

Introduction

Integral Theory in Action

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When 500 individuals from 30 countries gathered in Pleasant Hill, California, to listen to 100 individual talks, 12 panels, and 20 poster presentations, something extraordinary happened at the first biennial Integral Theory Conference (ITC) in 2008. Just as when the crew of the Apollo 17 mission took the famous “Blue Marble” picture of our Earth, and people could for the first time take the planet as an object of awareness, so could the integral community finally see its global face. It was the first international gathering of integral scholar-practitioners; transforming Integral Theory from “subject to object” (to borrow a phrase from Robert Kegan’s model of transformation).

For the first time, the integral community could take Integral Theory as an object of critical reflection and exploratory dialogue. No longer was Integral Theory primarily a set of two dozen books written by one man and a series of blogosphere debates between that man and some of his critics. Rather, Integral Theory became, in the course of one weekend, an actively networked global community of scholar-practitioners from 50 distinct disciplines. Obviously, individuals have been applying Integral Theory for many years to their personal and professional contexts. The difference I am pointing to here is that most of those examples of Integral Theory in action occurred in isolated pockets, without the benefit of their pioneers being part of a larger community of praxis and discourse.

Thus, ITC 2008 brought together academics and practitioners from all over the world who are working within and helping to develop the field of Integral Theory. Conversations that had never occurred or been possible before were all of a sudden a reality. This experience reminded me of learning French and how at a certain point after learning lots of isolated new words, phrases, verb conjunctions, and rules of grammar there would come, in almost an instant, a new level of connectivity in my grasp of the language and whole new worlds of conversation—in French—were made available to me. Similarly, ITC 2008 supported an emergent level of discourse as it interlinked, placed into contact,

juxtaposed, and contrasted important perspectives on Integral Theory. Thus, this volume is the result of that historic global gathering and is both a testament to the current state of this exciting and emerging field and a contribution toward the further application, refinement, development, and critique of Integral Theory. Each contribution in this volume provides a glimpse into the new kinds of conversations that are now possible within Integral Theory.

In recent years, an increasing number of scholars have begun to use Integral Theory in their courses and published work, as well as graduate students using it for their research. For example, over the past 10 years, 100 theses and dissertations have been written using Integral Theory as their primary theoretical foundation—many of which have actually been written in the past five years.¹ This fact highlights that Integral Theory is increasingly gaining acceptance as an approach for conducting scholarly research in academic contexts. The primary areas of focus of these theses and dissertations are: religion and spirituality; psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy; ecology; education; art; and health and medicine.

Likewise, in the past decade there have been more than 150 articles published in minor and major peer-reviewed academic journals, including *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, *Constructivism in the Human Sciences*, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *Counseling and Values*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *The Journal of Future Studies*, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *Advances in Nursing Science*, *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, and *Journal of Men's Studies*.² To date, the academic fields that have produced the largest amount of theoretical and applied material using Integral Theory include: psychotherapy and psychology; education; research; ecology and sustainability; future studies; and business and management.

In addition to these uses in academic contexts, there have been more systematic efforts to establish Integral Theory as a legitimate field of discourse and application. In particular, there are five main efforts that are currently contributing to this happening: a journal, an online master's program, a research center, an international conference, and an academic book series. In reviewing these projects and their affiliated efforts, we can gain a sense of how far Integral Theory has come as an academic discipline in just the past five years and obtain a sense of the trajectory this exciting new approach is on. Mentioning these developments here, as you will see, will set the stage for highlighting the significance and timeliness of this volume.

An Academic Journal

In 2003, I established the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* (JITP), an academic, peer-reviewed, theoretically vetted venue for content exploring

the AQAL model.³ After three years of establishing the formal structures and soliciting content and editing 40 articles simultaneously, the first two issues appeared in 2006. Over the past four years (2006–2009), JITP has published 140 articles (approximately 3,000 pages of applied integral content). And for the year ahead we already have enough articles to fill all four issues. So clearly there is a lot of academic material being generated by integral scholar-practitioners from around the world. In addition to JITP, there is *Integral Review* (IR), another academic journal that has emerged as an important voice on integral studies in general and has published valuable articles that focus on Integral Theory. In short, over the past few years an impressive amount of academic material has been published on Integral Theory. Michele Chase's chapter in this volume provides a wonderful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of JITP and its content over the first two and one-half years of publication (i.e., the first nine issues).

An Academic Program

In the summer of 2005, I began putting a proposal together at John F. Kennedy University to create an online Master of Arts degree solely devoted to Integral Theory. In 2006, we got approval to begin a one-year certificate (10 courses/25 units) in Integral Theory. This certificate was set up to double as the first year of the master's. The following fall (August 2007), we received full accreditation for the MA degree. We are now moving into our fifth year of the program. Each year since its inception we have received more applications for admissions than the previous year. Beginning this fall we will have around 100 students enrolled in the program and 20 faculty associated with it.

Also in the summer of 2005, at the same time that I was working with JFKU to create the Integral Theory program, Randy Martin and I began developing an Integral Theory certificate and an Integral Theory track in Organization Management and Development at Fielding Graduate University. As with JFKU, these integral programs were first offered in Fall 2006.

In fall of 2006 I approached Allan Combs, who had recently been hired by California Institute of Integral Studies, about setting up an Integral Theory track in their online PhD program in Transformative Studies. We explored various structures for the program and I encouraged him to investigate what might work best in his program. He continued to work toward developing this track in spite of various obstacles. In 2008, this track began and requires students to use Integral Theory as the basis for their dissertation research (e.g., honoring first-, second-, and third-person perspectives; recognizing the developmental dimension of individuals). In summary, since 2006 a number of academic programs at the graduate school level (certificates, tracks, and a

full master's program) based on Integral Theory have been launched and are enjoying success. Thus, prospective Integral Theory students have an increasing number of choices for their Integral Education.

An Academic Research Center

For years I imagined supporting graduate students the world over who wanted to use the Integral model in their studies and use Integral Methodological Pluralism in their research. I recall all too painfully what it was like trying to incorporate the AQAL model in my graduate studies, going against the cultural grain of my alma mater. Consequently, when I developed the online program at JFKU I built into it funding for establishing an Integral Research Center (IRC). This center was launched in March 2008 in conjunction with the publication of two special issues of JITP devoted to Integral Research (Vol. 3, No. 1 and Vol. 3, No. 2).

The IRC is committed to the development and promotion of informal and formal mixed-method research that utilizes first-, second-, and third-person practices informed by the AQAL model. As a result, the IRC is a pioneer of developing and applying Integral Methodological Pluralism. The center accomplishes this through a variety of activities, including: providing \$10,000 annually for scholarships, a \$5,000 annual research grant for graduate students in the online MA in Integral Theory, and a \$5,000 annual research grant for a non-JFKU graduate student conducting mixed methods research informed by Integral Theory; doing original research using six methodologies on the transformative effects of Integral Education; providing a discussion forum for graduate students interested in or doing Integral Research in their thesis or dissertation; promoting Integral Field Studies courses that provide individuals the opportunity to practice real-time applications of integral principles and methods and an opportunity to bear witness to grassroots organizations utilizing “folk” Integral approaches in the global South; publishing academic articles and original research through special issues of JITP; supporting scholar-practitioners through the provision of various resources (e.g., articles, charts, examples, case studies, lists of methods, ways to synthesize and integrate data); and sponsoring an Integral Research track at the biennial Integral Theory Conference, which provides researchers a chance to present their findings, methods, and ideas around Integral Research. Thus, the IRC is committed to supporting the global community of integral scholar-practitioners.

The establishment of Integral Research as a new approach to mixed methods is one of the most important contributions toward legitimizing Integral Theory. It accomplishes this by providing Integral Theory with the methodological means by which to critically and empirically explore its

claims, refine its theoretical distinctions, and effectively apply itself to more disciplinary contexts.

As noted above, numerous master's theses and dissertations have drawn heavily or exclusively on Integral Theory. Yet none of these efforts have had the benefit of being able to use an established integral methodology. In most cases, these efforts use Integral Theory or some aspect of it (e.g., the four quadrants) as an interpretive framework within which they make sense of positions, worldviews, and data from various approaches. In some cases, scholars have used Integral Theory to help them organize and augment their own original research efforts. In spite of these pioneering efforts, I have often heard graduate students exclaim some version of, "I want to use Integral Theory but my committee doesn't know what it is and I don't know how to actually use it for research!" With this distress call echoing in my mind and resonating in my heart, I set about establishing a new form of research and began teaching courses in three graduate-level programs on Integral Research.

An Academic Biennial Conference

For many years I have envisioned the existence of a regular academic conference devoted to Integral Theory: a conference that would serve as a global gathering of integral scholar-practitioners. In fact, I recall the early meetings of Integral Institute, in 2000 and 2001, where this was a common suggestion made by participants: "Let's have a major conference!" While such suggestions were always greeted with head nodding and enthusiasm, no one stepped forward to organize such a major event. So, for more than eight years this idea was floating in the integral air. In 2007, I submitted to JFKU, as part of the five-year vision for the Integral Theory program, the idea of JFKU hosting an international conference by 2010. Thus, when my colleague and friend Mark Forman approached me in the summer of 2007 about doing a major conference on Integral Theory at JFKU, I jumped at the chance.

When Mark and I sent out the call for papers in September 2007, we hoped to receive 50 to 70 submissions. We were amazed at the overwhelming response! In total, we received more than 120 great submissions. As a result we restructured the conference to be able to showcase the top 100 individual presentations. In addition, we set up 12 panels on important topics relevant to the future of Integral Theory (e.g., "Does Integral = Ken Wilber?" "Integral Theory in Academia," "The Integral Body," and "Integral Education"). There were also around 20 poster presentations. Thus, over 120 academics from all over the world gathered to present at the conference either in individual presentations, poster sessions, or on panels. So clearly, the academic world was ready for such a conference and arguably it was several years overdue. JFKU

and Integral Institute will host this conference every other year. Now there will be an ongoing venue for academics to showcase their integral applications, theoretical musings, and Integral Methodological Pluralism research.⁴

The title of the first biennial Integral Theory Conference was *Integral Theory in Action: Serving Self, Other, and Kosmos*. This event was the culmination of a remarkable year of planning and communication with the larger integral community. While we anticipated a solid turnout of presenters and attendees, we were surprised at the overwhelming interest generated by the event (e.g., selling out with 500 attendees nearly two months prior to the conference and generating a waiting list of nearly 300). We felt this level of interest was an indication of a new phase of Integral Theory, wherein a global network of scholar-practitioners can begin to have an academic conversation. We were deeply moved by the response since announcing this event, and inspired by the connections facilitated between presenters and attendees alike.

Our intention for the conference was to make Integral Theory the object of critical reflection and the subject of applied discussion. The goal was to provide an academic forum where we could ask pressing questions concerning the state and potential growth of the integral field: What types of research and scholarly analysis need to be engaged to carry the integral field forward? What works and does not work in terms of applying Integral Theory in our various professions? What are the strengths and limits of the AQAL model and what alternative views need to be considered and explored? We hoped that the conference would create a space for a diversity of perspectives expressed through free thought, respectful challenge, theoretical exploration, and shared celebration. We believed the ITC would help set the tone for the integral field for years to come, and we were guided by the premise that the deeper the exchange that happened at the conference, the greater the benefits would be for the larger integral community. The overview of chapters below will give you a sense of the kinds of content, issues, and debates that were present at the first ITC as well as illuminate some of the key issues facing the growing field of Integral Theory.

An Academic Book Series

Given the success of the conference and the amount of material it produced, I decided that an edited volume based on the conference would be a valuable resource for integral scholar-practitioners. I approached SUNY about this idea and Jane Bunker, editor-in-chief, was very excited and interested. I was also doing a co-edited volume on Integral Education with SUNY and I was aware that SUNY was also in the process of publishing Mark Forman's book on Integral Psychotherapy. As I realized that SUNY was in the process of

simultaneously publishing three books on or related to Integral Theory, I had the idea of doing an entire academic book series on Integral Theory. Jane was enthusiastic about the idea and before I knew it, it was a reality. So over the past 18 months I have been busy clarifying the vision of the series and talking with potential authors.

The SUNY Series in Integral Theory presents authored and edited volumes that are committed to improve and diversify integral thought and the application of the AQAL model. It purposes to do this by turning Integral Theory onto itself: as an act of theoretical-applied self-reflection. In so doing, the series will play an important role in setting the stage for the continual emergence of Integral Theory as a legitimate field of academic discourse within multiple disciplines. The series proposes to do this by bringing together the best academics in the field of Integral Theory and showcasing their work through applications, theoretical extension and clarification, and critical reflection. Integral Theory will flourish insofar as valuable contributions are made to it via direct criticism, theoretical clarification, and real-world application from many individuals working within its principles.

The series will publish three to five books each year, which aim to deepen the conversation around Integral Theory and its application. While the majority of these books will be grounded in the AQAL model, the series will also include alternative and complementary approaches to Integral Theory. In 2010 this volume and three others will be published (two on Integral Psychotherapy and one on Integral Education), with the entire series launched at ITC 2010.⁵ Currently there are a number of manuscripts (e.g., on Integral Recovery, Integral Gender Studies, Integral Meta-Studies, and Integral Religious Studies) in process for publication in 2011, with another dozen being considered or written. Many of the scholar-practitioner's that presented at ITC 2008 and who will present at ITC 2010 will be featured as authors and editors within this series. Thus, this new book series will go a long way in helping to showcase the amazing integral work that is occurring around the planet.

In summary, these recent academic developments (quarterly journal, online graduate programs, research center, biennial conference, book series) signal a whole new phase of the integral movement: the development of a global community grounded in the tradition of academic discourse. This emerging academic community now has the support of traditional academic institutions such as peer-review journals, international conferences, and accredited graduate programs. Consequently, Integral Theory can now more than ever begin to increase its status as a legitimate academic and applied approach to the complex problems we face in our local communities and across the globe. Finally, there is an emergent network of academics and practitioners who are working together to share their integral insights and bring forward their critical

observations. When one considers that each of these academic initiatives features prominently the term *Integral Theory*, it raises the issue of how exactly this term is being used. Is this use of Integral Theory primarily referring to Ken Wilber's approach, or is it a more generic use to refer to any and all integral approaches (e.g., Aurobindo, Gebser, László)? Since I have played a major role in the creation of each of these initiatives, I can clearly state that I hold them all in a "Wilberian" light. Since this an appropriately controversial topic, let me spend some time explaining why and what I mean by Wilberian.

Integral Theory and Integral Studies

It was around 2000 that Ken Wilber and scholar-practitioners using Wilber's Integral approach (i.e., Wilberians) began to refer to his body of work and secondary material as *Integral Theory*. Just to provide you a sense of the span and depth of this body of work, I currently estimate Wilber's corpus at approximately 10,000 pages of published material spanning three decades and I conservatively estimate the related Wilberian material also at approximately 10,000 pages of published material spanning mostly the past decade, with the latter figure growing rapidly each year.⁶ The point I am making in providing these page estimates is to demonstrate that there is a substantial body of material (mostly academic) that is based directly on or inspired by Wilber's integral vision and its AQAL model. This body of work is officially called by Wilber and his students Integral Theory. In other words, it is the name they have assigned to this corpus.⁷

The use by Wilber and others to refer to his Integral approach as Integral Theory (i.e., as a proper noun) was formalized in 2003 when I founded the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, which is and has always been explicitly a Wilberian venue. This usage of Integral Theory was reinforced in 2005 when I began to establish the Department of Integral Theory at JFKU, which is primarily based on Wilber's Integral approach. Then in 2007, Mark Forman and I set about creating the biennial Integral Theory Conference. As with the previous initiatives, this too was conceived of as primarily a Wilberian enterprise. The following quote from Mark and myself illustrates how "Wilberian" is to be understood (i.e., not as "Wilbercentric" or Wilber exclusive, but rather as Wilber-based, that is, built upon the foundation provided by Wilber and his proponents and critics):

One of the major aims of the conference in general . . . is to decouple Ken Wilber and Integral Theory. We bring a deep honoring of what Wilber has enacted through his writings and activities and an excited anticipation of any new writings he generates. He is without a doubt the most important

theorist associated with Integral Theory and there is no reason to assume this will change anytime soon. But to this orientation we also bring a desire to make sure Integral Theory receives the benefit of many contributors. In other words, we do not want Integral Theory to be a “one man show.” *We are fine with “Wilberian Theory” being synonymous with “Integral Theory” as long as “Wilberian Theory” is understood to mean “AQAL Theory” and not meant as “Ken’s Theory.”* So while Wilber might be the originator of Integral Theory, as Freud is the originator of psychoanalysis, he does not own Integral Theory. In our view, Integral Theory will only thrive insofar as valuable contributions to its criticism, clarification, application, and expansion come from many individuals working within its context and not just taking aim from the outside (e.g., by people who have never really tried applying the AQAL model to some contemporary issue). While we welcome insights from the “outside,” it is our experience that they are of less value than those that come from a committed place to improve Integral Theory by turning Integral Theory onto itself: an act of theoretical-applied self-reflection.

For us, Integral Theory is bigger than Wilber, even though Wilber is a big, important, and valuable figure within Integral Theory. (Forman and Esbjörn-Hargens, this volume, 23–31; emphasis added)

Consequently, in this volume, and in the context of the other initiatives outlined above, I make a distinction between *Integral Theory* and *integral studies*. Integral Theory is used to refer to Ken Wilber’s writings and those scholar-practitioners who are contributing to the development of the AQAL model through application, theoretical extension, and constructive critique. In contrast, integral studies is the wider category and is used more generally to include the writings of Wilber (and Wilberians) as well as individuals with their integrative visions, such as Rudolph Steiner’s esoteric cosmology, Jean Gebser’s sociocultural analysis of worldviews, Sri Aurobindo’s integral yoga psychology, Ervin László’s TOE based in physics and systems thinking, William Torbert’s Developmental Action Inquiry, and Don Beck’s Spiral Dynamics Integral model of value systems. Also, integral studies can be broadly construed to also include metatheory (e.g., George Ritzer’s work in sociology), critical realism (e.g., Roy Bhaskar’s work in philosophy of science), and science and technology studies (e.g., Bruno Latour’s work in the sociology of scientific knowledge).

I find that this distinction between Integral Theory and integral studies is justified for a number of reasons. First, Wilber himself (and his proponents) calls his integral approach Integral Theory. They have done this for almost a decade. No other approach that I am aware of refers to itself in name as “integral theory.” Clearly, many consider themselves to have an integral theory(e.g., Sorokin’s “integral theory of truth and reality” or László’s “integral theory of

everything”), but that is different than naming their theory “Integral Theory.” Because Wilber calls his work Integral Theory, I feel he and others are justified in using a capitalized “Integral” when “Integral” is synonymous with Integral Theory or the AQAL model. Similarly, capitalization of terms such as “the Integral framework,” “the Integral model,” and “the Integral approach,” or even of fields such as “Integral Ecology” or “Integral Psychotherapy,” are all justified when the context is clear that such capitalizations are being used to communicate that “Integral = AQAL.” This is the case in this volume. This use of capitalization is less of a colonizing “branding move” (which it is often accused of) and more commonly, I believe, an issue of grammar and common stylistic representation. While not currently a dominant practice it is academically acceptable to capitalize the names of single author theories (e.g., Fisher’s Skill Theory, Torbert’s Developmental Action Inquiry). I do not want to deny the politicized dimension of this, but I feel all too often the grammatical reasons for such capitalizations are ignored in favor of alleged sinister motives on behalf of Wilber’s Sauronic plan to “rule them all.” After all, it is totally acceptable for other integral traditions to capitalize “Integral” when referring to non-Wilberian approaches, as long as they make the context clear. Aurobindeans do this all the time with Integral Psychology and Integral Education. Just because Wilberians use capitalization to signify their approach does not mean that they think they now own “integral.” Equating “Integral” with AQAL is no doubt provocative to many in the wider integral community. However, the point here is not that other integral approaches cannot capitalize integral in their own contexts. Thus, this is often less of a power-truth move (AQAL is the best and only approach to integral) and is more often a stylistic move (AQAL is synonymous with Integral when capitalized, given Integral Theory is a proper noun).

Second, as noted above, Wilber and his proponents have produced a massive amount of theoretical and applied material—enough material that it often surpasses in both quality (e.g., coherence, internal consistency, fecundity, and parsimony) and scope many so called integral theories. In other words, Integral Theory as a Wilberian enterprise is quite substantial. In fact, it is currently being used in more than three dozen distinct disciplines, which is more than any other current integral approach. Although Steiner’s and Aurobindo’s both have quite an impressive portfolio of applied examples across many disciplines neither of their integral approaches is used in as many fields as Wilber’s. Nor is Bhaskar’s critical realism or meta-Reality as widely applied at so many scales both in popular, professional, and academic contexts. One of the consequences of this range of application is that it signals an unprecedented momentum, scale, and accessibility to Integral Theory that has yet to be enjoyed by any non-Wilberian approaches to integral. This widespread accessibility of Integral Theory has made it quite common parlance to use “Integral Theory” in

a Wilberian sense. In other words, the amount of individuals who use it in a non-Wilberian sense is relatively quite small, I believe, in both the literature and applied settings.

Third, Wilber has produced the AQAL framework, which is a metaframework that is arguably dare I say more integral (e.g., inclusive) than most other approaches that might aspire to the status of an integral theory. For example, Gebser's sociocultural theory of evolution is an integral theory of primarily one aspect of reality—cultural evolution. Gebser does not have a well-developed theory of subtle energies, the relationship between psychological stages and transpersonal states, the mind-body problem, the way major methodological families are related to each other (to name just a few areas where Wilber excels). This is not to assign fault to Gebser; I am simply pointing out that specific theories that contribute to an integral theory of reality often fall far short, in my view, from being complete. Besides, having a theory about the integral structure of consciousness in cultures (à la Gebser) or individuals does not in itself create an integral theory. Similarly, a theory that comes from integral awareness (e.g., the Autonomous level of Jane Loewinger's model of ego development) does not ensure you will have an integral theory. When I look around at all the possible contenders for a robust integral theory, I am struck by the inclusive dynamic architecture that Wilber and associates have crafted. Whether one likes or dislikes Wilber or his AQAL model, one is hard-pressed not to acknowledge the comprehensive nature and inclusive potential of his integral vision. Thus, Wilber's Integral Theory is arguably the most integral of all the integral theories.

Fourth, much of what passes for an "integral theory" is more of an approach than it is an actual theory. In contrast, Wilber is a serious theoretician and is quite skilled at what he does. I feel it is fair to say that he is the most sophisticated theory builder currently associated with integral studies. I would place Roy Bhaskar high on the list, but one of the things that I feel sets Wilber and Integral Theory apart is its accessibility to the average well-educated adult (in contrast to Bhaskar's critical realism, which remains largely associated with professional academics). Also, in my experience, many of the so-called integral theories actually are less of a theory than they are an approach. Thus, I feel there are many integral approaches out there, with Wilber's AQAL model being just one of them, but when it comes to integral theories, I would contend there are very few integral ones (and, as noted above, of those integral theories I feel Wilber's is currently the most integral in that it includes more than most and has the potential to include more than any other theory). Also, Wilber's Integral Theory is arguably the most theoretical of all the integral theories. Ironically, this theoretical maturity is in part what lends its self to being applied in so many different contexts.

Another issue related to these points is that it does not make sense to me to place Gebser, Beck, Steiner, Torbert, and so on into a big integral container and then label that a theory. This is a major reason why I opt to refer to that collection of theorists and their theories as integral studies. In other words, a heap of similar and complementary ideas does not add up to a theory, let alone an integral theory. Such a heap is eclecticism. The kind of eclecticism that Integral Theory is designed to avoid. It is for this reason I personally avoid using “integral theory” (lower case) as the generic expression of a non-Wilberian or even a “Wilberian plus many others” approach. Consequently, I prefer integral studies instead of integral theory—feeling that the former is a more accurate description of a large and growing group of theorists and theories, which often contradict as much as they overlap. My experience is that generic uses of “integral theory” tend to be either confusing (it is not clear what its relationship is to Wilber’s work), almost meaningless (it is hard to talk about an integral theory without including Wilber, and once you include Wilber’s approach it is so substantial that it tends to overshadow and undercut any generic usage), or inaccurate (it is not being used to represent a single or coherent theory).

In short, I feel it is justified and preferable to use Integral Theory to exclusively refer to a broadly Wilberian-based approach to reality. I have provided four distinct reasons for this above, which I summarize as: (1) Integral Theory as a proper noun, (2) Integral Theory as common parlance, (3) Integral Theory as more integral, and (4) Integral Theory as a real theory. This important issue (Integral Theory versus integral studies)—and the four points I have raised in support of defining Integral Theory in Wilberian terms—deserves more attention than space in this introduction allows. I am quite open to counterpoints to the positions I have presented above as well as the opportunity to unpack these brief comments. Also, I do not feel that this issue should be decided by a single person such as myself (or anyone for that matter). Rather, I feel that the integral community and our resulting practices of discourse will enact this over time. It may be the case that this issue is never neatly and easily resolved, and that is fine, too. What I have sought to do in this section is provide my own thoughts and considerations on the topic and give some important background context to this worthwhile discussion and debate. Now let us turn our attention to the contents of this volume.

In This Volume

From the 100 presenters at the conference, nearly 2,000 pages of academic content were produced. I have selected 16 exemplary essays and placed them into three categories of perspectives that I feel are essential to the development of Integral Theory: applied, theoretical, and constructive.⁸ Eight of the

chapters here were “Best Paper” award winners at the end of the conference in the following categories: one for each of the quadrant perspectives, theoretical contribution, research contribution, constructive criticism of Integral Theory, and alternatives to Integral Theory. Additional chapters were obtained from some of the Honorable Mentions in the above categories, with still other noteworthy pieces being chosen for this volume to fill out important aspects of Integral Theory and making a contribution to deepening the academic conversation. In order to set the context for the content presented here, I have included the essay, “The Academic Emergence of Integral Theory,” which Mark Forman and I wrote in response to an online essay posted by Frank Visser a few months before the conference. This essay was widely distributed on the Internet and we received a lot of positive feedback from all kinds of individuals. By including this here as a prologue, I aim to provide some context that people were walking into the conference with and the spirit of exchange that Mark and I are committed to engender through this and future conferences. Thus, I have left this piece in future tense, as it was originally written. A number of presenters (including several of the authors in this volume) cited this essay in their conference papers, which I feel highlights that Mark and I struck a resonant note in the academic community with our comments and vision. Following this prologue is the first chapter, “An Overview of Integral Theory: An All-inclusive Framework for the Twenty-First Century.” This chapter was not a conference paper and was written for this volume, although an earlier version was posted on the Integral Institute website as a resource paper. This chapter serves to provide an up-to-date and comprehensive tour of Integral Theory and its AQAL model. I have written it in a way that will serve individuals new to Integral Theory as well as those who are seasoned scholar-practitioners.

Applied Perspectives

In the first section, *Applied Perspectives*, there are five chapters on various aspects of self, others, and the world. Karen O’Brien opens the volume with “Responding to Climate Change: The Need for an Integral Approach.” O’Brien is a climate change researcher based in Oslo, Norway, and was the lead author for the adaptation article in the Fourth Assessment Report for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize alongside Al Gore. In her chapter, she looks at the six key areas where an Integral approach makes a difference in approaching the global issue of climate change. Then she explores how these areas can be understood in the context of a climate change “hot spot”—the Arctic.

Next, Theresa Silow, director of the somatic psychology track in the MFT counseling program at JFKU explores the role of Integral Theory in supporting

the first-person cultivation of embodiment. In her “Embodiment, an Ascending and Descending Development,” she identifies the points of contact between the transcendent (as represented by transpersonal psychology) and the immanent (as represented by somatic psychology). Silow shows how Integral Theory can facilitate a deeper integration of the insights of these two important orientations to our direct experience. In particular, she explores the paradoxical nature of embodiment as the integration of horizontal and vertical movements in Ascent and Descent.

In “Beauty and the Expansion of Women’s Identity,” Vanessa Fisher, an up-and-coming figure in Integral Theory, takes us on her journey through the worlds of art, individual beauty, and feminism. Her work weaves a wonderful tapestry between the personal and the philosophical and illustrates the power of an integral analysis for making sense of the existential relationship between self and world. She confronts the strained relationship between beauty and feminism and champions that they are not mutually exclusive. She uses Integral Theory to situate how feminism has historically addressed “the beauty question” and parallels this discourse with the evolutionary unfolding of female identity itself. Fisher uses performance artist Hannah Wilke as a case study of a pioneering feminist trying to reconcile beauty and her own identity as a woman. In addition, Fisher surveys the masculine and feminine polarity in the field of aesthetics itself and gives an eloquent account of her own struggle to transcend but include her beauty.

Michele Chase provides a delightful experience in “Writing to Effect: Textual Form as Realization in an Integral Community.” Chase is chair of the Department of Holistic Health Education at JFKU, and received her doctorate in English. Thus, like many integral scholar-practitioners, she is a meeting point between different disciplinary perspectives. She makes the most of this confluence in this chapter. Here she embodies a playful and important inquiry into the nature and role of writing in serving the commitments of a knowledge community such as Integral Theory. In the process, she questions some of the expectations of academic writing in service of actually realizing the goals of a truly transformative discourse. I sincerely hope all authors within the integral community read her analysis of the first nine issues of the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* (JITP), as her insights go beyond this particular publication. Her analysis has helped me to be much more reflective with regard to my role as executive editor of JITP.

The final chapter in this section is from Elliott Ingersoll, a prominent integral psychotherapist and professor of counseling at Cleveland State University. In “An Integral Understanding of the Etiology of Depression,” Ingersoll uses the four quadrants to explore the etiology of one of the most common issues clinicians face. Drawing and weaving together a dozen schools of thought and their

theories, Ingersoll demonstrates how anything less than an Integral approach runs the risk of leaving out too much. This chapter provides a good template of how integral scholar-practitioners can use the four quadrants to organize a comprehensive view of any phenomena or topic.

Theoretical Perspectives

In the next section, *Theoretical Perspectives*, six chapters are provided that contribute something theoretically valuable to the development of Integral Theory. In some cases, this is accomplished by discussing areas currently underexplored within Integral Theory, and in other cases it results from clarifying current theoretical understandings within Integral Theory. Zachary Stein, a doctoral candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a senior analyst for Developmental Testing Service, made a strong impression on conference attendees. His combination of open heart and clear mind embodies important aspects of the integral ideal of scholar-practitioner. He has already begun to make important contributions to Integral Theory, especially in the philosophical, ethical, and empirical realms of psychological measurement. He continues this trajectory with his “Now You Get It, Now You Don’t: Developmental Differences in the Understanding of Integral Theory and Practice.” In this chapter, Stein provides a historical context for developmental thought and introduces us to Kurt Fisher’s skill theory. In particular, he engages in the important process of applying developmental theory to the actual understanding and use of Integral Theory. In doing this and providing the outlines of a research program Stein initiates an important reflective move that has yet to be made by integral theorists and practitioners. Namely, Stein points out that the key distinctions within Integral Theory (e.g., quadrants and levels) will all be understood slightly (though importantly) differently depending on the level of psychological development of the user. This kind of understanding has important implications for the integral community as it tries to teach, learn, and apply these distinctions. Stein’s suggestive analysis forms the basis of the Lectical Integral Model Assessment (LIMA), which is being developed as part of the iTEACH project at JFKU.

Next, Michael Zimmerman, a lifelong academic philosopher who has drawn on Integral Theory since the 1980s, introduces the integral community to the important work of evolutionary theorist Stanley N. Salthe. In “The Final Cause of Cosmic Development: Nondual Spirit or the Second Law of Thermodynamics?” Zimmerman provides an important comparison/contrast analysis between Salthe’s use of thermodynamic equilibrium and Wilber’s use of “Kosmic Eros” to explain the development of complexity in nature. One of the contributions Zimmerman makes in this chapter is in demonstrating

the ways that Salthe has an integral philosophy very compatible with Integral Theory, but has a different set of assumptions and outcomes. In so doing, Zimmerman helps us become more capable of reflecting critically on Integral Theory and also identifies complementary and alternative perspectives that can enrich Integral Theory.

In “Frames of AQAL, Integral Critical Theory, and the Emerging Integral Arts,” Michael Schwartz, a professor of History and Philosophy of Art at Augusta State University, accomplishes a number of things. First, he explores what happens to Integral Theory when it is framed from different angles such as philosophy or theory. Then, using historiography he gives us a sense of what a mature *integral critical theory* consists of and points to potential future developments of the AQAL model. Schwartz provides critical reflections on Integral Methodological Pluralism and the nature of Integral Art. Lastly, he begins an “integral-critical-historical” exploration of art. By weaving together these various trajectories of inquiry, Schwartz triangulates a vision of the future contributions Integral Theory can make to the integral arts.

Then, in “Integral Situational Ethical Pluralism: An Overview of a Second-Tier Ethic for the Twenty-First Century,” Randy Martin addresses an area that is underaddressed in Integral Theory. This is especially the case given the prominent role of topics such as the moral line of psychological development and the *Basic Moral Intuition* (BMI). Martin is the chair of the criminology department at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, so his view of ethics is deeply informed by the consequences of unethical behaviors in our society. This chapter does much to start a conversation about what constitutes Integral Ethics. In particular, he highlights how the BMI and vision-logic are key concepts in Integral Theory for articulating a global ethic. Although Martin does not provide detailed examples of this ethic, he provides an important set of considerations for developing and applying such an ethic.

Next, in an “An Integral Map of Perspective-Taking,” Clint Fuhs sheds some much needed light on one of the most interesting areas of Wilber’s more recent work: a symbolic logic of perspectives. He begins by providing a historical context of previous research on perspective taking. This chapter will be invaluable to the integral community because it for the first time presents Integral Calculus in a straightforward and consistent way. In addition, Fuhs avoids many of the confusing pitfalls that have accompanied earlier uses of its fascinating equations of how first-, second-, and third-person perspectives interact to create reality. Fuhs is a long-time senior student of Ken Wilber and is currently a doctoral candidate at Fielding Graduate University, where he is further researching developmental perspectives and how to represent them symbolically.

The last chapter in this section comes from the world-renowned developmental psychologist Susanne Cook-Greuter. In her “Second-Tier Gains and Challenges in Ego Development,” Cook-Greuter continues her life-long project of researching and measuring the higher stages of ego-identity. This chapter presents her most recent research findings as well as her current formulations of the top two stages of postconventional ego development: Autonomous and Construct-aware. In particular, she focuses on some of the “pitfalls” and shadow dynamics that besiege these higher stages. This exploration is important because there is much talk in the integral community about the value of establishing and embodying these higher stages, but there is not a thorough understanding of the ego traps and difficulties that individuals at these higher stages face. It will be important for proponents of Integral Theory to be better versed in the downside of the higher stages so as to avoid the hubris that can come with using developmental models to understand self and others.

Constructive Perspectives

In the last section, *Constructive Perspectives*, five chapters are provided that contribute toward a more reflective and sober embrace of Integral Theory. One of the key components of academic discourse is critical and constructive engagement. All of these chapters provide beneficial and alternative views that can help deepen and expand theory building and applications within Integral Theory. The first chapter is Sam Mickey’s, “Rhizomatic Contributions to Integral Ecology in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.” Mickey is a doctoral candidate at California Institute of Integral Studies, my alma mater and where I developed the Integral Ecology framework.⁹ So it is great to have Mickey furthering this project by bringing Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomatic thought to bear on it. All too often, proponents of Integral Theory take a posture against postmodernism and its theorists. Thus, Mickey makes an important contribution by demonstrating how Integral Theory still has much to gain by interacting with postmodern theorists and their insights. In fact, Mickey makes a case for Deleuze and Guattari as post-postmodern theorists through their enactive concepts of rhizomes and geophilosophy. Thus, they are invited to join the growing list of key integral theorists.

Next, independent scholar-practitioner Tom Murray provides some guidance to the Integral Theory community’s aspiration toward new forms of community and dialogue.¹⁰ In “Exploring Epistemic Wisdom: Ethical and Practical Implications of Integral Studies and Methodological Pluralism for Collaboration and Knowledge Building,” Murray outlines the practical and theoretical implications of integral approaches to discourse, validation, and the

establishment of knowledge. In particular, Murray focuses on “methodological pluralism” and how it connects to issues of *epistemic indeterminacy* and various social vulnerabilities. In general, Murray’s chapter serves as an important invitation toward our developing more postformal modes of building integral approaches both within Integral Theory and the broader field of integral studies.

In “Appropriation in Integral Theory: The Case of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother’s ‘Untold’ Integral View,” Charles Flores, a long-term practitioner of Integral Yoga himself, provides a cautionary tale. Flores details how “well-intended sympathizers” of Integral Yoga often fail to appreciate the complex nuances of Aurobindo’s work and instead rely on Wilber’s interpretations. Thus, Flores is reminding all of us the value of becoming familiar with the primary sources of key thinkers and theories. This is especially important for scholar-practitioners of a metatheory such as Integral Theory, which can often get lost in its own 50,000 foot view and fail to see with enough granularity how it is distorting or misappropriating other theories, positions, schools of thought, and authors for its own ends.

Following this chapter is Mark Edwards’s “Of Elephants and Butterflies: An Integral Metatheory for Organizational Transformation.” Edwards is one of the most important emerging voices in the field of Integral Theory. He has a deep appreciation for the work of Wilber but is also not afraid to point out its blind spots and limitations. In this chapter, Edwards brings his study of metatheory to bear on how organizations transform. In the process, he makes a number of poignant observations of Integral Theory—from both a metatheory perspective and an applied example—that we all should be very attentive to. In particular, he demonstrates that Integral Theory isn’t the only metatheory game in town, and that many of what Integral Theory claims to be its unique distinctions are in fact shared by other metatheory approaches, such as those by Roy Bhaskar or George Ritzner. Furthermore, some of these other metatheories have distinctions, or what Edwards calls *integral lenses* (of which he identifies 24) that are undervalued or entirely absent within current Integral Theory formulations. Could it be that Integral Theory is not as integral as it considers itself to be? In any case, Edwards here and elsewhere is transforming the conversation around and practice of Integral Theory in important ways.

The last chapter is by the renowned Bill Torbert and his colleagues, Reut Livne-Tarandach, David McCallum, Aliko Nicolaidis, and Elaine Herdman-Barker. In their chapter, “Developmental Action Inquiry: A Distinct Integral Theory That Actually Integrates Developmental Theory, Practice, and Research,” they present an alternative to Wilber’s Integral Theory. Developmental action inquiry combines first-, second-, and third-person perspectives and practices within a developmental framework. Thus, it can be said to be an alternative

all quadrant (i.e., first-, second-, and third-person perspectives), all level (i.e., the Leadership Development Profile) approach to Integral Theory. In fact, Torbert is known to refer to Wilber's four quadrants as the "Flat Four" and his own four terrains of experience as the "Deep Four." This distinction is used by Torbert to highlight how his approach emphasizes action-inquiry in real time, whereas Wilber's approach can easily be and often is just used to theorize and abstract reality. Torbert's work in general, and this chapter in particular, serves as an important counterpoint to Wilber's work and is at the same time complementary to it. Through their juxtaposition and synergy, both approaches can benefit through their scholar-practitioners being familiar with the tenets of each other's method(s). This chapter also provides an important overview of the validity around the Leadership Development Profile (LDP) and some of the most recent research on action-logics.

Serving as a conclusion to this volume, Ken Wilber provides an afterword. In "The Dawn of an Integral Age," Wilber reflects on his own work over the past 30 years and looks ahead toward the future of Integral Theory as it continues to develop as an academic discourse. He points out that the next decade is going to be one of immense growth and diversification of Integral Theory. Pointing to sociologist Jeffrey Alexander's work, Wilber suggests that we are on the brink of a new major epoch where the view that "everyone is right" informs our efforts at addressing the major global issues of the twenty-first century, including the ecological, economic, and cultural crises that grab headlines each day. In concluding, Wilber invites everyone to get involved with ushering in the Integral Age.

Enacting an Integral Future

This volume serves in part as a historical snapshot of the Integral Theory Conference and the formative years of Integral Theory's emergence as a distinct academic field of discourse and practice. In addition, it serves in part as a foundation for building Integral Theory and setting in motion a number of trajectories of discourse for the future of the discipline. In closing, I want to highlight some of the key themes and salient issues that I feel surface in the course of the chapters in this volume. These integral arcs will, hopefully, be taken up and engaged with by the community of practice over the coming years. How we as a community choose to interface with these vibrant and complex issues will have an important influence on the long-term viability of Integral Theory and its application. In Roger Walsh's foreword, he spoke about the "current frontiers and possible futures" of Integral Theory. Below is a list of the most prominent issues facing Integral Theory as I currently see them. Feel free to add your own to this list as you traverse through the integral landscape

of this volume. I have organized them by significant questions facing Integral Theory as an emerging field.

What Is Integral Theory?

- Clarify the relationship between Integral Theory, integral theories, and integral studies.
- Continue to decouple Wilber the man and Integral Theory the field, so that Integral Theory transcends and includes him.
- Explore the similarities and differences between Wilber and other key integral thinkers such as Edgar Morin and Stanley Salthe.
- Interface with other metatheory approaches such as George Ritzner and Roy Bhaskar.
- Explore the limits and blind spots of Integral Theory—what it is leaving out, how it is distorting what it includes, in what ways it overemphasizes certain distinctions over others.
- Develop Integral Calculus further and provide illustrative advantages to its use.
- Explore the lineage of and philosophical traditions that feed into and are expressed through Integral Theory, thereby situating Integral Theory in a historical arc.

What Is the Role of Developmental Theory?

- Expose the shadow aspects of working with developmental models.
- Articulate the ethics of working with developmental models.
- Apply developmental assessments to ourselves so that we know what it is like to be under their gaze and are more aware of the limits and strengths of these instruments of transformation.
- Expand our use of developmental models beyond Beck, Kegan, Cook-Greuter, and Torbert.
- Research the contours of the “higher stages” so we are more clear about what they are and are not.

What Is an Integral Community of Practice?

- Establish an international network of organizations and events that support and deepen the integral inquiry needed within the field.
- Deepen current applications within existing fields (e.g., Integral Ecology and Integral Psychotherapy).

- Apply Integral Theory to new domains and areas such as Integral Parenting, Integral Architecture, and Integral Biology.
- Explore how to be a community of integral discourse through the creation of structures and processes that support feedback, criticism, and reflection.
- Create new kinds of injunctions for shared practice and discourse.
- Develop new forms of integral data analysis from multiple sets and methods of practice.
- Apply Integral Theory to the leading issues of the twenty-first century (e.g., climate change, human trafficking, healthcare, international terrorism).

What Is the Relationship with Postmodernism?

- Clarify whether Integral Theory is a form of constructive postmodernism, or is it post-postmodernism.
- Identify the contributions of postmodernism that have not been fully incorporated.
- Bring the body, the intuitive, the soul, the feminine, the indigenous, and diversity more fully into dialogue with the principles of Integral Theory.

It is my hope that these questions will continue to be taken up by scholar-practitioners in the field of Integral Theory and that more will be added to this initial list. The authors in this volume offer us much in beginning to consider and respond to these issues. The Integral Theory Conference will continue to offer academics and practitioners a place to engage in these kinds of considerations. Together may we enact our integral future in a way that serves as many perspectives as possible. I hope to see you at one of the upcoming Integral Theory Conferences.

Notes

1. A downloadable document containing all the abstracts of these theses and dissertations is available at www.integralresearchcenter.org/source.
2. This list does not include those chapters published in the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* or *Integral Review*.
3. In 2008, the journal's title was shortened from *AQAL: Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* to simply, *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*.
4. For more details, see www.integraltheoryconference.org.
5. See chapter 1, note 9 for a list of the titles being published in 2010.
6. The basis of estimation for these two figures is as follows: for Wilber's own work I included his collected works, the books published since the collected works came out,

- the articles not yet included in the collected works, and the Excerpts posted on his Shambhala Web page; for the Wilberian material, I only included books, articles, and dissertations that draw heavily on Wilber's writings in a constructive spirit regardless of whether they are critical of or sympathetic to his Integral approach.
7. The Integral Theory corpus itself is situated in a lineage of philosophical examination and psychological inquiry that has roots in figures such as James Mark Baldwin, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Jürgen Habermas. In many ways Wilber's vision is just the most recent though admittedly unique articulation of the tradition of American pragmatism.
 8. In addition to these 16 essays, the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* (Vol. 4, No. 3) published 10 additional essays that were presented at the conference. This collection covers a wide range of applications of the AQAL model, including politics, diversity issues, postsecondary education, music theory and pedagogy, recovery work, philosophy, paranormal phenomena, and thanatology. All of these chapters (in this volume) and articles (in the JITP issues) have accompanying MP3 recordings of the authors presenting their papers as part of the Integral Theory Conference. Visit www.integraltheoryconference.org for details on how to obtain these recordings as well as all the other recordings made of all other presenters at ITC 2008.
 9. For a complete overview of this framework, see Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman (2009).
 10. In many ways this chapter by Murray builds on an earlier article he published in *Integral Review*. See Murray (2006). This previous work is a well-researched and extensive exploration (54 pages in length!) of "knowledge building" in the context of dialogue practices between and among integral authors. One of Murray's (2006) observations is that these authors "by and large exhibit the same limitations as traditional intellectual discourses" (210). In response to this situation Murray (2006) offers many worthwhile insights and injunctions about the process of enacting "collaborative knowledge." I feel this article is essential reading for the integral community as it outlines a number of issues we need to consider and engage in.

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