Wilber's cultural historical detail is rather inconsistent if one compares his earlier writing with his later writing. Wilber's focus in his earlier writings (particularly "Wilber II": e.g., *Atman Project* (Wilber, 1996a) and *Up from Eden* (Wilber, 1996b), and some "Wilber IV", e.g., *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (Wilber, 2000c)) represents a balance between ontogenetic (individual developmental or Upper Left) and phylogenetic (cultural historical or Lower Left) perspectives. However, from *Integral*
Psychology (Wilber, 2000b) (late “Wilber IV”), he begins to focus more strongly on the postformal and transpersonal psychological models of stage development, drawing on numerous psychological theories which he then compares with the cultural-historical and sociological theories of Gebser, Habermas and others. Because most of the sociocultural evolution theorists he chooses to discuss do not theorise stages beyond formal/modernist or postformal/postmodernist (except for Duane Elgin) Wilber begins to draw more strongly on theories from transpersonal psychology and spiritual development to support his claims for higher cultural stages. Unfortunately because he did not research Steiner’s theories more fully he seems unaware that Steiner was also a socio-cultural macrohistorian who theorised higher/future cultural stages (see Galtung & Inayatullah, 1997). I intend to undertake further research on this area. In Integral Psychology, drawing more strongly on the postformal psychology literature, he begins to conflate the developmental psychology stages and Gebser’s cultural historical research. Wilber appears to associate both “pluralisim (early vision-logic)” and “universal integralism (middle to late vision-logic)” with Gebser’s integral-aperspectival structure (Wilber 2000b, pp. 26-27, 167-168). However, in Integral Spirituality (Wilber, 2006) (his main “Wilber V” publication), he begins to apply the psychological stages to Gebser’s cultural worldviews, incorrectly attributing to Gebser an additional stage “pluralistic” between “rational” and “integral” (pp. 68-69). This is not correct and thus leads me to conclude that his cultural historical detail is less consistent than his psycho-developmental research. If you are interested, I have discussed these issues in more depth in my article The Evolution of Consciousness as a Planetary Imperative (Gidley, 2007b, pp. 100-101, 119-120).

There is so much that emerged from my research that it is difficult to summarise without glossing, which I do not want to do. Some of the common themes in their ideas about the emergent consciousness are that:

1) it integrates previous structures of consciousness;
2) it transcends the dualisms of spirit and matter (e.g. Steiner's spiritual-science), masculine and feminine (e.g., Gebser's integrum), logic and imagination (e.g., Wilber's vision-logic);
3) it has a component of awakening spiritual awareness;
4) it is self-reflective and conscious of its own language, though this is emphasised more strongly by Steiner and Gebser than Wilber.

But this is just a beginning, Markus. One of my interests in this research, as someone who has been working with Steiner's seminal ideas for decades, is why Steiner's major contributions to so many fields has been so ignored—not only in the mainstream academy, but also in much of integral theory. Some of the fascinating things that I have discovered about Steiner's contribution to this discourse are that he began to speak and write about the evolution of consciousness as early as 1904 (ten years before Sri Aurobindo, decades before Gebser and Teilhard de Chardin, and almost a century before Wilber). Steiner was also using the term integral in a similar way to Sri Aurobindo and Gebser long before the others. For example, he was writing about "integral evolution" compared with "Darwinian evolution" as early as 1906. Ironically, none of this
outstanding contribution appears in the integral canon developed by Wilber. By contrast, Steiner’s significant contribution has been acknowledged in the theorising of integral philosophers from the California Institute of Integral Studies (McDermott, 1996, 2001; Tarnas, 1991). I have discussed these findings in more detail in my doctoral dissertation (Gidley, 2008b).

Finally, as I have no interest in taking a syncretic approach, which only synthesises the similarities between them in some kind of new universalising meta-narrative, I have also focused on their differences—the particularities in their views and approaches (Gidley, 2007b).

MM: I wouldn’t go deeper into the differences between Wilber, Steiner and Gebser in this dialogue, even if we agree that we should always consider similarities and differences together. It would take another dialogue to dive into this. Rather, I would like to turn now to educational practice and ask you whether you think that the cross-validation of the similarities between these authors gives a new impulse to educational reform engaged with what you call the factory model of mainstream education?

JG: Markus, we have hit upon a very complex issue here. Yet to put it simply, my integration of integral research on the evolution of consciousness strengthened my intuition that education urgently needs to evolve. This would be in keeping with the emergent changes in consciousness that are generally referred to as postformal, integral and/or planetary.

There are a number of threads that play into the multifaceted tapestry that I have been identifying, if education as a whole is to become responsive to the significant implications of the evolution of consciousness. Factors that need to be considered include at least historical, geographic and developmental levels of education.

In terms of geographic, I have not studied in depth the history of education in non-western geographies, so my comments are primarily in reference to European developments, which have been picked up in the Anglo-speaking world. These developments have subsequently influenced the current globalising agenda to introduce what I call the "factory model of education" to the rest of the world, particularly via the World Bank's "Education for All" agenda (Gidley, 2001a). In relation to levels of education most of my research has been related to school education although the evolutionary imperative also applies to higher education as I have also indicated (Gidley, 2006). I will not discuss this here as it is particularly complex when one begins to take into account Indian, Chinese, Arab/Islamic and Israeli streams of higher education—all of which arguably preceded the European academies and universities.

In terms of historical perspectives on school education, I have identified three broad phases in my research: 1) "informal education" via family/tribal enculturation, elite tutoring, and private religious schooling, prior to the beginnings of mass public education approximately two hundred years ago; 2) "formal school education," from late 18th to 20th centuries in Europe, USA and increasingly in other parts of the world last century; and 3)
what I am referring to as "a diversity of postformal pedagogies," beginning in the late 20th century and—one would hope—flourishing throughout the 21st century and beyond.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, which embedded modernist ideas into the socio-cultural fabric of Western society, education for children was not such a formal process, even in the Western world. Children were enculturated by their extended families and cultures and only the children of the wealthy—who could afford private tutors—or who wished to become clerics, had any 'formal' education (Holborn, 1964). Earlier integrally-inspired educational reform had been initiated in the 17th century by Moravian educational theorist Johann Ámos Komenský (more frequently called by his Latin name Comenius) who wrote the influential Didactica Magna, which proposed a three tier universal schooling system for all children (Dahlin, 2006). Subsequently in Germany, the notion of the evolution of consciousness, which was a major contribution of German idealists and romantics such as Goethe, Hegel, Schelling and Novalis, contributed to the initial impulse for mass public school education, which began in Germany in the late 18th century. This was carried forward particularly through Schiller's aesthetic educational principles (Schiller, 1954/1977), Herbart's integrative pedagogical system (Klein, 2006) and Humboldt's implementation of public education (Holborn, 1964). However, after the deaths of these leading German philosophers, by the middle of the 19th century the idealist-romantic educational project was largely hijacked in Western Europe by the gradual influence of the British Industrial Revolution, so that schools increasingly became training grounds to provide fodder for the factories. This factory model of school education was picked up in the USA around one hundred and fifty years ago (Dator, 2000).

MM: This long-term historical contextualisation seems quite important to me because we often remain caught in our day-to-day business. It shows that the invention of the modern school is linked to complex interactions between certain philosophical worldviews, the formation of nation-states, industrialisation (and secularisation). The specific mix and phasing between these ingredients has actually been somehow different in different countries, but the result at latest in the 20th century was very much comparable all over the place: a public compulsory school system with different types of schools. It seemed to be useful to a certain degree and represent an adaptive advantage, in the framework of such an overall societal configuration. But today we have a pretty much different situation. We might come back to this question later.

The educational systems grew and grew throughout the 20th century almost everywhere with regard to the allocated resources, the number of teachers, pupils and students, degrees delivered and so on. Illich’s (1975) profound criticism back in the 1970’s was basically that such a system will never deliver on its promises, that it will necessarily contribute to produce social exclusion and deepen the dependence on so-called educational experts. A decade ago or so the former French minister of education Claude Allègre claimed, much more pragmatically and without questioning schooling as such, that “it is necessary to trim the fat of the mammoth”. This became a very famous, often repeated phrase in order to criticize the state bureaucracy built to manage and control the educational system.
Despite various kinds of partly divergent, partly convergent criticism the educational mammoths seem well and alive until today, viewed from the quantitative perspective. This holds true even after the neo-liberal fat reduction cures preceded here and there, even if they have caused upheavals among teachers, parents and students because of worsening conditions for teaching and learning in the era of mass education. At the same time and based on the same ideology the new public governance models floated into the educational systems conveying more autonomy to individual schools in a whole array of countries and regions. So, none of these unfolding steps can be painted in black and white alone. But despite such never ending waves of educational reforms, little qualitative, transformative change seems to occur in these educational systems as a whole, after all.

JG: I have begun to use the phrase "evolving education" as an alternative to "educational reform" or even "educational transformation." This is because I want to highlight the scope of the transition we, as humans in a planetary age, are undergoing. The notion of "educational reform" very often only tinkers at the surface of appearances—a bit like rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic. While the notion of "educational transformation" potentially goes further than "reform," it can be limited by the philosophical perspective—or even ideology—that it subscribes to. The meaning that I ascribe to my notion of "evolving education" is one that connects education more consciously with the evolution of new patterns of thinking that appear in so many disciplines and fields throughout the 20th century. These new patterns of thinking are often referred to collectively as the “evolution of consciousness” and can be observed in:

- the transition from Newtonian mechanical physics to Einstein's relativity and quantum physics;
- the transition from classical biology, including Darwin's theories of evolution to the new biology’s, such as chaos and complexity theory, self-organisation and emergence;
- the philosophical transition from modernism to postmodernism and poststructuralism;
- the transition from disciplinary to multi-, inter-, post- and transdisciplinary;
- the emergence of new rational discourses on spirituality not limited by religious doctrines;
- the transition from studying the past to an awareness of the value of foresight and futures thinking, in parallel, paradoxically, with the deconstruction of the modernist, linear narrative of time.

The research in all of these areas has increased dramatically in the last 40 years, and more so in the last decade and has very significant implications for education. My research creates conceptual links between all these changes and the need for the transition from formal, factory-model schooling and university education to a plurality of postformal pedagogies (Gidley, submitted).

MM: You just took great care to reframe my initial question, historically and terminologically. This is quite helpful. I agree completely with you that we should consider the current challenges to the late factory model of schooling and the upcoming
horizons of integral education taken together, dialectically, as one of the very very few major transitions in the cultural evolution of education. The other day, however, I listened to a presentation of an educational researcher (Tröhler, 2007) based on his ongoing empirical research on school curricula in different European countries throughout the last two hundred years. One of Daniel’s main claims was that the fundamental grammar of schooling (Tylack & Tobin, 1994) in the basically national educational systems, i.e. a curriculum based on small recurrent set of separate subject matters taught in uniform fixed time slots to age homogeneous groups, has proven to be almost completely resistant to change underneath the continuous cycles of surface reforms. According to these results, he told his audience as a conclusion, it is unwarranted to believe in the very possibility to change educational systems substantially and that there is some good to this. Do you think this claim is a realistic position or does it lack this long-term perspective of cultural evolution and evolution of consciousness with major leaps occurring across societal sectors once in a while?

JG: Yes Markus, the institution of mass public education has been pretty static since its inception two hundred years ago. But I think I am a bit more of an optimist than that. Firstly, I find it helpful to view education in its broader cultural context, as only one of the types of enculturation that cultures provide for their young people. I have recently begun to look at the evolution of education in the context of Foucault’s archaeological concepts of connaissance in relation to the institution of education, and savoir for the broader cultural context or worldview (Scheurich & McKenzie, 2005). This gives me some hope as I believe it is inevitable that the institution of education (that is, schools, colleges and universities) will evolve as the cultural milieu evolves. This is why I have shifted the emphasis of my own thinking and research, from my earlier focus on the futures of education per se, to my current broader focus on evolution of consciousness. My understanding of the situation is that there will be no substantial change to the system and institution of education without a change to the way we think and view the world. That is why I have taken such an interest in creating conceptual bridges between the evolution of consciousness discourse, particularly the integral evolutionary views of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber, and the education discourse.

I have also discussed elsewhere that in addition to the various integral approaches, there is evidence to support the evolution of consciousness from the adult developmental psychology research on postformal reasoning (Bassett, 2005; M. Commons et al., 1990; M. L. Commons & Richards, 2002; Cowan & Todorovic, 2005; Kohlberg, 1990; Labouvie-Vief, 1992; Sinnott, 1998, 2005; Torbert, 2004), and also from the eco-philosophical literature on planetary consciousness (Benedikter, 2007; Earley, 1997; Elgin, 1997; Gangadean, 2006; László, 2006; Montuori, 1999; Morin & Kern, 1999; Nicolescu, 2002; Russell, 2000; Swimme & Tucker, 2006).

I have scanned the educational literature (NB: I am "language challenged" and limited to Anglophone literature) for signs of emerging pedagogies that are reflecting one or more of the features of postformal, integral or planetary consciousness. I have to say that there is a lot of encouraging material being written about new educational approaches in the last decade. There is also a very powerful neo-fundamentalist backlash in the Anglo
countries from government-backed educrats who seek to dominate the educational agenda with scientism, economism and technicism—through the "audit culture." On the other hand there are also several educational theorists and researchers who are attempting to expose and counter this reactionary neo-conservatism (Abbs, 2003; Coryn, Schröter, & Scriven, 2005; Denzin, 2005; MacLure, 2006).

**MM:** Of course. But despite the fact that Daniel Tröhler agreed with me that alternative schools do co-exist with the mainstream system in many countries, he argued that these schools never spread enough, and their educational approaches never gained enough influence to challenge the hegemony of the traditional grammar of schooling. Factually this is true in most countries to date. How would you counter his argument keeping in mind that there are a great many children, youth and adults yearning for learning environments fundamentally different from the factory model?

**JG:** I think we are experiencing what I would call a third wave of educational impulses to evolve education since the beginning of the 20th century. Although much of European and Anglo education did lose its initial idealist/romantic impulse during the 19th century, and succumbed to the weight of industrialism and secularism, new threads began to emerge in various parts of the world in the early 20th century. We had Montessori and Steiner in Europe, Whitehead in the UK, Dewey in the USA and Sri Aurobindo in India all pioneering more integral, organic educational approaches that provided a counter-weight to the factory model. They emphasised imagination, aesthetics, organic thinking, practical engagement, creativity, spirituality, and other features that reflect the emergent integral consciousness. However, as you say these approaches have mostly remained marginalised, or in the case of Dewey's initiative, been appropriated in a reduced form by the mainstream system as so called "progressive education."

What I call the second wave was sparked by the dramatic consciousness changes that began in 1968 with the student protests in Paris, followed rapidly by the 1969 Woodstock Peace Festival in the USA, which laid foundations for a youth peace movement against the Vietnam War. These events arguably marked the beginning of various "new age" movements, including participatory politics, new forms of music, east-west spiritual-philosophical dialogues, new gender relations, post-nuclear family lifestyles and recreational use of drugs. These movements were taken up quite strongly in the Anglo countries, particularly in pockets of the US and, at least indirectly, began to shift ideas about formal education. The 1970s to 1990s saw a broadening of alternative educational modes, including home-schooling (Holt, 1970), holistic education (J. Miller, 1990; R. Miller, 1999, 2000), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Illich, 1975), futures education (Fien, 1998; Gough, 1989; Hicks, 1998; Rogers, 1998; Slaughter, 1989), and a raft of educational reforms within mainstream settings. All were critical of the formal, modernist 'factory-model' of mass education. Most sought to broaden education beyond the simple information-processing model based on a mechanistic view of the human being to a more holistic, creative, multifaceted, embodied and participatory approach. Yet not all honour the spiritual needs or the multi-layered nature of the developing child, as part of a consciously evolving human species. Furthermore, these approaches are still minor threads and unfortunately most approaches are also isolationist in relation to each other.
This brings us to what I would call the *third wave* approaches to evolving education reflected in the plethora of new "postformal pedagogies" which have emerged, particularly over the last decade. Some of these aim to—or at least claim to—integrate all previous approaches.

**MM:** How then could integral and transdisciplinary ideas and practices for education have a greater impact on the grammar of schooling—Goliath as, historically, the alternative pedagogies and educational reform approaches have had? Which ones most probably?

**JG:** There are several different approaches to integral theory—and thus to integral education—that I have identified and perhaps we need to identify those before we go any further. In my doctoral research I have proposed a new frame through which to view the complementary nature of several significant integral theorists (Gidley, 2008b). For the purposes of this delicate theorising I focused on five integral theorists: Gebser, László, Sri Aurobindo, Steiner and Wilber; and two transdisciplinary theorists: Edgar Morin and Basarab Nicolescu. My framing includes several metaphoric perspectives, introducing five—mostly new—terms to integral theory: *macro-integral*, *meso-integral*, *micro-integral*, *participatory-integral*, and *transversal-integral*. I can only briefly summarise them here.

By *macro-integral* I am referring to the extent to which the integral theorist includes all major fields of knowledge. I suggest that at this macro-layer of conceptual integration, Wilber's AQAL framework makes a highly significant contribution and this is where his strength lies (Wilber, 2000a, 2004). While Steiner and Gebser are also macro-integral theorists, their work has been seriously marginalised in this area.

By *meso-integral* I am referring to the extent to which the integral theorist contributes significantly to theory building within particular fields or theories. I propose that Ervin László's contribution is highly significant in this domain (László, 2007). Sri Aurobindo's integral approach could also be regarded as a significant contribution, albeit also a marginalised one, given that his philosophy provides a foundation for much of the later integral theory development.

By *micro-integral* I am referring to the extent to which the integral theorist makes detailed contributions to specific disciplines or fields through the *application* of their integral theory. In this domain of detailed application of integral theory to a wide range of disciplines and professional fields, Steiner's extraordinary contribution can no longer continue to be ignored by integral theorists.

The notion of *participatory-integral* is based on the integral transformative education theory of Jorge Ferrer (Ferrer, Romero, & Albareda, 2005) whose participatory approach is inspired by Sri Aurobindo's integration of the three yogas of *knowledge, love and action*, which is in turn aligned to Steiner's *thinking/head, feeling/heart* and *willing/hands*. 
Finally, I propose a new concept via the term *transversal-integral* that refers to integral approaches that include and cut across these vertical and horizontal levels/dimensions. From my planetary scanning of the research it is apparent that the term *integral* is much more widely used in North America than in Europe. By contrast the term *transdisciplinary* appears to be used in Europe, particularly by Nicolescu and Morin, with similar integral intent (Morin, 2001; Morin & Kern, 1999; Nicolescu, 2002, n. d.). Morin and Nicolescu do not tend to use the term *integral*, nor are they cited as integral theorists in much of the integral literature. I suggest this is an unfortunate oversight based on semantic and cultural misunderstanding, rather than philosophical understanding. A special feature of both Nicolescu's and Morin's transdisciplinary, planetary philosophies is their attention to *transversal* relationships—hence my new term *transversal-integral*, which allows for their seminal writings to be included as part of a transnational, integral theory.

**MM:** You are right: there are a lot of writings not self-categorizing as integral while being a manifestation of the “integral” wave of consciousness. I would add Roy Bhaskar here (Bhaskar 2002a, and 2002b with a chapter on “educating the educators - or empowering teachers”). The complex history of all those approaches has still to be written, but even if we are yet lacking a scholarly approach to this history it is up to us not to remain stuck in one of them, and to take care to find out about their specific strengths and weaknesses.

I am pleased that you mention Morin and Nicolescu. I have been living in France for a couple of years, a place where Wilber is almost unknown because none of his recent books has been translated into French to date, whereas Morin is a kind of a national monument publishing books since 1946 straight ahead until now, and he is still appearing frequently on TV shows, in the radio and in newspapers. The influence of Morin spreads quite impressively across the Roman language countries in Europe and the Americas. Further research is likely to uncover preferential cultural-linguistic influence spheres of different integral and transdisciplinary authors.

Interestingly, like Steiner and Sri Aurobindo/The Mother, while promoting overarching and cross-cutting approaches, Morin and Nicolescu, have specifically talked and written about education (Morin, 2001, 2008; Nicolescu, 1997, 2005, 2008, n.d.). Their intention is precisely to trigger new educational structures and approaches and not only to contribute new content to be learnt in the old system. Two years ago the fully-fledged university intentionally called rather real life multiversity (precisely “La multiversidad Mundo Real Edgar Morin”) has been founded in Mexico with the help of a generous donor according to Morin’s educational imperatives. By the way, this university is hosting an international congress on complex thought and education later this year where Morin and Nicolescu will give the keynotes.

In Wilber’s work, however, as prolific a writer as he is and in spite of how many fields he is touching and connecting, education is one of the most neglected topics until today. Other authors have started to draw on the AQAL model to think more integrally about education, and some of them have their own gathering this summer in the United States, “exploring the leading edge of education theory and practice”. This is valuable, of
course, but I guess the leading edge can only truly be explored in its manifold forms and places of manifestation taken together.

The existing parallel universes of these many self-declared leading edges appear as curious to me as they do to you. At least, I am not aware of any intentional cross-connection between them besides very first timid attempts here in Integral Review. And there are still many many other relevant strands out there never mentioned together while sharing much of their goals and values. In order to illustrate this claim just let me take me some arbitrary examples from my much more extensive list.

There is the neo-humanist education tradition inspired by Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar (1998, Inayatullah et al, 2006) and their schools and training institutes all over the world, the global network developed by the Shapers of Education International Foundation based in the Netherlands and coordinated by Charlotte Korbee, the international UNIPAZ network inspired by Pierre Weil in Brazil deploying their holistic peace education programme in various places, or the shots of such singular figures as Steven Harrison (2002), co-founder of the Living School in Boulder as a real life example. By the way Steven has been literally a neighbour of Ken Wilber there for years. Did they ever meet? I don’t know.

In the end, they all seem to have their very own publications, supporter’s network, projects, trainings, meetings and conferences. This state of affairs is profoundly self-contradictory with regard to the integral and transdisciplinary programmatic stance to integrate knowledge and practices from all kind of sources regardless their cultural origins and paradigmatic traditions. It’s even more self-contradictory because the movements I just mentioned, as those you have mentioned - Steiner’s most strongly - have already developed at a global scale. As a summary we must state that we are witnessing today a major inconsistency in the deployment of integral and transdisciplinary educational thought and practice: geographically it seems to be already rather globalised (with some differential distribution though as mentioned before), and paradigmatically it seems to be rather fragmented - at the same time! If we finally decide to take the core role of education for the inevitable societal macroshift towards global sustainable development seriously then we simply cannot afford any longer this state of affairs.

JG: Well, Markus, I am enjoying this dialogue as I can see how aligned our passions are to try to develop a broader, more embracing approach to integral education. I am very interested to hear about Morin’s multiversity in Mexico and the conference there. I have also, for your interest looked a little bit into the relationships among Sarker’s neo-humanist education and Steiner’s and Wilber’s approaches for a conference presentation in Taiwan a couple of years ago (Gidley, 2005). That reminds me, there is an interesting integral education project in China also, initiated by Professor Fan Yihong, who previously studied in collaboration with David Scott’s Community for Integrative Learning and Action (CILA) in Amherst, Massachusetts (Yihong, 2002, 2005). I also agree that Integral Review is playing a very significant role in providing a scholarly

INTEGRAL REVIEW · June 2008 · Vol. 4, No. 1
There are two major approaches that are identified as "integral education" in North America—integral education based on Sri Aurobindo's early 20th century philosophy (for example, as reflected in the California Institute of Integral Studies) and integral education based on Ken Wilber's AQAL framework. There was a double special issue of ReVision: The Journal of Consciousness and Change on "integral education" in 2005 and 2006, which was quite strongly influenced by Sri Aurobindo's approach to integral (with some exceptions). It is worth following up for those interested. The following year, 2007, there was a special issue of Wilber's AQAL: Journal of Integral Theory and Practice on "integral education," which was primarily based on Wilber's theories. Although Wilber's theory espouses to "transcend and include" other approaches, I was disappointed in some of these articles for their lack of scholarly research on other neighbouring pedagogies, even other integral approaches (Crittendon, 2007; Zeitler, 2007). Such a technicist and uncritical approach to applying the AQAL model does not, in my opinion, reflect a fully integral approach nor does it forward the academic reception of integral education theory.

One of my concerns is that integral theory creation to date has been seriously hampered by internal rivalry, factionalism and, ironically, lack of integration of neighbouring perspectives. This also applies so far to the two major "integral education" approaches in North America: Sri Aurobindo's and Wilber's. In my research I identify a third major integral education approach: Steiner/Waldorf education. As part of my integration of integrals, I undertook an AQAL analysis of Steiner education and found that it fulfilled all the criteria of Wilber's Integral Operating System (quadrants, level, lines, states and types). This analysis can be found in Educational Imperatives of the Evolution of Consciousness: The Integral Visions of Rudolf Steiner and Ken Wilber (Gidley, 2007a). In the light of this analysis it is clearly important that Steiner pedagogy be given more serious consideration by AQAL-oriented integral education theorists, who so far have had little to say on school education. Furthermore, the emphasis in Steiner pedagogy on integrating thinking/head, feeling/heart and willing/hands is significantly aligned to Sri Aurobindo's integration of the three yogas of knowledge, love and action. It is important that integrally-minded educators give serious consideration to these and other existing approaches.

In my view, an authentically integral education would embrace the rich diversity of postformal and planetary pedagogical approaches that are out there, globally, in these urgent planetary times. It would also learn from pioneering integral approaches to education, such as Steiner pedagogy that has been operating globally, with a conscious intention towards the evolution of consciousness and higher order thinking for almost eighty years. It is ironic that integral educators such as Robert McDermott (2005) and Alfonso Montuori (1997, 2006), and holistic educators such as Ron Miller (2000, 2005, 2006) and Tobin Hart (2001a, 2001b) appear to have done more thorough research on the alternative approaches than have most of the educational writers in the AQAL Journal. Ron Miller's holistic educational philosophy seems the broadest and includes Steiner's, Montessori's and Sri Aurobindo's pedagogies as well as Wilber's integral as significant
integrative approaches to be considered (Miller, 1990, 1999). Current research is also underway to extend integral education theory through considering indigenous perspectives, the history of the university, the development of different sciences, and “integral education” in nineteenth century Europe (Hampson, Forthcoming).

To me the call for integral education theory is to contextualise itself academically in the long history of integral philosophies, east and west, and to contextualise itself geographically within transnational, transcultural, planetary discourses that go beyond the Anglo-American integral discourse.

MM: As a European working in a multilingual country in two other languages besides English I can systematically state the lack of consideration and integration of material not translated into English on - what is somehow quickly called - the “international level”. Particularly in the field of educational research, because of the nation-state boundness of the public educational systems, the papers and books produced in the national languages represent still the major part of the overall research output in this field, at least in the larger countries. As far as my observation goes the upcoming field of integral education cannot claim to be an exception. Existing books and papers are generally not translated. If this holds true already between the Anglosaxon world and continental Europe, both being parts of the dominant “North Atlantic belt”, the one-way ignorance with regard to other parts of the world is necessarily even more pronounced. This structural imbalance is a major barrier to developing those transnational dialogues on integral education and planetary consciousness you are rightly putting on the agenda. In this context, and because you started with mentioning special issues, I would like to add the 2005 special issue on transdisciplinary education of the Rencontres Transdisciplinaires, which is the journal of Nicolescu’s International (!) Center for Transdisciplinary Research (the major part of the 17 contributions are in French, a few are in English).

JG: Thanks Markus. It sounds like there is a great need for some funding for cross-lingual translation of emerging integral pedagogical literature. I think that the strengthening of multilingualism is crucial in the advancement of transnational dialogue to further the emergence of planetary consciousness.

In addition, I have identified over a dozen emerging pedagogical approaches that in some way, either directly or indirectly, facilitate the evolution of postformal-integral-planetary consciousness. I have begun the process of hermeneutic dialogue among them, but of course much more research needs to be done. These include: aesthetic and artistic education; complexity in education; critical and postcolonial pedagogies; environmental/ecological education; futures education; holistic education; imagination and creativity in education; integral education; planetary/global education; postformality in education; postmodern and poststructuralist pedagogies; spirituality in education; transformative education; wisdom in education. These are all part of what I am calling the third wave of educational evolution. It is too much detail for this interview to list all the many references that relate to these approaches, but I have explored this literature in detail elsewhere, including how these new pedagogies intersect with four themes that I
identified in the evolution of consciousness discourse (Gidley, submitted). As you can see this is a complex area and it is certainly not a simple matter of applying one brand of integral theory to education as some kind of "universal fix-it all."

**MM:** In this field there is definitely enough work to do for dozens of Ph.D. students. And I completely agree with you that we cannot stress enough the importance to intentionally cross the boundaries of cultures, languages, conceptual frameworks and prototypes of educational practices. Planetary consciousness cannot reasonably be promoted as an educational goal, if educational theorists do not, themselves, enact practices of learning about and integrating third wave educational discourses worldwide. Besides these important scholarly issues, where precisely do you see fields for promising action and reflection for integrally minded educators without fighting like Don Quichotte and becoming exhausted and frustrated?

**JG:** I think that we are really in the very early stages of integral consciousness being embodied in the world. Because of this, integral education is very much in its infancy. You ask how integrally minded educators may contribute to the bigger quest of transforming or even evolving education on a planetary scale, without becoming exhausted and frustrated. I was speaking recently to one of my futurist friends about how frustrating it is that even though there are all these amazing initiatives going on in the world that are trying to change things for the better, the weight of the status quo seems to resist it at every turn. His response was that the very pluralism of the change initiatives works against them, whereas among conservatives there is a unity of perspective: they all want the same thing—they don't want change! To me the only way that integrally minded educators can muster enough strength to enact the kind of meta-change that is required is to dialogue, dialogue, dialogue. Only by enacting conversations among the rich pluralism of postformal, integral, planetary pedagogies will we begin to have an adequate picture of the rich tapestry of evolutionary change that is already happening before our very eyes.

My research interest has been to identify and cohere what Nicolescu calls the "luxuriance of the plural" when it comes to educational approaches. By bringing them into relationship with each other we no longer have one "integral education brand"—whether it be Wilber's or Sri Aurobindo's or any other—but rather a *unitas multiplex* of postformal-integral-planetary approaches that can learn from each other, inspire each other and give strength to each other. This is what *evolving education* means to me.

**MM:** We talked quite extensively now about the horizons of the third wave of educational approaches. You mentioned as well that seeds of this latest wave have been somehow present already inside the first wave and then partly forgotten or marginalized. If integral means to acknowledge and to value the positive and productive aspects of all unfolding waves, let me ask you, finally, which aspects of the traditional model of compulsory schooling are good, efficient and helpful and need to be preserved in a larger, integral embrace?

**JG:** Markus, I think there is a danger in creating a polarising narrative between the traditional model of education and an integral approach, or even as Sean Esbjörn-Hargens.
(2006) suggests a three-type model of traditional, alternative and integral/AQAL. There is no doubt that the model of mass public school education that developed during the industrial era has delivered many benefits in the past both for individuals and for society. There is no question that there have been enormous social benefits for multitudes of young people who would not have had access to any formal education in the pre-modern era where school education was only available to the elite. My intention in using the metaphor of “factory” in relation to schooling is to highlight the industrial era underpinning of the schooling model that has become the myth-of-the-given, in order to beg the question as to whether that still needs to be the dominant metaphor in a post-industrial, planetary era. In a post-Newtonian, post-mechanistic, post-industrial integral age what new metaphors may be more suitable? The garden model perhaps? Or the forest model? Or even the extended family model? We need to think very carefully and creatively about the deep metaphors that underlie how we think about education. But this would be the subject of another discussion perhaps.

On the other hand if by the traditional model we mean the original model of universal and free public education proposed by Comenius in the 17th century and initiated by Humboldt in Germany two hundred years ago, then I think there is a lot to be gained from a careful historical study of this early pedagogy. Gary Hampson’s research is relevant in this regard (Hampson, forthcoming). After all, this model was first inspired by the unitive spiritual humanism of Comenius and later by the German idealist and romantic philosophers who were far more integrally aware than many of the educrats who have been writing national curricula in the world for the past hundred years. Some of the original inspirations included the head, heart and hands approach of Pestalozzi, the integrative interdisciplinary pedagogy of Herbart, the aesthetic educational approach of Schiller and the future orientation of Novalis. Although I have talked quite a lot about the factory model of education myself, upon reflection, I think the more we forget about models altogether and create living approaches that breathe with their local/global environment the more quickly the connaissance of institutional education will become imbued with the evolving savoir.

**MM:** Jenny, this seems to me a perfect remark for bracketing our stimulating discussion. I must say that I terribly enjoyed the cycle of learning throughout this interview ending up here with questioning and dissolving some conceptual distinctions we used initially to make our way through the complexity of the topic. I think this is a good example of how to practice a kind of awareness, which is absolutely crucial to learning. Each and every concept or model (as set of interrelated concepts) we might ever use is opening up and hiding away something at the same time.

As synchronicity goes, while conducting this interview with you, I finally received the book of Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah (1997) on macrohistory and macrohistorians I ordered a long time ago. In the domain of macrohistory Sohail - with whom you have published a book on the university in transformation – (Inayatullah & Gidley, 2000) and his co-authors (among them the presencing Otto Scharmer) pursue a similar attempt to the one you are pushing forward in the field of evolution of consciousness and education, i.e. stimulating cross-fertilization between vanguard
thinkers, for the sake of transversal-integral horizons of thought and practice. So, to wrap it all up, let me take some short quotes from the macrohistory-book, which are resonating pretty well, I think, with your approach to evolving education.

All these “metaphors create worlds: They fix stages, entrances and exits. Then we can ask if there are ways to transcend these worlds our words have created” (p. 160). All these models “will be seen as inspiring and important except when or if people really start believing in them ... From this point on they become dangerous ...” (p. 203). All these authors “have insights, but they are in no way infallible guides; certainly not singly, but not combined either. Eventually, we are to live in the future - only then will we know” (p. 243).

Thank you so much, Jenny, for having taken so much time for chewing rather than eschewing my questions, many of them difficult to answer, I admit! I am looking very much forward to pursuing and deepening this dialogue on other occasions.

JG: It has been my pleasure to engage in this dialogue with you, Markus.

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An Approach to Integral Consciousness and Politics: An Interview with Steve McIntosh
(Author of Integral Consciousness and CEO of Zen and Now)

Russ Volckmann

I first came across Steve McIntosh’s name as the author of the book Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution: How the Integral Worldview is Transforming Politics, Culture and Spirituality. Here was a work that linked integral theory to the idea of worldview, evolution, politics and culture, even spirituality. What a bonanza!

I was intrigued to discover that McIntosh is the Founder and CEO of the company, Zen and Now, designers and distributors of clocks, timers and other products using natural acoustic sounds and natural hardwood materials. I am always interested in how business leaders are attracted to and using integral approaches to their work. In McIntosh’s case, as an entrepreneur and executive, the book was a bonus for interviewing him for the Integral Leadership Review (March 2008). In that interview our focus was very much on his business and his role. When it was completed, I felt that there was still a lot more valuable ground to explore and invited McIntosh to participate in a second interview that would focus more on his perspective on integral theory and its implications.

In the book, he builds on the work of Ken Wilber, Spiral Dynamics® and other philosophies, theories and models, while offering some critiques that show that he, too, might stake his claim to be viewed as a philosopher in his own right. Here is a sample of the perspective he brings,

I have a direct personal experience of integral consciousness, and thus I know that it is a historically significant new level because I can see how extremely useful it is. Yet integral consciousness is more than just a tool for problem solving; it’s an identity-providing platform for cultural allegiance, a worldview that invites our passion and our loyalty. As integral practitioners we have to see ourselves as ambassadors of the future.

I wanted to learn more about this passion and its nuances. To begin with, I came to understand that much of work on theory and research and application is about the future, is about a creative process and thereby brings meaning to our work. I wanted to learn more about an approach that allows us to use more integrative approaches. I wanted to discover the potential for such approaches to bring different paths to engaging the challenges we face on so many levels of our—and the world’s—existence. This interview is the result.

— Russ Volckmann
RUSS: Steve, it seems to me that a critical foundational piece in your work has to do with the idea of the dialectic, whether we’re talking about a Hegelian dialectic or a Gravesian developmental dialectic. Would you comment on that?

STEVE: Sure. Integral philosophy is primarily a philosophy of evolution. And as we come to better see and understand evolution, when we see it in cosmology, biology, consciousness and culture, we can begin to detect certain things about the overarching master system of evolution, or how evolution works overall, especially in the realm of consciousness and culture. This reveals the process that is being enacted by evolution. And it exists across scale; that is, it is a process of development that acts at the micro and macro levels of development. Of course, this process is the well-known dialectic of development.

The term “dialectic” can be found in Ancient Greek philosophy, where it was more about a dialogue between people. However, since Hegel, the dialectic has been understood as a process whereby conflicting systems overcome themselves through a kind of transcendent synthesis. Most people are familiar with the terms “thesis,” “antithesis” and “synthesis.” But those terms have been criticized as a kind of vulgarization of the dialectic. There is a danger when you break this process down into its parts that you could lose the essential truth of the dialectic—that it is more of an integrated process as a whole rather than a series of steps.

However, seeing a moving process as a series of steps can be helpful in understanding the process. For example, until motion picture film was invented people didn’t understand how horses ran in terms of the order that they put their feet down. But when they first filmed horses running, they were able to look at the frozen frames of their feet, so they began to understand how horses ran because they could see it in stopped motion. So understanding the dialectic in terms of “thesis,” “antithesis” and “synthesis” is a useful construct; it allows us to see how the horse runs, if you will, and it gives us a snapshot of this moving system. As long as we keep in mind that the dialectic of development is this process by which the universe develops and greater degrees of complexity and integration are achieved, we can see that this process of dialectical development has discrete elements, but we don’t lose sight of the fact that it’s a moving system as a whole.

Q: As I think of the evolutionary perspective in your writing and in the notion of the dialectic, I see an optimistic way of viewing life. There is movement and change towards some higher stage, whether it’s higher levels of complexity and capacity to engage complexity or whatever it might be. One of my favorite authors—someone who has influenced me considerably over the years—is Charles Hampden-Turner. He put together a model of psycho-social development back in the late 60’s, early 70’s that is a dialectic and involves interactions between two people (or groups). In addition to the dialectic developmental model, he offers an anomic model—going up and going down—showing that there are processes of disintegration and integration. I did find reference to regression in your writing, but I never got an understanding as to whether you see us as being in a continuous progressive process, or whether there is something more complex going on.
A: Certainly, if you just look at the evolutionary record, regression, stagnation—these things are always a possibility. Evolution is never simply a unilinear advance towards greater perfection. Sometimes we definitely have to go backwards. Whether this is built into the system with some kind of regularity, whether regression is somehow part of the formula of the dialectic, I have to admit that I’m not sure. Mine is not a Pollyanna view of progress where it’s just upward and onward at all times. Indeed, the life condition that we face here at the beginning of the 21st century, in which regression of our civilization is a real possibility—that’s an important life condition that is calling for further development. So, whether these life conditions have to be just potential threats or whether they have to be actualized to motivate growth is something that is rather spontaneous and dynamic and not necessarily something that can be understood with a formula.

Let me add, regarding the dialectic, that it’s more than just the shape of the process of evolutionary development. It’s more than just the master system of evolution. Dialectical thinking is actually a mindset or critical part of the worldview of integral consciousness as I understand it. That is, in modernist consciousness—what Piaget calls “formal operational thinking”—there tends to be a lack of seeing problems through a developmental lens. For example, if you see a problem, it’s typically conceived of as an either/or proposition. But from a dialectical perspective, when you begin to look at life’s problems and conflicts and any kind of unsatisfactory situation, you begin to recognize that the conflicting elements are themselves being partially created by the relationship that they have with each other. You begin to see how the conflicting relationship is actually constitutive of the elements themselves. And this leads to the insight that conflicts are always moving in time, and that as conflicting systems move in time they demonstrate the process of a thesis calling forth its antithesis—they naturally reveal these polarities. And when we begin to recognize the dynamic of thesis and antithesis, this shows us how every problem, or every developmental situation, is really a transcendent synthesis that’s waiting to be achieved.

It takes practice, but this dialectical perspective actually provides a new epistemological capacity. And this new capacity can be compared to the emergence of the heightened sense of reason and logic that arose with the modernist stage of consciousness. Modernists are able to use reason and logic as a new epistemological capacity over and above that ability at the traditional stage. And it seems to me that when you begin to see things developmentally, see things dialectically and recognize problems as opportunities for growth, this provides a dramatic new way of seeing that can really make a big difference in improving the human condition.

Q: As you very clearly point out, using at least the perspective of traditional, modernist, postmodern, and integral levels, all of these levels of consciousness exist at the same time in our societies currently: is that correct?

A: Sure. That is, the elements of the dialectic are continuously co-creating each other to a degree, forming each other in their relationship. When we talk about these specific stages of history and culture, one of the insights of the integral worldview is that the history of
consciousness continues to be spread out over the last 4,000 years of human development. That is, even though we’re alive here in the year 2008, not all of us live in the same time in history. And according to Jean Gebser, it is the ability to recognize these historical structures of consciousness as they continue to exist in the present within the minds of individuals that actually gives rise to integral consciousness. These stages become transparent to your understanding when you begin to see them within people. For example, we can see how each one of these historical stages continue to include people who exemplify them in the present. And we can see how each stage has developed its own kind of orthodoxy—there are religious fundamentalists who are orthodox traditional, and there are atheists and scientific materialists who are rather orthodox modernist.

However, these structures of consciousness exist not only within the awareness of individuals, we can also see how these stages exist within a larger intersubjective system, which we might characterize as an “internal ecosystem of consciousness and culture.” And when you gain an integral perspective, one of the things that happens is you feel a drive to awaken all of these forms of consciousness within yourself, so that you’re able to make meaning with and share the values of the tribal, the warrior, the traditional, the modernist, the postmodern, and the integral—all these stages. From an integral perspective, you need to be in touch with all of these stages, you need to be able to metabolize their values in order to be authentically making meaning from the level of integral consciousness.

Q: This sounds very much in keeping with what Don Beck talks about in terms of spiral dynamics—that the spiral lives within. Is this what you’re getting at?

A: Right. A good example would be business people. Maybe they have an MBA. They’re highly educated and they find themselves in business. So we could perhaps recognize that they are operating from a modernist value system, or modernist stage of consciousness. But if they don’t embody within them some of the more enduring and foundational values of traditional consciousness, there can be a tendency to collapse back into a kind of warrior consciousness, or what spiral dynamics calls the “red meme.” For example, in the case of Enron, you see these sort of lawless corporate types basically engaging in criminal behavior. One of the things that caused them to regress into a criminal stage, even though they were highly educated and wealthy, was their lack of the values of traditional consciousness, which make people play fair, be honest and have honor in themselves. If you don’t have those values within yourself, then the stage that you’ve achieved—say modernism or postmodernism—can be unstable. You can find yourself collapsing back and ruining your life like the executives at Enron did. If they just had a sense of fair play, then the company may not have crashed down like it did.

Q: One of the aspects of the integral perspective that you are writing about has to do with the realm of spirituality. It’s my sense that one of the challenges for an integral theory in gaining legitimacy—at least in the academic world, and possibly elsewhere—is the giving of equal value to that which can be measured and that which cannot be measured. The introduction of the idea of spirituality is a critical factor in that consciousness that you were just speaking about. Can you tell me a little about what you mean by spirituality?
A: Sure. From my perspective, integral philosophy is founded on experience—that which is experiential, that which can be subjected to the tests of broad empiricism, if you will. This includes not only sensory experience of the material world, but also mental experience. For example, any experience with mathematics is a largely mental experience. It’s not grounded in sensation; it’s something that transcends the experience of our senses. Similarly, when we know another person in a relationship, this can be a very important form of experience that cannot be reduced to merely a sensory experience.

But in addition to sensory experiences and mental experiences, we can also have distinctly spiritual experiences that can be achieved in a variety of ways. For example, my deepest and most profound experiences of beauty, truth, and goodness are certainly spiritual experiences. And spiritual experiences can also be had through practices such as meditation and prayer. Indeed, it seems to me that spiritual experience is an important aspect of what it means to be human at every stage of development. Spirituality isn’t something that can simply be reduced to the mythic stage of consciousness that only exists on a traditional level. Spirituality for me is a very important part of my life—it’s what motivates me to get up in the morning, and it’s what motivates me to write philosophy books. Spirituality is not a level of development to be transcended; it’s a line of development that continues to find original expression in every stage, including the integral stage. And as human spirituality develops, ideally, it transcends and includes the best of the spirituality of the previous levels.

However, in my book, I do argue that science, philosophy, and religion need to be afforded a degree of separation. In other words, science deals with the physical facts of the external universe, and it has a level of proof that can be compelling; if you can prove something scientifically, it compels agreement. Spirituality, on the other hand, while it can be practiced and directly experienced, it deals with realities that exist in the realm of what we might call the “theosphere.” That is, I’m arguing that the physiosphere and the biosphere are in the realm of science; the noosphere—the realm of consciousness and culture—belongs to the realm appropriate for philosophy, and then there’s the spiritual world space, which can be identified as the theosphere—this is the realm of religion or spirituality. And spirituality has a very important role to play in making us feel at home in the universe by giving us explanations of the nature of the ultimate and teachings about life after death. These are teachings that can be used and practiced. For example, I definitely use the idea that I’m going to survive my body as an important orientation for my life on a daily basis.

Taking a million-year view of things really clarifies what’s valuable. If I think about what will matter a million years from now, I think, well, my family and the people whom I love will matter, and the work that I did in the world to try and make it a better place while I was still here will matter. It’s because of that million-year perspective that I’m fortified and motivated to do good works. I’m not doing good works in the hope that I’m going to survive my body; it’s because I take for granted that I’m going to survive my body that I try to do good works. I’m not saying that you need to have a spiritual or million-year perspective or believe in life after death in order to be motivated to do good works in the world, but I’ve certainly found that it helps me. Religion makes you feel at
home in the universe, and I think this is an important role for it to play. So I think we need to preserve the realm of spirituality and not try to reduce it to science or philosophy. I think we need to allow for the legitimacy of explanations that need to be taken on faith or explanations that have to be taken on the authority of a spiritual teacher or wise person? I don’t think we can eliminate those just because they can’t be proved scientifically.

Q: It would seem to me that what you’re suggesting is that, for some people, having the orientation that you’ve just described as one you have, where you have an element of faith and this million-year perspective that you’ve talked about, has a way of creating meaning for life and justifying it. It seems it is dependent on some esoteric notion of what the totality is all about as opposed to someone else who might look at the same situation and say that life in this lifetime is an experience I’m having. I might follow exactly the same patterns of behavior as you, because it means that my experience of this life in the now—in the present—is far more satisfying, for whatever reason, than requiring me to have that kind of million-year perspective and to act on faith rather than to act on a set of positive values related to my current experience.

A: I think the integral worldview is roomy enough to include all kinds of spirituality— theistic spirituality that recognizes God as a being, non-theistic spirituality like Buddhism that recognizes Non-Dual emptiness as the ultimate, or philosophical spirituality which can be rather agnostic regarding these big, supernatural explanations, but can nevertheless recognize spirit in a very circumspect way. I think all these forms of spirituality can find a home within the emerging integral worldview.

On this note, I recently received an email from Connie Barlow, who is married to Michael Dowd. The two of them travel around the country giving talks on evolutionary spirituality. Michael just came out with the book *Thank God for Evolution*. They are a wonderful couple doing good work. After reading about them I sent them a copy of my book. Connie then sent me an email complimenting me on my book and she included a couple of critiques. One of them was she thought that I did a good job of separating Ken Wilber’s metaphysics from integral philosophy, but that now I had to separate my own metaphysics from integral philosophy.

(Laughter)

I respected that; it was a thoughtful comment and it made me think. So next week I’m going to have a conference call with Michael and Connie and a few others to discuss this subject. My take on it is that we are in this universe at some existential level—we have to admit there is something rather than nothing. We’re starting from there. And so once we come to grips with this, there’s really no way to get away from metaphysics. Moreover, we can see that each stage has its own version of metaphysics. For example, if you’re at the traditional level, your metaphysics is defined by the Bible, the Qur’an, or the mythic explanation that goes with your tradition. Then with modernism, there is a different ontological explanation of the way things are. It starts with Deism, but then the more
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extreme forms of modernism adopt a sort of atheistic perspective that the universe is a random accident, and there is no purpose to it; it has just emerged somehow.

Q:  

Or at least agnostic in the sense of just not knowing; mystic, in a sense.

A: 

Right, but to claim that we can somehow eliminate metaphysics, that we can have no questions or answers about the nature of reality, or no explanation of why there is something rather than nothing … this position is still thoroughly metaphysical. It’s kind of a minimal, anti-metaphysical metaphysics, but it’s still something that has to be taken on faith to a degree. Think about it. Human consciousness is so small and the universe is so vast, and the mystery of it is so great, that to claim that you know for sure that there is no God—now, that’s a statement of faith.

Q: 

That’s the atheist view. I’m talking about an agnostic view of not knowing, of holding that there are questions of spirituality to be explored. There are questions we cannot know the answers to; hence, it relies on faith or a way of resolving those issues in our lives so that we can move forward.

A: 

Yes. Because I’m doing this public work in the realm of philosophy, I certainly wouldn’t say that the agnostic position is illegitimate; I think it’s a reasonable kind of stance to take regarding the mystery of the universe. However, if the agnostic says, “There is no way anybody can know,” I would say that…

Q: 

No, that’s not what they say. They say, “We don’t know now.”

(Laughter)

A: 

Fair enough. But I can say that I do know, for me at least, I can testify that I’ve had a direct experience of the love of God. And this is, of course, a metaphysical, spiritual proposition—which I can’t prove. But I want to add that my faith is not motivated by the need for security, I already feel secure so I don’t need a mythic teaching to give me that security. For me, faith is more of an active adventure of using my consciousness to know or experience that which is beyond my everyday mental experience. For me, the spiritual practice of faith is kind of super-thinking. My experience of God’s love for me as an individual—as part of my own spirituality—is something I know deep down at the cellular level, even though I know it by faith. It’s kind of paradoxical to talk about, but faith is definitely a spiritual practice, and it’s not just a belief in myths and miracles.

Q: 

Interesting. You talk about a realm in which at least some of us have never had that experience, and wouldn’t even begin to know how to reach it.

A: 

Well, Blaise Pascal has a wonderful quote on the subject. He says, “Human things must be known in order to be loved; but divine things must be loved in order to be known.” When you practice faith at the higher levels of consciousness, that faith gives you an experience which verifies that which you have faith in. But again, these things can become extremely paradoxical.
Various forms of spirituality do rely on the authority of the tradition or the teacher; and I think that can be appropriate in the realm of spirituality. But in the realm of philosophy, which I think in a sense should bridge and separate science and spirituality, philosophy can investigate and discover that which is beyond science. And it can do so in a way that doesn’t rely on any particular belief system. Philosophy can unite people who may have differing views of what spirituality is, or an agnostic view. So even though you may not have a robust concept of the spiritual, you can nevertheless find answers and get a universe perspective on things like evolution and consciousness through integral philosophy.

Q: You have several critiques of what you call the integral reality frame. Perhaps since I’m introducing the concept of the integral reality frame into this conversation for the first time, you can summarize what that phrase means.

A: Each stage of consciousness, or epic of human history, has its own explanation of the universe, and those explanations don’t necessarily remain static; they evolve. For example traditional consciousness in all its forms provides an explanation of the universe that frames that worldview. The reality frame of that worldview creates a kind of cell wall of the organism, the permeable boundary which makes the worldview a real evolutionary system. Indeed these worldviews are not simply phases of history; they cohere as evolutionary systems, which are somewhat similar to biological organisms.

One of the big insights of integral philosophy is the way that it recognizes real evolutionary systems within the internal universe of consciousness and culture. These internal systems share characteristics with the external systems of biology. So as we begin to recognize the internal systems of consciousness and culture, we see how these are composed of human agreements—value agreements that cohere into these historically significant worldviews which have systemic integrity. And so one of the things that gives each worldview its systemic integrity is its abiding reality frame. Each of these worldviews is a cultural agreement on the one hand, but each stage also exists within a larger dialectical evolutionary spiral—an internal cultural ecosystem. And the reality frames which help these stages cohere as systems are inevitably created through the use of some kind of metaphysics.

We can see this very clearly in the role that Rene Descartes’ philosophy played in the Enlightenment. Descartes’ framing of the subjective and the objective domains—his famous, “I think, therefore I am,” has now become known as “the philosophy of the subject.” This reframing of reality into subjective and objective realms—the objective being scientifically investigatable, and the subjective being supernatural, a realm of matter and mind—actually helped to forge the reality frame of modernism. Indeed, much of the postmodern reality frame has actually arisen through the various attempts to transcend the problems of this “philosophy of the subject.” However, we’re getting into some rather dense philosophy, which I try to unpack and explain carefully in Chapter 8 of my book. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that every worldview has some kind of reality frame, some kind of metaphysics that it uses to create the agreement structures which
make it cohere as a worldview and allow it to do the important work that these worldviews do to produce cultural evolution.

Moreover, we can see how these reality frames are subject to the dialectic, such that the problems or shortcomings of each specific reality frame require that the next reality frame to emerge in the sequence of evolution be in sort of an antithesis to that. We see this dialectic progression in action in the way that the reality frame of traditional consciousness is defined by the mythic order of religion. Then the reality frame of modernist consciousness swings the other way and is defined as whatever can be proved by science. Then the reality frame of postmodern consciousness swings back to a kind of unconstrained subjectivism. Thus, the integral worldview—in order to be a worldview, in order to take form and do the work it needs to do within the timeline of human history—needs to have its own distinct reality frame. Ken Wilber has tried to offer such a reality frame through his four-quadrant model, and I take issue with it to a degree, but I also applaud it.

I think that Wilber has done for the integral worldview something very similar to what Descartes did for the modernist worldview. He reframed reality. That’s what the quadrant model does. It shows the internal universe in new and important ways. Wilber recognized that this domain of intersubjectivity—the lower-left quadrant as it’s called—is not just a metaphor. It’s not just a structure of language, but it’s actually a real domain of evolution where real systems—these systems of culture, these human worldviews—have an ontological existence. These structures are not just in my head. They’re not merely subjective, even though they’re not completely observable scientifically. So they’re not merely subjective, but they’re not objective either. These cultural structures exist in this newly framed domain called intersubjectivity. And this is what gives integral philosophy a lot of life. It gives it the ability to make contact with these cultural systems in ways that are revolutionary, and in ways that give us new powers to improve the human condition. The main reason I love integral philosophy, the main reason I’m attracted to it, is because it’s pragmatic. It can do work. And so this new reality frame is one of its important features that gives it its ability to do this work.

Q:
Let’s talk about integral mapping for a moment. You’ve referred to the holon and the quadrants and by implication with developmental levels, the holarchies. I noticed that in your treatment of the history, which was very well done, summarizing the original contributions of Arthur Koestler and how Wilber has built on those, that you at one point made reference to the distinction between individual and social holons. In the work that I’ve been doing with Mark Edwards and Integral Leadership Review, we’ve been separating those two, so that when we’re talking about the four quadrants, at least in my mind—I’m not going to speak for Mark—I think of upper-left as intentionality and as the worldview and the beliefs of the individual. Upper-right is the biology and behaviors. What I’ve done in thinking about the individual is then to treat the upper-left as intentionality about self; in other words, the agentic intentionality, and the upper-right as the agentic behaviors. The lower-left and lower-right are the communal aspects of culture and systems if you will, but not so much the literal culture and the systems as
much as how the individual comprehends those. Do you make any distinctions between individual and collective holons?

A: Sure. I think Ken Wilber has done very important work in correcting the confusion in this area. For example, Wilber talks about deep ecology, environmental spirituality, at great length, where there is often this misunderstanding between the nature of an individual holon and a social holon. Readers of Wilber will know that you can’t just stack a social holon on top of an individual holon and call it a holarchy. So I think that distinguishing social holons from individual holons is an important element of integral philosophy.

Q: You write about the notion of artifacts that Wilber and Fred Kofman have talked about. It would seem to me that in talking about an individual holon, there is no artifact.

A: The quadrant model has been very useful in taking holons and showing how they emerge simultaneously in these different domains, but I also have some critiques of the quadrants, which I offer in Appendix B of my book. I’m not saying that the quadrants are invalid, I’m just saying that they are one slice of a picture that we are trying to discern, and we can’t use them as the end-all and be-all of integral theory.

Q: It’s just affirming what Wilber talks about in terms of them being the map and not the territory.

A: Also, all aspects of integral philosophy are true, but partial; they’re adapted to our time in history. Indeed, the whole point of the worldview is that it can help us make progress relative to the specific problematic life conditions we face today. But as those life conditions eventually become ameliorated to a degree, then progress will come in the form of a newer worldview that’s partially antithetical to the worldview of the integral. In other words, by using the spiral of development we can see how these worldviews emerge in this dialectical sequence, and this has predictive value. It not only shows us how we can create the integral worldview in our time, it also shows us that the integral worldview is not the end of history. It, too, will one day be transcended as it develops the successes, and the problems that are associated with those successes, that will call forth the next stage.

Q: There you are really pinpointing what I think is probably the greatest strength of the work that’s being done around all of this—the recognition of the relationships among the different worldviews, frameworks and stages of development and how they are necessary to each other in the evolutionary process.

One of the critiques of the integral reality frame that you offer is that as a philosophy, or as a metaphysics, it lacks a robust theology. Could you say a little more about what you mean by that?

A: Sure. At the end of Chapter 8 entitled, “The Integral Reality Frame,” I offer some critiques along the lines of what I’ve just described, I explore how we can poke holes in
this integral reality frame. So I offer four distinct critiques that are basically grounded in each one of the levels, beginning with traditional consciousness. However, in this critique of the integral reality frame made from the traditional level, I’m not trying to create a cartoon caricature of traditional consciousness, rather, I take it seriously and recognize that there are people with good sense and good faith who have a center of gravity of traditional consciousness. For them, creating higher levels of civilization is grounded in a religion. It’s grounded in faith, and grounded in a robust theology that explains where we came from, where we’re going…the big questions. So the traditional critique is that the integral reality frame allows for spiritual pluralism, and so it cannot provide an authoritative theology that all integralists agree with.

Again, in my book I argue that philosophy and religion ought to be afforded a degree of separation so that we can carry forward the values of spiritual pluralism that emerged at the postmodern stage. However, as we now attempt to transcend postmodernism we can also begin the work of discerning and determining which forms of spirituality are most effective at raising consciousness, improving the human condition, and revealing spiritual truth. But we’re just beginning, I think, to go beyond polite spiritual pluralism and it’s a little too soon for us to declare any one form of religion as essentially “right” to the relative exclusion of the others.

Going back to your question about this critique that I offered from the traditional stage, they’re saying that by separating science, philosophy, and religion, you’re losing a lot of the benefits of religion that can be used to form an organizing principle for a society, which it does, at the traditional stage. So as in medieval Christianity or in any of the pre-modern societies, the reality frame is exactly the same as the religion’s teaching about reality. Traditionalists would criticize forms of spirituality that allow for pluralism, that separate the philosophy from religion and disempower religion from a traditional perspective as the dominant truth in the society. Now, of course, my response to that critique is that in order for us to move beyond the traditional stage—in order to go beyond the mythic where there is no separation of, for example, church and state—then a degree of disempowering of religion, a differentiation of the value spheres as Max Weber was kind to point out to us, is a necessary step for the development of civilization. Perhaps some time in the future, when humanity has evolved to the point where we can have a world theology or an agreement about spiritual truth that is fully transcendent and can be universally agreed upon, that would be tremendous. But I don’t think we’re at a point in history where there is one particular theology that is strong enough to unify us. Any theology that had to be coercive in unifying people wouldn’t be unifying in the first place. That’s just a particular aspect of what I might imagine as a traditional critique of the integral work.

Q: Correspondingly, there is a modernist critique related to the metaphysics of the integral reality frame not being subject to falsifiability. How does that challenge get addressed?

A: Karl Popper, prominent 20th century philosopher of science, came up with a criterion for valid knowledge which he calls “falsifiability.” That is, if you can imagine a scenario
under which a proposition could be proved false, then it’s valid knowledge. If you can’t imagine a scenario in which it could be proved as false, then it doesn’t count as valid knowledge. The trouble is that while this defines what is and isn’t science, it’s highly reductionist in the sense that there is an implication that only science can deliver valid knowledge. My response to that is to evoke the idea of broad empiricism, which was first advanced by William James the pragmatist philosopher—he called it radical empiricism. And Wilber has modified and refined it into what he calls “broad empiricism.” It shows that some of the same methods for creating an empirical agreement in science can be extended to include things that are not necessarily accessible to scientific investigation, but are nevertheless “falsifiable” in a broadly empirical sense, because, although philosophical or spiritual propositions may not be materially falsifiable, others who are at a similar level of development can actually have a similar experience, which makes these kind of propositions broadly empirical. Wilber has done a good job of showing how broad empiricism can be a way of answering the critiques of falsifiability.

**Q:** These would be the integral multiple methodologies.

**A:** Integral methodological pluralism is what Wilber calls it. I think these ideas are generally valid, but regarding some of Wilber’s latest writing found in *Integral Spirituality*, as well as some of the latest turns that his theory has taken, I don’t find all of those details as useful as some of the other more sturdy and basic aspects of integral philosophy. I can see that integral methodological pluralism may have its uses, and might be valid in certain academic contexts, but I don’t find these ideas to be a particularly exciting development from my perspective. I’m not harshly critiquing these ideas; I’m just not seeing them as all that useful.

**Q:** It comes up for me in thinking about how to work with PhD. students on doctoral dissertations related to using integral theory and perspective in doing research.

**A:** What I like most about Wilber’s methodological pluralism is the unification of the structural and the phenomenological approaches to consciousness. That’s the part that I think is a worthy addition to integral theory in a sense that structuralists can see things that can’t be seen from a phenomenological perspective. In other words, you can meditate and you’re never going to discover the spiral through meditating. However, with structuralism by itself, unless you’re acquainted with the insides of these structures that you’re studying, you’re never going to get a true sense of what they are. Understanding that we need a phenomenological approach from the inside and a structural approach on the outside to adequately map and understand these stages of consciousness I think is a valid point and one I would agree with.

**Q:** What about the critique of the integral reality frame from the postmodern perspective—the argument that it’s all Eurocentric dominant male thinking—that it’s too cerebral and too concerned with “the truth” instead of many truths.

**A:** We’re going through each of these critiques which I offer of the integral reality frame, the first being traditional, which I mentioned; the second being the modernist critique,
which is the reductionistic approach; then there’s the postmodern critique; and finally I offer a “postintegral” critique of the integral reality frame. So with respect to the postmodern critique, I think there are basically two kinds: one is the critique of the integral reality frame from the perspective of postmodern philosophy—deconstructionist critical theory; and then there’s another critique from postmodern culture in general, which is the one you were mentioning regarding the complaint that “it’s too masculine” or “it’s too Eurocentric” or whatever.

From an integral perspective, we can see how the postmodern worldview—and I’m using “postmodern” as a defined term—isn’t just deconstructionist academic critical theory. We’re talking about the overall worldview that comes after modernism, the one that has emerged in the developed world as a sort of antithesis to modernism. This worldview is known by many terms, including the “cultural creatives” and the “post-materialists.”

In integral parlance there is a growing agreement that the word “postmodern” is the word we want to adopt as the defining term for this stage. That is, from an integral perspective, we can see that there is an evolutionarily appropriate move that goes beyond modernism and traditionalism and which takes the form of an antithesis. In other words, postmodernism is anti-modern and anti-Western to a degree. And there is an imprint of that antithesis that is seen in many aspects of postmodern thinking. Again, this is evolutionarily appropriate; the move away from the pathologies of modernism was achieved by pushing off against those problems, by moving to an antithesis. For example, the move that took human civilization from traditional consciousness to modernist consciousness was embodied in the slogan, “Liberty, equality, fraternity.” It was sort of a political rallying cry for democracy. Then in turn, the move away from the established structures of modernism was achieved or symbolized by the slogan, “Turn on, tune in, drop out.” Despite its semi-humorous quality, this rallying cry did serve as a potent invitation to reject the pathologies of modernism. So if you look at postmodern politics, it’s kind of a politics of protest. It’s a politics that defines itself in relation to the shortcomings, the pathologies, and the crimes of modernism—including colonialism, oppression and exploitation, we could go on listing the problems of modernism—but overall we can see how postmodernism made the important move of breaking away from those problems.

However, this postmodern worldview is now in a place where it’s gone as far as it can go, even though there will be people entering into the postmodern worldview for the rest of our lives. It’s a structure of history that people will pass through as they develop culturally. But what we’re interested in now is taking an evolution a step further beyond postmodernism and going to the stage of synthesis where we’re no longer defined merely in terms of an antithesis to what’s wrong with modernism.

As we try to create a synthesis that carries forward the best of all these previous worldviews, while also pruning away the worst, we can see that from a postmodern perspective, integralism looks very much like modernism. And when modernists see integral, to them it appears postmodern. These stages have a tendency to see everyone
who is outside of their worldviews as being suspect. So the postmodern critique of the integral worldview is that it’s basically just rehashed modernism. Therefore, it’s still complicit in the crimes of modernism. But from an integral perspective, we can recognize those attacks, those critiques from a postmodern perspective. We can also overcome them by recognizing that postmodernism is not the end of history and that there are certainly many positive developments of the modernist and traditional stages. At this point in history, in order to move forward, we need to recognize and acknowledge those positive aspects and integrate them into a transcendent whole that can use all the important truths that have come from the rise of the postmodern worldview. So we include those truths but also simultaneously transcend them through this new worldview that we’re creating.

Q: That opens directly on the door of integral politics, but I want to go somewhere else first. That has to do with what I think is a very creative way of reframing the notion of lines of development. You have argued that there are three organizing principles of the various aspects of being in the world. That has to do with will, cognition and emotion. These are really overlapping concepts that have things in common with each other, with the interpersonal and the idea of self being somehow the linchpin of these three modes of consciousness.

A: In my analysis of the lines of development within consciousness I start with Howard Gardner’s work on multiple intelligences. Then I bring in Daniel Goleman’s work on emotional intelligence. Then I try to show how we not only have emotion and cognition, but that there is another sphere of knowing which I identify as volition, or free will. So each one of these spheres—feeling, thought and will—are important metastructures that organize our consciousness.

Within each one of these domains there are a variety of lines of development, which overlap and comprise the various ways that humans can be smart or emotionally intelligent. The old idea of “IQ” can be taken as a measure of overall cognitive intelligence. And now we have the idea of “EQ,” which has become popular since Goleman’s book *Emotional Intelligence* came out in the 90’s. EQ thus refers to emotional intelligence and one’s general emotional ability. Then I add to that the idea of “VQ,” or values intelligence. This fills out all the potential lines and organizes them into a holarchy.

Part of the way I came up with this understanding was following my philosophical intuition. Again, I have always identified myself as an ally and supporter of Ken Wilber. I’m definitely standing on his shoulders and can’t say how grateful and indebted I am to his work. At the same time, one of the things that has motivated me to try to make my own contribution to integral philosophy has been my differences with Wilber. That is, although we agree on most aspects of integral philosophy, our disagreements are the most interesting. This is how philosophy has always evolved—a great philosopher makes some major progress and then other philosophers try to show how that’s not necessarily wrong but how it can be improved.
So regarding the lines of development, Wilber began teaching this subject through his psychograph model, which first appears in his 1999 book, *Integral Psychology*. Then in the past few years he has elaborated on it and explained how there are all these multiple lines of development, which actually develop independently. Wilber cites the case of the “Nazi doctor” who is highly developed in the cognitive line, a highly educated scientist, but who is also very stunted in the moral line, because he’s a Nazi. So I agreed with that—I think there are different lines of development and different types of intelligence, so that all made sense to me.

But my philosophical intuition was piqued when Wilber wrote that the “values line”, or the “worldview line” that is really the line of the spiral of development, is just one among several dozen lines, and that these lines are “apples and oranges.” That struck me as being not entirely true. That is, I agree with Wilber that there isn’t a single line—as was maintained by Piaget, who just thought he was getting at development overall—and I think that’s a valid critique of many aspects of developmental psychology, that there is no singular line of development within consciousness. There are actually multiple lines, and developmentalists haven’t done a very good job of identifying and coming to grips with that.

However, my humble critique of Wilber is that he goes from a critique of this “line absolutism” to the other extreme, which I would characterize as a kind of “line relativism” where we just have all these unrelated lines. Even though each of these lines develops in its own kind of holarchical stage-like system, Wilber hasn’t recognized—or at least hasn’t described in his work thus far—how these independent lines are organized by a larger overarching system.

If the lines are indeed holarchical structures, then the overall structure of the holarchy that we see throughout evolution would suggest that there are some higher level holons that transcend and include these various different lines. So in Chapter 9 of my book I first explain why I think the values line is somehow more important than other lines, and how the values line isn’t just “one among several dozen.” I explain why the values line has a more important role in determining our psychic or culture center of gravity.

Chapter 9 begins by examining what developmental psychologists have said and then what Wilber has said about the subject. Then I offer some critiques that show problems with Wilber’s psychograph model. I then advance my own theory, which involves the recognition that these lines of development are organized within a larger enveloping system of feeling, thought, and will as a sort of master systemic pattern of consciousness. That is, when we see how the spiral influences many different aspects of our will, the sphere of volition within our consciousness, then we can begin to see how it is generally more significant than, say, bodily kinesthetic intelligence or the emotional ability to be empathetic. Those are lines that can develop independently, but I would say for most people these kinds of intelligence are less significant than their core values. So when we recognize the very important role that values play in orienting our attention and determining our intention, and when we see that our values come largely from our worldview, our position on the spiral of development, we begin to see why “the values or
worldviews line” is so important in determining the internal location of our consciousness overall.

However, this is obviously a complicated subject, and it’s best described in a written argument. It’s difficult to reproduce it completely here in an interview.

**Q:** I have a couple of questions in relation to that. I’m wondering about the location or choice of subcategories. For example, you just mentioned “empathy,” and it doesn’t show up on the diagram. Another one might be “resilience” that didn’t show up. I’m wondering if there was a guiding set of principles other than sorting things into cognitive-emotional-volition values variables that caused you to place things in one circle versus another?

**A:** That’s a great question. The diagram in my book that shows the sub-lines within the overall categories of feeling, thought, and will is drawn partially from Howard Gardner, partially from Daniel Goleman, and partially from Clare Graves, Robert Kegan, and James Mark Baldwin. However, as I explain in the book, if you’ll allow me to quote: “Figure 9-4 is presented for the limited purposes of suggesting how the intersubjective structure of the spiral of development influences a variety of lines of development within the overall sphere of human volition. This simplified diagram is not intended as an exhaustive chart of all possible sub-spheres or lines of development within human consciousness.” So the diagram in my book is just a snapshot showing some of the sub-lines. The number and size of the categories could be different with every person.

Now, regarding the sub-lines found within the overall Sphere of Cognition, as I said, I’m building on the work of Howard Gardner, who is a very prominent developmentalist. He teaches at Harvard and he has done quite a lot of empirical work to discover what he calls “the eight intelligences” within “cognition as a whole.” His criteria is: “What does society value and what is the culture willing to reward?”

This research was advanced in Gardner’s book that came out in 1999 called Intelligence Reframed. Gardner is arguing against IQ as a sort of a monolithic line. Throughout the 20th century, educators used a test to determine the “quotient” of a person’s intelligence, and IQ was seen as a measure of being smart or dumb across the board. So Gardner has devoted a large part of his academic career to dispelling that myth and showing that there are different kinds of intelligences. It makes perfect sense. You can see that a gymnast has one type of intelligence and a great mathematician has another kind, so we can’t judge “smart” or “dumb” across the board. By using Gardner’s eight intelligences in my sphere of cognitive development, I’m being true to his work and using him as a foundation of that aspect of the model.

Within the overall Sphere of Emotion, again I use the work of Goleman in the identification of the sub-lines, who has become well respected in society and whom Gardner talks about approvingly. Indeed, Gardner recognizes emotional intelligence, but says that he wants to be formal in his definition of these eight intelligences, so he doesn’t
want to define emotional intelligence as a formal intelligence; he wants to call it "emotional sensitivity". Nevertheless, in the book, Emotional Intelligence, Goleman does describe different types of emotion—sadness, anger, joy, etc.—and I list those in Figure 9.4. However, there’s nothing exclusive about the list that’s in that circle in Figure 9.4. It’s just some types of emotion that have been recognized by the social sciences, but they are not suggested to be exhaustive. You would want to do more empirical research if you were going to try to definitively identify the specific lines of development that are within the affective or emotional sphere as a whole.

All I’m doing is recognizing that there are different types of emotion—the experts agree. And there are different kinds of cognition—again, the experts agree. And in addition to the modes of emotion and cognition, both Goleman and Gardner (as well as other developmentalists) agree that the Sphere of Volition or free will is also a mode of consciousness that is distinct from both feeling and thinking. However, Goleman, Gardner and other authors in this field tend to shy away from the sphere of volition, because it’s not really accessible to science. Just like biologists shy away from consciousness because it’s in the body but not really of the body, these developmental psychologists tend to shy away from volition because is not really accessible to scientific investigation the way the physical parts of the body are. Human free will is a kind of transcendent form of consciousness that can’t really be contacted or explained by science. Social scientists are thus somewhat embarrassed by it, because it’s inherently metaphysical.

Free will—the idea that human beings are responsible for their actions, and that their will represents an "uncaused cause," that our will can somehow move around the particles in our brain and cause our bodies to move without being predetermined—this can’t be explained from the mechanistic materialistic worldview. The human will is thus supernatural in that sense. So there has naturally been quite a bit of effort by materialist philosophers and scientists to try and explain that free will is an illusion, and that ultimately, all human choices are predetermined.

Of course, I reject that and I see free will as central to a spiritual understanding of the universe. Our role in the cosmic economy is really made effective by the fact that we do have freedom of choice, that we do have real free will. Indeed, this is how we participate directly and creatively in the evolutionary process—our free will allows us to act as agents of evolution. Yet, this is an inherently spiritual concept. But even though science can’t deal with spiritual issues, philosophy can. That’s why I make free will and values really the cornerstone of my understanding of integral philosophy.

Q: All of this comes to play in the context of your treatment of integral politics, which ultimately leads you to a model of integral world federation. Would you care to say anything about what it is that is integral from your point of view in terms of politics. How do you approach that?

A: We can see that every one of these worldviews—these historically significant worldviews that are identified by the integral perspective—emerges as a new octave of
values. That is, each one has new truth, new beauty, and new ideals of morality. And the values of every one of these worldviews have been forged in the crucible of politics. So, for example, when we move from warrior consciousness to traditional consciousness, one of the ways that traditional consciousness is able to make progress and improve the human condition is the way that it replaces the chaotic and warlike world of warrior consciousness—warring tribes, etc.—with a political system that brings some level of peace.

With every form of traditional consciousness, East or West, the political system that goes with it is feudalism. Now feudalism is something we’d like to transcend—it’s something to be looked down upon now as a primitive political structure—but it was a definite improvement over what came before it. It brought some form of law and order, even though it was oppressive and classist.

Then when modernism emerges, it likewise has new truth, new beauty, and new ideals of morality that are embodied in the transcendent political form of organization called democracy.

Thomas Jefferson really understood democracy at the beginning; it was clear to him that without a degree of modernist consciousness within the population, democracy would be dysfunctional. He could see that not everyone in the democracy needed to have a modernist center of gravity, but a certain proportion did, so that they weren’t in a conformist, traditional worldview where they were willing to be obedient sheep. They had to take responsibility for their own government, not tolerate corruption and be willing to put in the effort to try to create a government by the people. So democracy showcased the values of modernism and showed its moral superiority. The evident moral superiority of democracy over feudalism really served as a beacon of goodness that helped recruit people into the modernist worldview and make it successful.

Then, with the rise of postmodernism, we can also see the crucible of politics being very important. In the sixties, people were recruited and attracted into the postmodern way of seeing things by its higher ideals of morality. They could see that its political agenda of peace in Vietnam and civil rights was an exemplification of a worldcentric morality that transcended the more ethnocentric views of these earlier worldviews.

So now with the rise of the integral worldview, it is going to take its place in the timeline of human history as a historically significant stage. And it will have its own transcendent form of human politics. If we just look at the evolution of human politics, we can see that in 1,000 B.C., it’s estimated that there were 600,000 countries or sovereign political entities. And over time, these 600,000 political entities have been consolidated into larger and larger groupings. So although there have been periods of regression or stagnation, there are now about 193 countries. And now we see with the European Union (EU), and other types of federations of countries, that the direction of evolution in human politics is toward larger and larger conglomerations. And this is made particularly possible with the advent of democracy.
I certainly see the EU as a positive political development. We can see how it has done a lot of good in terms of uniting Europe, making it one political entity, making things more economically prosperous through the advent of a single currency and the reduction of trade barriers. We can see that by pushing power up and having an overarching federation that reduces competition amongst European countries, that has allowed power to be pushed down. For example, Scotland has now been given a degree of autonomy that it didn’t have before the EU. It’s because of the EU that England was able to divest a certain degree of power over Scotland. The same thing happened in Spain. Since Spain has become part of the EU, Catalonia as a province of Spain has been given far greater autonomy than it enjoyed during the 20th century.

So it is clear to me that as the integral stage takes its place along the timeline of human history, it too will bring its own transcendent form of political organization that will showcase its higher morality. Just as modernism and democracy co-created each other, so too will the rise of integralism eventually bring forth a system of democratic global law, although I doubt I’ll live to see it.

But I want to quickly add that as we see this process developing, we can also see that these stages of political organization are dependent upon the corresponding internal development of consciousness. So for example, when you try to bring democracy to Iraq, because you have a population centered in pre-modern consciousness, democracy becomes highly dysfunctional. Until Iraqi’s can develop a larger degree of modernist consciousness within their population, then democracy will continue to be problematic. Because of their traditional, ethnocentric level of internal development, it’s difficult for them to participate in a multi-ethnic nation state, which is the democratic form.

So before there can be a functional form of world federation, we will need to have a greater degree of integral consciousness in the world. This is why the main focus of integral politics right now is on building the integral worldview here at the beginning.

**Q:** Using the lens that you’re describing now—I’ll let people go to the book to find your model for world governance—could you talk about what is happening in the American political system today in terms of the presidential race?

**A:** Overall, integral politics is the political agenda that goes with the integral worldview. And this agenda is now being worked out, agreed upon and negotiated among people who have an integral perspective. I’m arguing that as the integral worldview matures it will produce a transcendent form of human political organization that will come in the form of a limited democratic world federation.

Again, I think that the ultimate goal of world federation is inseparable from integral politics, in the same way that the politics of modernist consciousness is inseparable from democracy. However, I can say that integral politics can do a lot of work prior to the long-term goal of some kind of global democracy by making immediate progress on the domestic front—politically here in the U.S., in the years ahead. And there are both short-term things that integral politics can do and long-term things. The long view helps inform
the short-term view. They work together. However, integral politics is something that’s just emerging now. I’m not claiming to have the final and authoritative view of what it is. I’m interested in entering into dialog with other integralists like yourself about what integral politics can become.

And I should say that there are some people who have a general center of gravity in the integral worldview who are more oriented toward Republican candidates than to the Democratic ones. Just because you’re an integralist doesn’t mean that you’re necessarily going to be a leftist. However, I do think that because you can’t really get to the integral stage without transcending and including the values of postmodernism, then this is going to have an effect on your political views. That is, if you aspire to be integral, but you don’t have empathy for postmodern values, then you’re not going to be authentically integral. You’re going to be a sophisticated modernist. But if you do hold the requisite degree of postmodern values, then this makes it difficult to be too conservative politically, even though you may see certain issues where the conservatives have a better argument.

However, regardless of who is elected president in 2008, because of the current profile of the American body politic, that person will be a tool of the system to a large degree. Because of the state of evolution of consciousness in America, and because it is a democracy, the next president won’t be able to just lead us all into the integral age, because to govern effectively, the next president has to remain identified with the modernist values system. Modernism represents over 50% of the American population and I think all the presidential candidates have a modernist center of gravity. Some are more influenced by traditional values; some by postmodern values, but overall, they’re all modernists.

The only political candidate who could be recognized as having a center of gravity in postmodernism would be Dennis Kucinich. Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton or even John McCain can certainly make meaning from an integral perspective. They can see that there is traditional and modernist consciousness, but again I think their center of gravity, at least from my perspective, is still in the modernist stage.

So at this point in history the real opportunity to make political progress from an integral perspective won’t be found in the realm of presidential politics. Our opportunity to make the most political progress will be more in the realm of raising consciousness and helping make progress culturally by helping move America’s cultural center of gravity forward in history in a way that then allows the federal government to follow suit. If we can get people to evolve their consciousness, then we can help break the logjam of the culture war. And this will help America to become less politically stagnant, and it will thus help the federal government to move forward as consciousness moves forward. As we raise consciousness in the American culture, we’ll begin to see elected leaders who embody integral values more.
**Q:** There are so many different levels and dimensions of society in which that can be happening. Whether you’re talking about the worlds of entertainment, sports, politics or educational systems, it’s truly a society-wide effort. Is that what you’re suggesting?

**A:** Definitely. When I give my presentation on integral politics, one of the things I emphasize is that the postmodern worldview, because it arose in this stance of antithesis, as I described earlier, is presently acting as a kind of cork in the bottle. In other words, because postmodernism is so anti-modern and anti-traditional, this tend to make these other earlier worldviews rather defensive. And this defensiveness kind of pins people in place culturally. For example, many people who are centered in the traditional or modernist stages perceive the environmental movement as a strictly postmodern issue. And so because postmodernists have contempt for many of the important values for traditionalism and modernism, some modernists and traditionalists repay the favor and exhibit contempt for important postmodern values. And this tends to make postmodernism’s ardent support for the environmental issues—issues that everyone should ultimately care about—somewhat of a liability within American politics overall.

So now, the best way that the integral worldview can help make political progress in the short-term is by helping a portion of those with a postmodern center of gravity move up to an integral center of gravity and help un-stop the cork. If more and more postmodernists come to better appreciate the enduring and foundational values of modernism and traditionalism, this will help make postmodern concerns seem less anti-American or anti-modern. As we carry forward some of the values of traditionalism and modernism into the integral worldview, we’ll find that we can carry forward many of the traditionalists and modernists themselves into a new era of progressive agreement.

**Q:** For example, we’re seeing religious leaders increasingly expressing concern about the environment and our care of the world.

**A:** Thomas Friedman argues that “green should be the new red, white and blue.” He argues that to be concerned about the environment is to be patriotic. Even though this concern for the environment originated with postmodernism, Friedman is now trying to show that environmentalism is a value that can be appreciated by every stage, he wants all Americans to agree that saving the environment from the destruction of global warming is something we can all get behind. And building the political will for that is something that the integral worldview can make great progress in, because it can help heal some of the wounds of the culture war by providing a progressive synthesis that isn’t as anti-modern as postmodernism. It can demonstrate what is actually a “more progressive” form of politics than what passes for progressive politics today. That is, integral politics is more progressive than postmodern politics because it carries forward all the worldcentric and environmental concerns and values of postmodernism, but does so in a way that better integrates and builds political will with these other earlier stages of modernism and traditionalism.

Put differently, postmodernism’s basic solution is to get everyone to become postmodern. And if everyone woke up tomorrow and realize that “we are all one
people,” and that this postmodern perspective is the most advanced, then that would indeed create the kind of political will we need to solve many of our problems. But because we can see in history and in the evolution of consciousness that it’s unlikely that the majority of America is going to wake up tomorrow and become postmodern, we can see that we have to find a way to make political progress that addresses people in the stage they are at and works with the values that they have.

The integral political perspective really brings a lot of new insights and abilities to help move America’s cultural center of gravity forward in history. And this can go a long way toward building the political will that it’s going to take to solve the crises of global warming and other problems.

On the subject of integral politics I should add that many people see Barack Obama as the savior—he’s kind of the projection screen for everybody’s hopes—and while I’d love to see more hope and unification in politics, I also see people holding onto this Kennedyesque fantasy of a leader of our culture. But that time in history has passed. Kennedy was president before the emergence of the cultural structures of postmodernism, before the radical partition that occurred in the sixties. So now that we’ve seen the differentiation of these stages more distinctly in our culture, now that consciousness is more spread out between traditional, modernist, and postmodern, I don’t think we want to regress to the point where one person can provide the kind of cultural leadership for America as a whole, in the way that Kennedy did. Consciousness has evolved since then, the horse is out of the barn. We need to find agreement in a way that doesn’t require that we regress to a unified modernism or somehow find a mushy middle where we can all agree. We can take an integral and developmental perspective which brings in this vertical dimension that can see these stages emerging through time and can find a way to integrate the stages that doesn’t just involve a kind of centrist position that just compromises on every issue.

To conclude integral politics, let me say that although the next president will be limited in what he can do, I’d like to see the next president bring in integral advisors—maybe not at the cabinet level, but at least some folks on their staff who can give them an integral analysis of the issues, especially foreign policy issues. Once you can see this inner perspective of consciousness, there are really a lot of insights and solutions that appear. My next book is going to be focused on that; the working title is Global Politics and the Physics of the Internal Universe. My plan is to take this integral perspective and apply it to various issues around the world, as I did in the interview in the last issue of What Is Enlightenment?, called “Integral Politics Comes of Age,” which I highly recommend to your readers, and which is available to read on-line at wie.org.

Q: Have you sent a copy of your book to any political candidates for the presidency?

A: I actually made inquiries with the Clinton foundation. Because Bill Clinton has read Wilber, has endorsed him and said good things about his work, I wanted to send my book to Bill Clinton. So I made my inquiry through channels and I got the response just a few days ago from his organization. They provided his personal address and invited me to
send my book directly to him, but they added that he is very busy and may not be able to respond.

(laughter)

So in addition to Bill Clinton, whoever emerges as the democratic candidate will also receive a copy of my book. But there are obviously hundreds of authors that are doing the same thing, and so I don’t expect that it will necessarily have much of an impact. Ultimately, the way we’ll get the attention of political leaders is to get the attention of the greater culture. And so as we emerge as a force in the media and in the culture at large, we’ll get their attention in that way, rather than just by sending them a book. I’ll do it nonetheless, though, since it’s a good gesture.

Q: 
I wish you all the luck in the world with that effort.

(laughter)

A: Thank you Russ. I appreciate this interview.
Central Fire

Andrew Campbell

*Central Fire* was inspired by the then *one third* complete essay an author is developing for publication in *Integral Review*, on mystical numbers, geometry and quantum qualia - some of the passages in the imagery here are delicious, slippery sliding to my mind. Anyway, use it as you wish. If you have glossy photo paper ever, print one out and put it in a little frame by your desk...

Take a look at 200% and more and track over the colours and undulations, enter into the spaces…

If you print it out and hold it upside down you may see in the red passage - near the centre, you may be able to make out an unhappy face - ;-) sometimes imagery like this can go either way up...Mmmmm. Also the blue passages seem to want to be in pairs...

*Editors’ note:* Although the author’s craft-work may come along later, *Central Fire* is for sharing now.
'CENTRAL FIRE'
Andrew Campbell, Acrylic on papers 17th April 2008
A Lesson to be Writ Large?

Sara Nora Ross

With
Held Lightly
by Andrew Campbell

This is a true short story. Elements of it are more earthy than I might like to write about, but they cannot be disguised and still have a story. I happen to think it’s a story worth sharing. Despite its earthy origins—if not because of them—it seems worth sharing because of its lesson. In sharing my story, lesson, and reflections on it, I hope this leads others to imagine what sorts of personal and social significance might be gleaned from such a lesson. I wonder if it might be a lesson we wish would be writ large.

On many nights, I keep my bedroom windows open. One morning last autumn, I awoke well before dawn, unusual for me. An odd smell in the room was the culprit that woke me. Once I was awake enough to do so, I realized the smell was in the outside air breezing through the window nearest my bed. It was an alien odor I had never smelled before. Noting that, I closed the windows and fell back asleep. When the alarm clock woke me later, I was surprised that the odor was still in the room. As I moved through the house doing my usual morning things, I was more surprised to find that it permeated the house. I closed every window to shut it out, thus simultaneously trapping it in the house. There was no escaping the awful thing!

When it was time to walk up to the barn to feed the animals, I noticed the smell was stronger in certain areas than others, and fainter near the barn. When I walked down the long driveway hill to get the morning newspaper, across the bridge that spans the creek down there, the odor was much fainter than up the hill where the house sits. So, I toured around the house, determining that the odor was strongest on the south side where there are several hilly acres of woods. It was so strong there that I became nauseous and wanted only to escape the inescapable!

I began to form a hypothesis about the odor’s origin. My memory traveled back a handful of years, to a time when a decomposed human body was discovered in the creek, downstream from my place. It was found near a public bridge that spanned the creek not too far from here. I remembered a neighbor telling me at the time that for several weeks, when he drove over that bridge, he knew the odor he smelled “just wasn’t right.” At least in the 20/20 hindsight he had when telling me about it, he said he was sure it must have been a human body decomposing. He had smelled plenty of dead animals, and this was not that. Perhaps he had military service in earlier decades that taught him such smells. He wished he had called the police to tell them about it, long before someone else eventually did.

Coming back to the autumn 2007 odor that plagued me, my hypothesis—conviction, really—was this: there was a decaying human corpse somewhere on the south side of my property, and
relatively near the house. Once I reached that conclusion, all I wanted to do was pick up the phone and call the police to get them over here to search, find, and remove the corpse. I wanted that nauseous odor exorcised from my morning air!

I delayed that gratification. It was still quite early, and my son was still asleep. The hubbub of a search party trampling around outside would be a rude way to wake up. I would wait to call the police until Paul was up and I could tell him what was going on.

A couple of hours later, that time came. When I told him about all this, the first thing he did was open his south-facing bedroom window and sniff the air. It smelled like great, fresh autumn morning air to him. I was shocked! Maybe the breeze had shifted and was temporarily blowing the odor away from the house. We headed outside so he could smell the same awful thing I smelled. While I was doing everything in my power to not retch at the horribleness of breathing it in, Paul was consistently shaking his head and saying, “No, I don’t smell anything. Are you sure this is where you smelled it? Are you sure you smell something?” Why couldn’t he smell it? What kind of turnabout was this, anyway? The whole experience began to feel incredibly surreal.

My sons are notorious in this family for humoring me. Paul performed marvelously. Despite his conviction that it was ridiculous to think there was a rotting corpse nearby, he asked what places I thought it might be hidden, and offered to do a search. But first he had to head to campus for classes. He couldn’t start the search till afternoon. He extracted my promise to not call the police until he got back and could do the search himself, first. He was determined to spare me (and probably himself) having the police search party decide I was a crazy old lady and have a good laugh at my expense. Not to mention that all of that would be at taxpayers’ expense!

Sauntering into the house after class that afternoon, Paul announced with a big grin that he was ready to go find a dead body, and headed outside. A bit later, he came back with the report that there was nothing anywhere and still no odor. We looked at each other. He was grinning from ear to ear. I wasn’t. Surely with a very furrowed brow, I was in a state of severe cognitive dissonance! I had to admit, upon a moment’s reflection, that the smell had faded sometime around noon, and now it was mid-afternoon. If there were a dead body outside, it certainly would not stop stinking as the sun got higher and warmer.

“Okay,” I admitted, “there must not be a dead body. There must be something wrong with my nose.” We broke into hilarious laughter at the ludicrous drama I had created. Laughing while shaking my head, I was still mystified. Good grief! How did I concoct something like this?

Just as earlier that morning I had had to come up with some story that would make sense of the horrible smell, by now in mid-afternoon, I had to come up with a new story to explain why the dead body story didn’t work. Damn, what a crazy way to spend a day! I could not let this dissonance go unresolved.

The next story I came up with made sense, literally. It was about my sense of smell. I remembered I had had a first-time-ever allergy attack two or three weeks before this. It started right after doing some autumn grass mowing. For two days, I had all the allergy symptoms I had always heard about and never suffered. Then it turned into a sinus infection that seemed to last
and last. Somehow, I figured, by that morning, the status of the sinus infection must have changed, and a different chemistry was playing out. It must have interacted with the air from a perhaps overnight development of a certain musty-moldiness in the woods, and resulted in a yet more different chemistry in my sinuses. Voila! Combined with my recall of local history, I constructed the explanation of a dead body outside!

What message—or messages—might be writ large from this little story? The commonplace saying that “perception is reality” is not only figurative, but literal. My nasal system activity proved it. I treasure that proof for its concreteness. I have decades’ worth of experience of living out of different worldviews, and am intimate with the use of multiple stories to interpret the world, events, others, and myself through those different lenses. These are more abstract experiences. But here, my distorted sense of smell taught me afresh (oh, how I wish that air had smelled fresh!) how really real, concrete, and seemingly indisputable our perceptions of reality—and therefore our perspectives on reality—can seem to be.

Someone who told me about a trip on acid reported the same sort of insight: on acid, the manifest world of sky and land and trees and buildings did crazy things that defied all laws of physics and thermodynamics. After the trip, the “normal world” of every day became merely another perception, held lightly, without attachment, no longer assumed to be “reality” but rather, mere likely-transitory perception.

What would our personal, interpersonal, and larger-scaled social and political dynamics be like if we all realized that what we perceive in self, others, and the world was not necessarily so? What kind of transformations might result?

My hopeful hypothesis is that many would discover how essential it is to become earnest inquirers into our own and others’ experiences: question-posers, answer-seekers, and assumption-disrupters who assume little but discover much by asking questions, by probing our experience, by doubting both our senses and our sense-making, by questioning the stories we tell ourselves about how we, others, and the world work. Dare we imagine that?

What further kinds of transformations might result from that sort of transformation? Ahhh…. I can think of multitudes of behaviors and assumptions that would find replacements, in such forms as co-constructed, multi-faceted versions of many diverse persons describing “how it is, what it is, from my perspective.” Dare we imagine that?

And what kinds of transformations might result from those sorts of transformation? Ahhhhh….! We would learn how to tango1 with our multi-faceted selves and our multi-faceted fellow beings in our families, organizations, communities, regions, nations, and natural world. We would learn new dance steps and dances to tell ourselves new stories about how we work our world and hand us mirrors to see how our stories tell us. Dare we imagine that?

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1 For more about these dynamics, see Ross, S. N. (2005). Toward an integral process theory of human dynamics: Dancing the universal tango. Integral Review 1, 64-84. [http://integral-review.org](http://integral-review.org)
And what kinds of transformations might result from those amazing transformations? A-ho! We would name how we must work ourselves in our world differently and actually do so. Dare we imagine that?

After the trip, the “normal world” of every day became merely another perception, held lightly, no longer assumed to be “reality.”

**Held Lightly**, watercolours, acrylics and oils suspended over stretched canvas, Andrew Campbell April 2008
How Then Do We Choose to Live?
Facing the Climate Crisis and Seeking
“the Meta Response”

Jan Inglis

Abstract: The author observes that a sense of hopelessness appears to be forming in our culture in response to recent descriptions of the impact of climate crisis. This reaction is compared to the way people respond to diagnoses of life threatening illness. Stages of reactions to difficult news are known to accompany such responses. The author shares her own sorting of responses as an example of stage transitions in the process of grappling with the difficult news of climate crisis. Transitions from one stage to the next are developmental. The importance of bringing resources from the field of adult development into the field of public deliberations to address the climate crisis is emphasized. A meta approach, “the Gaia approach,” is proposed, as are many questions for individual and public reflection.

Keywords: adult development, climate crisis, deliberation, developmental, Gaia approach, meta approach, stage transition processes, complexity

Introduction

This article shares observations about and reflections on the progression of peoples’ responses to climate change. Here, climate change includes the associated challenges of ecological overshoot, overpopulation, peak oil, and political economic instability. Although originally I had not planned to write a series, this article does appear to be a sequel to my essay in the December 2007 issue of Integral Review, Reactivity to Climate Change (Inglis, 2007). In that essay, I observed how it seemed that a tipping point had been reached and a shift was occurring. The shift was from the disbelief that there could be a climate change crisis, to a widely-accepted belief that there would be such a crisis, and thus a belief that corrective responses were needed. Now, scarcely five months later, I am writing about my observations that many people are feeling it is too late to turn the tide of devastation. This indicates a belief that the crisis is growing exponentially and cannot be averted. What a rapid leap — from acknowledgement of the existence of a planetary crisis to resignation that it is impossible to do anything to make a difference. Some have noticed there are different reactions in various regions of the world. Some have likened this range of differences and acknowledgments of the situation to being on the Titanic, recognizing or experiencing the crisis at different times, depending on the class of berth inhabited on the ship (Baker, 2008).

Voices of Resignation

One woman I spoke with the other day said that the human race should die off, because it had messed up the planet so terribly. I asked how that was for her, to think that way in view of the fact that she was a new, proud grandmother. She said firmly, “I just don’t think of it.” A friend, a
father of two who has been an active environmentalist working to protect water quality and wildlife habitat, told me the other day that he feels that his last 30 years have been a waste. He said he is getting older and wants to focus now on taking care of himself, travelling and enjoying the things he can while he still has the health to do so. Renowned scientist, author and futurist, James Lovelock, is saying nothing can be done to avert the catastrophe. Forty years ago he proposed the Gaia Hypothesis, indicating that all living and non-living aspects of the earth form a complex, interacting system. This system can be thought of as a single organism. Now, based on his and others’ research, he is saying that as soon as 2040, much of the Earth’s current population of 6.6 billion people will be culled. By the end of the century, he forecasts, only about 500 million will be left hanging on to life by living in the cooler latitudes of the planet.1

At the institutional level, the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, considered by some to be conservative in its estimates, is saying that we have only three to five years to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, after which it will be too late to avert climate change. It forecasts the devastating heating up of both land and oceans by 2°C, resulting in the extinction of at least 30% of plant and animal species mainly due to flood, drought, storms and disease. Behind the “too late” assumptions are the analyses that the amount of carbon already emitted into the atmosphere will remain for several generations. It forms a heat-trapping, life-threatening greenhouse roof over the earth. It is predicted that further emissions will result in temperatures rising by 6°C. Just as in our bodies, even a slight rise in temperature in the atmosphere disturbs the delicate balance required to maintain interdependent life systems. Such a rise would result in a 70% species loss by 2100.2

Even when confronted with such scientifically-based information, we see little organized response that seems to have any potential to reduce the use of fossil fuels. The topic of climate crisis, peak oil, food and water shortages, or other associated challenges are barely mentioned in the campaigns of US presidential nomination-hopefuls. People do not seem to be clamouring loudly for attention to climate change in those campaigns, either. Many people are versed enough on this issue that they do not want to be handed simple or optimistic platitudes. However, in the absence of leadership offering grounded-in-reality comprehensive approaches, it is hardly a wonder that there is a sense of hopelessness developing. This hopelessness seems to be named by those who simultaneously continue to participate in the collective “business as usual” mode. On one hand, dire hopelessness, on the other, no change in behavior to alleviate the problems driving the hopelessness. A crazy-making mixture! And for those who do express hope, saying that something will surely emerge, there is little clarity on what that emergence might look like or the detailed steps needed to bring it into effect.


Processes and Results of Coping with Difficult News

This prognosis is stark. It is incomprehensible! It is also so vivid and apocalyptic that it can focus our attention and frame our beliefs. I am noticing even as I write, how this dark cloud of absolutist doom can be compelling, overtaking my sense of other life options. I may have taken you, the reader, into this cloud with me. It can spread, become pervasive and self-generating. In this dark light, it could make all of our efforts in all kinds of fields of endeavour seem irrelevant and futile. How then do we choose to live? How do we define motivations and priorities in the context of possible mass extinction?

It is hard to talk about the possibility of this catastrophe, just as it is hard to talk about the prognosis of terminal illness. It is hard to write about it. It may be hard to read it. However, not opening this topic for direct attention, and in a publicly shared manner, would cut off the opportunity to engage and catalyze new perspectives and actions. Several years ago it was common practice for physicians to not tell patients they had been diagnosed with a terminal illness. This information was withheld out of fear of upsetting patients or their families. This was a paternalistic approach to physician-patient communication. More recently, this physician-patient relationship has changed from one of paternalism to one of respecting and supporting the patients’ needs and rights to know about their health status (O’Rourke, 2000). In the Western world, the topic of death now has less taboo associated with it. This contrasts to years ago, when people died in relative isolation. As they went through the dying process, their loved ones mostly carried on in a “business as usual” mode. This was not for lack of caring, but for lack of knowing how to navigate such vulnerable and unknown territory. Often the inability to share this poignant journey became as painful as the physical dying itself. A cultural change is evident as hospices and conscious dying processes are becoming more widely available and publicized.

It is one thing to contemplate one’s mortality from the abstract distance of years in the future. It is a different thing to have it take on a closer, more concrete reality within a possible two to three year time frame. Accepting death sits in tension with wanting life. There are almost as many ways of responding to this tension, as there are different people. Some wish to avoid the tension and do not transition beyond the overwhelmed feeling of shock. Yet, there are also stories of other people, who in the process of dealing with this tension, have shifted from the daily habits of a life they used to take for granted, to an awakening of aspects and experiences of themselves and the world that they had not observed before. Some have been thankful to have this wake up call; it allowed them to appreciate and therefore live the last part of their life with a fuller consciousness, redefining what a good life is. For some, this shift in perception has extended their life, and for others, it has even changed the diagnosis of their health status and its prognosis.

Can the intense work of noticing, sorting, prioritizing, and reconciling choices actually transform an individual’s biological, neurological, cognitive, and emotional patterns and thus allow a more integrated pattern to emerge? Many studies, including those on brain plasticity (Doidge, 2007), would suggest it can. This process, then, of confronting difficult news about personal survival can have generative impacts resulting in life-changing qualities and even transformative outcomes. What might we glean from this?
Towards Making Connections and Synthesizing Directions

The transition process of moving from hopelessness or denial to changes in attitudes, behaviors, and assumptions has been observed in numerous studies of “the grieving process” and by many who have companioned dying persons and their loved ones. Widely recognized, this is a nearly universal, if not truly universal, human process of adapting to new circumstances and arriving at new insights. I suggest this model of stage transition (see Commons & Richards, 2002), which describes the process individuals use to sort responses and make decisions, offers us a way to understand the universal, developmental stage transition and cultural decision-making. To step back and to view this process as a natural developmental transition process offers a perspective from which to make sense of the divergent often confusing mix of thoughts and feelings that arise on the road to resolving angst.

It seems important to bear in mind that the prognosis of climate crisis is based on current perceptions and projected outcomes. We arrive at these based on our assumptions of what would continue to occur in a linear logical manner as a result of known conditions, actions or inactions to date. These assumptions may not be taking into account the impact that clear consideration of these projected outcomes might have on the outcomes themselves. This self-reflective inquiry creates feedback loops, and learning. These in turn can potentially generate new, yet unseen options and adjustments. These adjustments could alter the course of the prognosis.

Observing myself in this process of viewing the climate crisis offers a place from which to inquire and reflect. When I can do this, I am not so embedded in this prognosis as the only truth. This reflective analysis allows me to move beyond the either/or dilemma, i.e., either rejecting the climate change prognosis or just accepting the hopelessness of it. I am not able to reject it because I can see the legitimacy of this information and am not willing to put my head in the sands. Nor am I able to accept a life with no hope and impotent action, because I am not willing to live without trusting the power that observing, learning and choosing has on producing more satisfactory outcomes. This analysis is fed back into my original response to the stark climate crisis prognosis. Based on this feedback loop I realize I have to adjust and move beyond this unsatisfactory and stuck either/or position, and search for new and broader options.

This searching leads me to recognize that although I see and accept the situation, if I labour under an assumption that I can create change of this magnitude alone, it is counter productive. I feel the necessity to engage with others who are willing to grapple with this challenge. I also recognize that this is not just your run of the mill, everyday quality of grappling. It means high stake investments of commitment and focus. It requires us to pay attention to both the personal (be self-reflective of one’s own experience), the interpersonal (work with what happens between us) and the global (notice patterns of systems within systems). It also requires us to be specific about what we have to grapple with and not get lost in abstract concepts. Then efforts can result in co-designed meta approaches (Ross, 2008) to undertake potent, rather than impotent, action. Through my sorting process, of generating and weighing out options, I eventually arrive at an

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3 Stage transition outlines the decision making process as it moves from the original thesis (yes, this is true), to antithesis (no, it’s not), relativism (yes or no), smash (many additional options to weigh) and finally synthesis or resolution (ahhh, this is it).
acknowledgment that for any of us to assume we can resolve this issue without the generativity of diverse minds working together could breed a futility of its own.

The hopelessness or avoidance I have been noting in response to the climate crisis may be signs of being stuck in stage transition, unable to create and weigh out new options. Being stuck when facing a crisis does not gain us evolutionary points. How can the use of adult development theories and research on stage transitions help us move out of this stage transition stuckness? Because the crisis is a complex, interconnected planetary issue, no single individual, group, corporate conglomerate, government, or international agency will be able to solve it. It is necessary to build structures for public interactions that match the complexity of the situation and support the quality of outcomes we want to achieve (Inglis, 2007). These interactive processes need to support diverse minds working together to co-design and weigh out new meta options. If these processes are designed from an understanding of the developmental diversity of adults, they are much more likely to support the quality of shared meaning making and deliberative decision making required to create comprehensive responses. In this way, I propose that knowledge gleaned from theories of adult development and adult learning have much to offer to the work on climate crisis. My concern is that there seem to be few who employ such theories in specific, on the ground, initiatives in this climate crisis domain. In general, the related fields of public policy, dialogue and deliberative democracy, and the related fields of adult development and learning appear to be standing as surprisingly separate silos. I advocate for dismantling these and many other such silos that limit our ability to see and work with the whole. I also advocate for and even predict that a new integral field of public issue analysis is ready to emerge. Through being comprehensively structured, it can potentially move us beyond those limits and support more effective approaches to our complex challenges.

A plethora of books, movies, and programs focusing on climate change is suddenly available to us, but few of them are informed by empirical research into adult development. Many attempts to explain why we have created this desperate crisis blame our stupidity as a species, for example, for having moved from being hunter/gatherers to being agricultural users/abusers of the earth. Or they blame us for being mesmerized by illusions about the industrial or technological revolutions. Both anthropological and adult development perspectives view these phases of evolution and societal changes as natural progressions, each building from the necessity to learn from and adapt our behaviors, attitudes, and systems to overcome the unmet demands of a previous phase. Through the process of development, limitations are reached within each stage. Although we can see these in hindsight, we could not have skipped going through these progressive stages at the time. There is little justification, then, for blaming the species for doing what a species does by its nature, or for thinking we can go back to and live the way we did prior to these phases.

Moving beyond the tendency to lay blame enables us to see that the challenges and limitations can only be resolved through deeper grappling with them. The experience of limitations is what motivates the search for what would overcome these limitations, and build the next adaptive stage. As a species, we had only fragmented views of what we were doing in the agricultural and

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industrial revolutions. At the time, they seemed like great adaptations to the limitations of the previous phase. We had no world wide web then. There were no wide scale, collective-engagement methods to gather and consider information, track feedback loops, and form a shared picture of what destructive patterns we were creating.

But now, in the communication era, with life conditions that support further individual, cultural and technological development, many of our previous communication and information limitations have been overcome. Now, for those living in such conditions, a meta picture is forming about our human and technological evolutions. This understanding is available for us to apply to this situation. If we had known better back then, we would have done better. We do know better now, and we have the option therefore to do better. We can feel the life threatening limitations of the phase we are currently in. We need to move beyond the taboo against discussing these threats, grapple with them in a publicly supported manner and be pushed by them to adapt. As a result, if we are motivated, we can potentially change the trajectory of the crisis.

Diverse Minds Seeking Meta Approaches

Currently there are almost as many different perspectives on the climate crisis as there are people. These perspectives have tensions and trade offs associated with them that need to be surfaced and publicly deliberated so we can make decisions we are willing to live with. The following recounts some of the most prevalent perspectives I have researched and observed to date from various sources (Inglis, 2008). For some, protecting their own community is the best approach to the impending peril: growing food, conserving water, living simply, and independently gives a sense of power as it offers something concrete to do. One consequence that would need to be considered in this approach is how to deal with the influx of environmental migrants, which could threaten the desired sustainability, and possibly trigger a militant form of protectionism. Through a different lens, some look to government to provide order and to develop and enforce corrective policies and structures. A consequence of taking this approach could be the slowness of government to respond and the distrust in leaders’ ability to grasp the severity of the issue. From yet another perspective, some believe that many kinds of innovations and new technologies will offer creative strategies to solve the dilemma. A consequence, which would need to be considered with this approach, is the unintended and often harmful results of short sighted and often short-term disconnected technological fixes. These trigger reactive suspicion of modernity in general, so incur resistance. Finally, looking through another perspective, some feel that deepening a sense of connections to each other and all living things will inspire less destructive ways of inhabiting the planet. A consequence of this approach is that it lacks details of how to coordinate and implement this inspiration into concrete steps that

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5 Much of this approach is happening under the name of “relocalization” and information can be found at http://www.relocalize.net/about/relocalization (Accessed April 2, 2008). Justification for guerilla type action are described at http://www.geocities.com/~dmdelaney/what-to-do-in-a-failing-civilization.html (Accessed April 2, 2008).

6 Ray Kurzweil, inventor, author and futurist states with optimism that he is confident that the acceleration and expanding capacity of information and nano-technology will solve, within twenty years, the problems that now preoccupy us.

effectively impact the issue. A further consequence is that the sensitivity and large vision this perspective promotes often turns off those whom it hopes to include and therefore also incurs resistance.

These are all very different and very legitimate perspectives, each accompanied by implications. Movement forward is often blocked due to the competition between the ideologies of these approaches, each blaming the other for causing the problem. This paralysis is another example of the stuckness in stage transitions we need to be aware of and respond to. As mentioned earlier, being stuck when facing a crisis does not gain us evolutionary points and it is definitely a limitation we need to surmount in our current climate crisis. A meta approach designed from an adult development perspective could include these diverse voices and coordinate their multiple action responses to enable moving forward in a comprehensive effective manner (Ross, 2008).

Looping back to Lovelock’s Gaia Hypothesis, is there a way we can integrate our diverse perspectives to function like Gaia: to knowingly be a complex interacting system of biological, geographical, cognitive, spiritual, scientific, political, emotional, and technical subsystems? What would a Gaia approach look like? If we put it in place now, could it allow many to not only survive, but evolve and thrive through and after the climate crisis?

It would mean acting out of a coherent synthesized meta response, not out of a stuck or chaotic transition stage described above. It could mean coordinating local sustainability initiatives with effective policy and structures (mentioned earlier), while creating, testing and distributing innovative technologies, with a sensitivity to our impact on others, locally and globally, human and non-human. Are we capable of moving beyond our personal shock, disbelief, and hopelessness, beyond concern for the well-being of just our descendants and communities, beyond our various ideological stances, beyond the dislike of sorting through tensions and attending to details, to thinking and acting like interdependent species? Are we motivated to overcome the limitations of this stage we are in right now? I believe in this motivation lie many possibilities to take us beyond the option of hopelessness to a response Gaia can live with.

References


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Appreciatively Critical Reflections on a Retreat with Adyashanti

Grady McGonagill

With an Introduction by Bill Torbert

and with

Another Step in the Walk of a Thousand Hills, I and II
by Andrew Campbell

Editors’ note: This reflective essay by Grady McGonagill is introduced below by inclusion of the cover note Bill Torbert used to circulate the original version of the essay among colleagues he thought would be interested. Both Bill and Grady have agreed to this combined publication. Grady also welcomed the inclusion of IR Arts and Creativity Editor Andrew Campbell’s art, inspired by this essay. For readers’ information, Grady also shared a version of his essay with Adyashanti, inviting his reflections or reactions that could be included with the essay’s publication. Although to date, Grady has received no such response, he, and we, believe it is important for readers to know that opportunity was extended.

January 2008

Dear Friend,

I am sending around, to good friends with a spiritual orientation, this essay on a contemporary young guru’s conference, written by my friend and fellow inquirer, Grady McGonagill.

I am forwarding this short essay because it seems to me exemplary in terms of the sort of appreciation/critique that a dedicated action researcher can offer. It is attentive to the single-, double-, and triple-loop feedback generated by his own perceptions and actions, and attentive as well to the mutuality (or lack thereof) evolving in a given situation. Therefore, it seems to me, the essay has potential value for the person writing, for other participants in the event itself, as well as for others engaged in spiritual inquiry.

In a more general way, this vulnerable, self-disclosing case study seems to me to highlight the inevitable paradoxes and outright incongruities that occur whenever someone takes/accepts a guru-esque role and claims to profess “the true way” to others who are but seekers. At the same time, the essay illustrates how any such sense of critique must lead to creative action on one’s own part if it is not, itself, to fall into hypo-critical self-contradiction.
I suggest that more participants in activities intended to be spiritually, politically, or scientifically transformative share self-observing tales like this with the initiators and other participants of the event, as well as other interested parties.

With best wishes for the New Year,
Bill Torbert

April 6, 2008

Given that for several years I had been seeking an opportunity to participate in an extended retreat with the meditation teacher who calls himself Adyashanti, it came as a surprise that when a chance finally came—at the Asilomar conference center near Monterey California, in December 2007—I decided to leave early. Like other participants, I had made a commitment to attend the full 5-day retreat. However, I left on the morning of the 4th day. One way to explain this is I was disappointed with my experience. Another, equally true, would be to say that I got what I came for and awarded myself an early graduation certificate. Still another would be to say that I got more than I came for, namely insight into my motivations for attending such a retreat and some of the underlying patterns of which that was an expression. These notes offer reflections on that experience and a preliminary report on what appears to be a resulting substantial impact on my life.

There’s much that I find admirable and attractive about Adyashanti. I was initially drawn to him by his approach to meditation, which is very non-directive. He writes, “True meditation has no direction, goals, or method. All methods aim at achieving a certain state of mind. All states are limited, impermanent and conditioned. Fascination with states leads only to bondage and dependency.” As someone who had always had great difficulty with efforts to achieve something in particular in meditation, such as maintain attention on the breath or strive for awareness free of thoughts, I found this perspective liberating.

Despite the pretensions of his name, (Sanskrit for “primordial peace”) Adyashanti encourages people to call him “Adja.” He reports with amusement that his audience tripled when he switched from his given name (Stephen Gray). He trained for many years as a Zen Buddhist with Arvis Joen Justi, a (female) student of Taizan Maezumi Roshi of the Zen Center of Los Angeles. But he left this tradition and has gone out on his own. His retreats are now in such demand that access is by lottery. There were 350 people at this retreat.

Part of his appeal results, I think, from his presenting himself as a kind of “regular guy,” one who enjoys playing cards, riding his motorcycle, and watching sports on TV. He sits in a comfortable chair rather than on a traditional meditation cushion. And he says he does not like burning incense or doing other conventionally “spiritual” things—all in all, a very “non-spiritual” spiritual teacher, in his own words. Consistent with this image, he disdains many of the formalities and rigors of Zen practice, such as maintaining a rigid posture even to the point of intense pain (he reports that such practice led him to do serious damage to himself by tearing a ligament). And he has little patience with the hair-splitting ideological wars within different schools of Buddhism or among other religions. For example, early in the retreat he made fun of
the mindset that led one school of Buddhist thought to refer to itself as Mahayana (“greater way”) and the preceding tradition as Hinayana (“lesser way”). Similarly he mocked the tensions between the “gradual awakening” and “sudden awakening” schools of Zen which was very amusing. And he couldn’t resist making a joke of more innocuous traditions, such as the practice at many meditation retreats of “eating abnormally slowly.”

The teaching style on retreats, if this one was typical, consists of meditation (he distributed a handout entitled “True Meditation” but didn’t talk about it much) and “satsangs”—one in the morning and one in the evening—two hours each, of which part is lecture and part is taking questions from participants who come forward and stand at a microphone. I found more than a few nuggets of wisdom in the presentations. For example, I found him particularly compelling on the meaning of “non-dual,” which he portrays as a full embrace of two worlds, one relative, one absolute, not just an ascendance into the absolute. He drew on unusual sources on this point, quoting the bible (“the fox has his hole, the bird its nest, but the son of God has no place to rest his head”). He often brought in good quotes: e.g., “When I look inside and see that I’m nothing, that’s wisdom. When I look outside and see that I’m everything, that’s love. And between these two, my life turns” (which I’ve since tracked down: it comes from Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj.) And he told good stories. One contrasted two different Buddhist teachers in the way they responded to women who had just lost their husbands. One (unnamed, presumably contemporary) teacher responded by telling the woman that what she experienced as pain was all just a “story” that she needed to let go of. The other (named something like Papaji) walked over to the woman, put his arms around her, and held her as she cried. Presumably there would be time for a conversation about the “story” later. Adyashanti’s preference for the latter response reflected an intuitive practical wisdom about how to apply Buddhist teachings that was often evident. In this case he mused, “I wish I had been in the room with the first teacher, with a large object in my hand, which I would have loved to have thrown it at him, and then asked, ‘Who’s feeling that pain, Mr. Nobody?’”

On occasion he also responded to questions in a way that I found compelling. For example, one woman reported with dismay that she had cut herself off from events in the world because she found all the rapes and violence too painful to let in. She felt herself to be both sensitive and cowardly. He suggested that she had in fact already let the world in, and was deceiving herself that she had not. She agreed. He asserted there was a true self in which there was room for all the pain in the world. He could see in himself, for example, all that which appeared as evil in the outer world; he invited her to imagine that so could she. She was able to make sense of this in terms of Jungian psychology, with which she was familiar, along with the notion of projecting outward repressed thoughts and feelings. And it seemed to be helpful to her to realize that in fact she had not shut things out as fully as she imagined. She seemed to go away satisfied. At other times he played the role of cognitive therapist in the style of Byron Katie, with a dash of humor. To one person he said, after listening for a few minutes, “OK, This is the part where you tell me your story and I ask you, ‘Is it true?’ I’m giving you the McDonald’s drive-through version of spiritual growth.”

Although this way of thinking was not new to me, one valuable part of the retreat was that I was able to take advantage of the uninterrupted time to apply some Buddhist-influenced cognitive therapy to myself, clarifying particular stories I was telling myself and asking if they...
were true. For example, I discovered on arrival at the retreat that I was experiencing a relapse of a fatigue syndrome that had immobilized me 25 years ago but which I had managed to keep in check during most of the intervening time. However, this was the 3rd relapse within 6 weeks and I found myself quite depressed about it. I decided to deconstruct the thinking process leading to the depression. Here is the chain of thinking I identified:

- “I will never get better.”
- “If I never get better I will not be able to make the contribution to which I aspire or fully realize my values.”
- “If I don’t do that, then my life will not have been worthwhile.”

Looking at this story with the intensity and detachment possible in a retreat, it seemed less than fully true. I began to sense the value of accepting the possibility that I might not get better. This led me to decide to conduct an experiment, to declare that my life was “over” (much in the way that a financial institution might write off sub-prime loans). I even mentally rehearsed my own epitaph, and decided that I could “live” with my life being effectively over as concerns anything productive. From this perspective, any additional day was grace. I could make of it what I wished, without feeling burdened to achieve anything. Somehow this felt very liberating. So although I never approached the microphone myself to seek direct counsel from Adyashanti, I was able to use the experience of the retreat to work through issues like this in ways that were inspired and supported by the retreat, which I presume was the aim of the “satsangs.”

But although there were a number of exchanges that seemed productive and some that I found personally helpful, at many other times I felt troubled by the interaction between Adyashanti and the people who came forward. Many described their problem in such abstract terms that it was hard for me to understand what they were asking, and equally hard for me to imagine that he understood them either. Sometimes the description didn’t go beyond metaphors, e.g., “I’m like a dog that won’t let go of a bone, and the bone that I’m chewing on is my own leg.” In this instance Adyashanti deftly invited the speaker to consult his own inner wisdom, which seemed to work very well, and didn’t require that the teacher understand the literal content of the metaphor. However, in most cases he began offering commentary, often without asking questions, or very many questions. Rarely did he ask for concrete examples. Instead he tended to move quickly to dispensing advice, sometimes even before a question had been posed. I often found the advice to be quite abstract and as unclear as the questions. People usually reached a point where they seemed satisfied, but I wondered whether they felt too embarrassed to say that they, like me, didn’t get it. (I recognize that these critical observations would carry more weight if they were supported by concrete examples, but I failed to note any at the time and couldn’t recollect any later. I recognize that others might have interpreted the interactions differently).

I also found myself troubled by Adyashanti’s use of concepts to explain his approach. Although I liked his approach to meditation, I was less fond of his name for it: “true” meditation. Doesn’t this name imply that other approaches are not true, or less true? And if so, isn’t Adyashanti doing precisely what he criticized others of doing when they declare their approach to be “better”? To his credit, he more than once said, following the Buddha, “Don’t take my word for anything. Try it out in your own experience.” But some of his teachings are so abstract that I find it hard to imagine how I, or anyone, would test them out. E.g., his definition of “true
meditation” contains a number of sentences like the following: “Silence is the non-state from which all states arise and subside.” I have no idea how I would find out through my own experience whether silence is a “non-state.” How indeed could I determine whether/how a non-state is different from a state? Most troubling of all, one person asked him whether his approach depended on beliefs. Among the things he said in response was: “beliefs are about things that you aren’t certain are true. If you know they are true (for which he gave the example, ‘that I am speaking into this microphone’) then they aren’t beliefs, rather they are ‘truths’.” I found this a deeply disturbing assertion. Apparently he would have us see his approach to spirituality as consisting of “truths” rather than “beliefs.” This suggests that he regards his own approach as self-evidently true and beyond dispute, presumably in contrast to other systems, which are based on “beliefs” that can be challenged. If I heard him correctly, he would seem to be taking a self-righteous stance not unlike that for which he had mocked other traditions.

On the second and third days of the retreat I spent a surprising amount of time and energy preoccupied with criticisms of this kind. I wondered whether to take them seriously, or simply as an expression of an overly-developed skeptical part of myself that often emerges during retreats and workshops (not to mention elsewhere in my life), which I am working to manage in a way that is less reflexive and more intentional. At one point I sat for three hours without interruption, and realized that I had spent over half of the time mentally rehearsing different ways of framing a challenging question to Adyashanti in front of the group, trying to strike the right balance among humility, curiosity and challenge. What an astonishing expenditure of energy! It became clear to me that by focusing on these criticisms I was directing my attention away from many other things that could be a source of learning, such as my fear about letting go of narrow constructions of my identity in order to engage the mystery of being and have the faith to tolerate the awful and magnificent uncertainty of a vast, unbounded and not fully knowable universe.

I was moving toward just letting these thoughts go and trying to redirect my attention away from comfortable criticisms of Adyashanti and toward less comfortable but potentially more generative self-inquiry, when on the night after the third day I had a transformative dream. In the dream I was making my way up a steep incline, pulling myself through underbrush, when I passed by an old rusting automobile. On the left fender I saw, to my delight, a pair of glasses that I had lost in my home a couple of months ago. I took the glasses and proceeded up the hill with a palpable sense of well being. As I recorded this dream in my journal, I recalled that earlier in the night, before going to sleep, a line from a Bobby “Blue” Bland song drifted through my mind: “There’s no one blinder than he who won’t see.” Putting these two things together, I had an epiphany: “I can see! All I have to do is put on my glasses! I don’t need to be huffing and puffing up the hill, struggling through the underbrush (i.e., my struggle with a tendency to be critical of the retreat). I already know enough to be able to do what I need to do on my own.” I felt exhilarated by this insight, and went back to sleep happier than I had felt in some time. Early the next morning, walking along the Monterey Beach, I mulled over what to do with my insight. Should I make it public in one of the day’s satsangs? Or perhaps pose a question about my criticisms, balanced by my insight? It occurred to me that my conclusion was very consistent with Adyashanti’s teachings: “You are already awake. You just need to realize it. You don’t need a teacher.” As I mused on the possibilities, and enjoyed the sound of the surf, the thought hit me: “I don’t need to sit through any more of this! I could be home this evening! I don’t need anyone else’s knowledge or approval or permission. I
got what I needed and I’m out of here.” Within little more than an hour—but, I confess, more than a little perseveration—I made the necessary arrangements and was on my way to the San Jose airport.

As I travelled, I added another layer of interpretation, building on some other “chance” experiences. I had found a pocket knife in front of the bungalow where I was staying. And by “coincidence,” behind him on the stage, Adyashanti had a statue of a Tibetan deity—Manjusri, the bodhisattva of wisdom and awareness—wielding a sword, a symbol of “cutting through bullshit” he said. Linking the found knife with the sword, I saw myself as cutting through the illusion that I needed something outside myself to be complete, to gain insight. And this lesson did not apply just to Adyashanti. I saw my whole orientation toward spiritual seeking as being driven by an underlying assumption that I was inherently deficient, incomplete, and needed to fill myself up with something from the outside. I had been aware of this pattern for some time, but unable to put it in perspective and let go of it. At last, I had an emotional footing—a message from my unconscious in the form of a dream, reinforced by the synchronistic metaphor of a sword—from which to cut through and let go of that limiting belief.

And then a deeper level of insight emerged. Although it was only during the retreat that I became critical of Adyashanti’s teachings, I realized that I had more than enough evidence beforehand to have aroused my suspicions. I had known that he called his approach “true meditation,” for example. And I recall reading the definition with the abstract language a few weeks earlier, and thinking, “Hmmm, don’t know about that.” Why had I ignored those clues? I decided that I had fallen victim to my yearning for a teacher who would point the way to enlightenment, teach me about how to attain it. Although I am sufficiently skeptical that I don’t easily allow myself to indulge these yearnings, or attach them to anyone, Adyashanti had gotten through my first level of defense with his non-directive approach, reinforced by strong endorsements from several people I know and respect. I had then become all too willing to give him benefit of the doubt. I was guilty of overlooking disconfirming evidence to serve what I wished to see—something that drives me crazy when I see other people do it! Very humbling. Very eye-opening. Another step in the walk of a thousand hills, the never-ending trek toward self knowledge. All in all, well worth the price of admission to the retreat. The irony being that although I learned that I didn’t “need” to go to the retreat, in fact I had to go to learn that, and something about Adyashanti’s way of being/teaching may in fact have made this insight possible.

Epilog

In contemplating these reflections as I wrote them, I found myself wondering whether the insights would have a lasting impact (evidence of playing a “larger part”), or merely be a set of intriguing but ephemeral epiphanies (for which I had ample precedent in my life). The evidence so far—two and a half months later—is mixed but encouraging. On the disappointing side, I find that little remains of the perspective in which I had made my peace with thoughts that I had to do still more for my life to have been worthwhile. It surprises me to note this, as I had returned from the retreat quite excited about this perspective, and talked it up to friends. But a deeply ingrained achievement-oriented mindset has settled back in. To be sure, when I now notice self-critical thoughts about my declining abilities, I recall the exhilaration of being able to step out of that
mindset at the retreat. But it now seems a dim and distant perspective, not one that I have internalized. There is probably some value to that memory as a benchmark of an alternative perspective, but I suspect it would take far more work of that kind, or reinforcing work of a different kind, to fully integrate new thinking into my consciousness.

Far more encouraging are several indicators of an increased inclination to act. I acted in three ways in the aftermath of the retreat that I believe were influenced by the retreat and my reflections on it, although they were probably also an expression of shifts that had been percolating for some time. First, within a few days of my return, I signed up for some volunteer activity. I had sensed for some time that I would do well to put more energy into “giving” in addition to “searching,” but had dismissed the impulse on the logical grounds that my professional work was about giving and that in any case I tend to make substantial financial charitable contributions. But now I made a specific commitment to do something humble and concrete—spend a Saturday putting together Braille books for blind children. Moreover, I’ve noticed since then an increased tendency to act on feelings of compassion for others. Second, it became clear to me that I needed to “wield the sword” within my family, to cut off my youngest brother from his continuing financial exploitation of my 86-year old mother. Within a few days of the retreat—and in collaboration with my sister—I found a way to do this.

Finally, and most significantly, after three weeks I decided to initiate the deepest cut of all: separation from a marital partnership that had been stuck for many years. This was the hardest decision I’ve ever made; indeed, I unmade and remade it a dozen times over a period of several weeks. Taking this step—like leaving the retreat early—could lead to breaking a vow (“until death do us part”). But in deciding to cut through my long-standing indecision in this area I was inspired by that moment of knowing on the Monterey Beach when it became clear to me that it made no sense to feel bound by an agreement that no longer served a meaningful purpose.

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Grady’s workshops on leadership, coaching, interpersonal skills, conflict management and team building have been offered through a number of executive programs, including Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, M.I.T.’s Sloan School of Management, Babson College’s Center for Executive Education, Brandeis University’s Heller School of Management, and the Center for Management Research.

Grady holds an Ed.D. from Harvard University, an M.A. from Stanford University, and a B.A. from the University of Texas. He is a contributor to the Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, edited by Peter Senge et al. (New York: Doubleday, 1994) and the author of “The Coach as Reflective Practitioner,” a chapter in Executive Coaching, edited by C. Fitzgerald and J. Berger (San Francisco: Davies Black Publishing, 2002).
Another step in the walk of a thousand hills

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aprylics on glass/brush/paper/glass/paper/glass/paper/glass
11. am 17th April 2008
Andrew J. Campbell
("When in time this file is opened by you the original image will have been destroyed")
Another step in the walk of a thousand hills

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Andrew J. Campbell

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-- a line from a Bobby "Blue" Bland song drifted through my mind: “There’s no one blinder than he who won’t see.” Putting these two things together, I had an epiphany: “I can see! All I have to do is put on my glasses! I don’t need to be huffing and puffing up the hill, struggling through the underbrush (i.e., my struggle with a tendency to be critical of the retreat). I already know enough to be able to do what I need to do on my own.”
Book Review

The Seeker Academy

Reviewed by Jonathan Reams

Introduction

L.D. Gussin’s novel The Seeker Academy is a perceptive examination of today’s New Age truth seeking movement. Gussin describes a complex and interwoven set of threads that enables his novel to do justice to the realities of such truth-seeking. The main character, Grace Hudson, takes up the journey of finding deeper meaning in life and her experience opens a window into this world. Gussin’s other characters represent core types found in the New Age movement and elsewhere, and many will recognize them from their own experience. His writing style enables a movement through perspectives in a way that reveals to the reader some of his judgments while leaving space to ponder their own view of such matters.

From this brief introduction to the novel, I want to back up a step and provide some insight into why I chose to review it. Gussin asked me last winter if Integral Review would be interested in doing a review of his book. I did some background research, and found that he had thus far approached over 60 editors of publications in the field of progressive, spiritual or integral thought, leaders of retreat centers (places much like The Seeker Academy portrays) and workshop leaders of such retreat centers as well as various scholars in the field. Only one had chosen to review his book. This piqued my curiosity. Was the book so bad that people simply didn’t respond? Were they simply too busy, already overloaded with long lists of books to review? Or did it touch a nerve in them that led to a tuning out of the book’s message and marginalizing it through neglect?

I saw that Gussin took aim at many kinds of practices, beliefs and ideologies that I have encountered on my journey. Having formed my own views on such things, (and often finding myself in the minority), I was interested enough to say yes to doing this review. While “integral” thinking can be applied to any topic or field of inquiry, I believe that, at its best, it is able to live up to a promise to “integrate” the spiritual into our everyday experience of life rather than treat it as some kind of appendage. I hoped to see some of these insights in Gussin’s novel.

The Story

The plot line is simple enough. Grace Hudson is a former actress (not profoundly successful), turned school teacher/wife/mother with, at the start of the novel, a 12 year old niece in treatment for leukemia. Through her caring support of her niece, Grace comes into direct contact with existential aspects of life. These lead her to take a summer workshop on “Embracing Sadness” at the Seeker Academy as a way of dealing with this upwelling of deeper feelings. Once there, she
realized that the workshop had not answered the call she felt, and chose to stay on as staff for another three weeks.

At first, Grace finds it a strange world of people and ideas, and while making a few friends among an eclectic and diverse group of fellow staff members and workshop participants, she really is looking in from the outside. As she unwinds from the intensity of her experience with her niece and settles in to the place, she gradually becomes more interested in both the lives of those she has encountered and the ideas that form the background to their seeking. She encounters yoga, meditation, body work, past life regression and a host of other practices and beliefs. She also encounters narcissism, spiritual elitism and emotional dysfunction in the people she takes an interest in. Gussin’s careful narration allows the reader to see this even when Grace may not name it as such.

The mesh of these threads is brought out in the novel through a car crash involving some of her companions. The aftermath helps bring these elements into focus and propels Grace to get at the deeper meanings behind all the action at the Seeker Academy. She weaves her way between cynicism and insight, leading her to leave the Seeker Academy with a healthy dose of distaste for some of the pretenses that are seen to dominate the presenters and their offerings. At the same time, Grace is profoundly affected by her time there.

The Review

The sparse plot line I have provided above describes the outward framework of the story, which Gussin conveys in wonderful style. There is realism to the writing, grounded in both the action of the characters and Grace’s reflections on and perceptions of them. The writing uses specific events and concrete descriptive language to engage the reader with the unfolding view that gradually emerges. This style also enables Gussin to avoid awkwardly slipping in long winded philosophical discourses surrounded by some sparse action. The sections of philosophical discourse are surprisingly few and emerge naturally as support for the movement of Grace and other characters.

While Gussin does not fall prey to long philosophical meanderings, he does manage to say a lot about the wide range of ideas present in the novel. He says just enough about them, woven into the context of the characters presenting the ideas and juxtaposed with Grace’s perspective to create a space where a complex, nuanced and integrated view offers itself to the reader. There are no simplistic condemnations of practices or beliefs, nor hollow praise for others.

Grace’s narrative is the central thread of the book, presented in a way that enables an outside perspective on everything encountered at the Seeker Academy. Gussin uses it to reveal a complex and nuanced view of what appears to be intended as a representative segment of the New Age movement. While Grace is new to much of the content she encounters at the Seeker Academy, she is perceptive and notices that most of what goes on there enacts the same kinds of dynamics as the rest of the world, simply dressed up in new clothes. Gussin is able to show very clearly how the psychological functioning of people, some healthy and some not so healthy, gets mixed with their ideologies, beliefs and how they put those into practice. The rich characterizations Gussin portrays illuminate how much of what New Age spirituality has to offer
can be and often is distorted by personal needs and agendas. At the same time he also shows that despite these and other shortcomings, this seeking can be of value, that there is truth to be found.

Attending the Seeker Academy represents turning inward and away from everyday life, captured by Grace’s exploration of herself beyond being a wife/mother/teacher. This inward turn allows for reflection and the opening up of space for awareness of what has always been present to come into focus. It allows Grace to encounter a full and rich landscape that she finds mirroring the issues of her everyday world at times, or perspectives and experiences she had in the past. The tensions and distortions that arise from many at the Seeker Academy who attempt to treat it as different from the world outside its gates fuel a range of dysfunctional behaviors. Grace’s perception that it is in many ways similar to the everyday world reveals Gussin’s capacity to hold the richness and complexity of such seeking and the places that foster it. Eventually, this time of inward reflection allows Grace to go back out into her world with a new level of awareness that has a capacity to integrate the spiritual with the mundane.

There is also a gradual unfolding of Grace’s awareness and a natural rhythm to this process that Gussin captures extremely well. I have read other novels that try to convey the subtle unfolding of consciousness, and they often feel awkward, forced or artificially contrived. This is not the case here, as Gussin manages to weave into the story the psychological and spiritual awakenings of Grace so deftly that it feels like a natural and obvious response to her inclinations and the situations she finds herself in. Her seeking arises authentically, which highlights a contrast with some of the other characters who appear driven by a range of other motivations. Some of these appear as healthy, some as unhealthy, but all of them come across as real people struggling with the complexity of their lives.

The flow of the novel felt like it rose in tempo towards a climatic realization, a collapsing to a singularity that I felt rushing in. And yet, when the end came, there was a denouement of sorts that managed to symbolize and capture everything and open up into a very real and transformed future that was also open. Grace steps back into the world at large, having found in herself a confidence and awareness that many sought at the Seeker Academy. She finds that this is not something new or strange to her, but that she has simply not focused her attention on it before.

I had a great appreciation for the way Gussin presents people first, and then the ideas as inextricably woven into the fabric of their lives. This gives the book an “integral” grounding. The diversity of the cast of characters shows the diversity of reasons people seek the truth, and the multiple ways they interpret, use and abuse the ideologies they adopt.

One element present in the novel is that Gussin calls for the return of reason to balance the some of the mysticism and more foolish elements of the Seeker Academy and New Age in general. His descriptions of some of these beliefs and practices at the Seeker Academy come across as comical at times, yet from my experience I can recognize that such things are taken very seriously by many. As with any beliefs and practices, there are people who hold those of the New Age in a balanced fashion, and others who take them to extremes and lose perspective. This is often compounded and fueled by the kinds of psychological needs mentioned above. Gussin’s call for a measure of reason is fitting in this context, and the long history of tension between reason and mysticism is woven into the story as a backdrop for the seeking going on there.
It becomes clear enough through the novel that Gussin sees many people being taken in by an abandonment of reason through some psychological need aiming to be fulfilled by a belief, practice or guru. As I read through the novel, what I found myself wanting to hear more of was how one could transcend and include reason. The concept of the pre/trans fallacy is relevant here. Briefly, it proposes that what is non-rational can be either pre-rational or can transcend (and include) rationality. The fallacy is that the pre-rational can be mistakenly elevated to a transcendent status. It is common in the world that Gussin aims to describe for people to proclaim the spiritual as transcending reason, (which indeed can be true), yet actually be reverting to a pre-rational stage. To me, making and applying this distinction is a key aspect of the integral project. While I could feel hints of such a view in the novel, I wished for a more clear and explicit expression of this distinction and its implications.

**Why Have Others Been Unwilling to Review It?**

In reflecting back on one of the points that motivated me to read and review this novel, I can now see at least one possible reason why others had not taken up the invitation to review it. While I have indicated above a clear admiration for the way in which Gussin manages to capture the depths of real human seeking, I have only briefly mentioned how he subtly reveals his view of the leaders of New Age, spiritual or integral movements.

Gussin places these people in a very human light. The limitations of their work, the mix of personal agendas with an emphasis at times on marginalizing reason to keep critical questioning at bay are there to see. Not flagrantly, but possibly enough to get under the skin of some who might style themselves along the lines of such leaders.

Beyond this possible reason, I can only speculate on why others have not been willing to review the novel. One such speculation is that Gussin portrays many of those in the Seeker Academy as being “had by” their beliefs and ideologies rather than “having” them, and thus unable to sort the feelings arising from these views from their own psychological condition. This leads to the entwinement and enmeshment of psychological dysfunction and resultant coping agendas with a host of New Age themes. This is not very flattering for those who identify with this culture, but it is this complex situation that Gussin portrays so well in *The Seeker Academy*.

So while these reasons may have contributed to the lack of reviews Gussin’s novel has received, they stand out for me as the strengths that make it a compelling piece of literature. The mix of action and reflection narrated through Grace Hudson, the deft touch of lightly interspersed philosophical offerings, the focus on whole human beings and how they have this rich variety of mixed psychologies and beliefs all contribute to making *The Seeker Academy* a compelling and insightful read. L.D. Gussin opens up a window that clearly lets the light in, and allows us to see out onto a spacious vista, replete with helpful markers to inform us on our own journey into this territory.

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Book Review


by Bonnitta Roy

Raul Rosado’s new book succeeds on many levels. He makes an important contribution to integral studies; he describes new ways for understanding group and self identity; he opens new ways for transmuting the processes of fear, oppression and victim-hood into liberation and transformation; he creates a unique synthesis between the highly rational-analytic AQAL model and the native American medicine wheel; and he creates a processual system that overlays and resonates with both models. His writing style is personal and intimate. He allows the reader to feel into his own experiences of oppression, and his own journey toward liberation and transformation. But because Rosado also has worked with various communities on such issues, he is able to put the personal in context with the group—a necessary ingredient of his work.

The main feature of Rosado’s process model relies on the metaphor of a cyclone. After Rosado identifies the various patterns of oppression with respect to each of the four AQAL quadrants, he shows us that these factors are not merely inter-related, but mutually inter-active and continually reinforcing the system of oppression. When visualized as a process, the system of oppression becomes a cyclone of oppression, “moving” inwards, causing continual contraction of self-identity. He describes two such levels of contraction: 1) the impact of cultural oppression on personal identity and 2) the psychosocial pattern of internalized inferiority. With these system models, Rosado is able to demonstrate how the processes of oppression accumulate tremendous power on the personal, cultural and institutional levels and therefore are highly resistant to change. The systems of oppression, Rosado is warning us, are active not static.

In the second part of his book, Rosado puts consciousness in action. Again, overlaying the wisdom of the medicine wheel with the pluralistic methodology of the AQAL model, Rosado identifies positive patterns called “spheres” of action and influence. Rosado argues, if the direction of oppression is inward, toward contraction and stasis, the direction of consciousness is outward, toward liberation and transformation. With this process framework, Rosado is able to explain the possibility of fighting “fire with fire”, as it were, by activating the positive, outward momentum of conscious liberation. This momentum requires participation at the same levels that feed the cycle of oppression – and so the active response is multi-layered, multi-leveled, multi-perspectival, and integral.

Consciousness-in-Action is a useful and purposeful manual for people interested in social activism at any level. It is also a wonderful personal narrative, giving us an insight into a caring, thoughtful, and hard-working integrated person. Finally, it is a great example for how integral writers can expand the existing models into process versions, into infinite riches of discourse.
Extended Length Book Review and Integral Evaluation.

M. P. Mumber, MD (Ed.).

by Sara Nora Ross

Nearly a year ago, a colleague associated with the editor of *Integrative Oncology* asked me to review the book, which at that time was still in the newly-published category. As a scientific reference text, it had been subjected to rigorous review procedures before its publication. Because I am not in the medical field, the motivation for asking me, as I understand it, was to have the book reviewed through an integral lens. To the usual functions of a book review would be added an evaluation on how the book meets such standards as we apply at *Integral Review*.

Not long after receiving that request, my 92 year old mother began a descent into ill health that turned out to be terminal cancer. My roles during her dying process delayed my reading and writing about this book while they provided my first direct exposure to the care and concerns of a cancer sufferer. Perhaps some insights gained and experiences pondered during that last journey with my now-deceased mother will be informed by and contribute to this later-than-promised review in some ways not otherwise possible.

Integrative oncology (IO) is the next step in the evolution of cancer care. It addresses the limitations of the current system, while retaining its successful features. It includes the use of evidence-based tools that translate into definable outcome in the fields of preventative, supportive and antineoplastic care… IO addresses all participants in a sustainable process of cancer care, at all levels of their being and experience. Along with tools that translate into definable outcomes, it also includes methods that can transform the health of individual participants and the entire medical system. (Mumber, p. 3)

Thus begins the integrative medicine field’s first reference text to focus on oncology. Integrative medicine is a term intentionally adopted by the field to replace the more prevalent “complementary and alternative medicine (CAM).” As editor Matthew Mumber explains in his introductory chapter, the aim of using the term integrative medicine is to replace dualistic distinctions between conventional medicine and CAM with more pragmatism, distinguishing “a form of medicine that delivers ‘what works’” irrespective of such categories.

**Organization of the Book**

This book’s organization indicates a commitment to educative thoroughness and consistency and therefore utility as a reference text. The first of two sections is dedicated to explicating principles of an integrative oncology. After the first chapter’s introduction to integrative medicine and its general principles, six chapters offer context, principles, and resources on (a)
clinical research and evidence, (b) physician training, (c) the health and wellness of the physician/health-care provider, (d) models of care, (e) legal issues, and (f) business assessment.

The second section is dedicated to practice, with an impressively methodical and highly serviceable approach to presenting material. The initial two chapters address clinical decision analysis and stages of change, respectively. The third chapter, an overview of modalities, introduces each modality and sets the presentation sequence used to organize the remaining chapters’ applied subject areas. The eight modalities that are overviewed and invoked in sequence where applicable in the remaining chapters are (a) physical activity, (b) nutrition, (c) mind-body interventions, (d) botanicals, (e) manual therapy, (f) energy medicine, (g) spirituality, and (h) alternative medical systems. The authors of these overviews are also the contributors of the multiple modality discussions within the specific topics of the remaining chapters. Three of those remaining five chapters address modalities with respect to (a) cancer prevention, (b) supportive care, and (c) antineoplastic therapy. One chapter is dedicated to tobacco, alcohol, and integrative oncology. The final and longest chapter treats specific applications of integrative oncology in sub-sections dedicated to malignancies of breast, prostate, lung, colorectal, skin, and other cancers. These are followed by the final sub-section on palliative and end-of-life care.

The Chapters

Section I - Principles

1. Principles of Integrative Oncology

Before introducing the principles of integrative oncology in his opening chapter, Matthew Mumber provides a basic introduction to orient the reader. This includes an overview of integrative medicine’s relationship with the conventional medicine it includes. His brief discussion of the “push” away from conventional medicine and the “pull” toward its alternatives, supported by statistics, is appropriately balanced with acknowledgment of both the positive and the negative attributes of integrative medicine. In checking, I found that the Society for Integrative Oncology (http://www.integrativeonc.org/) does not provide a definition of “integrative,” but Mumber does. To do so, he draws on two general ideas from Ken Wilber: (a) since the evolution of integrative systems transpires through a combination of transcendence and inclusion, integrative oncology “must include the positive aspects of biomedicine while going beyond its limitations;” (b) a truly comprehensive integrative approach will address “all of the individuals involved—patient, family, providers, community and society—at all levels of their being (mind, body, soul and spirit) in all levels of their experience, including the self, their role in a specific culture, and the effects of and on the natural environment” (p. 6). The distraction of that assertion’s grandiose scope and its odd classification of community and society as individuals are somewhat rescued by two scope-clarifying points: (a) “community” is used (in duplicative fashion, above) to refer to a group of people that includes the patient, family members, and providers; and (b) to meet the needs of these diverse individuals, a team approach to care is required.

This initial chapter of the book warrants extra space here (Table 1) to quote its list of principles of integrative medicine and then, specifically, oncology (pp. 7-8).
Table 1. Principles enumerated in *Integrative Oncology*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrative Medicine Principles</th>
<th>Integrative Oncology Principles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Relationship centered</td>
<td>7. (Continued) integrate the best</td>
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<td>2. Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>therapy for individual, conventional</td>
</tr>
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<td>3. Individualized care based on</td>
<td>or CAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mind, body, and spirit</td>
<td>8. Seeks and removes barriers to</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Patient as active partner</td>
<td>innate healing</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Focus on prevention and health</td>
<td>9. See compassion as always helpful</td>
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<tr>
<td>maintenance</td>
<td>10. Works collaboratively with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provider as educators and role</td>
<td>patience and a team of providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>models, i.e., self-care</td>
<td>11. Maintains that healing is always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Evidence-based approach from</td>
<td>possible even when curing is not</td>
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<td>multiple sources of information</td>
<td>12. Agrees that the physician’s job</td>
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<td></td>
<td>is... to cure sometimes, heal often and</td>
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<td>support always</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Service among equals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Compass</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Focus on healing</td>
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The defining feature asserted for integrative medicine is transformation, as distinguished from translation. The systems in which integrative medicine therapies are rooted can result in “an entirely new viewpoint” (p. 10) on the part of health providers and patients. By comparison, translational interventions target desired outcomes, i.e., a linear relationship between action $x$ and outcome $y$. Mumber provides a list of differentiating characteristics of interventions with intent of translation versus transformation that conveys operating assumptions of the two approaches. Wordings of the transformative ones seem designed as contra-versions of the translational ones to emphasize their differences. In doing so, a number of them appear to indicate an either/or rather than integrative definition. For example, translational characteristics of “external locus of control” and “has levels of effect” have counterpart transformational characteristics of “internal locus of control” and “all or nothing.” It seems that the rendering of the list slips away from the goal to integrate (“transcend and include”). However, lists are merely lists, and the “walk” of the remainder of the book does not manifest such contradictions as I inferred from this list’s “talk.”

Integrative oncology emphasizes the addition of prevention and supportive care in addition to treatment modalities. In doing so, it extends the Precautionary Principle. This principle had non-medical origins that have since been extended to health care situations, specifically breast cancer prevention, and its use is extended in this book. It “allow[s] physicians and other providers to act in situations where limited data are available, if that action is almost certainly safe and deemed necessary” (p. 13). The relative paucity of scientific research to date into many integrative medicine therapies places a greater burden on the practice of that medicine, because it requires high degrees of diligence to analyze the entirety of clinical situations. Overall, integrative medicine in general and oncology in particular have demanding sets of tasks to perform and coordinate, the complexities of which the remainder of the book illuminates.

2. Clinical Research and Evidence

By distinguishing an additive connotation, commonly given to *integrative*, from the more complex association of *integration*, Nancy Stark, Suzanne Hess, and Edward Shaw begin their chapter by articulating the unique demands of an integrative approach to oncology. It is not about adding to one’s toolbox, the additive approach. It is integrative because it “must involve a critical appraisal of modalities that may enhance the response to biomedical therapies” or at minimum...
enhance the quality of life of “the community” Mumber defined earlier. It involves different systems of enhancement. These introduce perennial concerns about complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies’ efficacy, safety, and appropriate patient counseling. Efficacy and safety of CAM therapies are complex to assess because they must interface with chemotherapy, radiation, or surgical treatments for cancer. This level of complexity is addressed as the authors use their chapter to offer a framework for clinicians’ decision making to recommend or incorporate CAM therapies in their practice. To construct that framework, they review research methods and a levels-of-evidence scheme to weigh research findings on CAM therapies, their efficacy, and their safety. These demand coordination and principled decision making.

Their discussion of research methods used in the traditional Western medicine paradigm as compared to methods appropriate for CAM therapies has a certain kind of similarity, though different and more complex, than methodological debates argued in numerous other literatures. The similarity is that of a penetrating analysis of where traditional scientific methods cannot always suffice. Rigorous science is consistently argued for in integrative medicine, so this is not an argument against it. But it is an explication of the increased complexity involved to do science that informs how to integrate CAM therapies with conventional cancer treatments. CAM therapies’ systems of enhancement have more to juggle than cause-effect tests of single-treatment efficacy and probabilities. The authors’ work in this chapter is recommended reading for researchers in any discipline as an exemplar of carefully yet succinctly teasing apart and explicating research demands, methods, well- and ill-placed assumptions, and balancing acts required with varying levels of empirical evidence.


Placing medical education in the principles section of the book, rather than the practice section, sends a message that Patrick Massey develops further in his chapter. He and other authors in this text refer to the high percentage of cancer patients seeking complementary and alternative medicine. One concern is that many patients do not inform their conventional medical providers about their pursuit or use of CAM therapies. With more than half of cancer patients using CAM, with or without the knowledge and advice of their physicians, physicians need a working knowledge of CAM therapies to help them communicate with and serve their patients. The contraindications of some CAM therapies in conjunction with chemotherapy and radiation should drive the need for better doctor-patient communications supported by knowledge acquisition. However, “it is safe to say that most physicians have little experience with CAM” (p. 47).

Massey discusses physician education in integrative medicine from three standpoints: the personal benefits to the doctor, progress in institutionalizing CAM in medical education, and continuing medical education. The Consortium of Academic Health Centers for Integrative Medicine, comprised of 27 medical schools at the time of this book’s publication, “has become the vanguard of medical school CAM education,” playing a role in addressing the first two issues above. It emphasizes the need to bring greater healthy balance to medical education, seeking to embed integrative medicine’s values. The benefit is two-pronged: obviously, patients and doctors benefit from access to CAM modalities, but further, the holistic values are emphasized to
increase the personal and emotional development of physicians. (Viewers of the television series Grey's Anatomy may have observations of how vital this two-pronged agenda is.) Massey also explores the challenges of continuing medical education in general as well as for CAM. A hopeful note is his report that according to a number of studies, the former presumption that continuing education was not necessary has been replaced and physicians recognize it as essential. Development matters: an integrative principle.

The chapter closes with a network model for community physicians, because even those physicians who choose not to use CAM therapies in practice should understand its terminology and be familiar with the research as well as where to find experts in CAM to serve as resources. Methods to start new continuing medical education programs are enumerated, as are resources that include physician retreats and healing spas, among others.

4. The Health of the Healer: Physician/Health Care Provider Wellness

Developing the rationale introduced above, Danna Park’s focus in this chapter is on how and why providers’ health statuses matter, too. Medical texts rarely address the conflict between self care and care for others inherent in the medical profession. Easier said than done, Park discusses the challenges of physicians’ incorporating self-care and wellness. One source is less evident than others: the integrative approach recognizes the interconnection of provider-patient relationships, each person affecting the other. Well developed, an integrative approach may result in “the practitioner-patient relationship itself becoming a tool for healing” (p. 58).

The wellness of oncologists is particularly vital when studies report from 25-50% of them suffering from burn-out, and high percentages of physicians without personal health-care providers. Oncologists suffering from high emotional exhaustion and the sense of low personal accomplishment were about half of one study. Park explores several domains of burn-out and its detrimental impacts on patient care, stress, depression, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, and relationships. The role of “medical culture,” instilled during the inhumane rigors of medical school, stands out as a significant player in embedding ongoing challenges to wellness. Part of the challenge to wellness is the need to transform our systems from “sickcare” to health care. Principles promoted by an increasing number of groups “are a call to action” to “start with introspection and honest self-evaluation, honoring the fact that the individual is at the heart of change” (p. 67). The remainder of the chapter is dedicated to addressing a wide range of approaches that educate about and support delving into personal self-care, from individual lifestyle changes, to the psychosocial or interpersonal, to the spiritual. The message to physicians it that it is possible and vital to develop more integrative awarenesses, and to realize the extent to which their health impacts patients, families, and the medical system as much as their ill-health does: the principle of beneficence begins with oneself.

5. Models of Care

Judith Boyce’s chapter is instructional for integrative medicine practitioners who want to extend the reach and benefits of integrative approaches. In addition to treatment modalities, this can include the preventative and supportive dimensions of the integrative triad. After enumerating and discussing practical discernment, logistical, and strategic questions necessary to
the launch of a new practice, and in particular one using integrative medicine therapies, the remainder of the chapter is dedicated to presenting models of care with their advantages and limitations followed by examples of 14 integrative medicine centers.

The chapter also could be instructional for the integrative oncology field as such. In it, I see the beginnings of a (presumably) new model. Such a model could perhaps lead to an evidenced-based developmental assessment tool for the field’s own use. In effect, Boyce’s overall presentation enables, at minimum, four kinds of high-level gazes. These are relevant to factors involved in evolving cancer care. Each gaze can discern a spectrum of sorts across the factor(s) it examines. One kind of high-level gaze enabled is at the structural form of organization(s) involved in a given model. Another is at the level of geographic, including within-building, location. A third is the spectrum of increasingly complex and more integrative models and the factors that enable them to be so (but not enumerated here). Finally, one is the spectrum of population demographics reached and *relationships formed and affected*, as a function of the organizational structure, location, and degree of integrative level achieved. Given a vision of integrative oncology addressing “all participants in a sustainable process of cancer care, at all levels of their being and experience,” such a model to under gird various assessments may be a developmental tool for the field.

6. Legal Issues

All physicians, and many other health providers, have to be concerned with the legal and ethical demands that go hand in hand with their medical profession. When medical collaborations include CAM therapies, issues of shared liability surface along with malpractice and other traditional areas of law that apply to non-CAM practice. Michael Cohen and David Rosenthal use cases from their own experience and liability and ethical frameworks to analyze situations that integrative oncologists may expect to arise in practice. This treatment presumes the United States context; legal issues in other countries would differ somewhat. The clinical audience they target in this chapter includes oncologists who have cases of (a) patient seeks therapeutic advice about CAM therapies, (b) patient enrolled in a clinical trial designed to use a CAM therapy, or (c) a patient who plans to use CAM therapies with or without medical advice.

CAM therapies are sufficiently in the medical mainstream that the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) at the National Institutes of Health has defined integrative medicine and recognized its therapeutic modalities when they have merit determinable by “some high-quality” evidence. While these are the beginnings of institutionalizing integrative medicine, Cohen and Rosenthal point out that because NCCAM does not specify a threshold for that evidence, it leaves the clinician “to make delicate judgments at the borderland of good clinical and legal sense” (p. 102). More thoroughly institutionalizing integrative medicine would show up in the form of more, and more specific, guidelines for this context.

In the meantime, the legal and ethical maze of factors for clinicians to weigh in making decisions is elaborate. By offering case scenarios and discussing their intricacies, case law, general malpractice theory, and permutations of the cases, the authors walk through the kinds of legal and ethical reasoning and hypothetical tangents that they, institutional review boards,
consulting attorneys, and courts of law must navigate. The intricacies—applicable in research and clinical practice—are increased when patients exercise their options to disregard physicians’ advice while the law may maintain that physicians remain responsible. The chapter includes two practice-relevant appendices with procedural forms, and a list of major resources for legal and ethical issues in integrative care.

7. Business Assessment

Joan Kines begins her chapter with the question: Why provide integrative oncology service? One of the answers is the prediction of an expert in the field that infers consumers in the United States context, at least, will continue to demand CAM therapies. The prediction is that by 2010, the supply of alternative practitioners would grow by 88%, as compared to the supply of traditional medical physicians growing by 16%. Kines situates her question, though, in the context of an integrative oncology business assessment. Before launching such a service, there are numerous practical business issues to address. She tailors her contribution to walk her target audience through the detailed assessments required to function in the U.S. context. Addressing both general and CAM-specific concerns, it treats market and costs assessments, reimbursement analysis, medical codes and how to add new ones to categorize CAM treatments, CAM reimbursements and non-reimbursements by the medical system, insurance benefits covered, and insurance coverage issues related to specific modalities. The appendix supplies schedules of specific insurance coverage and physical therapy policy.

Section II - Practice

A stated purpose of this major portion of the book is to move forward the process of defining the practice of integrative oncology. For its target audience of physicians who serve as the “conductors” of the integrative approach, the attempt is to build a decision making guideline. In chapters and sections dedicated to specific clinical goals, the multiple interventions are presented together in a framework so that an integrative approach rather than a toolbox approach may be more accessible and likely to be adopted.

8. Clinical Decision Analysis

Judging from his review of the several efforts previously undertaken by others, Matthew Mumber’s chapter substantively addresses the previous void in integrative oncology’s decision analysis. His systematized approach results in a standardized method that is transportable to the different contexts in which clinical decision making processes must coordinate (a) a patient’s clinical situation, (b) specific treatment goals, (c) general preventative approach, (d) general supportive care approach, (d) general antineoplastic approach, and (e) the level of evidence for therapy.

He developed four decision tree processes rooted in case experience, corresponding to four major groups of decisions. These address the variations of patient and disease characteristics: localized versus metastatic disease and high versus low rates of disease control or response. Within each group’s decision tree is a separate decision pathway for the intervention goals of
prevention, supportive care, and antineoplastic care. This results in each decision group actually having four decision process trees within it, encompassing an integrative approach to the group.

While the term decision tree may invoke in the reader a line drawing of bifurcation-type decision points and the limbs and branches that lead to and from them, Mumber’s decision trees reflect a juxtapositional, nuanced approach—and no line drawings. He appears to correct for deficiencies in earlier approaches to integrative oncology decision making. This befits the complexity of coordinating the multiple relations among decision factors. While each decision tree is tailored to the specific challenges, nuances, and if-thens of the four groups above, they share a consistent centerpiece, which I call Mumber’s juxtapositional matrix. It provides a systematic method for using the preponderance of data for safety and efficacy to arrive at recommendations. Each of the twelve decision tree processes is supported by clinical examples of scenarios in which the process would be used. Mumber stresses that these products are “by definition, exploratory tools—and are not meant to be firm clinical guidelines” (p. 147).

My specialization in complex decision making processes suggests the following assessment of Mumber’s integrative contribution. Given the inherent complexities of cancer in human systems, the variations in patient and disease characteristics, the balancing acts of deciding how to coordinate conventional and CAM therapies, the uneven range of reliable data to inform decisions, the different levels of evidence provided by those data, and the integration of treatment, prevention, and support goals, Mumber is contributing a significant innovation that should support integrative oncologists’ efforts to coordinate the challenging array of systems of relations their profession demands. This is no small feat, all in the service of these physician-conductors of multi-system orchestras of patient-family-provider communities they in turn serve.

9. Stages of Change

Robert Lutz introduces his brief chapter on stages of change by acknowledging some of the various perspectives that cancer patients in different disease or high risk contexts may manifest. This sets the stage for introducing the stages of change model already familiar in the medical field. Relative to an individual’s readiness to initiate a new behavior, the stages are: (a) pre-contemplation (preceding awareness of a problem requiring change), (b) contemplation, (c) preparation, (d) action, and (e) maintenance. The change process is recognized to be a nonlinear one, characterized by different rates of passage through the spiral of the stages. Lutz provides an integrative range of patient change-readiness assessment points: (a) quality-of-life concerns, goals, and expectations; (b) current health status/fitness status; (c) health practices and attitudes; and (d) life situation and environment. Wisely, he recommends periodic re-evaluation that acknowledges barriers and challenges, a step-wise approach that includes articulating how the program is affecting the individual’s perceived quality of life. This feedback loop can support the change process. He suggests that physicians who have developed healthy lifestyles, and implicitly, who have navigated their own change processes, may be more effective providers.

10. Modalities - Overview

Over the span of more than 70 pages, this overview section is organized to provide a systematic introduction of the eight modalities that may be included in integrative oncology.
Each modality section has the following sub-sections: (a) general introduction, (b) cancer research background, (c) major current questions facing that field, (d) general summary that includes tools for practice, and (d) glossary of terms specific to the modality.

10a. Physical activity, by Robert Lutz. Lifestyle behaviors influence the occurrence of diseases. Rather than viewing cancer and other diseases as “actual” causes of death, the locus of cause is more and more recognized as lifestyles and behaviors therein. Research to date does not explain the exact biological linkages between physical activity and cancer, but supports that such a link exists. Levels of physical activity that support prevent and treatment will vary by one’s age and life conditions.

10b. Nutrition, by Cynthia Thomason and Mara Vitolins. The development of 30-50% of all cancers is linked to dietary patterns and food selections. As with physical activity, the exact connection mechanism with the development of chronic disease, including cancer, is yet to be made. Estimates are that 30-40% of cancers could be prevented by maintaining healthy body weight, nutritious food intake, and increased physical activity. Nutritional care for oncology patients that responds to nutrient metabolism changes is a well recognized need.

10c. Mind-body interventions, by Linda Carlson and Shauna Shapiro. A mind-body intervention is “any treatment that addresses the interaction between the mind (thoughts, feelings) and body (physical processes)” (p. 184). Some such therapies are already mainstream in oncology, while a number of others are viewed as adjunctive. Therapies covered throughout the book include hypnosis, imagery, relaxation, meditation, yoga, psychotherapy and creative therapies (e.g., dance, music, writing/journaling, painting/drawing, sculpting). Other interventions are not included in the book due to both space constraints and more limited research. These include biofeedback, healing prayer, and autogenic training. Mind-body interventions help decrease symptoms of depression and increase emotional expression, and many have potential impact on the immune and endocrine systems. Psychotherapy and meditation have the most research and thus the strongest evidence to date. Cancer patients’ needs change over the course of time and the variety of interventions used can be tailored accordingly.

10d. Botanicals, by Lise Alschuler. Among cancer patients, from 13-63% are estimated to use publicly-accessible herbal remedies, yet relatively few health-care professionals are trained to recommend such botanical therapies. Research data on botanicals and cancer care are mostly experimental, yet demonstrate promising results and trends. Clinicians have insufficient data for decisions to include or recommend botanicals. Institutionalized support for regulation of quality, standardized ingredients, claims of efficacy, and drug interactions related to botanicals is a societal growing edge.

10e. Manual therapy, by J. Michael Menke. Hands-on therapies reduce anxiety, pain, disability, and related inflammation by restoring structural and mechanical function. The manual therapies of massage, chiropractic and osteopathic manipulation treat from the “outside-in” via the muscular-skeletal system. Although there is a compelling link between inflammation and cancer, there is no evidence that manual therapies are effective as antineoplastic goals. Modern manual therapies offer risk assessment, preventive, early detection, supportive, and rehabilitative contributions in an integrative oncology.
10f. Energy medicine, by Suzanne Clewell. Energy medicine includes “all energetic and informational interactions resulting from self-regulation or brought about through other energy linkages to mind and body” (p. 203). This includes energy pulses from the environment that affect both biology and psychology, such as magnetic, electric, electromagnetic (radio and micro waves, including cell phones), acoustic, and gravitational fields. Evidence documents that humans can generate and control subtle energies that seem to influence physiological and physical mechanisms, although these are not yet measurable. Thirty-four energy medicine modalities are organized in table format to indicate their non-mutually-exclusive distribution across their modes of use. With the percentages calculated from the table by this reviewer, modes of use Clewell itemizes are energy that is: (a) guided by universe (59%), (b) guided by practitioner (70%), (c) administered by others (97%), (d) self-administered (65%), (e) distance healing (17%), (f) current research (73%), and (g) used in U.S. hospitals (47%).

This section is longer than those that precede it, justified by the nature of its invisible topic. Ten characteristics of energy medicine are listed, providing an inferable snapshot of subtle energies’ characteristics: for example, energy follows thought, energy medicine is non-local, and changes in the energy field are eventually expressed in the physical body. Clewell walks the reader through the human chakra energy system and selected therapies, providing an orientation to this non-Newtonian universe. The review of the chakra system offers an integrative window into the meta-system of the human person. It represents an opportunity to understand active interrelations among the systems of one’s psychology (e.g., emotions, thoughts, motivations), of one’s chakra energies, and of one’s numerous physical sub-systems. Integrative, indeed.

10g. Spirituality, by Howard Silverman and Toby Schneider. This longest of the eight modality introductory sections begins with attempts to define spirituality; at the same time it respectfully avoids imposing a definition that could be argued and thus distract from the purpose of introducing the modality. Beyond the earliest pages, the section progresses further into meaning-making territory, suggesting the difficulty to tease apart “things spiritual” from “things psychological.” One author’s autobiographical journaling during her cancer experience is used liberally for inspiration and to illuminate points. Two brief mnemonic-based tools for soliciting patient history, “spirituality assessments” developed by others, are shared to aid clinicians’ efforts to be present to and explore this dimension of patients’ beliefs.

10h. Alternative medical systems, by Lawrence Berk. The general philosophy of ancient medicine systems is congruent with that of integrative oncology. This section discusses how these systems work and how they address cancer in general, selecting three of them for specific introduction. While these medicine systems are complete systems, most recommendations in the remainder of the text include only partial aspects of them. Beck compares Western medicine methods and assumptions with those of alternative medicine systems. These differences are evident in the brief descriptions of the three selected for focus: ayurvedic medicine, homeopathy, and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Supportive care of cancer patients has effective tools in alternative systems of medicine. These systems, however, view cancer as a late-coming symptom of pre-existing, underlying problems of a systemic nature. (In this, their relation to energy medicine is most evident.) In these systems, many such problems are not viewed as treatable by the time malignancies become evident. Thus, these systems stress prevention.
11. Modalities – Cancer Prevention

Cancer prevention takes place on three levels. Primary is the level of prevention in the general population. Secondary prevention concerns people with documented precancerous changes. Tertiary prevention is that with people who had a cancer diagnosis and good results from treatment, and want to prevent recurrence of the disease or its symptoms. (This echoes the energy and alternative medicines above: disease is the last, not initial, manifestation of problems.) The remainder of the chapter is in sub-sections of detailed discussion by the various modalities’ content experts of their modalities’ effects on the three levels of prevention.

12. Modalities – Supportive Care

Supportive care is not an option for oncologists. Rather, it is an integral dimension of the continuum along which they have responsibilities, from diagnosis through the course of illness. Supportive care is needed in managing both the cancer and treatment-related symptoms. Possible symptoms are numerous: sleep changes, pain, depression, anxiety, weight gains and losses, and changes in connections with sexuality, fatigue, mucositis, nausea, and diarrhea. The remainder of the chapter is in sub-sections of detailed discussion by the various modalities’ content experts of their modalities’ contributions to supportive care. Of these, the energy medicine sub-section is both the longest and most impressive for the wide range of integrative dimensions it addresses, an indication of the pervasively holistic nature of energy medicine and its insights.

13. Modalities – Antineoplastic Therapy

Antineoplastic therapy refers to all interventions whose action mechanism results in eradicating, i.e., killing, cancer cells from the body. The three major categories are conventional medicine’s chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and surgery. There are several active trials of new antineoplastic alternative approaches. The remainder of the brief chapter is in sub-sections of detailed discussion by those content experts whose modalities do, or may, contribute to antineoplastic therapy.

14. Tobacco, Alcohol and Integrative Oncology

Because it includes yet transcends the smaller scale of the individual patient and extends to greater social scales, Dennett Gordon’s may be one of the most socially-integrative chapters in the book. From its introductory citations of health and demographic statistics and relationships of tobacco and alcohol consumption with cancers, its discussion moves from individual-oriented treatments to systemic consideration of the institutionalized health tragedy that plays out around the world. It advocates for social, political, and institutional approaches and reframing national and international agendas, and proposes a list of interventions believed to be effective at the societal level.

15. Specific Malignancies

Six sections of this chapter are individually dedicated to prevalent cancers: breast, prostate, lung, colorectal, skin, and a group of “others.” Consistent with the scheme used throughout the
book, each modality that can be included in an integrative oncology for each specific malignancy is discussed in that context. Each section includes a substantive reference charting of benefits of interventions in the specific malignancy. Charts specify relevant modalities and interventions, their benefit, and the level(s) of evidence available for each line-item. These sections complete the reference function of the book, discussing the current state of knowledge on treating the conditions and the findings of relevant studies. The final section is described separately, next.

15g. Palliative and end-of-life care, by Matthew Mumber. Palliative care, as described by the Institute of Medicine, “seeks to prevent, relieve or soothe the symptoms of disease or disorder without effecting a cure… is not restricted to those who are dying or those enrolled in hospice programs… attends closely to the emotional, spiritual and practical needs and goals of patients and those close to them” (Mumber, p. 495). Mumber notes that palliative treatment is closer to an integrative approach than conventional medicine, given the fact that at this stage, curing is impossible while healing remains possible. CAM modalities are also being considered as part of palliative and end-of-life care. About 60% of hospices use CAM and patient studies indicate more satisfaction with hospices when they do. Patient preferences for palliative care are not yet widely incorporated, though. For example, although 90% would prefer to die in the comfort of their home, only 15% do. The key elements of palliative care are concerned with alleviating suffering in the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. Each of these has at least several manifestations. This final section of the book itemizes alternative modalities that provide palliative care of these various sufferings at the end-of-life.

Evaluative Discussion

In the earlier Section I – Principles part of this review, I incorporated some evaluative comments into my overviews of those chapters. Occasional evaluative comments showed up my review of the Section II – Practice chapters. Thus, my remaining discussion is organized to respond to several global evaluative questions I asked and sought answers to while reading this text. The first is drawn from the book’s own stance about what integrative oncology does and how well the book’s contents appear to manifest or support that stance. The other three questions are the evaluation points Integral Review (IR) employs to assess how well a given work meets IR’s criteria.

Integrative Oncology’s Stance

Two related assertions at the beginning of the book convey what I would call the overall stance of integrative oncology. Because the field is yet young, stance would include commitments, hopes, and aims to be realized in the future.

Integrative oncology (IO) is the next step in the evolution of cancer care. It addresses the limitations of the current system, while retaining its successful features. It includes the use of evidence-based tools that translate into definable outcomes in the fields of preventative, supportive and antineoplastic care… IO addresses all participants in a sustainable process of cancer care, at all levels of their being and experience. Along with tools that translate into definable outcomes, it also includes methods that can transform the health of individual participants and the entire medical system. (p. 3)
A truly comprehensive integrative approach will address “all of the individuals involved—patient, family, providers, community and society—at all levels of their being (mind, body, soul and spirit) in all levels of their experience, including the self, their role in a specific culture, and the effects of and on the natural environment (p. 6).

The global evaluation question was how well the book’s contents appear to manifest or support that stance in relation to its key elements. I found that before I could legitimately use the foregoing assertions to select key elements for evaluation, I needed to make some editorial revisions to them. Working from a re-worded stance removes the need to critique unrealistic elements in the original wording. I considered unrealistic those elements that lacked sufficient qualification of scope, or that were outside the realm of the practical or possible if they were interpreted literally. Segments that I have revised are indicated by italics and some original words are deleted.

Editorially revised versions of integrative oncology’s stance.

Integrative oncology (IO) is the next step in the evolution of cancer care. It addresses the limitations of the current system, while retaining its successful features. It includes the use of evidence-based tools that translate into definable outcomes in the fields of preventative, supportive and antineoplastic care… IO addresses all participants in a sustainable process of cancer care, to the extent possible, at all relevant and accessible levels of their being and experience. Along with tools that translate into definable outcomes, it also includes methods that can transform the health of individual participants and the entire U.S. medical system. (Editing included insertions only, no deletions.)

A truly comprehensive integrative approach will address to the extent possible, all of the individuals involved—patient, family, providers—at all relevant and accessible levels of their being (mind, body, soul and spirit) in all relevant and accessible levels of their experience, including the role of their specific culture and the effects of social and natural environments on them. (Editing included insertions, deletions, and other revisions.)

How Well Does Integrative Oncology Manifest and Support the Field’s Stance?

Integrative oncology: Principles and practice is an extremely well conceptualized and systematically organized scientific reference text that I would learn from and take seriously, were I a member of the medical field. It is a research-based, non-speculative resource. It explains and addresses a range of limitations of the current cancer care and medical systems with a positive, constructive tone, and offers evidence-based reasons for recommended changes in medical education. It advocates for reframing the yet prevalent competition between conventional and integrative approaches. It embeds methods to help achieve pragmatic, non-competitive integrations of “what works” in cancer care. It incorporates the best of current medical practices and tailors them to the unique challenges of this specific field, e.g., defining and including levels of evidence criteria in treatment decision making and in detailed outlines of complementary and alternative medicine approaches. The book consistently incorporates attention to the three dimensions of cancer care: preventive, supportive, and antineoplastic. Its innovation of standard
guideline decision trees offers a new model for clinical decision making in oncology and embeds the integrative approach in those processes. Methods are clearly oriented to foster healthy transformations in patients and physicians/health providers, including various forms of patients’ healing as compared to curing. The book succeeds in manifesting the stance of the field in these respects.

The book’s effectiveness is uneven when it comes to manifesting the stance of the field to address “all participants” and “all levels.” Explicit statements about addressing all participants at all levels appears in only a few places in the entire book. When it is encountered, it includes no explication or rationale. Implied, however, is a “should:” that integrative approaches “should” essentially be all things to all people. This is a tall order for any enterprise, and one that warrants careful, realistic modification. For example, Figure 1.1, page 7, includes more “participants” than any single field can “address” at “all” levels, e.g., society, culture, and the natural world.

To avoid overstatements, an integral approach would carefully discriminate among the viable possibilities and reasons for them, identify and compare possibilities and constraints, and articulate principles that are more tailored to contexts and are thus more pragmatic than sweeping generalizations. Integral approaches are practical. They take into account others’ perspectives as well as various forces of inertia and motivations, etc. They can embrace the reality that no enterprise controls the attitudes, behaviors, and choices of others, who may not wish to be affected by the enterprise’s mission in the same way as the enterprise envisions, if at all.

However, Chapter 5 in Section I on models of care provides, even if more implicit than explicit, the windows into various hows that integrative oncology may use to fashion itself into realizing its worthy goals. Whether taken at its face value as an integrative examination of integrative medicine models, or as the beginnings of a complex integral model that supports developing the field itself, it is noteworthy for offering grounded pointers to help the field manifest its stance. While its section in this review did not include any specific mention of how the models do or do not address the community of the patient defined at the beginning of the book, that chapter is the place in the book where that stance gets some attention (but see below).

While the book does an excellent job of addressing perhaps most of the patient’s and physician’s needs, concerns, behaviors, healing, and education, it gives little attention—beyond initial mention of them—to “the team” of health providers serving a patient (p. 6), or to “the community,” “the group of people that includes the patient, their family members, and the providers” (Fig. 1.1, p. 7). One reason may be that in a non-speculative, evidence-based book for a young field, there is insufficient data to do more than identify the ideal. But I also reflected on the possibility that the objectives for the book could not encompass so much as to address these two key elements. I reflected on the possibility that focusing on patient, physicians, and the challenges of cancer itself leaves little room, in practice, to address individuals who are peripheral or at least not consistently central to attention. I reflected on the steep demands on the “conductor of the orchestra” (p. 6), whether the traditional or integrative oncologist working with the patient, to coordinate the team of providers. This set of reflections led to the notion that what is missing in each of those scenarios is the role of process observer. Process observers do not have such tasks as direct patient care, team coordination, operational communications, etc. The role is to maintain a finger on the pulse, the awareness and oversight of the processes going on,
and alerting team and community members, as appropriate, to circumstances and occasions that
need their attention. A process observer might also function as an important link between the
medicine delivery team and the patient’s community of family and other support. If in the
development of this text there had been a process observer role, might the team and the
community around the patient have been given more print space? In general, might an integrative
oncology with goals to address all participants benefit from incorporating a process observer
role?

The whole domain of patient, family, and other caregiver dynamics and relationships, part of
“the community” mentioned above, was untouched territory in this book. While conventional
medicine procedures may adequately address issues in this domain and their effects on patients,
it may be possible that complementary and alternative medicine treatments could engender
additional dynamics. Does an integrative oncology elsewhere address these and their impacts on
patients, treatments chosen, related stresses, and relationships? If not, does it need to?

Appropriate sections of the book addressed larger social and environmental effects on patients
and the occurrence of cancer. These were not exhaustive, but their scope seems justified.
Economic and health insurance coverage issues were touched on in various sections of the book,
but the overall economic picture represented by complementary and alternative medicine (CAM)
was not portrayed or addressed. In stating that, I reflect the assumption, which I believe applies,
that CAM is largely an option for the shrinking middle class and the wealthier upper class
population in the U.S. Long term, deeply systemic change would be required before this picture
is likely to change in the U.S. much less elsewhere. This is certainly an aspect of “all
participants, all levels.” Does integrative oncology have this picture in view and a long term
strategy toward greater access to CAM therapies?

The nutrition modality presented throughout the book conveys its significance in health and
cancer rates. Of all the modalities, it and physical activity are universal across populations.
Nutrition represents certain issues not addressed in the text. Integrative factors that might have
been introduced include those of: (a) educating the general population about the nutrition-disease
linkage and (i) correct balances of food amounts and varieties and (ii) how to select and prepare
nutritious meals; (b) institutionalizing such education, including the society-borne costs of both
that education and nutritional ill-health from lack of it; (c) economic difficulties of purchasing
the variety of quality foods in the ideal diet, and their compounding when multiple dietary needs
co-exist in one family budget; (d) meal preparation time and effort in both busy working families
and cancer patients’ life conditions; and (e) pervasive influences of advertising and other media
on unhealthy food choices.

Individuals’ culture and culture at large received only cursory mention in a few places.
Beyond the mention of medical culture’s roots in medical education, and participants’ “role in a
specific culture,” (p. 6), cultural sensitivity (p. 7), stigma (p. 212), and taboos (p. 223), I did not
see the text incorporate cultural considerations. Different cultures characterize medical teams,
patient communities, the medical system, ethnic groups, and larger society. From a realistic
 standpoint, though, it makes sense for the text to confine itself to refer to culture without delving
into it. This would be because how culture could be a factor and be addressed would require case
and culture specificity, not the purview of this general reference text.
In summary, the book *Integrative Oncology: Principles and Practice* succeeds in manifesting and supporting the stance of the integrative oncology field as represented at the beginning of the book, without contradictions, and with only a few minor weaknesses that do not detract from its success or its benefits to readers.

**Integral Review’s General Evaluation Criteria**

The following evaluation, brief in light of the foregoing review and evaluative process, applies *Integral Review’s* general criteria to the book, *Integrative Oncology*.

**Criterion #1**

*The work reflects or takes into consideration multiple possible perspectives of understanding how humans perceive, organize, and experience reality. Along with this, it demonstrates some understanding of the evolutionary processes, layers, and patterns inherent in all life phenomena.*

Criterion #1 is for assessing if the work coordinates multiple systems of various kinds (which are described quite generically in the criterion). To *coordinate* systems means one may reflect on, create, compare, contrast, transform, define and/or synthesize their properties and behaviors. This is the hallmark of integral thought and action.

The field of integrative oncology is explicitly about coordinating the existing medical system with integrative medicine systems applied to cancer care. Within integrative oncology, the evidence-based systems of preventative, supportive, and antineoplastic care are integrated. The book’s organization itself reflected coherent coordination of the numerous systems not only of that cancer care triad, but also the modalities available within them, and further, those modalities applied to cancers in the human system. Numerous perspective systems and social systems at various scales were coordinated in multiple places throughout the text. Authors demonstrated the coordination of multiple kinds of systems within their presentations. These accomplishments may be inferable if not always explicit in the book review’s abstracts of and evaluative comments on the chapters. *Integrative Oncology* meets Criterion #1.

**Criterion #2**

*The work demonstrates a sensibility for developmental and/or evolutionary dimensions throughout the lifespan of individuals, social units, organizations, and societies.*

As the first reference text of the integrative oncology field—a social unit—the book represents the field’s determination to be the next step in the evolution of cancer care. The book advocates for evolutionary complexity showing up in the form of the integration of, rather than competition and dismissive attitudes between, integrative medicine and conventional medicine.

While doing so, it advocates for more research to support its own evolution as an evidence-based field, which in turn will facilitate its integration with conventional medicine. It is explicitly sensitive to the conditions supporting the development of cancer, individual and societal...
development to reduce those conditions, and the patient’s and physician’s own development as sufferer and healer, respectively.

In these and other ways not spelled out here, *Integrative Oncology* meets Criterion #2 in basic ways that are necessary but not necessarily sufficient for a more fully integrated, and integral, developmental approach. Beyond the scope of the present text, the ideal would require an additional text to full apply this criterion. To do this would involve applying developmental theory itself to integrative oncology principles and practices. This would reveal that principles and practices, in practice, thwart any one size fits all assumptions. A fully developmental treatment would require nuances and tailoring to address the variety of differences in individual and organizational behaviors at each stage of development. This is a recommended direction for integrative oncology, integrative medicine, many other institutions and, actually, society as a whole.

**Criterion #3**

*The work is oriented toward facilitating translative as well as transformative development in various domains of life. (Translative development refers to increasing capacity within a given set of competencies, views or attitudes. Transformative development refers to the evolution of a set of competencies, views or attitudes with a fundamentally greater capacity for handling complex situations.)*

The purpose of the book, well supported by its presentation, is transformative. The contents effectively articulate how both translative and transformative development in individuals, medical education and practice, and other domains can be fostered and manifest in multiple ways. *Integrative Oncology* meets Criterion #3.

**Conclusion**

Little did I imagine that this book review cum evaluation processes would result in a writing of this length. It was a long but satisfying exercise, and one that I hope serves the field of integrative oncology.

In closing, I want to return to having mentioned at the beginning of this writing that I had gained experience and insights from having companied my mother in her dying process. The most poignant to share became more so during this process of reading and writing. It has much to do, I believe, with integrative oncology’s vision for evolving cancer care and transforming the health of individuals and indeed the larger medical system.

To relate one experience, below, helps me underscore the importance of key insights in *Integrative Oncology*’s chapters on energy medicine and alternative medical systems. Their authors emphasize that cancer and many other illnesses—our human dis-eases—are symptoms and end results of various problems of imbalance (dis-ease) that long precede the physical forms they will eventually take if they go unaddressed. This is familiar territory for those who do various kinds of energy practice or medicine, but it is not mainstream knowledge yet. If it were, and if it were coordinated in integral ways described above, and if it were applied in practice in
our individual and collective behaviors, it could have the revolutionary and evolutionary power to indeed prevent dis-ease and transform the health of individuals and societies.

Three years before her death, my mother left her geographic community of 45 years to move to another, to my nurse-sister’s home. A few weeks before dying with cancer and related complications, she shared her personal diagnosis. “You know, I think I began going downhill this summer, when I was starting to feel so depressed with missing all my old friends at the Senior Citizens Center (in her former community) and not finding any Centers here I could get to. I think that’s when all this started.”

If a culture is imbued with recognition of the wide array of catalysts of dis-ease, and of dis-ease as a forerunner of disease, it would under gird and motivate a society that invests in the numerous kinds of services and education in healthy ways of relating that help prevent and alleviate dis-ease. Integrative medicine has the insights to be the vanguard of such a culture.

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