

Editorial

Integral Foundations

Introducing the First Issue of *Integral Review (IR)*

We are proud to offer the first issue of *Integral Review (IR)*, a new journal to publish works on qualitative change and development in different spheres of life, under an integral perspective. “Integral” stands for a worldview, paradigm, epistemology or general approach that encompasses multiple perspectives and dimensions, holism, and integration. Efforts to take integral approaches are finding their way into many avenues of academic and professional discussion as well as into practical application in a variety of fields. It is our intention to make a significant contribution to the discussion and research in this area through publication of articles which have been thoroughly discussed and reviewed by the editorial committee as well as by external reviewers. Articles will be either openly peer reviewed or will go through a blind review process, according to the authors' wishes.

“We” stands for a group of people who have joined together for this common endeavor after several years of internet exchange and discussion. Other than a few individual personal meetings, it has been a virtual community, focused on discussing the integral approach. We came together at the initiative of Sara Ross, who founded ARINA Inc., which is IR's publisher, and formed an editorial committee as a subgroup of ARINA for publishing *IR*.

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The articles in *IR* are in English or other languages. In the case of non-English texts there is a summary in English in addition to a traditional abstract in English.

From beginning to end, the production and release of this internet journal has been, and will continue to be, an honor to participate in. Our reward is the motivation and satisfaction that can be drawn from cooperating across continents, cultures and disciplines in a meaningful project. As well, we will find reward in the feedback, active engagement and the contributions of readers, and we have designed mechanisms to facilitate this.

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

On the Contents of Issue # 1

For this first issue of *IR* we decided to present (as much as possible) our own positions within the larger integral conversation by publishing texts representing our different approaches, personal backgrounds and professional fields. Additionally, we invited some other professionals to contribute to this issue. We aim to step back a little in succeeding issues to leave plenty of room

for more authors from around the world.

In this first issue, we start with a lead article by the editorial committee of *IR* itself. In it, we attempt to present the essence of our understandings of “integral” and “integral paradigm.” According to the integral principle of balancing unity and diversity, Sara Ross, president of ARINA, and Reinhard Fuhr, editor-in-chief of *IR*, describe what we might call our first attempt to define a common denominator for understanding “integral” in the course of introducing readers to *IR* and its mission. Its mission is conveyed by discussing the meanings we give to the terms used in the journal’s entire title. This is then complemented by contributions from individual members of the editorial committee. These committee members point out their personal emphases and viewpoints of “integral” in the context of their personal histories and respective professional fields, in agreement with or deviance from the main body of the article.

Jean Gebser may be considered as the intellectual father of integral thought and discussion. In a very concentrated form, Kai Hellbusch, a Gebser expert from Germany, presents the main assumptions of this extraordinary scholar by explaining “consciousness structures” as the very basis of all experience, perception and thinking. Hellbusch then summarizes the main characteristics of Gebser's spectrum of worldviews, from archaic to magic to mythic to rational to integral.

In the next article, Jan Inglis and Margaret Steele, from Canada, develop and explore a concept they call *complexity intelligence*. They draw on a broad range of literature to support putting forward the term complexity intelligence as a requirement for the work of *cultural coaches*. These cultural coaches represent a new kind of change agent, whose major task is to facilitate bridging the gap between different developmental paradigms within social contexts.

Michael Basseches, of the USA, complements approaches to the integral discourse by describing it as a psychological phenomenon of intellectual development that he calls dialectical thinking. Its dialectical dynamic, summarized here from his previous research, is distinguished from uses of the term *dialectic* found in philosophical traditions. He offers a genuine philosophical approach to the psychology of integrated thinking, and transforms the meaning of dialectic into an organizing principle of such thought. He emphasizes its importance for our world in different domains of life, how it could be supported in different professional fields, and the limits of these endeavors.

Sara Ross, also from the USA, has summarized the findings of her many years of intensive research on the general characteristics of human dynamics. She offers a set of fundamental premises, illustrated and supported by a process model. She grounds these principles theoretically and in human experience, and from this succeeds in conveying general fractal patterns on a very high level of generalizability. These universal patterns and principles can then be used to understand developmental processes and inform integral methodologies in all areas of practice.

Anne Starr and Bill Torbert, USA, devote themselves to describing what they call “triple-loop awareness,” a human capacity that is potentially crucial for radical changes in terms of the integral paradigm. This concept has a few predecessors that are referred to, such as Bateson's “Level III Learning” or the “witnessing” consciousness in Eastern philosophies. The authors aim to go beyond merely talking about triple loop awareness by engaging readers in a way that aims to elicit such awareness. They involve readers by means of case studies, real life experience, and offer exercises in the course of reading itself.

Although we want to cope with the challenge of not dividing theory from praxis, personal background from subject matter, or the concrete from the general, we do have to emphasize one or the other in the articles. The following articles then put the more concrete, practical and/or personal issues into the foreground.

Thus Russ Volckman, USA, a consultant and trainer for leadership development, interviewed Thomas Jordan, from Sweden. Jordan has a long history of experience in research and praxis on

workplace conflicts and as a consultant for conflict management and prevention. He has worked with personnel within the Swedish government, and reports in the interview on results from a recent research project: He wanted to identify integral qualities of mind and personality in people holding important positions in organizations. This investigation produced very interesting results for our understanding of the nature of integral consciousness.

Jonathan Reams, from Canada, approaches the challenging task of outlining the foundations for an integral leadership theory. His approach describes and then utilizes elements of integral theory to contextualize existing leadership theories, and makes distinctions about what sets an integral approach to leadership apart.

How can integral perspectives and approaches be applied in praxis? This is shown by Reinhard Fuhr and Martina Fuhr, from Germany, in their article on an “Integral Gestalt-Approach to Therapy and Counseling.” They merge the once revolutionary ideas and concepts of Gestalt therapy by F.S. and L. Perls and P. Goodman from the 1950’s with further developments of this approach, and with the most recent concepts on personal and social development. They then demonstrate on the basis of their long-term experience what integral therapy and counseling may look like in praxis.

When reflecting on what we have assembled for this first issue, it looks like a solid and challenging bulk of material which may not always be easy to digest, but which hopefully answers a few questions about the quality and scope of our intentions, and of what we call the “integral paradigm.” Many of the articles will simultaneously raise new questions, so that it looks as if we are confronted with a kind of hydra when dealing with integral thoughts and experience. But we are sure that this hydra will turn out to be a benevolent and exciting creature that will continuously challenge our efforts, creativity, and mutual support. Of course, we would love to involve as many readers as possible in this adventure.

Reinhard Fuhr
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