

## Epistemological Pluralism in Futures Studies: The CLA–Integral Debates

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## Contents

Epistemological pluralism in futures studies: The CLA–Integral debates .....	1
<i>Edited by Sohail Inayatullah</i>	
Theory and practice in transformation: The disowned futures of integral extension .....	7
<i>Sohail Inayatullah</i>	
Resistance is not futile: Escaping the Integral trap.....	17
<i>Marcus Bussey</i>	
Movements toward holism in futures inquiry.....	23
<i>Jose M. Ramos</i>	
An other view of Integral futures: De/reconstructing the <i>IF brand</i> .....	37
<i>Jennifer M Gidley</i>	
Futures of Integral futures: An analysis of Richard Slaughter’s analysis of Causal Layered Analysis .....	51
<i>Gary P. Hampson</i>	
Rethinking moral futures .....	73
<i>David Turnbull</i>	
Self-reflexive challenges of Integrative futures.....	80
<i>Anthony Judge</i>	
Models and methods in motion: Declining the dogma dance .....	91
<i>Wendy Schultz</i>	
CLA: An evolving methodology in a learning community .....	95
<i>Colin Russo</i>	
Solving the futures challenge—All you need is a 3LA .....	107
<i>Marcus Barber</i>	
Contact details for contributing authors .....	114

## Epistemological pluralism in futures studies: The CLA–Integral debates

Edited by Sohail Inayatullah<sup>i</sup>

*This issue is a response to the March 2008 Special Issue of Futures titled Integral Futures.<sup>ii</sup> A response is necessary to correct theoretical misrepresentations and factual errors.*

*I present short summaries of authors' contributions in this special issue. Some of the contributors are well versed in Integral or Integral futures (Judge, Ramos, Gidley, Barber and Hampson, for example), while others are users of the four quadrant approach as one of their foresight methods. In this introduction, no overarching narrative is used, rather, through extensive quotes, the voices of the contributing authors speak.<sup>iii</sup>*

### Resistance is not futile

Marcus Bussey, in his essay, “Resistance is not futile: escaping the integral trap”, writes. “For me the noun [integral] forecloses on alternatives: ‘This is whole; complete!’, one might also add kaput! The adjective has similar connotations, carrying implicit within it a sense of singularity, unit as whole, linearity (the terminus of an evolutionary cycle), centre–periphery (the whole heart—the incomplete inchoate periphery), distance (the integral gaze is not unlike the panopticon), and monotheism (you’re either integral or incomplete). Furthermore, the word seduces, drawing its proponents into an integral end game that can, for the rigid convert, lead to a kind of integral fundamentalism underwritten by a sense that there cannot be many (alternatives) when there is only one Way. It achieves this through a universal gaze that assesses all else as less than, incomplete, partial and unfinished. This epistemic absolutism (nothing exists outside of it) is driven by its power of definition which colonizes past and future inner/outer space. I say this with all due respect to my friends and colleagues enamoured of the integral. The word should come with a large red sticker clearly visible: Buyer Beware!”

It is this trap that Bussey asserts he will resist.

My own approach challenges Integral futures generally and defends CLA from the claims made in the Integral Futures special issue. I argue that “Riedy's piece in particular [1] makes a strange series of errors in that it: 1. confuses Vedanta with Tantra; 2. misreads subjectivity—arguing that subjectivity does not exist for the poststructural, instead of seeing how the self is contextualized with structure and genealogy (as in Foucault's work, among many others); 3. misses the entire work around Inner CLA; 4. adopts the Orientalist discourse of constructing CLA as cultural (instead of noting that it seeks to move up and down layers of data, systems, worldviews and myths); and that 5. it is not grounded in the practice of conducting layered analysis with varied groups.” My essay concludes by arguing that there is no need for this battle. “We do not need to be either for or against Integral or CLA. We can live in multiple spaces, use different theories and methodologies, each having its purpose, each useful depending on the person, time and particular space we inhabit. The strength of futures studies is its epistemological pluralism.”

### Wilberism

As one of the developers of Integral Futures, Jose Ramos notes that while Integral has made important contributions to Futures studies, he is wary of ‘Wilber-ism’, what Ramos calls “an ideological orientation to the Wilber version of holism”, and indeed to politics.<sup>iv</sup>

Writes Ramos, “Of course, ideology can be said to be a persistent human problem that emerges in many traditions and cultures, of which ‘Wilber-ism’ is just one manifestation. As well ‘indicators’ of these dangers and pitfalls do not appear across all uses of Wilber, but in certain cases. Yet these cases, or examples, have led me to see an overall pattern that needs to be addressed. Simply put the potential danger and pitfall in the use of Wilber is the tendency to marginalise alternative conceptions of holism, by subordinating them into its developmental hierarchy (in the guise of ‘refreshing’), appropriating alternative conceptions into its model as less complete theories or approaches, which are purely defined in Wilberian terms. And thus, within this Wilber-ism, alternative conceptions of what holism mean are not accepted *on their own terms and language*. From a non-western view, Wilber-ism remains foundationally Western, continuing the orientalist tradition of appropriating non-western categories a-contextually and a-historically.” Adds Ramos, “The chief problem here is that in Wilber’s terms, Integral does not seem to be a discourse, but rather amazingly ‘a-perspectival’, meaning that it somehow sits above discourses and the flux of the perspectival world.”

Ramos argues that we need to appreciate the various genealogies (discourses) and ontogenies (manifestations) in the movements towards holism in futures inquiry. By appreciating this diversity, and fostering dialogue across these context specific manifestations in the movement toward holism, we can validate the impulse toward coherence while protecting each from intellectual colonization, appropriation and ‘integration’ by any other. He writes “It is not in the integration of a diversity of elements into a single model where we will find holism, but rather I believe it is to be found in an ongoing relational process of dialogue across diversities, where holisms can emerge as aspects of our ongoing journeys.”

## Integralism

Jennifer Gidley also challenges the particularity of Integral Futures. Originally inspired by the notion of linking Integral and Futures thinking, she was dismayed when she noted “the tendency in the Special Issue is to privilege and promote a particular *brand* of *integral futures*, i.e. via Wilber’s integral model—while not exploring other integral approaches—is more akin in my view to a business/marketing approach than a scholarly engagement. This may reflect an alignment with the “corporate turn” in Wilber’s approach to promoting his own model over the last couple of years. However, such a one-sided approach does not nurture the breadth and depth of potential of *integral futures* (broadly defined)—nor indeed, even its current embodiment.”

Gidley, in contrast, seeks to enliven Integral through a genealogical summary; she brings back Gebser, Aurobindo and Steiner, to begin with. Thus, the Anglo-American bias is to some extent expanded as other integrals are brought in. Indeed, Gidley wishes to integrate the integrals. She seeks theoretic openings instead of the closings presented in the Special Issue. Writes Gidley, “by consistently attending to the kindred theories that rub up against our cherished theories and methodologies, we keep them soft and alive, rather than hard, rigid and mechanistic.”

But it is the hardness that is the problem. Hampson in his work, while attempting to move to a redemptive space, first step by step, reference by reference, challenges some of the claims made in the Integral Futures Special Issue in particular those of Richard Slaughter.

Writes Hampson, “Slaughter states: ‘I will here cover three key issues based on claims for the method that have been put forward. They are: (1) the claim that CLA is systematic, (2) the claim that it adequately represents depth, and (3) the claim that it ‘unpacks individual perspectives’” [2].

Within this quotation, Slaughter cites one reference as evidence to support his assertion regarding these three claims. Somewhat incongruently, the reference he cites is authored neither by Inayatullah nor by any other CLA-oriented scholar but by himself, namely, the article “Mapping the Future: Creating a Structural Overview of the Next 20 Years” [3].

Even more startlingly, this reference does not address these three claims; indeed, it does not address CLA in any way. As his ensuing analysis of CLA is based on these three claims, it would be difficult to argue that Slaughter's errancy in this matter is insignificant.

Concludes Hampson: "Slaughter's position is that, 'at best the CLA is a part of a *preparation* for post-conventional inspiration and work' [40, p. 134]<sup>vi</sup> (original italics) and that 'CLA has little to say about the human interiors' [40, p. 133].<sup>vii</sup> This position is inaccurate. Rather, CLA can be identified as a postconventional approach which addresses human interiors. In contrast, Slaughter's analysis insufficiently foregrounds the postconventionality of integral approaches; indeed, aspects of it bespeak unhelpful modernistic tendencies.

Slaughter might himself wish to attend to the following in relation to possible enactments of integral methodology: "one of the central insights to emerge from IF, in fact, is that it is the level of development of the practitioner that determines how well or badly any particular method will be used" [4]. He might also wish to problematise such a totalizing perspective regarding the evaluation of an entire person by way of a singular development level. Redefining Integral itself

David Turnbull's "Rethinking Moral Futures" continues this vein of thought, indeed, redefining integrality. He writes, "Integrality is not about assimilating another person, an outsider, into a particular field of practice. It involves changing the field of practice to allow for the unique contributions of the person". Turnbull locates the tension between critical futures studies (CFS) qua the CLA approach and some approaches within Integral futures as between an opening and closing of the future. One constructs the world textually, as an open and interpretive space. The other constructs the world as The Book, one lens, one way of seeing the world. Certainly, the one-wayness can lead to dramatic change and move a particular field forward. At the same time, in a field like Futures Studies, with its main strength that of textual openness, The Book closes the future, leading to conceptual dead-ends.

At heart it is the epistemological framework behind one's ontological commitments. Writes Turnbull, "[The] poststructural/Tantric approach to CFS is about opening up the future to influences from beyond 'the dominant paradigm' ...[it] opens up ways (albeit fragile) to help address deep-seated dislocations and frustrations within the contemporary social/cultural world. And for some, it provides ways of transferring hope into the future, whilst at the same time working actively towards it, without actually *defining* what 'it' is. Contrary to futures approaches that are concerned to define, to concretise, to grasp as a whole, the poststructuralist version of CFS is partly to undefine, to lessen the tight hold on the future that some crave."

In contrast, argues Turnbull, "Integral seeks to provide a grand program based on a particular view of human nature. But is this even possible? Against this proclamation one may well be reminded that 'human nature' is not something that can be tested and analysed under research conditions no matter how grand or comprehensive the program. Such an entity remains forever elusive for describing it would require, as Hannah Arendt put it poetically, 'jumping over our own shadows.' [19]"<sup>viii</sup> That is, we—I—are complicit in the worlds we create; we inhabit the theoretical frameworks we employ to make the world intelligible to us.

Anthony Judge, as well, brings in epistemological complexity. He questions Wilber's attempt to write a theory of everything ... "to what extent does Wilber's model imply that those who disagree with it are necessarily less aware—namely that agreement with it is an indicator of a subtler state of awareness?"

As with Gidley, Judge is concerned about the corporatist turn in Wilber's Integral. "Integral futures is necessarily challenged by the difficulty of Ken Wilber in having positioned himself and his ventures in a style to be caricatured as the Craig Venter of memetics (rather than genetics)! One is concerned with mapping and "cracking" the human psychosocial "genome" and the other with mapping and "cracking" the human genome—and then exploiting any exclusive patents to the full."

The way forward for Judge, in contrast, begins with doubt. In a theory of everything can there be evolution without doubt? asks Judge, “Does the absence of doubt preclude dialogue of a quality from which mutual learning can emerge? No doubt, no dialogue?”

This relates to the shadow of Wilber ... Are Wilber and his Integral shadow free, or is it, as Judge suggests, through the gaze of the shadow that meaningful dialogue becomes possible. Indeed, it is via the shadow that Integral can grow and learn about itself—what it disowns, what it fragments, what it excludes. Along with the formal garden of knowledge that Wilber offers, Judge suggested we need the charm of disorder. Without it, imperfection will not be engaged in, and knowledge will flow merely in one-way.

## Methodology and practice

Schultz, while agreeing with the challenges to Integral, eschews these grand debates, and is focused astutely on their implication. In her entry, “Models and methods in motion: Declining the dogma dance”, Schultz focuses on the application of methods. She writes: “It is intellectual bigotry to demand that everyone master the tools you choose to use”. Most important for her, it is the mash-up which creates novelty. She writes: “But you know what I love most? ... Mashing them all up: use them all at once: pick’n’mix. Collisions generate creativity; chaotic, turbulent waters where the ocean slams into the continents are home to the most life. Categories and their boundaries are useful to tidy our desktops and our mental landscapes, but we must be wary of their ability to hobble both imagination and insight.”

Her argument is that the use of frameworks and methods is situational—dependent on the person, the particular task at hand and the cultural context. Adds Schultz, “An insistence that everyone adopt the integral framework for every futures study does a disservice not only to the innate gifts of individuals, but also to the integral approach itself: not every single researcher can encompass it—or CLA—and it *can* be applied badly.”

Colin Russo picks up this methodological stream and argues that methodologies need to be able to bolt and unbolt from each other. Poststructuralism–CLA cannibalizing Integral or Integral assimilating CLA would be a methodological mistake—innovation, emancipation and enrichment would be the losers. To avoid this strategic error, Russo suggests the vinculum, where methods meet and unmeet, moving in and out of their own spaces and creating ever moving third spaces. Each theory and methodology needs the self-reflexivity to see itself from the authentic viewpoint of others and of course be loyal to itself. Moreover, Russo—and others—suggest that “refreshing” comes best from learning via practice and not from experts armed with theoretical knowledge that has not been tested in the world.

Marcus Barber continues this methodological discussion, but focuses on futurists, themselves, ourselves. He writes: “I appreciate Riedy’s passion for the model and enthusiasm for assessing CLA to see how it might be developed further. But replacing structurally sound, relatively straight forward methods with highly complex, iterative and exclusionary approaches [Integral Futures] is not in my opinion, a way for the futures community to endear itself to those in arguably in greatest need of assistance—us.”

Thus, it is the “they” he seeks to unpack. Who is the “they” that futurists seek to provide salvation for? It is not the short term nature of markets that explains why certain brands of futures studies have not taken off, but rather, suggests Barber, “the critical failure has been an unwillingness or inability of futures practitioners to play in the same sandbox as their key clients. By and large, the deep thinking and prognostication has been theoretical and non pragmatic and it is for this reason that the ‘short term, extremely powerful’ paradigm of market forces has remained unchallenged. ”The interiors of futurists, themselves, has remained un-reflective. We are fine, they—the short-termists—need to change! It is they that must change, while we continue our theorizing.

## Conclusion

One reading of the difference in approaches developed by the authors above and the Special Issue of *Futures* on Integral is—as Ashis Nandy has noted—the difference between the text and the book [5]. The text is open, it can be critiqued, read differently, it embodies and allows for multiple metaphors and frameworks. Different ways of knowing can change the text—the text invites alternatives even as it may make claims for a particular truth. This is in contrast to the book ... one future, one reading, few openings, and often little or no self-reflection. The particular truth overwhelms alternatives. A book may even try to come off as a text, but as Jose Ramos writes, it is in the practice that we can discover the difference.

However, as all the contributing authors to the CLA–Integral Debates suggest, Integral and Integral futures can be a textual resource. It can potentially be rescued from the claims and worldviews made by some of the contributors to the Integral Futures Special Issue. Doing so, of course, begins with our selves—the stories we tell and the behaviors we practice, as well as with the external world and the myths and worldviews that support it. And, of course, it does not matter by which door we enter or exit. We can take, for example, the CLA door through which we can ask which of my inner and outer litanies am I recreating and what new systems of self and world need to change. Along with changes in self and system, we can ask which of my dominant and alternative selves and worldviews need to transform, and which of my inner stories and our mythologies can aid in this process. And there are many other doors, many ways of knowing (including those that challenge the metaphor of the door and the built environment narrative that is hidden in this image) as Joseph Voros alerts us [6].

The beauty of futures studies is that all these doors are possible—there are many alternative entrances and exits—and many ways to create openings and closings.

## References

- [1] C. Riedy, An integral extension of causal layered analysis, *Futures* 40(2) (2008), 150-159.
- [2] R. Slaughter, What difference does 'integral' make?, *Futures* 40(2) (2008), 120-137 (quote from page 131).
- [3] R. Slaughter, Mapping the future: Creating a structural overview of the next 20 years, *Journal of Futures Studies* 1(1) (1996), 5-26.
- [4] R. Slaughter, What difference does 'integral' make?, *Futures* 40(2) (2008), 133.
- [5] A. Nandy, *Time treks: The uncertain future of old and new despotisms*. Ranikhet, India, 2007.
- [6] J. Voros, Integral Futures: An approach to futures inquiry, *Futures* 40(2) (2008), 198.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> With thanks to Patricia Kelly, Susan Leggett, Jan Lee Martin, Rob Burke and contributing authors for editorial comments on this opening essay.

<sup>ii</sup> Vol. 40, No. 2, March 2008. Edited by Richard Slaughter. There is some confusion over editorship as the table of contents lists Slaughter as the sole editor while the front cover includes Peter Hayward and Joseph Voros.

<sup>iii</sup> Unless specified, all quotes from this *Futures* issue: Epistemological pluralism in futures studies: The CLA–Integral Debates.

<sup>iv</sup> Writes Michel Bauwens, "Ken Wilber hails Tony Blair as the ultimate representative of Integral leadership, associating himself (and hailing) with the worst contemporary spiritual abusers: first Da Free John, now Andrew Cohen. Now, there is nothing wrong by itself in being a neoconservative (that is, until you go about invading other countries on false pretenses), but it becomes manipulative when you start cloaking that particular political vision under a false scientific cloak, feeling yourself a superior being in 'consciousness'. Doesn't sound much different from the scientific justifications of a Leninist vanguard party, and we all know where that led us"

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(personal communications. 21 July 2008). Bauwens is a former colleague of Wilber. See Michel Bauwens, "The cult of Ken Wilber: what has gone wrong with Ken Wilber."

[http://www.kheper.net/topics/Wilber/Cult\\_of\\_Ken\\_Wilber.html](http://www.kheper.net/topics/Wilber/Cult_of_Ken_Wilber.html). Accessed 25 July 2008.

<sup>v</sup> Richard Carlson provides this cautionary advise. "An integral theory which valorizes its own epistemology by denying other traditions, theories ...or by simply mis-characterizing them segregates rather than integrates. Any theory which asserts itself ideologically by cannibalizing other traditions and appropriating the voice of alterity as a function of its integral model while discarding the ten thousand nuances, subtleties, traces of culture which are essential to indigenous identity, fails at the level of integration itself. Such theoretical practices are not integral but imperialist, such discourses do not achieve cultural hybridity but rather cultural hegemony. Such an integral theory is colonialist at its worst and patronizing at its best." See Richard Carlson, *Integral Ideology: an ideological genealogy of integral theory and practice*. Forthcoming. 2008.

[http://www.sciy.org/blog/\\_archives/2008/4/11/3633725.html](http://www.sciy.org/blog/_archives/2008/4/11/3633725.html). Accessed 24 July 2008.

<sup>vi</sup> [40, in Hampson, this issue] R. Slaughter, What difference does 'Integral' make?, *Futures: The journal of policy, planning and futures studies* 40 (2) (2008) pp. 120-137.

<sup>vii</sup> [40, in Hampson, this issue] R. Slaughter, What difference does 'Integral' make?, *Futures: The journal of policy, planning and futures studies* 40 (2) (2008) pp. 120-137.

<sup>viii</sup> [19, in Turnbull, this issue] H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Second Ed., The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998, p. 10.



# Theory and practice in transformation: The disowned futures of integral extension

Sohail Inayatullah

## Abstract

*The strength of futures studies is its epistemological pluralism. Integral futures as defined by Slaughter and Riedy loses sight of this strength. Instead of an interpretive dialogue, the "Integral Extension" seeks to frame and define causal layered analysis (CLA) within its own terms. Its proponents do so by constructing their version of Integral as above—more evolved, higher, more ... and CLA as lower. Integral, in Riedy and Slaughter's terms, appears to inhabit the totalizing linear modernist paradigm, not to mention the straightjacket of the masculinist discourse. Their strategy is the classic defining of the other within the terms of the person who seeks to define. Riedy's piece in particular makes a strange series of errors in that it: 1. Confuses Vedanta with Tantra; 2. Misreads subjectivity—arguing that subjectivity does not exist for the poststructural, instead of seeing how the self is contextualized with structure and genealogy (as in Foucault's work); 3. Misses the entire work around inner CLA; 4. Adopts the Orientalist discourse of constructing CLA as cultural (instead of recognizing that it seeks to move up and down layers of data, systems, worldviews and myths), and 5 is not grounded in the practice of conducting layered analysis with varied groups. This essay concludes by arguing that there is no need for this battle. We do not need to be either for or against Integral or CLA. We can live in multiple spaces, use different theories and methodologies, each having its purpose, each useful depending on the person, time and particular space we inhabit..*

**Keywords:** Integral theory, integral practitioners, causal layered analysis, macrohistory, linear developmentalism

## Essential message

The essential message of Chris Riedy's article, "An Integral extension of causal layered analysis" [1] is simple. Integral theory and integral practitioners, as presented by Slaughter and Riedy, have a higher awareness than others, thus they offer the light to those of us with a lower consciousness. Their deep myth is that they are above and others below. This emerges as well in Richard Slaughter's description of the issue—he seeks to reveal the faults of others and then correct them [2]. Other theories too—particularly poststructuralism and Vedanta, but generally all—are judged from these lofty heights (they call it transcendent inclusion); Ken Wilber is the (willing or unwilling) guru who has given the light. Their worldview, following other great modernists such as Comte and Spencer, accepts linear developmentalism as the only macrohistorical shape that is sensible. Other possibilities such as the cyclic, the spiral or complexity are deemed to be confused and overly cultural [3]. Integral, ultimately, in attempting to be a theory of everything, fashions the future in a straightjacket. Instead of offering escapeways, it becomes, as Ashis Nandy has commented (after Richard Slaughter's presentation on Integral Futures, 7 November, 2005, Tamkang University, Tamsui, Taiwan, and in personal email communication, 15 March, 2008), potentially one more western hegemonic totalizing theory—the problem of the future, not the solution.

### *Define or be defined*

Slaughter [4] and Riedy analyse CLA from the particular lenses of their interpretation of Wilber's Integral theory (there are many Integral theories!). This is all very well as a beginning, but since there is no dialogue of theories and methods, no mutual learning is possible. This is partly because what we have is closet hagiography—Wilber as godhead and Slaughter and Riedy as evangelists.

Riedy's guiding question is, "can CLA develop enough to be useful to Integral or will it be superseded by other methods?", while Slaughter asks, "which quadrant does CLA fit in?"

These are 'how many angels on a pinhead' type questions; they do not inform how we can understand or transform the world. But as this can be read as a "religious piece", we should not be surprised. We know this from Riedy's concluding assertion that CLA can be useful to Integral when a "group of Integrally aware participants" [1,4] engage in the task. But how exactly do we need to be aware? How do we judge? Perhaps these integrally aware participants will have a special aura or special clothes? Of course, a futures workshop, or other pedagogical space, runs better if there is self-reflection. But this occurs if the context is made explicit; that is, the workshop practitioner begins the workshop by exploring ideas of reflection for example, via the tried zero (no learning), single (take-aways, actionable) and double loop learning (learning about learning) or other learning formats [5]. CLA, in contrast, does not need especially 'aware' persons, it works with all humans irrespective of their ideological positions. This is not say there is no resistance. There is resistance with any method. We need to understand resistance and 'resistings' as part of any process of change and transformation [6]. Resistance tends to come from those who reject multiple worldviews—be they religious fundamentalists, geneticists or Wilber integrals.

This religious dimension is of course linked to utopianism as well. As Jim Carey argues in *The Faber Book of Utopias* [7], the utopian first finds the current system to be faulty. Next he argues that doomsday is coming. Then he provides the solution so that doomsday does not occur. In the triumvirate of Wilber–Slaughter–Riedy, the world is ending because of growth curves—the environmental crisis ahead; Integral futures studies is, however, here to save the day. But ... there is a problem—"they" are not listening to us—they are short-sighted. Only if they can hear the Father and the many apostles will all be okay. But they need to listen *correctly*, as no mistakes are allowed. Fortunately, the Integralist will reveal the mistakes of others—governments, corporates, SUV owners, futurists—and all will be resolved. The blessed day of the futures renaissance is imminent.

Within the Integral framework, other alternatives—epistemes, worldviews, practices—are not possible, since this is not about authentic meetings with the Other. Rather, it is about coming to the truth via Integral. We are lucky, Riedy tells us, since if we agree to a process of non-exclusion, unfoldment and enactment, we can be included. However, we must adapt to Integral or face being left behind by history.

Now let us discuss more in detail the problems with this approach.

#### *Factual and philosophical problems*

In the abstract, Riedy asserts that CLA is a futures method [1]. He is right: it can be constructed as futures method. However, it is also a theory of knowledge developed within a poststructural and Tantric epistemological context. Riedy uses Integral theory to capture CLA as method. If we wished here to argue theories then he should have compared Integral theory with CLA qua poststructuralism. To do this, he would have needed to analyse the basic foundations of CLA [8]. These include: deconstruction, genealogy, distancing, alternative pasts and futures, and reordering knowledge. However, Riedy applies Integral theory to CLA as methodology, instead of offering a methodology-to-methodology comparison.

Riedy next argues that CLA is not an Integral method in its own right. This is a strange approach as CLA was never intended to be an Integral method. CLA intends to be an integrative methodology, that brings together multiple perspectives, layering them; but unlike Integral, CLA allows escapeways from its methodology. That is, one is not caught in a straightjacket. The escapeway is the multiplicity built into the system. Language is considered opaque and not transparent as it is in Integral.

Furthermore, Riedy makes the claim that Slaughter was one of the first to propose a critical approach to futures work that engaged with the inner world of subjectivity. A literature review on this would show that long before Slaughter was Somporn Sangchai. In 1974, Sangchai wrote "Some aspects of

Futurism", for the Hawaii Research Centre for Futures Study [9], in which he developed an inner directed futures studies as well as an outer directed futures studies. Also important are the works of Bart Van Steenberg, Johan Galtung, James Dator, and the late John and Magda Mchale (at their Center for Integrative Studies), all of whom in the 1970s challenged establishment futures studies, bringing in subjectivity, although to different extents [10]. There is also the rich tradition of Elise Boulding [11], Ashis Nandy (and his notion of eupsychia) [12] and many others who have transformed the field.

However, it is the next theoretical mistake that underlies the entire problem of Riedy's essay. Rather than presenting evidence, Riedy argues that CLA develops from a Vedantic theory of mind. In the Vedantic qua Indic approach, the self is subjective and there are deeper layers of the self, each one opening up to the next—the metaphor of the onion skin is apt. And yet later in the piece, Riedy argues that CLA does not have a subjective approach, it is lost in culture. So which statement is accurate? Given the subjective nature of Indic thought, which CLA is indeed partly derived from, how has CLA abandoned the subjective? On this Riedy remains silent.

As argued below, CLA does include the subjective. But Riedy confuses two very important divisions in Indic philosophy and history—those of Vedanta and Tantra. CLA has never claimed any links with Vedanta. As argued in the CLA Reader [13], causal layered analysis was influenced in part by a Tantric theory of knowledge [14], as developed by the Indian philosopher, P. R. Sarkar [15] and others. Tantra predates Vedanta considerably, existing prior to the Aryan invasion and the beginning of varna or caste [16]. Over time, Tantra has focused on challenging class and caste orthodoxies (and power in general) and mapping the intricacies of the individual self and the collective unconscious, or what is known in Tantra as collective mind. Moreover, in the last few thousand years, Tantra has been far more practical than Vedanta, seeing the physical, mental and spiritual worlds as real while Vedanta has tended to focus on the Absolute with the material world as maya, or illusion [17]. It is not clear why Riedy confuses Tantra with Vedanta. The two do share a superficially similar overall project of mapping the self, but they are dramatically different traditions. In Vedanta, moreover, the godhead is central.

CLA borrows from Tantra in that all levels of reality are seen as real, though in different ways. There is no maya that must be torn away. It is through a process of questioning—up and down layers and horizontally within layers—that different understandings emerge. Vedanta remains hierarchical, re-inscribing the hierarchy of caste, while Tantra challenges this hierarchy, arguing that knowledge results from reflections on practical experience, and not just from theory.

Still, in both Tantra and Vedanta understanding the subjectivity of the self is primary, even if Tantra seeks to reconcile the self in society, not just the self in a world of illusion. Thus, I return to Riedy's argument that CLA excludes the subjectivity of the person. There are a number of problems with this. First, CLA has developed via action learning, in workshops with now tens of thousands of individuals. The subjectivity of each person is pivotal. They enter the structure, use it, and find and construct new maps of reality through it. Of course, this is not a pure action learning approach as there is the existing structure of the layers that they enter. Still, within the layers of litany, system, worldview and myth—metaphor, there is considerable reflection on the meanings individuals give to their lives and the systems that interactively create these meanings. Through a process of inquiry into systems, worldviews and myths at inner and outer levels, alternative futures can be explored and created. Moreover, the borders between subjectivity and objectivity can be challenged as can the layers themselves. Meta-reflection is invited.

That said, certainly the four quadrant approach can add to the CLA case study. Along with the structure of the layers, inner dimensions can be investigated; for example, asking individuals to identify both the inner meanings and the inner collective meanings that they ascribe to litany, system, world and myth is helpful. Indeed, in my work in futures studies and CLA, I have never seen these two approaches as being in tension; rather, they build on each other. As with other futures methods (scenarios, futures wheels, backcasting) there is no need to create a hierarchy of methods. For the

practitioner it is critical to have knowledge of a number of tools, and to understand when to use them. That type of research is crucial.

Thus, the four quadrant tool can add an inner dimension to CLA. However, CLA does not need the four quadrant tool. That is, one could simply ask individuals to engage in a CLA with themselves as the research question. What are my litanies: how do I represent myself to the world? Do I use age, or ethnicity, or nation? Then, one could explore the systems of the mind: which are the multiple selves that create my inner constellation, as per the work of Bert Hellinger [18] (a map of the constellation of the selves and futures) and Hal and Sidra Stone [19] (the disowned self and the disowned future)? Which self is dominant in this system—the vulnerable child, the adult, the old wise person? The key is to map the full extent of selves. This can be done individually or with others in the working group. In an organizational setting, the selves of the organization can be mapped—who is the organizational mother, the father, etc. Then one could create a map of the inner worldview: how do I construct the world—is it the egoic model, a transpersonal model? I could even inquire into what identities would result if I utilized different worldviews to create selves: what is my Islamic self? My Western self? Indic self? Planetary self? Finally, I could explore the inner stories I tell myself. Is life a struggle? Is life bliss? Is this the way things really are? Or, ‘yes but the bottom line is...’! A genealogical gloss of the evolution of these stories would help as well: do the core stories come from childhood fairy tales—Snow White or the Three Little Pigs, or Aladdin, or Berbil and Akbar?

Moving up and down levels, one can develop a tapestry of the inner self. That is, what are the implications of my stories on how I construct the world, how I organize the systems of selves? Is my worldview authoritarian? Do I need to move to an inner democracy, a pluralism of selves? This inner map can then be linked to the external world. For example, one could ask, is it possible to have an inner map that is authoritarian (dominated by one story, an authoritarian ego) and still have a collective democracy? Can there be a democracy on the outside if the inside is not equally pluralistic [20]? The main point is that it is possible to map the inner and link it to the outer for a particular self or a collectivity of selves, as in an organization.

### Role of the individual

For Riedy, however, not only can subjectivity not be accounted for, but there is no role for the individual. And yet, earlier in the piece he discusses that, at the third level, stakeholders or worldviews or episteme are used. Certainly, when Riedy discusses the key politician resisting climate change, he argues that this is a problem for CLA. But how? The politician is a stakeholder, thus, his or her view is brought to the table with all his or her subjectivity and objectivity. Moreover, not only can his or her interests be represented but so can the worldview of the politician and the deeper category of ‘politician’ that episteme gives us. Thus, depth occurs as the self of the politician, the worldview of the political party or general interests, and the category of ‘politician’ itself can be brought to the table. These three levels of depth are possible (whether Integral can or cannot do this is not my point).

Riedy then resorts to hypotheticals—that CLA will not work if those in the room are not developmentally equipped to deal with how others think. The problem here is the framework of the question Riedy asks. Most futurists/facilitators know that any theory and methodology needs be presented in ways that both are in tune and challenging to the cognitive frames of those present. That is what futures studies is about. Certainly, CLA would require additional effort if all in the room had one shared ideology or worldview. And certainly CLA works better if the facilitator and/or participants have access to multiple perspectives about a particular issue (realist, neo-realist, idealist, spiritual, for example), that is, as Dator has argued CLA is theory and method (pers. comm., Jim Dator, Singapore, 3 December, 2008). In the doctoral thesis writing process, this occurs in the literature review chapter. However, in a workshop context, my experience and the experience of colleagues—again employed with thousands of individuals in various settings—is that the process of unpacking in itself helps create an understanding of different worldviews. Of course, there is always resistance, but one can find examples to help. One can ask whether participants have children? If so, then they will understand that

children see the world differently. Are they married (the gendered construction of reality) or are they from a marginalised social group due to their sexual orientation or for some other reason (hegemonic construction of reality)? Have they travelled (how do different cultures order the real) [21]? Thus, in a situation where there is more than one gender, when there has been contact with other cultures, with difference, then CLA works. This not only assumes some capacity to engage with the Other [22], but offers a process that develops participants' capacities to listen to others and to themselves [6].<sup>ii</sup> Even with resistance, CLA's engagement with breadth and depth allows the Other to sneak in, even if one enters as an ideological hegemon.

Indeed, the issue of hegemony may be identified as a "hidden curriculum" (pers. comm., Gary Hampson, 4 March, 2008) of Integral futures, as it is unwilling to accept the Other on its terms, instead setting up complex exclusivist categories to dominate. This is typical of traditional mega-mapping, nineteenth and twentieth century classification schemes. Each map seeks to classify others as lower order categories in their overall scheme. Writes Frank Hutchinson:

Maps can be confused with territory, and the need for defensiveness/border protection, especially when there is a sense of terrifying futures (e.g. war on terror, global warming). Rather than the song-lines of diversity of Indigenous Australian culture, there is the search for order, control, security. In some ways, we want to map 'inner'/'outer' worlds in much the same way as the European surveyors mapped this country and divided it into rectangular blocks and western property possessions. Whether rectangles or quadrants, finding a way to 'fit' things in or order them hierarchically is seen to be important. 'Security' rather than peace discourses tend to predominate in troubled and troubling times. (pers. comm., Francis Hutchinson, 6 March, 2008)

Hutchinson goes on to suggest that the Integral map appears to privilege guruism and elitism at the expense of deep dialogue and inclusion; stage-on-stage instead of action learning; methodological colonialism instead of decolonizing methodologies [23]; and neo-platonist ontology instead of poststructural approaches. As well, gender is made silent by subsuming it in a particular quadrant.

Within this Orientalist map, a dialogue of systems or theories is barely possible or even desirable. Indeed, the problem is that instead of seeing Integral as a map, Wilber, Slaughter and Riedy believe these are empirical categories. I certainly get this sense when Slaughter, in his analysis of CLA, assigns numerical strengths to his categories (i.e. UL, UR, LL, LR) in terms of CLA's (or indeed, any method's) adequacy. Not only does he confuse levels, but, in his missionary zeal, he reifies the world. This, of course, is what intellectuals qua priests do [15]. The challenge, as I see it, and as poststructuralism contends, is to keep on moving. To use structures but not be used by them. Once we use the four quadrants and start to assign numbers to how many in each quadrant, a certain kind of madness is not far behind.

In contrast, the strength of futures studies has been its capacity to engage in and with multiple interpenetrating maps—an ecology of alternative epistemologies. However, for Integral futures, it appears that a goal might be to enclose the Other without the possibility of being encompassed itself—or at least for Integral futures to be the sole gateway of interpretation (pers. comm., Gary Hampson, 4 March, 2008).

The criticisms levelled by Riedy appear because Riedy has either not gone through a CLA workshop process or has fundamental political differences with aspects of Indian thought or poststructuralism, or because of his faith position regarding Integral. What ever the reason, it is clear that he is unable to interact with others' methods and theories. It certainly appears that Riedy is challenged by Foucault et al.; we can sense this when he makes the claim that Foucault and others discount the subject. He may have misread Foucault. For Foucault, the subject is contextual or liminal or alternative: it is not the hegemonic self of modernity, but a self of differences [24]. The self, for Foucault, is multiple—the nomination of a particular self is a political choice, not a given [25]. The self becomes made, created. It does not emerge vis-à-vis Integral's essentialized categories. Again, with this conceptual mistake,

Riedy can argue that CLA ignores the subjective. For me, CLA layers the self and the subject, seeing it as nested.

This mistake is also made by Chris Stewart in his attempt to classify scenario methods. He argues that the signature mistake of critical foresight scenarios (of which CLA is an exemplar) is that of "Becoming trapped in idealistic normative conceptions and failing to acknowledge practical empirical realities" [26]. But where does he derive this notion from? As in other Integral mega-typologies (again, continuing the mega-classification systems of the nineteenth century), it appears this is just all pulled, rabbit-like, from the proverbial top-hat. CLA begins with the litany—the official view of the future. This official view is almost always presented as empirical data, that is, empirical reality. Certainly, one can argue that myths and metaphors are not empirical reality, but in CLA, the myth and metaphor dimension is related to and linked with the litany. Each story has its own empirical reality representation. As well, worldviews are linked to systems. Thus, if one imagines a Gaian green scenario, the CLA incasting process then seeks to develop systemic changes necessary for this to happen. How does building design need to change? What level of subsidy is required for solar, wind and other alternative energy systems? At the litany level, what percentage of households are likely to be 'off the grid' by 2020? What are the costs and benefits of this change in energy? But the Integral world of Slaughter, Riedy and Stewart seems to allow one to say what one wishes as long as there is an overall box into which one can place it. Other (and the "other") aspects of reality appear to not matter.

Counter to the arguments of Riedy, Slaughter and others, CLA does have an inner dimension, does engage with subjectivity, is derived from a subject-sensitive-poststructuralism and Tantra, not a subject-denying-poststructuralism and Vedanta and, via layering levels of reality, it negotiates multiple terrains—litany, systems, worldviews and myths-metaphors. Furthermore, it intends to be a theory and method that enables a multiplicity of voices to be heard, is inclusive of all humans (whether spiritually 'developed' or not) and their worldviews, enables dialogue rather than 'consciousness raising' (although certainly this is possible), and is fluid and malleable. In addition, argues, Phyllis Araneo, it has both a masculinist dimension (litany and systems) and a more feminist dimension (worldview and myths) (pers. comm., Phyllis Araneo, 2 February, 2008). Thus, it is fundamentally an ethical and inclusive workshop method and theoretical process; the focus is on the process not on deciding which layer everyone fits in.

#### *The problem of culture*

I also differ with Riedy's interpretation of CLA as overly focused on the cultural. Indeed, as Riedy himself explains, CLA has four levels—the litany (data, which is certainly not in itself cultural), the system (again, I am challenged in understanding how STEEP can be seen as cultural), the worldview level, and the myth-metaphor (both of which certainly have cultural dimensions). The CLA process—textual or in a workshop setting—moves up and down levels, not getting stuck in any particular spot. Riedy perhaps believes CLA is overly cultural because difference in the West [27] is seen as cultural; the problem of difference in Western thought, as Said, Nandy, Sardar [22,27,28] and others have argued, equates difference with culture. But even more broadly, this is the human challenge—to encounter the Other within 'its' own epistemological categories.

CLA, by bringing in difference, challenges the Orientalist [28] discourse which locates all difference as culture. Rather, CLA, borrowing from poststructuralism, interrogates the ordering of knowledge. At the worldview level, the ordering of reality is examined with the method seeking to move through horizontal spaces to foundationally understand different worldviews. Instead of searching for isomorphisms and real-world analysis of when to use which approach, Riedy seeks to reduce CLA to one level, enclosable in a box. Again, this is the type of reductionism that comes from a hegemonic theory—all other approaches are seen as special types, within the overall project.

Integral is foundationally from the 'West', and so this type of 'classification' should not come as a surprise. It has developed in a civilization that has tended to judge all others as inferior, that uses its

lenses to construct others. The danger of its linear stage theory is that those 'ahead' in the stages define themselves as more evolved and thus unreflectively judge others. While obviously damaging to those that are judged, ultimately it robs the Integral theorist of his humanity. An arrogance emerges. True, a progressive image of the future, a direction, as Fred Polak has argued [29], is essential to create a better world. However, along with the linear there is a necessity for the cyclical, for understanding that existence, history, has ups and downs, that there exists a life cycle of the person, including death. No one is truly above or below. This cyclical approach can of course lead to fatalism, but it also lends itself to humility. Galtung [3] and others have argued for a spiral approach that synthesizes linear and cyclical as a potential mapping solution. But this is not what Slaughter and Riedy give us. Furthermore, to equate the third level with culture ignores politics (epistemological and traditional). That is, at the third, worldview level, for example, we can bring in feminist views on transport and thus move from a view of transport as about increasing speed to a view about creating liveable communities, as Vuokka Jarva has argued [30]. Thus, gender is not considered merely as culture but as providing a framework which helps create different types of policy outcomes. Once difference is allowed in, alternatives can be created. Divergence is foundational to CLA. Convergence is brought in later in the foresight process through visioning and other approaches.

### *Epistemological pluralism*

As mentioned above, I favour an epistemological pragmatic and pluralistic approach to theory and methodology. While this may not be appropriate for all disciplines or fields, for futures studies it is essential.

I use CLA as part of a broader approach to futures studies which I call the six pillars approach [31]. The first pillar is mapping the future, this uses the futures triangle. The second pillar is anticipating the future which uses emerging issues analysis. The third pillar is macrohistory. The fourth is deepening the future, for which CLA and the four quadrant method are used extensively. The fifth is creating alternative futures in which scenarios are used. The sixth is transformation in which visioning, backcasting and anticipatory action learning is used. The Integral four quadrant method works brilliantly at the fourth level. Others use different schemes, for example Joe Voros [32] has developed a generic foresight framework of input, foresight, output and strategy, with CLA being used in the foresight part. And there are many others (Bell [33], Masini [34], and Dator [35], for example).

However, the Integral approach appears not only to argue for a hierarchy of theories and methods (instead of an ecology of approaches), but that futures studies needs to accept (for its own good) the dominance of the Integral approach. Of, course, within an ecology of approaches there can be interpenetrating hierarchies, but Slaughter and Riedy appear to favour a dominator [36] hierarchy rather than a functional one. Unpacking, this, we can see that at the litany level, this is about articles published on which theory in which journal (in this case, *Futures*). The systemic site of this context is academic journals. The worldview is masculinist—that is—competitive, with the myth being essentially 'who has the biggest organ'. At the level of myth and metaphor what are the inner meanings operating here? Is it the jealous Integral God chastising the non-believers? In other words, what are the inner meanings that Slaughter and Riedy bring to this debate? And more importantly, as the author of this essay, what are my inner meanings (how is my own ego invested in the outcome)? How am I marking territory? What external and inner systems account for these? What have I and others disowned here? And how am I, how are we diminished by this?

### Conclusion

Riedy and Slaughter wish to capture and tame CLA using Integral. It appears that in doing so, they have exposed foundational problems in Integral, particularly the issue of hegemony. Indeed, the extent of the attempt toward hegemony is such that dissent becomes predictable, that is, we can deduce which quadrant it will come from. Writes Nandy, "No hegemony is complete unless the predictability of dissent is ensured, and that cannot be done unless powerful criteria are set up to decide which is

authentic, sane, rational dissent" [37]. While Nandy, in this quote, challenges the emergence of brands such as postmodernism and postcoloniality, Integral futures by closing the "options of dissent" reinforces the problem of expert knowledge.

I hope that Integral can enter into dialogue with other futures theories, methods and traditions. To do that, perhaps this brand of Integral needs some self-reflection. Such reflection while not demanding correction, can focus on pluralism. But there is a challenge here for CLA, too. The disowned selves of Riedy, Slaughter and others and the claim that they are deeper, have post-conventional consciousness, and are subjective and objective. And yet, as the special issues of *Futures* suggests, the opposite appears to be the case—despite Voros and Hayward's far more inclusive interpretation of Integral, written in the best spirit of futures studies. However, given the extensive critique of Wilber [38], we can well understand Slaughter and Riedy's bellicose urges. Still, the challenge remains for not only CLA qua theory and methodology but for the futures field itself. Just such an hegemonic approach amid an ecology of alternatives echoes what the Islamic world is currently experiencing, wherein dissent is being narrowed and the official future "mullahized."

Of course, I can well imagine protests from our Integral colleagues that I and others are making too much of this—that no hierarchy is implied, that Integral too both reveals and conceals. It is one approach among many, no hegemony is implied. Perhaps. However, at heart Integral arrives with a modernist understanding of language; that language is transparent, adequately describing the world it represents. Poststructuralism challenges this position asserting that language is opaque, complicit in the worlds that are described. Integral thus languages the world in particular ways—ways that I argue re-inscribe hierarchy, linear developmentalism and Orientalism.<sup>iii</sup>

It may even be the case that Integral (as presented by Riedy and Slaughter) is complicit in the problem that the planet faces today—it does not open up for visions and deep dialogue but attempts to narrow them within its four quadrants. In this it is typically masculinist, as William Irwin Thompson has argued [39]. And, it closes the future. As James Carse has written in his *Finite and Infinite Games*, "The Renaissance, like all genuine cultural phenomena, was not an effort to promote one or another vision. It was an effort to find visions that promised still more vision" [40]. The strength of futures studies has been its epistemological pluralism and its capacity to help create new visions. Integral futures can potentially help in this effort. However, the current rendering does the opposite moving us potentially toward mechanistic dead-ends. Fortunately, Futures Studies has the capacity to integrate Integral.

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## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> And just who are these infamous "they"?

<sup>ii</sup> Thanks to Jenny Gidley for this insight (pers. comm.), 4 March, 2008.

<sup>iii</sup> Indeed, this current debate is similar to one that Zia Sardar initiated in 1993 in *Futures* on the colonization of Futures Studies and to which both Slaughter and I responded. Z. Sardar, Colonizing the future: the 'other' dimension of futures studies. *Futures* 25(2), 1993. Indeed, the issues raised then, remain the same, unresolved and part of the dynamic tension of futures studies.

## Resistance is not futile: Escaping the Integral trap

Marcus Bussey

### Abstract

*This article questions the use of the term integral. It argues that although the use is well intentioned it draws its energy from the geophilosophical drive of the Western project. This project is imperialist in nature and bases its power on its ability to define. So although IF claims to be inclusive it actually establishes a self referential dialogical relationship between itself and its interlocutor that privileges its position. This is clearly counter to the integral rhetoric of its most ardent exponents. It is argued that this imbalance is central to the entire Western philosophic project and is rooted in the geophilosophical gaze. Such a gaze is ultimately about assimilation not mutual discourse and should be set aside for more inclusive and less culturally aligned forms of cultural analysis such as Causal Layered Analysis which accounts for the primacy of context and local knowledges and finds agency in the working of those who constitute the multitude. Such work is process oriented and stands in real contrast to the definitional power (and terror) of the Integral gaze.*

There is a paradox lying at the heart of integral futures (IF). This paradox is built into the word integral which, as Joseph Voros points out, is rooted in a meaning base which includes: “whole, complete; essential; balanced; joined into a greater unity”<sup>i</sup> [1 p.197]. It is this word ‘unity’ that troubles me and explains why, although as Jennifer Gidley and Gary Hampson [2] point out there are multiple ‘integrals’ in circulation, I generally avoid both the noun and the adjective in my work.

For me the noun [integral] forecloses on alternatives: ‘This is whole; complete!’, one might also add kaput! The adjective has similar connotations, carrying implicit within it a sense of singularity, unit as whole, linearity (the terminus of an evolutionary cycle), centre-periphery (the whole heart—the incomplete inchoate periphery), distance (the integral gaze is not unlike the panopticon), and monotheism (you’re either integral or incomplete). Furthermore, the word seduces, drawing its proponents into an integral end game that can, for the rigid convert, lead to a kind of integral fundamentalism underwritten by a sense that there cannot be many (alternatives) when there is only one Way. It achieves this through a universal gaze that assesses all else as less than, incomplete, partial and unfinished. This epistemic absolutism (nothing exists outside of it) is driven by its power of definition which colonizes past and future inner/outer space. I say this with all due respect to my friends and colleagues enamoured of the integral. The word should come with a large red sticker clearly visible: Buyer Beware!

To return to the paradox mentioned above. IF is certainly well intentioned. Integral futurists wish to promote the well being of the field and to augment, in the most charitable of senses, the work of all futurists. As Richard Slaughter, recently noted, “One of the most welcome aspects of IF is that it is not exclusive, not in competition to other approaches. Rather, it complements them, revealing new options, insights and strategies” [3 p.125].

The irony here is powerful. As IF seeks to complement other forms of futures thinking it disempowers them. This happens simply by initiating a hierarchy cascade in which all else is found to be wanting, limited and ‘pre-integral’ (ibid). Now, my hyperbole may suggest I am antagonistic to IF. This is not the case. I am antagonistic to any hegemonic discourse and, as long term colleagues may be

somewhat taken aback by my position, I think it needs some careful explanation. After all, how can one disagree with Joseph Voros when he asserts for IF:

Because futures inquiry is, by its very nature, a broadly inter-, trans-, multi-, meta-, counter-, and even anti-disciplinary activity, it is well suited to the conscious use of more inclusive and integral frameworks, such as the one proposed by Wilber (1 p.199).

Similarly it is hard to disagree with Peter Hayward when he declares:

The integral approach is, at its essence, perspectival rather than methodological. That is to say that method alone will not evoke the integral perspective but rather that integrality in methods is enabled by taking integral perspectives [4 p.110].

In this we meet the aporia at the heart of the entire Western intellectual and cultural project. I believe this lies in the West's commitment, ontologically, to a Platonic dualism that separates idea from matter, the inner from the outer [5]. The integral thinking of Ken Wilber can certainly be shown to replicate this ancient division. To begin with Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari [6] point to the geophilosophical rootedness of philosophy in an imperial project that seeks to enlighten, for the best of intentions, but ends up colonizing. Such is the force of the philosophical demand for light that only the crystalline formalism of a concept, such as Wilber's AQAL<sup>ii</sup>/IOS [7 p.18], is legible to its gaze. This results in the fluid, amorphous, fractal dreamings of indigenous peoples, and non-Western epistemologies, being drawn into the world-philosophical theatre in a democratic gesture but not given the same voting clout as the Western 'host', who holds the trump card: the power to define (veto). This is why Deleuze and Guattari talk about "democratic imperialism, colonizing democracy" [6 p.97] and Peter McLaren dismisses what he calls the "empty democracy of forms" [8 p.24].

Now it might be protested that the core of Wilber's insights are rooted in an Eastern metaphysic, after all he does meditate everyday. True, but I would argue his core emotional culture is still Western. We may change our 'service provider' but the core messages—our cultural codes—rooted in deep conditioning, remain the same. This is why all the great religions are so varied when examined from a global perspective. As yet there is no planetary culture, and I am grateful for this, that guarantees the movement of traditions from one corner of the globe to another without modulation in expression. Like many Westerners who have embraced the depth and spiritual practices of Eastern traditions Wilber retains his western Enlightenment orientation—the need for a panoptical gaze. And it must be noted that this is not a humble gaze. Thus he states:

Many of the spiritual realities ... do in fact have all the requisites for converting them from meaningless metaphysics to meaningful post metaphysics. They can be refitted in an AQAL matrix specifying their Kosmic addresses and injunctions. At Integral Institute, we are working on extensive 'refitting jobs' for many of these. But until these types of integral updates occur, religion and spirituality will remain metaphysics dismissed by intelligent men and women, or reduced to their mythic-level manifestations, where they are embraced by, frankly, less intelligent men and women [7 p.274].

There is an energy here that is distinctly uncompromising, elitist and colonizing: it inspires in me an Enlightenment terror. The kind of violence that Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer critiqued so thoroughly [9]<sup>iii</sup>. This disturbs me as it is anything but inclusive. I can imagine AQAL coming to our planet and announcing, like the Borg<sup>iv</sup>, that it will add our cultural and technological distinctiveness to its own, in pursuit of perfection: Assimilation is destiny and resistance is futile! It is this quest, this evolutionary drive for perfection that once again announces the Platonic orientation of IOS. This sense of imperfection being rooted in the limited consciousnesses or egos of non-integral futures practitioners is present in such comments as the following from Richard Slaughter:

There are many, I believe, who consider themselves successful enough in the futures field to believe that they 'know what they are about' and reject new approaches. Some confuse the individuals (e.g., Wilber) with the perspective (i.e., the working out of integral developments in various fields), which leads to a variety of misconceptions.

Others have invested years of their lives creating their own very distinctive view(s) of the world, to whom integral thinking is fundamentally threatening, and hence unwelcome. In a sense this is understandable. The perspective challenges conventional thinking and long-held views. But the point, I think, is not to dismiss it out of hand. A better solution is to (a) seek to understand it, (b) find out what others have made of it and (c) test it out in practice. What is mainly at stake here is a certain rigidity that may come with an age and/or an unthinking over-investment in the fallacies of what might be called the ‘unreconstructed ego’. So while some ‘big names’ in the field affect to ignore these developments, the long-term judgement of the entire body of futures thinkers and practitioners will be authoritative and final [3 p.121].

Certainly the long term judgement of the field may be kind or unkind to us all, but we should not be so quick to pass judgement in the present. Theories and methods need years of field testing. We need to see how much about the world they reveal/conceal [11]. We need time to assess their emancipatory capacity. Of course this might be just my ‘unreconstructed ego’ beating its not-so-hairy chest, but I think there are good reasons for withholding judgement while celebrating the emergence of yet another futures tangent: and I do celebrate what IF has to offer. However, in Wilber’s hands, it seems unnecessarily formulaic and legalistic; traits again to be associated with the Platonic need to provide detailed maps that capture the esoteric and insubstantial in complex formulations<sup>v</sup>.

No doubt we have in the futures arena the prophets who seek to save, and those Sufi types who don’t wish to be saved but to experience and grow. This dichotomy, the law-givers and the gnostics, are two central ordering categories—what Wilber would call ‘types’—that can be clearly seen to be at play here. I think we can see this at work in the difference between IOS and Causal Layered Analysis (CLA).

CLA has received some solid criticism from Chris Riedy [12] and Richard Slaughter [3] who both compare it to IOS and find it less than integral. Such critiques are always salutary as it is all too easy to become complacent and for me these analyses did challenge, as Slaughter in the above quote said it would, some core commitments I have. Yet I also feel that what we are dealing with here are two quite different approaches to reality, both ontologically and epistemologically. If we think pragmatically, it is possible to see that they perform totally different tasks. This explains why CLA is found wanting when analyzed from an IF perspective. The difference is flagged in the names of the two approaches. Integral, as noted in the introduction implies the singular. It is a map of ‘us’ all; it is definitive in that it places us all in AQAL (like bugs in amber); it is idealist in that it is, as Voros notes, “a meta-paradigmatic integral meta-perspective” [1 p.199]; it is Platonic in that it poses a dualism (inner/outer) as its principle ordering structure.

Causality flags the multitude. It implies process and presence, links, context, temporal breadth and depth, multiplicity, responsiveness, and participation. In all this it is closely akin to Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomic thinking which is fluid, sticky and creative [13]. Ontologically it is grounded in a Tantric (not Vedantic as Riedy mistakenly asserts) world view. Tantra, as an indigenous episteme is a poor cousin at the geophilosophical banquet of the Western mind. Yet it has a real potency in that it is process oriented, practical and focused on the *becoming* nature at the heart of human potential [14, 15]. Thus, unlike IOS it is not proposing an ideal type but a permanently unfinished (from an earthly perspective) project. Thus it could be said that CLA is a map of process compared to IOS which is a map of place (within a hierarchical system). I also see the primary function (ie there are other functions) of each as different. IOS offers a taxonomy of context, it helps us identify key forces and positions at work in any present situation and this is undoubtedly useful. CLA is a hinge concept in that it acts as a futures method, one of Sohail Inayatullah’s six pillars (16); simultaneously it also breaks out into a foundational theory of knowledge, yet retains its pragmatic focus by enabling a form of critical agency. Thus, I find CLA, in its process orientation, to be emancipatory as it has the potential to evoke co-creative responses to context. IOS on the other hand defines problems, contexts and even people. Thus it has that typical geophilosophical compulsion towards hegemonic singularity.

CLA however is the reverse as it offers multiplicity and ambiguity, sensitivity to context and a participatory promise. Of course, as Voros rightly acknowledges:

Central to this approach to futures is the role of human consciousness—images of the future require a consciousness in which to be held, so we cannot reasonably study the content of images of the future without also understanding the container. [1 p.200]

This point is relevant for both CLA and IOS. Yet what does it really mean? I am sure Voros does not simply have in mind a cognitive understanding. This is, after all, as Hayward notes above, an issue of perspective. There needs to be an account of intuitive, spiritual and microvital processes that are facilitative of these, not simply a dry scholastic treatise (“all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types” [7 p.18]). Voros in fact spells it out beautifully:

A truly integral approach to knowledge inquiry would seek to include not only all levels of human experience, but would also consider all levels of existence itself, in all of the forms it has been conceived of in the entire history of the human knowledge quest, be it material, mental or, indeed, spiritual. [1 p.198]

This is the ‘soft’ integral voice at work here. It allows for consciousness to be multiple, deep and generative. Yet such a vision is betrayed by the term itself which, as demonstrated, invites excess. I could substitute for ‘integral’ in the above statement ‘human’, ‘holistic’, ‘neohumanist’ or ‘partnership’ and be more convinced that the intention would not be derailed.

Finally, to address the critique by Slaughter and Riedy of CLA it should be noted that to any hegemonic meta-narrative the process orientation of a theoretical perspective like CLA is unintelligible. Where IOS seeks to define, CLA seeks to allow. For Deleuze and Guattari this is the difference between the tree and the rhizome:

There is always something genealogical about a tree. It is not a method for the people. A method of the rhizome type, on the contrary, can analyze language only by decentering it onto other dimensions and other registers. A language is never closed upon itself, except as a function of impotence [17 p.8].

The unitary, integral, nature of IOS and some IF work is tree like and its language is closed (foreclosed by certainty), and therefore impotent (can create nothing beyond itself). The rhizome, as CLA, on the other hand is a process of the people. This is how I have experienced it when applied in workshops: there is a point of entry (and exit) for every participant. In this sense CLA accounts for definitional registers in the use of language. Such a register allows also for language beyond the word, as before we can say anything with depth, it must be informed emotionally be a congruence with our inner psycho-spiritual world [18]. This subjective adjustment allows for a more objective approach. It also hints at the importance of integrative practice (meditation, silence, prayer, singing, etc.) as the well spring for heart-mind congruence. Thus spirituality garners a critical edge and collective focus [15].

When compared in this manner, IOS and CLA are clearly different assemblages of concepts, practices and values. Figure 1.1 captures the mismatch as a form of deterritorialization [17 p.9] in which CLA would appear not unlike the platypus to the fellows of the Royal Academy: as some kind of joke made up of incongruous bits and pieces<sup>vi</sup>.

	<b>IOS</b>		<b>CLA</b>
<b>Form</b>	Define		Process
<b>Verb</b>	Integrate	<b>Deterritorialization</b>	Allow
<b>Metaphor</b>	Form		Formless
<b>Core Value</b>	Chart/Taxonomy	<b>↔</b>	Facilitate
<b>Ontology</b>	Neo-Platonism		Tantra

## Figure 1.1. Deterritorialization

This layout illustrates the mismatch that has occurred in the narrow integral reading of CLA performed by both Slaughter and Riedy. In particular, by applying the four quadrant model (4QM) to CLA they misunderstand what CLA is doing. The 4QM divides the world into inner and outer, personal and social. It seeks to classify human actions accordingly. As such it is a powerful futures tool. However, CLA resists these quadrants working instead the interface between them. Its epistemological pragmatism is about the interface, what Habermas calls the life-world [19 p.65] where praxis instead of theory, is the critical determinant. Such an orientation is far from the epistemological idealism of the IOS.

In conclusion, it is worth reflecting on what it is that draws one to a method or theory. It could be that in a time of uncertainty many reach for certainty in new forms, and formalisms. The power to define is certainly seductive while surrendering to process, to the democratization of human potential, involves a great deal of trust. These tensions are analogous to those represented by the Encyclopaedia Britannica and Wikipedia, or the Bible and the Gnostic Gospels. I find in critical futures work a broadly emancipatory programme that is much in tune with a great raft of the aspirations of IF, yet I feel no desire to abandon process for definition. Critical work, particularly when augmented by a critically spiritual orientation, accounts for the deepest yearnings of the human heart. I am sure that IF is also in touch with this deep song, yet I feel that some integral futurists have mistaken the form for the force behind the song. In this Eckhart Tolle's words come to mind as he describes the role that the flower (form) has played as a signifier for the inward journey:

Without fully realizing it, flowers would become for us an expression in form of that which is most high, most sacred, and ultimately formless within ourselves [20 p.2].

I for one will resist the integral trap. Seductive though the flower may be, there are safer, more inclusive routes to enlightenment. Jacques Derrida's [21] evocation of an enlightenment to come, in which reason will live up to its promise, is an encouragement to look to the future, seek inclusion in the present and remember that resistance is not futile.

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## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> From L. *integer* "whole," lit. "intact, untouched," from *in-* "not" + root of *tangere* "to touch"

<sup>ii</sup> All Quadrants All Levels (Wilber, 2006, p, 18ff)

<sup>iii</sup> Adorno's short paper on education after Auschwitz is also worth considering in this regard (10. Adorno TW. Education After Auschwitz. In: R T, editor. *Can One Live After Auschwitz?* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press; 2003. p. 19-33).

<sup>iv</sup> Thanks *Star Trek* for this great metaphor.

<sup>v</sup> The Brilliance of Ken Wilber is similar to that of the Renaissance genius Pico della Mirandola (1463-1491) who like many in that age sought to explain the unexplainable via elaborate hermetic and cabalistic formulations. I must admit I have always had a soft spot for Pico.

<sup>vi</sup> When James Cook's naturalist Joseph Banks returned to England in 1770, following their visit to Australia he took the remains of a platypus—its veracity was hotly debated.



## Movements toward holism in futures inquiry

Jose M. Ramos

### Abstract

*This article takes up the question of the various movements toward holism in futures inquiry. The Ken Wilber inspired integral futures, developed by Richard Slaughter and others, and put forth as the most comprehensive approach to-date, is critiqued and assessed. While Wilber's integral and the variant it has inspired in futures represent significant innovations, it also contains the tendency to un-necessarily close down, lock out or to sub-ordinate alternative conceptions of holism, what I term 'Wilber-ism'. Wilber's 'theory of everything' and integral futures are analysed, re-assessed and re-situated in the context of the alternative approaches to holism that exist. What emerges is a rich view of potential genealogies and ontogenies as movements toward holism. One variant from the action research tradition, which I call 'integrative foresight', is put forward as an example of an alternative. The article concludes by proposing a process of dynamic dialogue between diverse conceptions of holism, which can at once honour the great diversity of approaches, while likewise continuing the journey of creating shared meaning and common understandings of the complex contexts in which futures inquiry works.*

### Introduction

In the search for holism in futures inquiry, I propose that the Wilber-Slaughter version of integral is one of a number of movements toward holism in futures, and to unduly privilege it at the expense of other approaches is to un-necessarily close down the dynamic diversity necessary for such a process of inquiry to unfold in a healthy and meaningful way. While Integral Futures (IF) has made important contributions to futures theory, it also contains certain problems and limitation. The way forward is neither a complete rejection of the Wilber inspired conception of integral, nor its complete and blind acceptance as the only 'integral' possible. There is a third way, which is to see the Wilber inspired integral futures created by Slaughter and others as one of a number of existing and possible conceptions of the movement toward holism in futures inquiry. This entails an opening up of the various alternative conceptions of 'integral', 'integrative' and 'holism' in other fields as well as alternatives in futures studies, such that we can qualify Wilberist claims, provide a wider vision and have an ongoing open and dynamic dialogue that will lead to fruitful innovation.

Richard Slaughter and others (including myself) developed what Slaughter dubbed 'Integral Futures' (IF), primarily based on the work of Ken Wilber (and as Gidley [1] points out EF Schumaker as well), but also incorporating other influences [2, 3]. Integral Futures has made important contributions to futures inquiry. It has been a bold attempt to broaden out and legitimise the epistemological spaces from which futures inquiry is conceived (eg through Wilber's four quadrant model). In doing so, it has provided an easy entry for beginners into some of the key debates that have punctuated Western discourse. As well, the four quadrant model has become a facile analytical framework that can be used in many situations to dissect issues. The correlating frameworks on collective and individual development offer deep insights into locating and understanding ways of seeing, acting and knowing as stages in the development of consciousness [4]. Overall Wilber has attempted a bold and grand synthesis of science and spirituality [5]. Wilber's 'orienting generalisations' offer broad correlations that bring forth a greater overall pattern with respect to the ways people know the world. It is an ambitious attempt to address fragmentation at disciplinary and social levels, and it has added to the wider debate about what constitutes complete 'integral' and holistic work, teaching, and research, in

futures inquiry and in other areas. Thus in my opinion Wilber's work and Slaughter's (and others) extension of his work into IF had definite value.

In my estimation, however, this has not been unproblematic, as the Wilber approach and what it has inspired carries certain potential dangers and pitfalls. These dangers and pitfalls are not specific to those who use Wilber, but rather are associated with 'Wilber-ism'—an ideological orientation to the Wilber version of holism. Of course, ideology can be said to be a persistent human problem that emerges in many traditions and cultures, of which 'Wilber-ism' is just one manifestation. As well 'indicators' of these dangers and pitfalls do not appear across all uses of Wilber, but in certain cases. Yet these cases, or examples, have led me to see an overall pattern that needs to be address. Simply put the potential danger and pitfall in the use of Wilber is the tendency to marginalise alternative conceptions of holism, by subordinating them into its developmental hierarchy (in the guise of 'refreshing'), appropriating alternative conceptions into its model as less complete theories or approaches, which are purely defined in Wilberian terms. And thus, within this Wilber-ism, alternative conceptions of what holism mean are not accepted *on their own terms and language*.<sup>i</sup>

### Premature foreclosures

For Latour, social theories understand reality through their particular categorical assumptions, and are inadequate for understanding the social (in his terms 'associative' worlds). Social theories prefigure the world they see through ontological projections, constructing categories by which the social is understood, and by doing so the social is, in part, a projection of a standpoint. While the Wilber model aspires to seeming universality, a Latourian perspective shows that Wilber's Theory of Everything (TOE) is just another social theory, and that the ontological categories of AQAL are a conceptual projection as opposed to essential features of reality in and of themselves. He writes:

... the very success of social explanations has rendered them so cheap that we now have to increase the cost and the quality control on what counts as a hidden force [6, p.50].

Wilber uses a cartographic metaphor, two axis based on two (seemingly universal) variables creating four categories (interior/exterior and individual/collective). The principle variables used are rarely questioned or substituted with alternatives such as *gender* (masculine/feminine), *power* (enfranchised/disenfranchised), or as through Pierre Bourdieu's alternative cartographic representation, the variables of cultural and economic capital [7]. This might be especially confounding from a Wilberian perspective, which wants to put post-modernists in their place (as part of the 'mean green meme'), and would certainly not want to see itself as just another discourse with its attendant ontological assumptions. Yet Latour is not a post-modernist or any of the other epithets attached to post-modernism (e.g., post-structural); he is rather an empirical-constructivist, who argues that depth understanding of the social requires rigorous tracing of 'actor-networks' that cannot be understood through prefigurative categories, and that one of the constituent elements in tracing the social is to take into account conceptual formations and how TOEs guide action in the world, of which Wilber's is one [5]. The irony here is that while Wilber attacks the post-modern, from a Latourian actor-network theory (ANT) perspective, Wilber's TOE is part of the post-modern phenomenon which Latour critiques as leading to social theories '*so cheap that we now have to increase the cost and the quality*'. Integral ends up being yet another grand discourse through which a world is framed, and every time someone apologetically adds 'it's just a model', it becomes ever more part of the post-modern phenomenon of proliferating social theories.

The Wilberian discourse, which purports to see the world in its totality, unashamedly defines the world on its own terms, through its specific language and conceptual frameworks (primarily through the notion of 'all quadrant all levels'—AQAL). The chief problem here is that in Wilber's (and Slaughter's) terms, Integral does not seem to be a discourse, but rather amazingly 'a-perspectival', meaning that it somehow sits above discourses and the flux of the perspectival world.<sup>ii</sup> While I

welcome epistemological pluralism, the Wilberist tendency seems to be to take its framework as the *ultimate* perspective by which to frame the world.<sup>iii</sup> It is from this premise (of ‘a-perspectival’) by which we can be led to the self-referential dead end of ideology. Ideologies (well developed systems of thought) comprise self-referential realities: once a conceptual system is strong enough, it has the power, through people, to define everything in terms of that system of thought. In its most pernicious form people holding such an ideology lose choice as to whether or not to interpret the world based on a given system of thought, there is no way out. For example, my critique of the Wilber model, seen from a Wilber ideology, is evidence of how I hold a ‘green’ worldview (in the language of Spiral Dynamics) which is characterised by ‘post-modern / critical / multi-cultural / counter-cultural’ thinking, or equally damning, that I display ‘pre-conventional’ / childlike behaviour, or worse, that I have committed the ‘pre-trans fallacy’.<sup>iv</sup> It is not seen as evidence of a person with some reservation regarding a system of thought, whatever that might be, which *might* be worth hearing (who’s to say?). Hampson critiques just this ‘premature foreclosure’ in respect to Wilber’s mythic construction of the ‘*Mean Green Meme*’ [8].<sup>v</sup>

As with orientalist accounts of the world, armed with one’s own theory, one interprets the world from that framework, and every new occurrence provides the necessary self-referential evidence. Where is the room for disconfirmation when self-referential language frames everything in its own terms? This was one of the problems Adorno identified, in particular his concern with the ‘domination of the conceptual sphere’ and ‘identitarian’ reductionism, in terms of what the ‘concept’ leaves behind and omits. He argued for the need to ‘defend the irreducibility of non-conceptual material (of the real in its opacity) against the ravenous power of the concept’, and to maintain the creative tension between the conceptual and non-conceptual—to dwell in the contradictions between thought and experience [9]. Slaughter himself acknowledged this much:

it is vital to remain aware of the dangers of reification. The four quadrants, for example, are a device for thinking—they do not exist in the outer world. Care should be taken, therefore, not to make them—or any other part of the integral operating system (IOS)—‘too real’ [10, p.121].

Yet on the same page Slaughter calls Integral ‘a neutral framework’ [10, p.121]. Is he implying it is a framework which is *not* brought forth by a perspective, that it privileges nothing, favours no one position, and hence describes the world (inner and outer) as it is? In respect to such (potential) claims we need to examine what is espoused as opposed to what is practiced.

### An Integral monopoly?

A related challenge to Wilber’s TOE comes from the action research tradition, through the concept of the ‘model monopoly’. Participatory action research challenges the use, by experts and initiates, of ‘model monopolies’ [11]. The use of expert models create power relationships between those that understand and accept expert models, and those that do not. In action research, ‘Model monopolies’ are challenged, and client groups and stakeholders are encouraged to develop their own particular models or frameworks that are useful and meaningful to them in their particular circumstances. A model that purportedly applies to all circumstances, universally, is arguably viewed within action research circles as fraught with both practical as well as political problems. The action researcher’s obligation is to combine their action research frameworks with the local stakeholder’s understanding of local context into a third ‘local theory’ that emerges from the co-research. Out of this process local stakeholders learn how to conduct action research on their own, furthering their own empowerment and a democratisation of the research/action praxis [11]. Model monopolies set up the dynamic of inner circle initiates (with depth understanding of the model) vs. an outer circle yet to be initiated, or worse, obstinate critics, rejectors, and in Wilberist terms ‘flatlanders’ (objectivists) and ‘post-modernists’ (subjectivists / cultural relativists), who in other conceptual schema might be considered the equivalent to ‘Luddites’ or ‘counter-revolutionaries’. Hardened model monopolies can be seen to be expressions of specialised self-referential systems of thought veering into ideology.

An extension on the problem of the model monopoly is the claim of origination or invention associated with Wilber's Integral and Slaughter's Integral Futures, e.g. the presumption that Wilber is the first example *true* Integral, and Slaughter's IF combination of 'integral' and 'futures' also the first. Over time I have become increasingly aware of a number of examples that expressed holism or 'integrality' in their futures work, but simply didn't call it that.<sup>vi</sup> For example Ashis Nandy expressed a view for the need for empirical, cultural and critical futures research as a whole [12]. Hazel Henderson has over a long period of time explored holism through a post-conventional lens [13, 14]. Sohail Inayatullah documented the development of predictive, interpretive, critical and participatory approaches to futures inquiry, arguing for their parallel uses depending on the context [15].<sup>vii</sup> And of course William Irwin Thompson has for many decades explored holism and historical transformation and the conception of planetary futures [16, 17]. Yet none of these authors necessarily called their work or their consciousness 'integral'. Thus it seems to be a mistake to take integral futures as only those that are claiming to be doing 'integral futures', as opposed to those that have demonstrated a movement toward holism, the core principles of integral or 'integrative' in practice, *even if this was not explicitly stated through language*. Ignoring these tacit practices and examples fails to acknowledge the work that preceded them, obscures alternative sources of holism that can expand the overall enterprise, and seems to reflect a tendency want to 'lock-up' ownership of the Integral 'brand', on the presumption that it was recently invented or originated.<sup>viii</sup> Branding spirituality, like the branding and locking up of many other aspects of our common heritage, is a form of predatory intellectual capitalism [18, 19].

To personalize this, while criticising Wilber or Slaughter at the Australian Foresight Institute was difficult for me (and perhaps others), any criticism of Wilber himself apparently invites total denunciation and ostracisation from the Wilber inner circle [20]. The pattern that has emerged seems to be an extreme vehemence toward any competing theories of integral, be they from California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), or even Wilber derived variations.<sup>ix</sup> This mirrors the pattern in which Marx and Engels, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, also denounced any competing socialist theories, labelling them 'utopian' and dismissing them as naïve and unworkable [21, p.698]. In this pattern, only one theory can survive. Visceral attacks against alternative and dissenting views, and extreme denunciations of alternative conceptions, 'intellectual bullying', enforce a model monopoly through sheer intimidation. As Watkins argued [22], modern ideologies tend toward utopianism, and tend to over-simplify reality and construct false 'friend and enemy' dualisms, explaining:

Anyone who believes that his goals are absolutely and overwhelmingly in the public interest will suspect something sinister about the motives of those who reject his conclusions. Surely those who persist in refusing so great a good must be greatly bad, or at least invincibly ignorant. [22, p.8]

### An Integral 'end of history'?

Developmentalism is another manifestation of the model monopoly, with its teleological projection about the past and future course of human development, and presumptions of cultural superiority, which express a historicism that closes down alternative futures. It re-hashes key assumptions that were the basis for justifying the Western colonisation of the world and the global genocide and enslavement which ensued. Such a-historical developmentalism obscures the geo-political power dimensions of 'de-development', how the West actively and consistently undermined the development and welfare of other cultures over the past 500 years [23, 24]. The social evolutionist model that buttressed colonialism was simply re-packaged as modernism and now the development model [25], put forth by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank over the past 50 years, despite a shaky record of success.<sup>x</sup> Wilber's version of integral mirrors many of these colonialist assumptions. We see in this integral developmentalism, not only the tendency to define whole cultures and nations in 'integral' terms, but an equal resistance to seeing its own perspective as culturally located, as opposed to universal [5, p.119]. In Nandy's words, this developmentalism basically means:

societies in Africa, Latin America and Asia, they are supposed to be societies on a particular trajectory of history. They are all supposed to be trying to be in the future what Europe and North America are today. So, in that sense, technically there are no options open to them in the future. They are today what Europe was in the past; tomorrow they will be what Europe is today. [12, p.434-435]

Wilber's correlations of individual psychological development [4], while a great contribution, have already fallen into the trap of Wilber-ism. It is based on the seductive notion that those that read Wilber or use a Wilberian integral model are 'post-conventional', or have 'second tier' consciousness, or express an 'a-perspectival' view. This kind of spiritual hyperinflation presumes to be able to locate others as part of the 'spiral' or developmental levels, with normative assumptions regarding what is to be regarded as 'transcendent', and knowledge of the psychological make up of those people who have enough development to take us into an integral world. Wilber's political writings that draw upon well known 'clash of civilisation' and 'end of history' neo-conservatives makes for an odd, if not disturbing, parallel with his one integral teleology [20], [5, p.114-115]. The self-referentiality of integral developmental-ism is possibly an expression of a dominant culture unable and unwilling to see the world from alternative cultural perspectives, unconsciously imposing the categories, values and terms of what is considered normal, rational and acceptable, 'developed' and 'integral'. In short when one evaluates alternative approaches entirely within a perspective or framework (in a completely self-referential manner), it is all too seductive to see ones approach as more 'encompassing' and 'integral' and other approaches as incomplete, to the extent that such judgements can easily become categorical errors (such as confusing a perspective / theory with an analytic approach / methodology) [10, p.132].

### Context vs. 'everything'?

While Wilber attempts to subsume all contexts into his model, I argue that context subsumes all integral theorists, no matter how clever they are. We are all 'situated' within a cultural and physical ground of being, and 'everything said is said by someone' [26, p.27]. Integral theories emerge in particular cultural-historical situations, through people grappling with the complexities of their lived challenges. These complexities are context specific. Whether one is in a particular field, for example Health, Sociology, Ecology, Medicine, or in a particular culture, *one brings their perspective into a context*, to achieve a greater wholeness. I argue, therefore, that it is with the perspective of a person, and from within the grounded-ness of a situation, with all its constraints and details, where integration makes sense. These situations are not dis-embodied abstractions, but specific fields of shared experience and action. These embodied 'places', provide the ingredients by which integration can emerge. Without such a grounding in a perceptual-experiential situation, there is little to moderate the human inclination toward dis-embodied conceptual abstraction on scales of ever increasing grandeur, referring to nothing more than our own mental projections we mistake for being the 'world'.

My last point therefore concerns whether a TOE is possible. If 'Everything' presupposes ALL contexts, and yet integration exists only within a context, what is that context from within which the IF integration happens, besides the placename of 'everything'? The use of 'everything' seems to leave Wilber and his followers without a context in which to situate the work of integration. 'Everything' can mean many things, depending on where and what problem a person works on, and the perspective a person applies in their practices. Many have searched for wholeness in their lives, but this has progressed differently according to the different situations people find themselves in. My contention here is that the movement toward holism must go beyond 'orienting generalisations' and have some 'long-ish histories of something', or more modestly be a 'theory of something', there must be some correspondence between 'substantive theory' [27, p.111]. TOEs or 'Histories of Everything' leave the gate open to an intellectual subjectivism that can endlessly imagine conceptual schema and social theory without feeling the pinch of context specific situations, and the complexities and lived challenges they throw up. As Adorno argued, 'Identitarian thinking is subjectivistic even when it denies being so' [28].

By focusing on ‘Everything’, Wilber-ism disowns the local and particular, individual practice and context. Context matters because many of the established principles or theories within a given field exist for good reason, and any movement towards holism that attempts to ‘integrate’ disparate regions cannot simply over-generalise the complexities that exist in these areas. We must be careful that, in the movement toward holism, we are not lost in dis-orienting over-generalisations—a careless transfer of (metaphoric) language that does not honour the knowledge that has been rigorously developed in specific contexts [29], or equally important the ambiguities and controversies that still exist.<sup>xi</sup> I argue Wilber’s AQAL model does not correspond to a totality, but rather corresponds to Wilber’s projection of ontological assumptions about the constituent categories of a totality. This is not to say that Wilber inspired TOEs have no value, but we need to be alert to potential dangers and pitfalls associated with Wilber-as-ideology, summed up very well by Rich Carlson:

An integral theory which valorizes its own epistemology by denying other traditions, theories, practices their own voice, or by simply mis-characterizing them segregates rather than integrates. Any theory which asserts itself ideologically by cannibalizing other traditions and appropriating the voice of alterity as a function of its integral model while discarding the ten thousand nuances, subtleties, traces of culture which are essential to indigenous identity, fails at the level of integration itself. Such theoretical practices are not integral but imperialist, such discourses do not achieve cultural hybridity but rather cultural hegemony. Such an integral theory is colonialist at its worst and patronizing at its best.<sup>xii</sup>

### Alternatives to Wilber’s TOE

In ‘transcending and including’ the meta-physical assumptions of a universal and generalisable TOE, I would like to present a few of the alternative approaches to conceiving of holism that I am aware of, ‘integralisms’ that are indeed context specific attempts at conceiving what is ‘meta’. Lakoff and Johnson are perhaps foundational in this regard, arguing that any conceptual schema we devise is ultimately based on concrete experience [30].<sup>xiii</sup> They have developed an approach to cognitive linguistics which steers clear of the ‘myths of objectivism and subjectivism’, showing how our understanding of phenomena is based on metaphorical language coupled to experience, and how reality is composed of ‘experiential gestalt’ which become sedimented metaphorically in language. We might see the many movements toward holism in this way, as metaphoric constructions that emerge through the experience in a specific time and place as inquiry seeking holism.

As previously mentioned, Latour’s ‘actor network theory’ (ANT) offers a fundamental challenge to all social theory that would apply a model or frameworks to define a world, and argues that, to begin to understand the social we must begin with the complex networks of actors that comprise associative phenomena [6]. His challenge to social science research is to trace ‘actor networks’, characterised by both human and non-human elements, with ideational, biological and physical dimensions. The individual is composed through associative actors, while the social is reciprocally composed of distinct actors. From a spatial point of view, he challenges researchers to ‘localise the global’ and ‘globalize the local’, in depicting the way that actors make up a social. I would argue Latour’s approach can be considered an ‘integrative’ approach to the area of sociological research. And parallel to the empirical-constructivism of Latour is the ‘Santiago School’ pioneered by Maturana and Varela. Their work can be seen to be another integral approach, applied to the area of biological development and cognition. Their work has furthered our understanding of cognition as an emergent aspect of social and biological self-organisation. Their term ‘ontogeny’ captures the way that biological and social organisms carry a history of experience and action as they develop, and how organisms are structurally coupled through bio-cognitive means to niche domains, concretely linking knowledge and action in the world [26].

Gunderson and Holling developed an approach called ‘Panarchy’, which examines the ‘holonic’ coupling of socio-ecological processes, their resilience, and comprehensively examined the worldviews by which humans construct and then interact with ‘nature’, looking at the complex

feedback processes between culturally embedded ways of knowing and our interactions with the ecosystems we depend on [31]. In an earlier socio-ecological approach, Trist explored the emergence of meta-organisation [32]. He argued that meta-networks emerge to deal with meta-problems, problems too complex for isolated organisations to deal with alone. One of his many insights was that meta-networks and the emergent domains they emerge to deal with are both cognitive constructions as well as bio-physical entities.

The California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in California has been a pioneer in integrative education.<sup>xiv</sup> Work at CIIS has emphasised the role of dialogic processes in education as a form of integration and participatory spirituality [33], as well as the inner confrontation of forms of violence, such as racism and sexism [34], through process oriented action-reflection work. A similar example in Australia is the Oases graduate program, which has become home to a diverse network of people developing ‘Integrative and Transformative Education’ and whose stated goal is ‘Transforming our future through collaborative thinking, purposeful dialogue and mindful action’.<sup>xv</sup> Work at CIIS and Oases draw upon an ‘integrative’ approach to action research (AR). Reason, Bradbury [35] and Torbert [36], conceived of first, second and third person action research (AR), as a way toward a more holistic approach to research practice. First person AR refers to work aimed at developing critical subjectivity and enhancing the researcher’s awareness of his or her core assumptions and developing an understanding of the meaning of personal experience in the world (one example being auto-ethnography); second person AR refers to work in groups that is typically associated with AR; and third person AR refers to developing a reflexive stance toward the impersonal world of ideas / media / literature and social phenomena / events.

In the area of community development, Manfred Max Neef developed a holistic approach to understanding human development—an antidote to the reductionism of economic determinism. His approach is based on an understanding of the basic needs of human communities and synergetic pathways to satisfying basic needs [37, p.186-192].<sup>xvi</sup> Jim Ife has also developed an integrated approach to community development, which draws together economic, social, political, ecological, cultural, and personal / spiritual dimensions [38]. To this can be added the work of Arnold Mindell, who pioneered Deep Democracy, a psycho-social-political approach to human development [39]. The concept of Deep Democracy proposes that within society, organisations, communities or ourselves, even the most contradictory, counter-positional and controversial voices, emotions, interests that exist need to be heard and honoured in a process toward the development of a more robust and dynamic ‘self’, psycho-social ecology and body politic. This approach has resonance with the peace work of Galtung and Ikeda [40]. Also connected to this is Hal and Sidra Stone’s work, who developed a psychological process called ‘voice dialogue’, an approach through which one learns to bring forth an ‘aware ego’ that can identify, balance and integrate aspects of self: dominant, marginal and disowned selves and energies in healthy ways [41].

This short overview is based on my (limited) understanding, and no doubt a more thorough group review would uncover very many worthy of being considered approaches to holism.<sup>xvii</sup> Each one represents an approach that is context specific, they emerge in particular areas with particular concerns—biology, linguistics, community development, social research, politics, education, psychology, etc. Thus given the variety of approaches to holism, I wonder why we would ever want a TOE to subsume them all, or to define what is and is not ‘integral’. Each approach described reflects a richness of inquiry and language specific to the challenge of making sense of an aspect of the world. These examples are at once modest yet powerful. I see no reason to collapse all of them into one (self referential) taxonomical schema. I believe we can only preserve the quest for holism by appreciating what it means in their conceptual and practical diversities.

## Movements toward holism in futures inquiry

Likewise I feel it is both a factual error and a strategic mistake to consider the synthesis of Wilber's TOE and Slaughter's IF, as the only variant worthy of consideration in the area of futures inquiry. There are many alternative synthesis of futures and integrative / holistic thinking. Even if ones does not name what they are doing as 'integral' and 'futures', they may nevertheless be expressing an approach to foresight which is a movement toward holism.

There are many examples of holism in futures inquiry. Previously mentioned were Ashis Nandy, Hazel Henderson, and William Irwin Thompson. Sohail Inayatullah has developed a number of approaches toward holism in futures inquiry, such as a layered conception of the use of futures methodology [15], Causal Layered Analysis [42], historio-graphic analysis [43], Anticipatory Action Learning [44] and most recently work linking futures inquiry with the integration of selves [45]. Ervin Laszlo has also articulated a vision of macro-historical change in which the human species is undergoing a leap in the evolution of consciousness toward planetary holism [46]. Many other examples exist, including: Jennifer Gidley's work on the 'emerging post-formal-integral-planetary consciousness' [1]; Marcus Bussey's work linking neo-humanism, education and futures [47]; Tom Lombardo has written extensively on psychology of future consciousness and its evolution and historical development from prehistoric to contemporary times [48]; Michel Bauwens theory of social change, based on the peer to peer movement is another worthy example of a work of holistic foresight in the area of alternative futures of globalisation [49]; Gio Braidotti explored the Taoist principle of 'non-action' as a post-conventional or integral approach to innovating responses to crisis [50]; (the late) Dennis List's 'scenario network mapping' is also a significant contribution [51]; While not within Futures Studies per se, Yoland Wadsworth has developed a theoretical approach to 'the living fabric of complex human systems-in-process', with a complex analysis of the phase changes between *is* (now) and *ought* (futures) as personal, organisational and cultural dynamics [52, p.15].

Within AFI itself, integral applications of futures, over time, diversified, and it is fair to say that, while Wilber's integral remained the orthodoxy and common linguistic reference point, over time a variety of intellectual predilections and influences created a more plural and diversified conception of what integral futures means. Hayward and Voros developed the 'Sarkar Game', which drew upon the macro-historical conceptions of P.R. Sarkar, and indeed used this approach to experiential learning as a way of teaching 'a-perspectivity' [53].<sup>xviii</sup> In teaching in the area of sustainable futures, Josh Floyd has linked futures with the philosophy of enactive cognition developed by Evan Thompson [54], finding correspondence between many integrative approaches: systems theory, action learning, Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive linguistics, Maturana and Varela's work, together with Wilber [55].<sup>xix</sup> Alex Burns' discussion of Futures Studies as art or science, as well as much of his other work, can also be seen as movements toward holism [56].<sup>xx</sup> Using the myth of the Fisher King, Chris Stewart developed an integral narrative of alternative futures of globalisation, addressing the threat of human self-destruction and strategies for action [57]. At AFI I also developed several 'metascans' that drew upon a variety of influences (including Wilber) applied to the domains of Foresight Practice in Australia [58]. What is important in these examples is that there was a correspondence between different approaches to holism in the futures inquiry, diversity which has led to more robust conceptions of holism for the various contextual applications in the field.

Finally, if we count sustainability theory and practice as a futures oriented one, as I would, then we also need to include other approaches into the mix, such as Jacques Boulet's approach to thinking about sustainability and community development [59], Frank Fisher's work on 'eco-literacy' and 'meta-responsibility' [60], and work in domains such as Permaculture, Health Promotion and Eco-Design [61]. We can also consider Clive Hamilton's and other's attempts to address economic reductionism through the expansion of the concept of progress and the development of indicators that



can measure a new multi-dimensionality of value and change as an important movement toward holism [62].

### Toward genealogies and ontogenies of holism in futures inquiry

Two inter-related concepts can help give clarity to this effort to pluralise the concept of integrality (holism) in futures inquiry: ‘genealogy’ and ‘ontogeny’.

Through the lens of causal layered analysis, we can examine movements of discourses through time. The Foucauldian notion of genealogy, in part, describes how certain discourses come into existence, become dominant or victorious or fade into oblivion. Through the lens of genealogy we can begin to appreciate the various traditions and discourses of holism, as well as their application in futures inquiry, that emerge in different historical periods, places, cultures or situations, and apply themselves differently with varying influences and impacts. We might use Inayatullah’s questions in this area:

Which discourses have been victorious in constituting the present? How have they travelled through history? What have been the points in which the issue has become present, important or contentious [63, p.818]?

This can also be linked with Maturana and Varela’s theory of cognition; different approaches to holism in futures can be seen to be expressions of particular ‘ontogenies’ (histories of becoming) which are embodied diversely [26]. Each embodiment brings forth what ‘integral’ means differently depending on the context: situation, background, and the people involved. It will be different through the way each person brings it forth to grapple with the particular circumstances, complexities and challenges that are faced in different situations. We can expect that this process will continue indefinitely, there is no final integral, as ontogenesis (the generation of our being) is ongoing and will forever change in respect to where new holisms are needed to deal with new challenges.

The concepts of ‘genealogy’ and ‘ontogeny’ point toward this insight: ‘integral theories’ and the movement toward holism in futures inquiry emerge differently in different contexts, and for different purposes. No one model can have a monopoly on what holism means. Indeed we need such diverse movements, such variants, as they will travel through the world and time with nuance and relevance. Rather than one AQAL map, we need to begin to appreciate the genealogies of holism in futures inquiry, making the varieties visible, and to see how these movements toward holism in futures inquiry are expressed ontogenetically (as lived and evolving practices) across different actors dealing with unique circumstances and challenges.

### Integrative foresight as an alternative movement toward holism

My deep involvement with both theorising and practicing action research has been fundamental in re-orienting my thinking in regards to what integral means to me. It has lead me toward the conception of ‘integrative’ as an action-reflection oriented process, as opposed to ‘integral’ as a cognitive map or model somewhat disembodied from practice that can be superimposed on the world as social theory. This has been influenced by a number of sources [26, 33-36, 44, 64-68].

By articulating an ‘integrative foresight’ I want to provide an explicit space in which to discuss what holism in futures means from my perspective. First, it is the practical marriage of action research traditions with futures inquiry [69]. The AR tradition provides the meta-theoretical principles as well as a rich pool of practical examples and case studies that offer a general direction for what this means. The AR distinctions of first, second and third person inquiry / practice can also be invoked here. Secondly, it is fundamentally participatory, it is a process of engaging in futures inquiry which is inclusive of diverse perspectives, yet grappling with common challenges. Thus, thirdly, it is a processes of shared engagement in dialogue about our shared challenges that leads to present actions—individual / personal, group / organisational and social experiential learning processes which can be

seen to be recursive and cyclic. Fourthly, a process of ‘anticipatory innovation’ [70] flows from this ongoing heuristic engagement in futures inquiry and present action, such as projects, initiatives and programs for change. Fifth and finally, it represents what Josh Floyd, Alex Burns and myself have called ‘embodied foresight’,<sup>xxi</sup> practical being and action in the present, and a (more) coherent, meaningful and appropriate response to our ongoing futures inquiry. This is expressed through Maturana’s statement that: ‘knowing is effective action, that is, operating effectively in the domain of existence of living beings [26, p.29].

## Conclusion: Dialogue as a vehicle for our journeys

To conclude, I would like to present dialogue as way forward in the movement toward holism in futures inquiry. Dialogue entails an engaged process of relating between a diverse group of people. It is a way to bring together multiple perspectives on an issue, which leads to a richer understanding. In a paper written on the subject, Peter Hayward, Allan O’Connor and myself explored what it means to innovate across disciplinary perspectives (in conditions of complexity), in the face of wicked problems [71]. In undergoing an experiential dialogue process we uncovered some key insights. We found that some of the key obstacles to dialogue included the discussing or debating of ideas (the win / lose argument dynamic), searching for shared purpose (rather than searching for understanding), introducing theory (with its attendant power dynamic), and performing our social role (in this case the role of academic-intellectual). The enablers of dialogue we discovered included the attraction of not knowing (genuine mystery), the suspension of purpose and outcome, the primacy of the present experience, and the re-owning of the Other (that which we have ‘disowned’). Overall we realised that to even get to dialogue we had to undertake a process of coming together in some shape or form, unencumbering as an active process of identifying and loosening existing assumptions, and unlearning as the active letting go of our attachments to outcomes and ideas. From here we could authentically dialogue in a way that led to emerging insights, the adoption of new ideas, new roles and plans for action.

For me the challenge in dialogue is to find a way of balancing the impulses of individuation and communion (the impulse toward differentiation vs. the impulse toward holism)—and create a vehicle that can hold the tension between totalising and diversifying forces [72]. In dialogical processes, there is simultaneously the impulse to differentiate (to voice within the position of one’s experience) and the impulse to commonness (to create shared understanding, purpose, perspective, and to agree). In dialogue we want people to speak their experience authentically, which implies invoking differences, yet we also want to come to a greater understanding that is shared, that creates holism out of fragmentation [64]. The unchecked impulse to differentiate leads to fragmentation, while the unchecked impulse to create the common leads to stifling totalitarianism. We need to honour both movements to productively innovate and address the trenchant and complex problems we face. These seemingly contradictory movements are actually complementary, but only if processes and rules exist to allow them both to be resources rather than unchecked obsessions. Diversity and autonomy form the basis for dynamic interaction, and through communication and dialogue an emergent common can be woven.

This is the challenge in the movement toward holism—to retain the veracity of context specific understanding, based on diverse experiences, while also moving toward coherence. Yet, it is not in the integration of a diversity of elements into a single model where we will find holism, but rather I believe it is to be found in an ongoing relational process of dialogue across diversities, where holisms can emerge as aspects of our ongoing journeys. We will need to pack our bags for a long trip with many paths. I believe that through a process of relating dynamic difference, we can weave new common and not so common movements toward holisms in futures inquiry.

**Note:** This article is dedicated to the memory of Dennis List, a soft spoken and compassionate human being committed to creating a democratic and open world, and a foresight practitioner of the first order.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Indeed Sohail Inayatullah argues that from a non-western view, Wilber-ism remains foundationally Western, continuing the orientalist tradition of appropriating non-western categories a-contextually and a-historically. Personal communication, June 30, 2008.

<sup>ii</sup> Another way this 'a-perspectivity' has been framed is as a 'a neutral framework', see: Richard Slaughter (2008) p121

<sup>iii</sup> For a critique of Wilber 'a-perspectivity' see: Jeff Meyerhoff, 'Six Criticisms of Wilber's Integral Theory' <http://www.integralworld.net/meyerhoff4.html>

<sup>iv</sup> Ironically, recent research from within the Spiral Dynamics community demonstrates it is in fact the blue-orange DQ/ER v-meme which showed the highest tendency to reject the green FS v-meme, while 'second tier' yellow GT did not tend to reject Green FS v-meme, also indicating that Wilber's attack on the 'mean green meme' via 'Boomeritis' and other examples are riddled with conceptual errors. The research goes on to show that Wilber's analysis (second tier dismisses green) is partially based on attempts to discredit critics, and not necessarily indicative of his 'second-tier' and 'post conventional' consciousness, as his followers might have been led to believe. See: Natasha Todovoric, 'The mean green meme hypothesis: fact or fiction?', NVC Consulting, 2002; [http://www.spiraldynamics.org/documents/MGM\\_hyp.pdf](http://www.spiraldynamics.org/documents/MGM_hyp.pdf) accessed July 20th 2008.

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<sup>v</sup> Gary Hampson has commented that the signifiers ‘postconventional’ ((Cook-Greuter, 2002) via Kohlberg), ‘aperspectival’ ((Gebser, 1949/1985)) and ‘second tier’ ((Beck & Cowan, 1996) via Graves) all have their own unique histories and contexts, and ‘Postformal’ should also be identified within this conceptual family. Personal communication: June 20, 2008

<sup>vi</sup> Apparently Somporn Somchai was the first to write on inner and outer integrated futures, in a piece in 1973 for Jim Dator in the East West Centre futures series. From personal communication with Sohail Inayatullah, June 15 2008.

<sup>vii</sup> S. Inayatallah first charted the shift from predictive to critical futures in ‘Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Future: Predictive, Cultural and Critical Epistemologies’ (1990) *Futures*, Vol. 22, No. 2, March, p115-141 and predictive to participatory futures in ‘Reductionism or layered complexity? The futures of futures studies’ (2002) *Futures*, Volume 34, Issues 3-4, April, Pages 295-302, and most recently in *Questioning the future: futures studies, action learning and organisational development* (2002) Tamkang University Press, Taiwan

<sup>viii</sup> Inventing and trade marking ‘integral’ in the context of the many previous thinkers-practitioners such as Aurobindo, Steiner, Gebser and the perennial traditions which preceded them might be likened to Monsanto ‘inventing’ and patenting corn.

<sup>ix</sup> See: [www.wilber.shambhala.com/html/interviews/Shambhala\\_interview.cfm/](http://www.wilber.shambhala.com/html/interviews/Shambhala_interview.cfm/) , [www.integralworld.net/mcdermott2.html](http://www.integralworld.net/mcdermott2.html) , [www.deepspirit.com/sys-tmpl/replytowilber/](http://www.deepspirit.com/sys-tmpl/replytowilber/)

<sup>x</sup> This type of developmentalism was put forth at AFI as worthy of serious consideration. See Ray Harris’ ‘The memes at War’ <http://www.integralworld.net/harris3.html>

<sup>xi</sup> From the heights of meta-theory it is very easy to lose contextual grounding and to put other aspects of reality into a framework that does not accommodate for the nuance of contexts. For example, Slaughter (2004) (p159) and myself (2004) both made the mistake of putting Action Research in the lower left quadrant of Wilber’s scheme, as a completely inter-subjective process. Yet action research cannot be so reduced, it is actually a process of inquiry that incorporates a heuristic movement through experimental action, concrete experience, empirical observation, personal and dialogic reflection, and can thus be considered a movement toward holism.

<sup>xii</sup> Richard Carlson gives an excellent analysis of the ideological dimensions of Wilber’s work, as well as the connections to neo-conservative pundits. Richard Carlson, *Integral Ideology: an ideological genealogy of Integral Theory and Practice*, unpublished, 2008 [http://www.sciy.org/blog/\\_archives/2008/4/11/3633725.html](http://www.sciy.org/blog/_archives/2008/4/11/3633725.html) accessed June 20, 2008

<sup>xiii</sup> Ideas drawn from conversation with Josh Floyd, personal communications March-June 2008.

<sup>xiv</sup> see: [www.ciis.edu](http://www.ciis.edu)

<sup>xv</sup> see: [www.oases.org.au](http://www.oases.org.au)

<sup>xvi</sup> Max Neef’s holistic conception of fundamental human needs includes: Subsistence, Protection, Affection, Understanding, Participation, Leisure, Creation, Identity, and Freedom, cross referenced with the existential categories of Being, Having, Doing and Interacting, creating a complex and rich view of the dimensions of human development

<sup>xvii</sup> This is without even touching on (for lack of knowledge) some of the known other integral thinkers: Jean Gebser, Rudolf Steiner, Sri Aurobindo Arthur Young, Teilhard de Chardin, Haridas Chaudhuri, Alfred North Whitehead, etc. See Jennifer Gidley’s article in this special issue.

<sup>xviii</sup> Hayward was also the resident systems thinking expert, and conducted workshops on various systems approaches, such as that of Maturana, Varela, Peter Checkland and others, and how these might be incorporated into futures. His work also draws heavily upon developmental psychology and the work of Gebser.

<sup>xix</sup> From a unit Josh Floyd teaches at the National Centre for Sustainability at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne 2008.

<sup>xx</sup> At AFI he was one of the chief critics of Wilber’s appropriation of the Clare W. Graves developmental model (now known as Spiral Dynamics).

<sup>xxi</sup> This term ‘embodied foresight’ emerged in a written unpublished dialogue conducted between Josh Floyd, Alex Burns and myself in 2005.

## An other view of Integral futures: De/reconstructing the *IF* brand

Jennifer M Gidley

### Abstract

*This paper points to some limitations of the narrow version of integral futures (IF) as represented in the recent special issue of Futures (2008, Vol 40, Issue 2). I also propose several ways that the IF brand could be refreshed through a broader and deeper approach to integral futures by way of a scholarly engagement with other kindred discourses. The main focus of this paper is to open out beyond the “myth of the given” in relation to the notion of integral and in this way broaden and deepen possibilities for integral futures.*

### Introduction

Open unity and complex plurality are not antagonistic [1, p.5 of 11].

It would be difficult to find two academic fields with broader potential scope than *futures studies* and *integral studies*. Consequently, when I first encountered the integration of these two approaches via the composite term *integral futures* in 2003 I was excited at the vast potential of such a manoeuvre. As a researcher who has been working and publishing in the field of futures studies from an integrative perspective for over a decade I was inspired by the notion of *integral futures* and began to integrate it into my own writing. Having continued my research within what I see as the very broad terrain of *integral futures*, I note with some disappointment that the recent special issue of the journal *Futures*, edited by Richard Slaughter takes a decidedly narrow and shallow approach to *integral futures*. This is an unfortunate turn, given Slaughter’s prior contribution to broadening and pluralising the knowledge base of futures studies [2] [3] [4]. The tendency in the special issue to privilege and promote a particular *brand* of *integral futures*, i.e. via Wilber’s integral model—while not exploring other integral approaches—is more akin in my view to a business/marketing approach than a scholarly engagement. This may reflect an alignment with the “corporate turn” in Wilber’s approach to promoting his own model over the last couple of years. However, such a one-sided approach does not nurture the breadth and depth of potential of *integral futures* (broadly defined)—nor indeed, even its current embodiment.

By contrast with my own *integral futures* research discussed below, the special issue presents a selective sample of articles that primarily represent a particular (Wilberian) brand of *integral futures*—which Slaughter refers to as *IF* [5, p.120]. Slaughter claims these authors represent the “current ‘leading-edge’” [6, p.105] and are presumably also part of what he calls the “new generation of integrally informed futures practitioners [that] has been emerging” (p. 104). If one did not know better, one could be persuaded to believe that the particular—partial and uncontextualised—version of *integral futures* presented in this special issue was the new, and indeed only, “integral futures canon.”

However, the broad notion of *integral futures* has a long and deep history, a planetary geography and a complex genealogy. Having researched and published in the field from a broadly based *integral futures* perspective I have a keen interest in how this approach is being theorised [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [15] [16] [17] [18] [19] [20] [21] [22].

As a faculty<sup>i</sup> member of the former Australian Foresight Institute (AFI) at Swinburne University during the period when the notion of *integral futures* was being developed there, I was one of the first futures researchers<sup>ii</sup> to publish on the notion of *integral futures* [25] [23], along with Slaughter [26]. In a comprehensive, global literature review of “futures in education” commissioned by Slaughter and

written in 2003, I referred to *integral futures* as an emerging framework and undertook a Wilberian integral analysis of the “futures in education” discourse [25]. From this perspective I would like to provide a brief potted history of the development of *integral futures* in Australia as I have observed it, since this was not provided in the special issue.

It appears that the first written use of the term *integral futures* was in 2003, when Slaughter and Joseph Voros, both faculty of the former AFI wrote unpublished<sup>iii</sup> papers on *integral futures* to present at the World Futures Society Conference (WFS) [27] [28]. Prior to this, the first to combine the term *integral* with *futures studies* methodologies appears to have been Voros who began to write about the potential integration of Wilber’s integral theories with environmental scanning [29].<sup>iv</sup> In response to some critique at the WFS Conference of the overly Wilberian bias of the papers by Slaughter and Voros, I was invited in September 2003 to speak with the faculty of AFI (including Slaughter, Voros and Peter Hayward) about my doctoral research involving a broader-based *integral futures* approach. I discussed my research drawing on Rudolf Steiner, Jean Gebser and Sri Aurobindo as well as Wilber, including disseminating to them a final draft of a paper which was later published [16]. Given this history of exposure to a broader potential framing of *integral futures*, it is particularly remiss that the special issue—published five years after this event—is so limited in the scope of its interpretation of *integral futures*.

In this paper, I first point to some limitations of the narrow version of integral futures (IF) as represented in the special issue [6]. I then propose several ways that the *IF brand* could be refreshed through a broader and deeper approach to *integral futures* through engagement with other kindred discourses. The main focus of this paper is to broaden and deepen understandings of the notion of *integral* as a pathway to broaden and deepen the notion of *integral futures*.

### Mistaking the part for the whole: Deconstructing the *IF brand*

Much could be said by way of critique of the version of *integral futures* that is represented in the special issue of *Futures* on the theme of “Integral Futures Methodologies”. However, I will limit this critique to what I consider to be the most significant faults in such a branded approach, in order to spend more time/space on pointing to ways to open the notion of *integral futures* to a fuller, richer potentiality.

There is a lack of substantial engagement by most of the authors in the special issue with the complex genealogy and multiple contemporary uses of the term *integral*. For example, Slaughter heads one of his subsections “What is meant by “integral”?” [5, p.121]. He then proceeds to summarise some of the features of Wilber’s integral theory without any suggestion that this is merely one view of “integral.” He thus perpetuates the “myth-of-the-given” of the Wilberian *integral brand*. Although Hayward [34] refers to Gebser and Habermas as genealogical pointers towards Wilber’s integral—which purportedly transcends and includes them—he also notes that “Three of the greatest integral theorists of the twentieth century would be Jean Gebser, Siri (sic) Aribindo (sic) and Rudolph (sic) Steiner” (p. 109). Yet Hayward does not engage with the integral writings of Sri Aurobindo or Rudolf Steiner, nor does he refer to the substantial research in the *integral futures* domain that explores the relationships between the integral theoretic narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber [16-18]. Throughout the special issue, when the term *integral* is used it is consistently conflated with the Wilberian Integral Operating System (IOS) or AQAL, with little acknowledgement of the other contemporary uses of the term *integral* and minimal engagement with the broader integral literature [16] [35] [36] [24] [37] [38] [39] [40] [41] [42] [43] [44] [45] [46] [47] [48] [49] [50] [18] [51] [52] [53].

Even more disturbing is that most of the articles in the special issue reflect a conceptually parochial approach to scholarship, even in relation to *integral futures* itself, referring largely to a small pool of authors who all interpret *integral futures* through a similar Wilberian integral lens [54] [27] [28]. None of the authors has indicated any serious engagement with other academic research in the *integral*



*futures* area [16] [25] [23], notably research that includes *and* transcends a Wilberian perspective through an *integration* of integral views [16] [17] [18] and/or an *ecology* of integral theories [24].

There is a formalist reductionism inherent in the contraction of the broad notion of *integral futures* to the acronym “IF” [5], colonising the vast potential of “integral futures” by a managerialist mindset. The use of managerialist metaphors is a form of sciolism, giving an appearance of scientific scholarship, much like the neo-fundamentalist audit culture dominating educational research [55] [56] [57]. Such a technicist approach is evident in Slaughter’s [5] pseudo-empiricist quantitative application of Wilber’s four quadrants to his own mythic idea of Inayatullah’s CLA. Furthermore, purporting to be post-conventional, Slaughter’s technicist application of Wilber’s four quadrants as a tool to evaluate Inayatullah’s causal layered analysis is rather a *conventional* scientific manoeuvre based on monologic thinking rather than the post-conventional dialogic possibility of engaging in a postformal process such as hermeneutics or intersubjective dialogue. Rather than an enriching of causal layered analysis through an integrative dialogue of methodologies, the result is a *slaughtering* of the multifaceted potential of causal layered analysis as a rich postconventional-integrative methodology [58] [59].

## Reconstructing *Integral Futures* as Macrohistorical and Planetary

### *A deep time genealogy of Integral*

Integrality must by its nature be complex, many-sided and intricate; only some main lines can be laid down in writing, for an excess of detail would confuse the picture. (Aurobindo, 1997, para. 152, p.359)

It is notable that although many contemporaries who use the term *integral* use it in reference to Wilber, he has not divulged where his use of the term arose. The genealogy of the term *integral* is somewhat contested among contemporary integral theorists and researchers. In the middle of last century cultural philosopher Jean Gebser [60] used the term *integral* to refer to a new, emergent, structure of consciousness. However, unknown to Gebser when he published his first edition of *The Ever-Present Origin* [60, p. xxix], Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo had begun in 1914 to use the terms *integral knowledge* and *integral consciousness*, in a series of writings later published as *The Life Divine* [61]. Sri Aurobindo refers to *integral knowledge* as “a Truth that is self-revealed to a spiritual endeavour” [61, p.661]. This is also aligned to Gebser’s use of *integral*: “Integral reality is the world’s transparency, a perceiving of the world as truth: a mutual perceiving and imparting of truth of the world and of man and all that transluces both” [60, p. 7]. What has not yet been recognised in the integral literature, to my knowledge, is that even before Sri Aurobindo began writing about integral knowledge, Steiner was already using the term *integral* in a similar way. Steiner’s earliest use of *integral* to my knowledge is the following comment he made on *integral evolution* in a lecture in Paris on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1906.

The grandeur of Darwinian thought is not disputed, but it does not explain the *integral evolution* of man... So it is with all purely physical explanations, which do not recognise the spiritual essence of man's being. [62, para.5] [Italics added]

Steiner also used the term *integral* in a way that foreshadowed Gebser’s use. Gebser [60] claimed that the integral structure of consciousness involves *concretion* of previous structure of consciousness, whereby “the various structures of consciousness that constitute him must have become transparent and conscious to him” (p. 99). Gebser also used the term *integral simultaneity* (p. 143) to express this. This echoes Steiner’s characterisation of “the stages on the way to higher powers of cognition ... [where one eventually reaches] a fundamental mood of soul determined by the *simultaneous and integral* experience of the foregoing stages” [63, § 10, para.5]. [Italics added] Recent research has also been undertaken by Hampson in relation to even earlier, pre-twentieth century notions of *integral*, specifically integral education in Russia and France [64].

The term *integral* has been popularised over the last decade by Wilber and to a lesser extent by Ervin László with their respective *integral theories of everything*<sup>v</sup> [42] [33] [65]. Much of the contemporary evolution of consciousness discourse that uses the term *integral* to point to an emergent, holistic/integrative and spiritually-aware consciousness—draws on the writings of Gebser and/or Sri Aurobindo, either directly, or indirectly through reference to Wilber's *integral theory* [47] [66] [46] [67] [49] [68] [33] [69] [70] [71] [72]. However a careful scholarly analysis of the basic elements of Wilber's AQAL theory disclose that his theory consists primarily in piecing together into one framework a number of theoretic components from earlier theorists—some of which he appropriately attributes, while others he does not. Wilber's highly prized *four quadrants* model is a barely disguised and unattributed replication of Schumacher's *four fields of knowledge*<sup>vi</sup> [73] [18]; his holon theory is an insufficiently attributed adaptation of Koestler's *holon theory* (see Hampson in this issue); his levels are a complex and sometimes inconsistent hybrid of Gebser's cultural history and postformal psychology research [74, p. 50-51]; and his integral hermeneutics [75] is remarkably similar, though again without attribution, to Ricoeur's earlier complex reconciliation of the Gadamer/Habermas debates in hermeneutics theory [76].

My research enacts an *integration of integrals*<sup>vii</sup> involving a *deepening* of integral theory by honouring the significant yet undervalued theoretic components of participation/enactment and aesthetics/artistry via Steiner and Gebser as a complement to Wilber's conceptual emphasis. I also introduce the notion of *reverence* as an underappreciated feature of postformal-integral consciousness, which Steiner regarded as fundamental to the healthy emergence of the new consciousness [77]. The significance of *reverence* is also noted in some education literature [78] [79] [80] [81]. When brought into hermeneutic dialogue with each other, Steiner's integral spiritual science,<sup>viii</sup> Gebser's integral-aperspectival cultural phenomenology, and Wilber's integral-AQAL theoretical framework, demonstrate significant convergences in addition to their unique particularities. My particular interests in using the term *integral* are to foreground the concepts of inclusivity, holism, pluralism and reverence.

#### *A planetary view of Integral*

Understanding requires holism... If the holism is to be taken into account then the values of all the world's cultures in all their diversity are salient initial conditions to which sensitivity is essential, and this holds just as true for the moral and ethical ideas of the west itself—they have all played their part in making the richness of the world... We have to accept a new equivalence between perspectives... Through chaos and beyond, we have to emerge into a dynamic new era of interrelationship. Zia Sardar [83]

A critique that could be made of some forms of integral theory is that they carry an Anglo-American bias that is tantamount to another hegemonising grand narrative. I became aware throughout my own research process that most of the contemporary literature on integral theory is being written in the USA and most of the *integral futures* writing draws primarily on Anglo-American integral theory. This bias needs to be addressed and a first step is to explore what other similar integrative narratives might exist in other cultural discourses. I have included two other significant integrative discourses in my research, both of which are not limited to Anglo-American authors. These include discourses that use the term *planetary* and discourses that use terms such as *transdisciplinary*, *transnational* and *transcultural* [84] [85]. Furthermore, there is a significant history of integral education theory in Europe, particularly 19<sup>th</sup> century France and Russia that has been largely overlooked in contemporary Anglo discourse [64]. The notion of *integral foresight*, drawing on the French *prospective*, is also utilised by Fabienne Goux-Baudiment.<sup>ix</sup>

The use of the term *planetary* has been increasing within evolution of consciousness discourses. The semiotic pluralism of its contemporary usage provides a counterbalance to the more politico-economic term, *globalisation*. Many researchers who use the term *planetary* have been inspired by Teilhard de Chardin's notion of the *planetization of mankind* [86]. The phrase *planetary consciousness* is emerging as an alternative to the terms *postformal* or *integral* to characterise emergent consciousness,

particularly in the light of our current planetary crisis. In addition to its popular use by environmental activists it is used in academic contexts by a range of philosophers, scientists, educators and sociologists [69] [39] [87] [37] [84] [38]. This critical use of *planetary* has been emphasised in the philosophical writings of Edgar Morin who refers to the present times as the *Planetary Era*, which he claims began around five hundred years ago [84,88-90]. Several other contemporary writers have also been influenced by Morin's concept of *planetary* [91] [92] [93] [94] [37] [95]. My use of *planetary* is multi-layered, foregrounding critical environmental (biosphere), transcultural (anthropo-socio-sphere), philosophical (noosphere) and spiritual interests (pneumatosphere). These complex concepts are discussed in more detail elsewhere [18] [19].

If we take a planetary perspective to the historical development of knowledge in universities we need to take into account Indian, Chinese, Arab/Islamic and Israeli streams of higher education—all of which arguably preceded the European academies and universities. This early history of universities has been developed more fully by Hampson [64].

Perhaps a relevant example given the current misunderstandings between the dominant American worldview and Islamic perspectives is the court of Haroun al Raschid in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century CE in Baghdad. Steiner described the cultural leader, Haroun al Raschid as:

The figure-head of a civilisation that had achieved great splendour... at the centre of a wide circle of activity in the sciences and the arts... Profound philosophic thought is applied to what had been founded by Mohammed with a kind of religious furor; we see this becoming the object of intense study and being put to splendid application by the scholars, poets, scientists and physicians living at this Court in Baghdad. [96, § 10, para.6-9]

This description characterises a type of *integral culture* that has not yet been repeated in Europe or the Anglophone world.

If we look beyond Europe and the Anglophone world in relation to contemporary integral approaches, we can find many examples. These include the *Multiversidad* in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico based on Morin's complex planetary philosophy. This university is hosting an international congress in October 2008 on complex thought and education, with Morin, Nicolescu and Maturana as keynote speakers. There is the "international UNIPAZ network inspired by Pierre Weil in Brazil deploying their holistic peace education programme in various places" [74]. There is also an interesting integral education project in China, initiated by Professor Fan Yihong, who previously studied in collaboration with David Scott's *Community for Integrative Learning and Action* (CILA) in Amherst, Massachusetts [97] [98]. These are just some of the integral projects that appear when one broadens the notion of integral beyond the limitations of the *IF brand*.

In summary, if one conceptualises *integral futures* with an eye to macrohistorical as well as planetary perspectives one can find significant examples of integral worldviews in a range of previous times and diverse contemporary places. It is on this delicate and dialogic integral theoretic ground that my broadly based version of *integral futures* stands.

#### *An integration of Integral views*

The dialectical challenge felt by many is to evolve a cultural vision possessed of a certain intrinsic profundity or universality that, while not imposing any a priori limits on the possible range of legitimate interpretations, would yet somehow bring an authentic and fruitful coherence out of the present fragmentation, and also provide a sustaining fertile ground for the generation of unanticipated new perspectives and possibilities in the future. [99, p.409]

These words of integral philosopher Richard Tarnas point to the challenge I have felt and tried to meet in my work. I recently undertook the ambitious task to develop an "*integration of integral views*." A critique of this venture could surely be that this is an egotistic, competitive attempt to enter the rivalrous fray between Wilber, László and the Aurobindians.<sup>x</sup> However, I believe a close reading of my

text will reveal that my primary intention is to try to introduce a more dialogic rather than rivalrous tone. My interests in entering into what I consider to be a significant *millennial conversation* were to listen carefully with critical reverence to what had already been said, to hear the silences and to see what may have been overlooked. My intention is not to introduce another competing integral monologue (another *theory of everything*) but to begin a conversation that may facilitate a healing within the integral fragments, so that the task at hand—to understand, cohere and translate the breadth of the expanding noosphere—can more freely continue. Before providing a brief overview of how I have cohered these approaches, I make two prefatory points. Firstly, my interest is not so much in the literal use of the word *integral* but in the meaning that it attempts to express. Secondly, a major contribution of my research is to introduce into the integral conversation the significant contribution to integral theory of Steiner—perhaps the most marginalised 20<sup>th</sup> century integral theorist, given his application of integral thinking to so many fields (e. g., medicine, education, agriculture, architecture and the arts, to name a few).

I propose a simple frame through which to view the complementary nature of several significant integral theorists.<sup>xi</sup> For the purposes of this schematic summary I have chosen to focus on five integral theorists: Gebser, László, Sri Aurobindo, Steiner and Wilber; and two transdisciplinary theorists: Morin and Nicolescu.<sup>xii</sup> I propose to view the contributions from several metaphoric perspectives, introducing five—mostly new—terms to integral theory: *macro-integral*, *meso-integral*, *micro-integral*, *participatory-integral*, and *transversal-integral*.<sup>xiii</sup> Based on this new framing I intend to demonstrate how the various integral approaches need not be seen to be in competition with each other but rather as complementary aspects of a broader articulation of *noospheric breadth* that is seeking living expression. Without implying that any of these terms represent closed, fixed categories or that any of the integral approaches could be contained completely within any of these concepts, I suggest the following provisional mosaic of integral theory as it stands today.

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 level of conceptual integration, Wilber's AQAL framework makes a highly significant contribution and this is where his strength lies. The breadth of Steiner's theoretic contribution to the understanding and integration of knowledge is at least as vast as Wilber's, however it has been largely ignored by both the academy and integral theorists, perhaps to their detriment. Gebser also made an impressive, but largely under-appreciated theoretic contribution to articulating the emergence of integral consciousness in numerous disciplines and fields in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In summary, I see Steiner, Gebser and Wilber as the most significant macro-integral theorists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with Wilber perhaps being the most accessible.

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 László's [42] contribution is highly significant at this level. Having followed a rather more formal, European, academic-scientific approach to theory building, László has taken a general systems approach to integral theory. Although it can be critiqued from a Wilberian view as being partial, it appears more successful than most integral approaches at being taken seriously from an academic perspective. Although Wilber and Steiner have both made numerous theoretic contributions to various disciplines, their contributions remain marginalised within mainstream approaches. Sri Aurobindo's integral approach could also be regarded as a significant contribution at this level—albeit also a marginalised one—given that his philosophy provides a foundation for much of the later integral theory development [47].

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 theory. I propose that at this level 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. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to consider all the fields of application of his theory, I have made extensive reference elsewhere to the integral nature of his theory and particularly of its pedagogical application [17] [19] [100]. By comparison, Gebser's, Wilber's and László's theories are largely conceptual, although Gebser enacts his integrality in the style of his writing and Wilber is

making moves towards the application of his theory in various fields. The emphasis on applied theory in Sarkar's approach can also be noted in this regard.

The notion of *participatory-integral* is based on the integral transformative education theory of Ferrer, Romero and Albareda [48] [101]. Their participatory approach<sup>xiv</sup> 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*. Ferrer et al. emphasise the importance of the participation of the whole human being (body, vital, heart, mind and consciousness) and claim that most integral education theories are either too cognicentric or too eclectic. They provide an alternative framing, based on Wexler's notion of *horizontal integration*, as "the way we integrate knowledge" and *vertical integration*, as "the way we integrate multiple ways of knowing" [101, p.309]. Based on this framing Ferrer et al. place most integral, holistic and even transdisciplinary approaches within horizontal integration. My interpretation is that this framing is too simplistic: firstly, because there are other unacknowledged ways that the terms vertical and horizontal are used in integral theory and other theories; and secondly, much depends on how the approach to integrating knowledge is applied.

I also 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. While it could be argued that all the integral theorists mentioned cut across these different dimensions to a greater or lesser degree—particularly Steiner and Wilber—I acknowledge two other significant integral thinkers who enact *transversal*<sup>xv</sup> reasoning and relationships through their transdisciplinarity. Morin and Nicolescu do not tend to use the term *integral*, nor are they cited as integral theorists in much of the integral literature.<sup>xvi</sup> I suggest the latter is an unfortunate oversight based on semantic and cultural misunderstanding, rather than philosophical understanding. From my planetary scanning of the research it is apparent that the term *integral* is much more widely used in North America today than in Europe though this was not the case in the 19<sup>th</sup> century [64]. By contrast the term *transdisciplinary*<sup>xvii</sup> appears to be used in Europe, particularly by Nicolescu and Morin, with similar integral intent. A special feature of both Nicolescu's and Morin's transdisciplinary philosophies is their attention to *transversal* relationships.<sup>xviii</sup> See also the special issue on *transculturality* (*Futures*, Vol. 36, Issue 4).

In summary, my position is that integral theory creation to date has been seriously hampered by internal rivalry, factionalism and, ironically, lack of integration of kindred theories. My interest here is in offering a means for perceiving the interrelationships among significant integrative approaches that have been operating in relative isolation from each other. This points towards the possibility of new liaisons between approaches that are: inclusive of the vastness of noospheric breadth (*macro-integral*); that provide rigorous theoretic means for cohering it (*meso-integral*); that attend to the concrete details required for applying the theories (*micro-integral*); that encourage the participation of all aspects of the human being throughout this process (*participatory-integral*); and that are able to traverse and converse across these multiple dimensions (*transversal-integral*).

### Postformal–integral–planetary openings: *Integral education futures*

Thinking begins when conflicting perceptions arise. Plato's *Republic*, VII, 523 (cited in [103, p.8])

As a way of countering the tendency among contemporary integral theoretic narratives towards a particular *brand* of integral—such as Wilber, Gebser, Sri Aurobindo, László or any other—my style of *integral futures* research involves deliberately, actively and frequently pointing to theoretic openings rather than premature theoretic closure. By consistently attending to the kindred theories that rub up against our cherished theories and methodologies, we keep them soft and alive, rather than hard, rigid and mechanistic. I call this *delicate theorising*<sup>xix</sup> [19]. There are two major strategies that I have used to enact this process of delicate theorising with regard to *integral futures*. The first strategy is developed in my broad philosophical research and involves conceptually linking the term *integral* with two other concepts, *postformal* and *planetary*—both of which are also potentially very broad and deep

[18,19]. The second strategy is developed more fully in my educational research and involves creating ongoing dialogue—rather than debate<sup>xx</sup>—with kindred theoretic approaches [74,100]. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these strategies in detail, I will include here some brief pointers to these approaches. They have been discussed in detail elsewhere [18] [19] [100].

In constructing my term postformal-integral-planetary I use Edgar Morin’s complexity-based linguistic method of hyphenating three or more concepts together to demonstrate their interrelated meanings [88] [89]. My decision to conjoin these concepts could be critiqued from several perspectives.

From a Wilberian perspective there may be no perceived need to conjoin the terms postformal and planetary to integral in the belief that Wilber’s integral theoretic framework already incorporates both postformal reasoning and planetary perspectives [75] [106]. This perspective could be represented as in Figure 1b. However, it could also be argued from the perspective of some adult developmental psychologists that the concept of postformal also contains both integral and planetary perspectives, for example through Michael Commons’ hierarchical complexity model [107] [108]. This perspective could be represented as in Figure 1a below. Finally, those theorists of the new consciousness who focus on the critical, planetary perspectives may consider that their narratives incorporate postformal reasoning and integral theory, for example Edgar Morin’s notion of the *planetary era* [88] [84]. This theoretic perspective may be represented as in Figure 1c below.

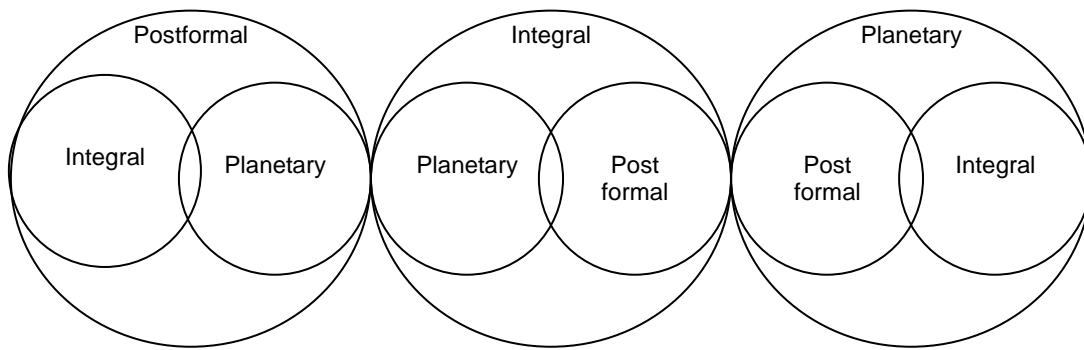


Figure 1a: A *Postformal* perspective on Integral and Planetary discourses

Figure 1b: An *Integral* perspective on Planetary and Postformal discourses

Figure 1c: A *Planetary* perspective on Postformal and Integral discourses

**Figure 1. Possible postformal perspectives on Integral and Planetary discourses**

These three major strands of research each have a stronger emphasis in a particular area. The planetary consciousness literature tends to emphasise the urgency of our planetary crisis; the integral literature—particularly Wilberian integral—tends to emphasise the epistemological crisis and how this can be transformed by integral consciousness; the postformal psychology literature tends to focus on empirical and analytic articulation of higher stages of reasoning. My philosophical interest is in *thinking* these threads together as facets of the one emerging consciousness movement and, in particular, to pull through the educational imperatives of this emergence.

When I apply my *integral futures* approach—in concert with postformal and planetary perspectives—to educational futures, I find that there is a plethora of postformal pedagogies that tilt towards more integral, planetary futures. 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; neohumanist education; partnership education; planetary/global education; postformality in education; postmodern and poststructuralist pedagogies; spirituality in education; transformative education; wisdom in education.

In summary, the call for *integral futures* when applied to education is for both integral education theory and integral futures theory to contextualise themselves academically in the long history of integral philosophies, east and west, and to contextualise themselves geographically within transnational, transcultural, planetary discourses that go beyond the Anglo-American integral discourse. In my view, an authentic approach to *integral futures* of education would embrace the rich diversity of emergent pedagogical approaches that are out there, globally, in these urgent planetary times.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> I was responsible for co-designing, researching, developing and teaching the online component of the first year of the Masters in Strategic Foresight (Graduate Certificate Online) from 2003-2006.

<sup>ii</sup> My second article referred to here [23] was co-authored by my friend and colleague Gary Hampson whose recent research also seeks to broaden integral theory beyond the limitations of a Wilberian branding [24]. See also Hampson in this issue.

<sup>iii</sup> Slaughter's paper was published as a chapter in a book the following year [26].

<sup>iv</sup> Although Slaughter had previously written about the implications of Wilber's theories for futures studies, including environmental scanning [30] [31], he drew primarily on Wilber's seminal text *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality* [32]. Wilber himself did not begin to use the term integral until two years later [33].

<sup>v</sup> The integral approaches I consider here, including my own, need to be contextualised as *post-positivist*, in contrast to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century strivings of the Vienna Circle to create a *unified science* through *logical positivism*.

<sup>vi</sup> Wilber's four quadrants bear a remarkable similarity to the *Four Fields of Knowledge* put forward by Ernst Friedrich Schumacher in his 1977 *Guide for the Perplexed*, summarized as 1. I—inner; 2. The world (you)—inner; 3. I—outer; 4. The world (you)—outer. (Schumacher, 1977, p. 62) Although Wilber refers to this book in his reference list at the end of SES, and in two endnotes, he does not cite Schumacher in relation to his four quadrants. (Wilber, 2000d) Some clarification from Wilber on this issue would be valuable, since this is the cornerstone of his AQAL theory.

<sup>vii</sup> My privileging of the term *integral* over *holistic*, or *integrative*, is not intended to contribute to any "turf wars." I seek to honour both the scholarship and spiritual depth given to the term *integral* last century by Gebser and Sri Aurobindo. By using the phrase "*integration* of integrals" I distinguish my stance from any one

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particular integral theory. My use of integrality also conceptually includes the notion of *holistic*, as used by holistic theorists who honour a developmental and evolutionary perspective.

<sup>viii</sup> In his discussion of the potential *interdisciplinary* relationship between anthropology and anthroposophy—also called spiritual science—Steiner refers to his spiritual science as a “systematic noetic investigation” [82].

<sup>ix</sup> See website <http://www.projective.com/en/projective/historique/>

<sup>x</sup> Although there are other integral theorists that could be considered these three streams are the dominant threads operating within what could loosely be called *integral theory* today, particularly in the USA.

<sup>xi</sup> I am using the terms *theorists* and *theory* in this section broadly to cover philosophy, epistemology and methodology.

<sup>xii</sup> The atypical nature of this list can be accounted for in two ways: My reasons for including transdisciplinary theorists will become evident and other integral theorists who could be considered are generally aligned to one or more of these major theorists. P.R.Sarkar could also be considered but his vast theory is beyond the scope of my research to integrate in this paper.

<sup>xiii</sup> I recognise that some of these terms have technical meanings in mathematics, engineering and computer sciences, however, I am using them metaphorically in this context.

<sup>xiv</sup> The term *participatory* in relation to integral theory is also used in a different way to refer to self-reflective enactment [24]. See also [18, pp. 13, 110, 124].

<sup>xv</sup> Professor of science and theology, J. Wenzel Van *Huyssteen* draws attention to the role of *transversality* in postfoundational approaches to interdisciplinarity: “Transversality in this sense justifies and urges an acknowledgment of multiple patterns of interpretation as one moves across the borders and boundaries of different disciplines” [102].

<sup>xvi</sup> However, integral theorists from the California Institute of Integral Studies, Alfonso Montuori and Sean Kelly, have been translating Morin’s writing over the last decade and clearly appreciate its significance for integral theory.

<sup>xvii</sup> A lack of clarity on these matters within integral theory may result from a conflation by some American integral theorists of *transdisciplinarity* with the concept *interdisciplinarity*, which is more widely used in the US. From my reading of these terms, Nicolescu’s *transdisciplinarity* is closer in meaning to *integral* than it is to *interdisciplinarity*.

<sup>xviii</sup> The *Charter of Transdisciplinarity* developed in 1994 by Nicolescu, Morin and others acknowledges the *horizontal integration* of the exact sciences, humanities, social sciences, art, literature, poetry and spirituality (p. 149); the *vertical integration* of intuition, imagination, sensibility, and the body in transmission of knowledge (p. 150; and also the significance of broader, *transversal integration* through a “transcultural, transreligious, transpolitical and transnational attitude” [85].

<sup>xix</sup> After Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *delicate empiricism* [104] [105].

<sup>xx</sup> From a developmental perspective the notion of *debate* is an expression of *formal* logic—the logic of the *excluded middle*. The notion of *dialogue*, on the other hand, is an expression of *postformal* logics, such as dialectics and paradoxical thinking—which enact the logic of the *included middle*. For more on the significance of the logic of the included middle in transdisciplinarity and planetary consciousness, see Nicolescu (2002).

# Futures of Integral futures: An analysis of Richard Slaughter's analysis of Causal Layered Analysis

Gary P. Hampson

## Abstract

*By way of exemplifying the problematisation of particular uses of Ken Wilber's integral approach and its address of postformal thought, this paper analyses Slaughter's "integral" analysis of Inayatullah's Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) which forms part of Slaughter's article, "What difference does 'integral' make?" Futures 40 (2) (2008). Evidence given for Slaughter's assertions is investigated. His assertions are then analysed partly by way of hermeneutics, CLA and deconstruction including address of Koestler's holon theory, Jung's archetypes, and Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor. The potential of Slaughter's analysis involves the opening up or furthering of generative dialogue, specifically through extending the possibilities of CLA. As instituted, however, it enacts a premature foreclosure of such potential, partly through offering an inadequate and inaccurate evaluation of CLA. This paper specifically problematises the notion that CLA is not substantively postconventional, whilst pointing to unproductive modernistic tendencies in Slaughter's analysis. In so doing, it opens up new avenues for integral futures.*

**Keywords:** Causal Layered Analysis, conceptual metaphor, deconstruction, hermeneutics, holon theory, integral, Jungian archetypes, postformal thinking, poststructuralism, system, Wilber

## Introduction

*Integral* is a contested site. Discourses concerning *integral* indicate a plurality of interpretations, including [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [15] [16] [17] [18] [19] [20] [21] [22] [23]; such plurality is identified in a variety of ways—[24] [25] [26] [27] [28] [29] [30]. This multiplicity allows for a range of possible future scenarios of *integral* and thus for the identity/identities of *integral futures*. Such scenarios could be configured either in reference to *one* line of development (e.g., [26] [31]) or to a genealogical ecology of complex interconnectivity [24] [25]. An overall coherence could also be enabled by Sara Ross' delineation of *integral* as enactments of "high stage action-logics" or postformal/postconventional reasoning [28, pp.284-288],<sup>i</sup> where *postformal* is identified with reference to psychological literature pertaining to development beyond Jean Piaget's *formal operations* (see [25]).<sup>ii</sup>

Within this ecology of current identifications and possible future scenarios, Ken Wilber's *integral*, a.k.a. *AQAL*, is a powerful player, both in terms of its self-identified capability—as "a theory of everything" [32]—and concomitantly in terms of its potential to colonise, including particular misappropriation of other integral approaches such as that of Jean Gebser [24] [25]. Somewhat in keeping with Wilber's self-identification as a "cowboy,"<sup>iii</sup> discourse concerning *AQAL* tends toward polarised positions. This non-dialogic characteristic seems poignantly ironic, given *integral as pertaining to integration* in contrast to fragmentation. It also acts as a potential obstacle to those who seek to make reference to Wilber rhizomatically (as a creative point of departure). Such noetic "agency" might well reflect a well-thought-out "product" whose integrity would be seen to be compromised by undue "communion"; but it may also point to unhelpful modernistic tendencies involving both Borg-like [34] technological metaphors (as perhaps indicated by the tagline "powered by *AQAL*"), and corporate-style templates including the *branding* of *integral* as "Integral," spurred on by competitive marketing and defended by deflection and other non-academic manoeuvres.<sup>iv</sup>

The special issue of *Futures* on *Integral Futures* [36] features a variety of perspectives which nonetheless privilege a Wilberian integral approach insufficiently attentive to the above contestations. A particular relationship of contestation is that between Wilber’s integral approach on the one hand and poststructuralist-postconventional/postformal reasoning and enactments on the other [25] [28]. One poststructuralist approach is that of Sohail Inayatullah’s Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) [37]. It has proven successful as a workshop methodology, and is also used as a methodology for academic research [38]. Two papers in the special issue [39] [40] enter the foray of the integral/poststructuralist conversation, each of which analyse CLA from a Wilberian integral futures perspective. This, indeed, is the singular focus of Chris Riedy’s article, whilst Richard Slaughter’s addresses CLA as one of a number of futures methodologies.

Bonnitta Roy [41] has identified the perils of overgeneralisation and inapt abbreviation in integral discourse and the need to go “gap-diving” into the actual territory. Such risk may be amplified in texts of condensed format. This paper draws attention to this danger (in addition to other matters) by addressing Slaughter’s “integral” analysis of CLA in hermeneutic detail (and with sufficient indication of redemptive openings). It is consequently an extended piece. The integral perspective I am taking here bears witness to Sara Ross’ *integral* as that which might be “*essential to completeness* for the task at hand” [28] (original italics), and also to Jennifer Gidley’s “postformal-integral-planetary” [24]. In this instance, the task at hand (analysis regarding Slaughter’s text) seems to require an approach which employs a judicious balance of the analytic, hermeneutic, deconstructive, and redemptive. A hope would be to indicate the possibility and desirability of an ecology of possible integral futures beyond the hegemony of a business-as-usual branded “Integral.” Such a quest is substantively in agreement with Richard Slaughter’s interest in moving beyond “superficiality,” “problematic, one-sided, methods” [42. p.845] and the under-appreciation of human interiors in futures studies.<sup>v</sup> It is also in reference to the quest to distinguish *thinking postformally* from *thinking conventionally about postformal thought*.<sup>vi</sup>

#### *Scope and outline*

This paper seeks to analyse Slaughter’s “integral” analysis of CLA,<sup>vii</sup> and in so doing, (further) open up integral futures to other possible futures of integral, notably ones involving a more thorough engagement with poststructuralist and postformal thinking. Such a scope, however, mostly *precludes*:

- (a) analysis or evaluation of AQAL, Wilberian integral futures, or Slaughter’s *oeuvre*, independent of Slaughter’s analysis of CLA;
- (b) analysis or evaluation of CLA independent of Slaughter’s analysis of CLA;
- (c) elucidation of either modern/istic or postconventional thinking independent of Slaughter’s analysis of CLA.

Conversely, this paper’s analysis may be *positively* identified in relation to:

- (a) hermeneutics—in that it substantively concerns textual analysis and *interpretation*;
- (b) CLA—insofar as it identifies ecologies of possible metaphors in relation to various interests identified by Slaughter, such as *system*, *depth* and *integral*.<sup>viii</sup>
- (c) Deconstruction<sup>ix</sup>—in that it is in reference to the specificity of Slaughter’s text, opening it up in novel ways partly via dialectical operations [44] [45] held complexly [25]; notably through
  - (i) an apt sense of *being systematic*—for example, an allowance for both firmness and fluidity of voice; internal order and openness to dialogue;
  - (ii) an *adequate depth* of analysis;
  - (iii) an appropriate “*unpacking*” of Slaughter’s *individual perspective*;
  - (iv) attempting not to *overclaim*—partly through sufficient evidencing.

Further, Martin Beck Matustík [31] distinguishes “*integral critical theory*” from “critical theory” in that the former “must embody *redemptive critique*, insofar as its motive not only develops a theory

with practical intent but also with transformative hope” [31, p.228] (original italics). Apropos, this analysis seeks to identify apt redemptions.<sup>x</sup>

The outline of this paper is as follows: Firstly, there is an identification of Slaughter’s three core assertions and the evidence he provides (or fails to provide) for them. Regardless of sufficiency of evidence, these three are then used as portals for exploration. A brief reflexivity is then conducted before offering concluding statements.

## Regarding literature review, assertions and evidence

### *Literature review*

Slaughter’s apparent general aim is to extend the possibilities of CLA such that there might be a “whole family of CLAs” [40, p.134]. He does not, however, engage with prior literature which involves similar aims regarding evolving the methodology—for example, [46] [47] [48].

### *Assertions and evidence*

Slaughter states:

I will here cover three key issues based on claims for the method that have been put forward. They are:

1. The claim that CLA is systematic,
2. The claim that it adequately represents depth,
3. The claim that it ‘unpacks individual perspectives’ [40, p.131].

Within this quotation, he cites one reference as evidence to support his assertion regarding these three claims. Somewhat incongruently, the reference he cites is authored neither by Inayatullah nor by any other CLA-oriented scholar but by himself, namely, the article “Mapping the Future: Creating a Structural Overview of the Next 20 Years” [49]. Even more startlingly, this reference does not address these three claims; indeed, it does not address CLA in any way. As his ensuing analysis of CLA is based on these three claims, it would be difficult to argue that Slaughter’s errancy in this matter is insignificant.

If the evidence is not to be found in the article Slaughter cites, where might it be found? Slaughter’s article refers to only one piece by Inayatullah:<sup>xi</sup> namely, “Causal layered analysis: Poststructuralism as method” [37]. Perhaps the missing evidence can be found here?

*Regarding claim 1*, Inayatullah’s article appears to present something of an ambiguous, postformally paradoxical, or perhaps integral relationship with *system*. On the one hand, CLA is identified as systematising Michael Shapiro’s poststructuralism [37, p.827, n.9]; on the other, it sits (or moves) in relation to a poststructuralist understanding that “construes all systems of intelligibility as false arrests” [37, p.827, n.9]. Inayatullah also presents a table which “offers a systematic presentation of CLA as method” [37, p.828]. This table comprises items categorised under “context,” “horizontal levels,” and “vertical levels.” My reading in relation to the table is that Inayatullah is not claiming that CLA *is* “systematic” per se, but rather that a systematic presentation *of* CLA is possible and desirable. The totality of the above is thus somewhat indeterminate from an *either/or* perspective, even if it complexly leans *toward* system.<sup>xii</sup> Regardless, it cannot be said that Slaughter adequately evidences the assertion that CLA claims to be systematic.

*Regarding claim 2*, neither “adequate” nor “adequately” appear in Inayatullah’s text, nor does “depth,” whilst “deep” appears seventeen times, although none of these instances regard the contextualisation of CLA with respect to depth. From this, it can be said that Slaughter does not adequately evidence the assertion that CLA claims to “adequately represent depth.”

*Regarding claim 3*, “unpack” or “unpacks” does not appear in Inayatullah’s text. Perhaps the nearest correspondence to this claim is that CLA “layers participant’s positions (conflicting and harmonious

ones)” [37, p.816]. Slaughter might have fashioned claim 3 from this understanding. Given this, it can be said that although Slaughter does not adequately evidence the assertion that CLA claims to ‘unpack individual perspectives,’ per se, such a notion can be seen to be presented in Inayatullah’s text.

In summary, Slaughter does not adequately evidence his assertions. The present analysis will, however, proceed *as if* the assertions regarding the claims are legitimate grounds for analysis (i.e. regardless of the sufficiency of their evidencing).

## On being systematic

This section explores “being systematic” (regarding CLA), firstly through exploring Slaughter’s representation (*quadrants as system*) and then by opening up two alternative AQAL-derived possibilities, namely, *levels as system* and *types as system*.

### *Quadrants as system*

Slaughter adopts a “systematic” approach to CLA by way of applying a Wilberian (horizontal<sup>xiii</sup>) four-quadrant analysis upon it. Although he says that “there are many ways to assess if CLA is systematic,” [40, p.132] he does not further justify the equating of “a systematic approach” with the application of Wilber’s four quadrants. This is curious as both the four quadrants and CLA have certain features in common from the perspective of systematic thinking, namely, that (i) they can both be seen as a systematic approach to viewing phenomena; (ii) they both do this by way of a fourfold topology; (iii) they can both be used in relation to a wide range of phenomena; and that (iv) they “both use depth as the basis for judging whose perspectives are more valid.” [39, p. 153]. Slaughter does not evidence how the four quadrants provide a better systematic approach than CLA. Indeed, his inference is that CLA is not systematic—somewhat contrasting with Josh Floyd’s view, for example, that “an inherently systemic outlook can be detected in much of Sohail Inayatullah’s work, particularly in the development of Causal Layered Analysis” [50, p.139].<sup>xiv</sup>

Why would it not be equally legitimate to use CLA to analyse the four quadrants with respect to their degree of, or characteristics of, systematic thinking? (Or even, reflexively, CLA upon itself? Or a four quadrant analysis upon itself?)

### Genealogy and characteristics

In terms of its genealogy,<sup>xv</sup> Wilber’s *four quadrants* can be identified in substantive relation to Ernst Friedrich Schumacher’s *Four Fields of Knowledge* [24]. Four chapters in Schumacher’s *A Guide for the Perplexed* [52] elaborate upon a schema of four generic perspectives comprising: inner self, outer self, inner world/you and outer world/you. This matches the four quadrants’ binaries or bipolar dimensions of individual-collective and interior-exterior. Gidley notes that,

Wilber’s four quadrants...bears a remarkable similarity to the *Four Fields of Knowledge* put forward by Ernst Friedrich Schumacher...summarized as 1. I—inner; 2. The world (you)—inner; 3. I—outer; 4. The world (you)—outer. Although Wilber refers to this book in his reference list at the end of SES, and in two endnotes, he does not cite Schumacher in relation to his four quadrants” [24, p.44, n.96].

Regarding the holarchic relation between *whole/unity* and *part (as field/quadrant)*, Schumacher remarks that although “the Four Fields of Knowledge can be clearly distinguished...knowledge itself is a unity” [52, p.118]. Likewise, Wilber states that, “the quadrants and levels are in some sense quite different, but they are different aspects of *the Kosmos*, which means that they also *intrinsically* touch each other in profound ways” [23, § Summary and Conclusion]. His text here mirrors Schumacher’s multiplicity-in-unity regarding the four fields or quadrants.<sup>xvi</sup> As regards the theorised *heterarchic* relationship among the fields/quadrants (such as degree of equality among them), and also their relation to overall purpose, Schumacher identifies that, “each of [the four fields] is of great interest and importance to every one of us” [52, p.62]. As for Wilber, he posits the efficacy of “‘simultracking’ the



various phenomena in each level-quadrant and noting their actual interrelations and correlations” [23, § Summary and Conclusion]—that of attempting “*theoretically* to elucidate this wonderfully rich and interwoven tapestry” [23, § Summary and Conclusion] (original italics). Here, Wilber foregrounds identifying the *interconnections* among the four perspectives. Elsewhere, he states that as his integral approach “privileg[es] no single context, it invites us to be unendingly open to ever-new horizons” [53, p.122]—foregrounding *openings* that can arise from not remaining with one quadrant, for example. He also states that “an all-quadrant...approach...refuses unwarrantedly to reduce any...quadrant to any other” [32, p.50], thus highlighting the danger of imagining that the perspective of any one quadrant is sufficient to describe the entirety of a particular item. In addition, he notes that the ‘simultracking’ across quadrants, for example, “requires a judicious and balanced use of all four validity claims”<sup>xvii</sup> [23, § Summary and Conclusion]. Here, he foregrounds a *balanced* perspective toward the four quadrants, one requiring the art of judgment. From this reading, Wilber’s understanding of the overall approach one should use regarding the four quadrants can be summarized as:

1. exploring interconnections between the quadrants;<sup>xviii</sup>
2. foregrounding the opening of new possibilities;
3. not reducing quadrants to each other: not imagining any one describes the totality of a situation;
4. employing the art of judgment regarding their balancing for any given context.

To the extent that the eight native perspectives are in reference to the four quadrants, one could assume for current purposes that a kin perspective to the above characterisation would also apply to them.

#### Characteristics of Slaughter’s analysis

How does such an understanding correspond to Slaughter’s four-quadrant analysis of CLA? He presents a matrix of the four quadrants correlated with the four CLA layers. Its cells comprise naughts and crosses signifying whether the layer in question “manifests” in the quadrant in question. The results, according to Slaughter are Upper Left (UL, individual interior) = 0; Upper Right (UR, individual exterior) = 1 (litany); Lower Left (LL, collective interior) = 4 (all four CLA layers); Lower Right (LR, collective exterior) = 2 (litany and social causes) [40]. No reasoning is given for the particular entries, so one might assume that the answers would be somehow self-evident. Yet Inayatullah had previously published a different view on the relationship between CLA and the four quadrants:

CLA...fits perfectly into Ken Wilber’s (as developed by Richard Slaughter) four–quadrant method. In this method, using the poles of inner and outer, individual and collective, four worlds are created. An inner individual world of meanings; an inner outer world of behaviours; an inner collective world of myths and stories; and an outer collective world of policies and strategies [55, p.44].

Slaughter does not address this or any other previous assessment given. Such differences in evaluation outcome between his and Inayatullah’s assessments problematises the idea that Slaughter’s evaluation is self-evident. Furthermore, although an *either/or* response for each matrix cell might perhaps be suitable for casual purposes or in a workshop situation, a more judiciously considered approach would surely need to be taken for research which seeks to provide a comprehensive evaluation of a methodology in relation to developmental levels. Does Slaughter consider the art of *functionally fitting* different four-quadrant ecologies necessary for particular contexts? Does he frame his claim in terms of the possibility of misappropriating one or more quadrants? Does he acknowledge the possibility that *language* (as through both worldview and myth/metaphor) might be inherently liminal (in both individual and collective interiors) and thus “speak” of the quadrant *interconnectivity* identified above by Wilber as an integral methodological goal? The answer to all three is negative.

#### Four quadrant analysis as “relativist”

Rather, I would suggest that Slaughter enacts a particular *mechanistic* application of the four quadrants—an approach, indeed, that can raise the spectre of Wilber’s idea of “postmodern relativism” in which all perspectives are regarded as unduly equal—in this instance, the equivocal relativism of all quadrants being valued equally regardless of context. In this regard, it would be important to distinguish between, on the one hand (i) discourse which does not address all quadrant perspectives *and* which claims its ecology of perspectives to be comprehensive (whether explicitly, or by denouncing alternative perspectives which could otherwise be countenanced by an integral approach); and on the other hand, (ii) discourse which does not address all quadrant perspectives but which does *not* claim its ecology of perspectives to be comprehensive (evidenced either by a non-denouncing of alternative perspectives and/or by explicit openness to dialogue and the possibility of further development). Thus, *even if* particular biases across the quadrants can be identified in a given analysis, this does not automatically signify inappropriateness: it depends upon the context. Such an idea can be understood by way of identifying the manoeuvre of a four-quadrants analysis as a type of systems thinking in which the validity claim is *functional fit* [23]. Conversely, it might be the case that a noetic entity “ticks all the quadrant boxes” but nevertheless suffers from quadrantism (quadrant reductionism) in that the unique attributes (such as validity claims or styles of languaging) are unduly reduced to an inapt common schema in the text of the analysis. Such a peril would no doubt be even more probable in the case of the eight native perspectives.

#### Eight native perspectives as “relativist”

By way of opening up possible ways to extend the range of CLA, Slaughter suggests that,

one could plot ‘alternative CLA pathways’ through phenomenology and structuralism to autopoiesis and empiricism; from here to social autopoiesis and systems theory, and from there to hermeneutics and cultural anthropology [40, p.133].

He continues, “one could travel the ‘interior journey right round’, or the ‘external’ journey” [40, p.133]. For CLA to somehow (further) include such a smorgasbord of methodologies as “alternative pathways” and/or to go on a roundabout journey of interiors and/or exteriors may seem at first glance potentially generative ways forward. Indeed, such possibilities could be identified by CLA as new forms of myth or deep story for CLA itself. The question then would be to explicate the necessary detailing involved in forming a new litany layer. The inquiry, however, may discover considerable theoretical obstacles. Firstly, Slaughter’s statement does not refer to which methodologies are *already* being employed. Slaughter has not, for example, associated CLA with poststructuralism (discussed further below) or identified where poststructuralism might “sit” in relation to the eight native perspectives. He has not explored the possibility of methodologies in general as AQAL types. Nor has he identified the eight native perspectives in terms of their developmental level(s) (see [25, p.112]). Through not addressing this last matter, questions might be raised: “What if the eight native perspectives were all identified as conventional-level methodologies whilst poststructuralism—and (most likely) therefore CLA—was identified as postconventional?” or, “What if the eight native perspectives were each variously ‘discovered’ to be operating at different developmental levels?” or, “What if poststructuralism was identified as a ‘more evolved form of’—or ‘having evolved from’—structuralism, in a kin way to postmodernism being a ‘more evolved form of’—or ‘having evolved from’—modernism (whilst noting that structuralism is a named methodology as an outside perspective in the Upper Left quadrant)?” Further, the methodologies listed by Wilber as examples of the eight native perspectives have numerous dimensions of phenomenal difference among them, including differences of (self-)identity, self-identified forms of legitimation, and forms of languaging. To take a relatively minor example, the historico-cultural *identity* of social autopoiesis (inner Lower Right quadrant) is substantively different from empiricism (outer Upper Right quadrant). The former relates to a contested idea within a small discourse—see, for example, [56]; [57] and rejoinders; and [58]—whilst the latter, even in its modern form, has a history dating back to John Locke’s 17<sup>th</sup> Century doctrine, and arguably forms the “backbone” of the entire edifice of modern science. The general question here is: How might such differences be reconciled or harmonized without the violence of

colonization? Such a quest would surely be identified as a decidedly delicate,<sup>xix</sup> dialogic, transdisciplinary<sup>xx</sup> task cohered by emergent transversal understandings, but neither Wilber or Slaughter address such substantive matters. Further, the task is surely (at least) a profoundly hermeneutic one, but, if so, then hermeneutics—forming one of the eight methodologies which are apparently, according to the theory, to be regarded as peers—takes on an *unequal* role, a dominant one. How would such a manoeuvre be accounted for? Again, this is not addressed. Other methodologies might also have their own type of “say” in relation to “coming to terms” with the proposed situation such that one could *not* simply say that one could “plot” alternative pathways for CLA via the eight native perspectives: not all perspectives would “agree” with such a legitimacy of the manoeuvre of *plotting* (and on what basis would such contestation be addressed?).

In terms of Slaughter’s use of quadrants (rather than AQAL as a whole) to represent “being systematic,” perhaps it could be argued that the four quadrants’ / eight native perspectives’ greater context of AQAL legitimises their greater systematic import in that AQAL is a larger system within which the four quadrants are (integrally) located. Yet this beckons the question of why other aspects of AQAL were not brought to bear on the analysis of CLA—aspects such as levels and types.

#### *Levels as system*

*Levels as system* would be a particularly pertinent representation here in that Slaughter’s evaluation marker is developmental (judgment regarding degree of postconventionality). The discussion below will involve three items brought to focus through the developmental schema of *formal* → *postformal*; namely, *noetic entities*, *system*, and *poststructuralism*.

#### Post/formal noetic entities

Noetic entities of whatever characteristics or scale are, at least in our post-Hegelian world, capable of being interpreted developmentally. This would include *terms-concepts*<sup>xxi</sup> and “larger” entities such as methodologies and other aspects and/or types of narrative. Wilber and others in his wake tend to identify the developmental in terms of larger-scale entities and under-regard the smaller scale [25]. Yet the fabric of our languaging is very significant in terms of the entirety of the communication act. For example, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s work shows that metaphor<sup>xxii</sup> forms multiple semantic vertical layering within our languaging such that “metaphorical thought is what makes abstract scientific theorizing possible” [61, p.128]. This realisation can potentially facilitate the possibility of becoming more “construct-aware” [62].

An example of a developmental perspective applied to this scale is as follows. Given that *formal* logic is in reference to the law of the excluded middle, whilst *postformal* reasoning allows for multi-valued logics [25], one may consider the metaphor of *container* to be in substantive relation to formal thinking in that material may be either inside or outside the container but not both. The formal notion of *definition* is in accord with this metaphor (*concept as container*). The legitimate question at this level would then be: Does concept C include item *x*? (Yes or no). In contrast, postformal reasoning, whilst allowing for such definition *as appropriate*, allows for richer semantic dimensionality. Semantic *nuances*, for example, can potentially be very significant; an analogy here might be that (initial) *subtle* variations can (eventually) cause *large* “perturbations,” as per chaos theory. Such is the potential potency of *thinking poetically*. Notice here, too, that the *either/or* quality of *container* forecloses further exploration (beyond yes/no). The foreclosure of inquiry also privileges *the already-given* over *the possibly emergent*, thus further thwarting possible creative development. Conversely, possible *postformal* templates include such multi-valued metaphors as *concept as attractor* (after complexity theory) and *concept as transformative portal*. The term-concept *integral* may be viewed thus. A formal interpretation of *integral* would seek strongly-bounded closure whilst a postformal interpretation would allow for multiple delineations and contestations, such as Gidley’s *postformal-integral-planetary* [24]. In this instance, Slaughter’s usage is in reference to the former and does not substantively partake of postformal sensibility.

### Post/formal systems

An example of a larger noetic entity on which the above consideration may be applied is that of *system*. *System as container* would here be contrasted with *system as attractor*, *system as transformative portal* or regarding other metaphors of apt openness and possibility. Such a formal/postformal differentiation can be identified in relation to a developmental manoeuvre from closed system to open system:<sup>xxiii</sup> Ludwig von Bertalanffy [63], originator of General System Theory, refers to physics and physical chemistry—the physiospherical domain—as being mostly concerned with *closed* systems, in contrast to the *open* systems identified in the biosphere.<sup>xxiv</sup> In accord with Schumacher’s forwarding of *adaequatio* [52], Bertalanffy notes the holarchical nature between closed physiospherical systems and open biospherical systems: “It is always possible to come from open to closed systems...but not *vice versa*” [63, p.156] (original italics). Applying such a schema upon the noosphere opens up exploration concerning the degree of, or qualities of, openness or dialogic in methodological and theoretical systems (among other things)—such as CLA, AQAL, and the analytic approach by Slaughter currently under consideration.

With regard to the latter, Slaughter’s assessment of the systematic nature of CLA is one which tends toward a sense of *closed* system: no inquiry is made regarding the degree of elasticity or openness of CLA’s theoretical fabric, or what dialogic relations it might have with its noetic environment. If *systematic* had been interpreted in relation to the higher order *open organic systems*, then Slaughter’s data would have included the following: “Causal layered analysis is best used with other methods” [37, p.825]—indicating explicit acknowledgement of its noetic ecology or openness to (two-way) dialogue: an indicator of its postformality (where formal is associated with the necessity of *contained* closed system,<sup>xxv</sup> and postformal with dialogic open system).

### Post/formal post/structuralism

Although Inayatullah specifically foregrounds an identification of CLA with poststructuralism, Slaughter does not once refer to poststructuralism in his article. Indeed, Slaughter’s bibliographic referencing of Inayatullah’s article “Causal Layered Analysis: Poststructuralism as Method” [37] is incomplete: Slaughter’s article lists its title merely as “Causal Layered Analysis.” Although such slippage can be seen as irrelevant or inconsequential, this view can be regarded as modernistic in its lack of regard for possible subtexts seen in such slippages. In the current instance, Slaughter’s undue disregard of poststructuralism can be seen as underlined by such slippage.

Wilber maps “postmodernism,” “Foucault,” and “Derrida” in relation to pluralistic relativism [32, p.11]. He speaks of postmodernism and poststructuralism in one breadth [65, p. 38]. Given that pluralistic relativism is identified as a form of postformal thought by such postformal researchers as Jan Sinnott, Deidre Kramer, and Diana Woodruff [66] [67], poststructuralism should therefore be regarded as postformal through AQAL. CLA as a form of poststructuralism would also, then, by definition, be postformal or postconventional. Given this, what might account for Slaughter’s non-engagement with such an identification? An undue conflation, between postformal-postconventional and Grave’s *second tier*, perhaps? Conversely, Hampson [25] has problematised a simple identity between AQAL and thinking postformally, indicating inapt pre-postformal aspects of Wilber’s *oeuvre*.

### Types as system

AQAL types, like quadrants,<sup>xxvi</sup> are horizontal. Unlike quadrants, they are more heterogeneous in that there is no Wilberian prescription for them to be configured into a numerated or co-ordinated regime. Nevertheless, through Slaughter’s lead in using one AQAL dimension to represent system, types as an AQAL dimension could also be regarded as a form of system. CLA could then be affirmed in relation to this form of system in that an event in which CLA is used might produce a set of different myth/metaphors. Given that AQAL type can be seen as a form of abstraction upon a litany of phenomena—where different types cohere different sets of litany—myth/metaphors can be seen as abstractive *types* which cohere their respective litanies. CLA would thus be systematic, where *systematic* is interpreted with respect to AQAL types.

Moreover, this understanding could be furthered through identifying the genealogical stream in which AQAL types sit. Wilber introduces *types* in relation to Carl Jung, Katherine Cook Myers and Isabel Briggs Myers' Indicator, and Don Richard Riso and Russ Hudson's Enneagram [32, pp.45-8] [68, pp.53-4]<sup>xxvii</sup> but he does not sufficiently explicate their historical or theoretical contexts. Specifically: he does not identify the Myers-Briggs typology as being derived from Jungian archetypes [69] [70] [71]—or, indeed, that the Myers Briggs Indicator might even be a *depostformalisation* of Jung's work [72]; he does not discuss Jung's archetypes in relation to discourse regarding universals and nominalism [73]<sup>xxviii</sup>—a quest highly pertinent to integral theorising; nor does he identify Riso and Hudson's Enneagram as stemming from a Neoplatonic understanding—as relayed through George Ivanovich Gurdjieff, Guvia Oscar Ichazo and Claudio Naranjo [74, pp.19-26]. The latter can be seen to indicate that the deepest *systemic* understanding of the Enneagram lies in its identification as an ecology of (arche)types for both human and cosmos, not human alone [74, pp.19-26]. As such, AQAL types can be seen as a “flatland” version of archetypes, a reductionist manoeuvre from (arche)type as two-layer system (cosmos-human) to (arche)type as one-layer system (human only). Wilber's somewhat obscurantist manoeuvre in this regard is compounded by two things: firstly, he had engaged in prior discussion of Jungian archetypes but without referring them to AQAL types (nascent or otherwise) [75, pp.246-9]; and secondly, he himself has used mythic archetypes—as drivers of AQAL's developmental ascent and descent<sup>xxix</sup>—yet without substantive reflection on their mythico-archetypal<sup>xxx</sup> nature or usage [75, p.69, pp.338-341, p.443]. To this situation, Causal Layered Analysis can be seen as capable of providing clarity in its ability to *integrate* Wilber's fragmented narrative via its schema: locating, for instance, (i) context-dependent phenomenological details at the litany layer, (ii) AQAL's model of ascent-descent and health-pathology at the systemic layer, (iii) Wilber's *integral* at the worldview layer, and (iv) Eros, Agape, Phobos and Thanatos (in conjunction with a Cartesian metaphorical template—as discussed below) at the myth-metaphor layer.<sup>xxxi</sup>

In short, not only can CLA be seen as systematic through using *types as system*, but it can also assist in identifying AQAL's own—relatively hidden—mythic underlay.

The potential of a yet deeper schism can be uncovered in a certain deconstruction of (*AQAL as not*) “*being systematic*”—as follows. Wilber's theoretical stance toward a certain selection of archetypes seems to be “befriend the images, rob them of their worldview” [75, p.247]. As suggested above, in such an act of “stealing,” Wilber also appears to have thrown the baby of semantic depth out with the bathwater of worldview. Further, to compound the matter, he sharply differentiates between Jungian archetypes which he regards as non-transcendental, and those of Plato (amongst others) which he regards as transcendental, yet this manoeuvre of polarisation does not account for Jung's own text which states that “‘archetype’ is an explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic εἶδος”—Plato's transcendent Form or “Idea” [78, p.4, §5]. This connection between Plato and Jung points to a particular problematisation of Wilber's theorising of *the pre/trans fallacy*, and developmental framework in general, adding to those already made [25]. Regardless of this problematisation, the current analysis will assume the efficacy of Wilber's developmental levels at least with respect to its use as a perspective adequate to explore Slaughter's interest in “being systematic.”

### On adequately representing depth

The section explores “adequately representing depth” (regarding CLA), by exploring depth as represented by depth psychology, depth linguistics, holon theory, and Slaughter; also noting context dependencies and possible hidden agendas “slipping up” from “the dark depths of the mind” [79, p. 38].

#### *Depth psychology, depth linguistics*

Jung's representation of *depth* can be exemplified through his understanding that “new thoughts and creative ideas...grow up from the dark depths of the mind like a lotus and form a most important part

of the subliminal psyche” [79, p.38], and that “a decision to go into analysis is usually accompanied by an emotional upheaval that disturbs the deep psychic levels from which archetypal symbols arise” [79, p.277] noting that “archetypes create myths” [79, p.79]. In short, Jung’s esteemed approach, self-identified as *depth psychology*, uses an analysis concerning unconscious depths in which archetypes and myths may be uncovered: *depth as myth*.

Lakoff and Johnson’s seminal work on metaphors represent depth in a similar way:

Conscious thought is the tip of an enormous iceberg. ...The 95 percent below the surface of conscious awareness shapes and structures all conscious thought. ...Our conception of the self...is deeply metaphoric. ...This metaphorical conception is rooted deep in our unconscious conceptual systems, so much so that it takes considerable effort and insight to see how it functions as the basis for reasoning about ourselves” [61, p.13]: *depth as metaphor*.

It would be difficult to argue that Causal Layered Analysis does not represent depth in a similar way: it, too, surely seeks (using the above quotations) to “disturb the deep psychic levels from which [myths and metaphors] arise,” through understanding that “our conception of the self...is deeply metaphoric...rooted deep in our unconscious conceptual systems.” Indeed, CLA involves the explication of *depth as myth and metaphor*. It would thus surely be pertinent to discuss matters of depth, myth, and metaphor by way of discourses such as those involving Jung, and Lakoff and Johnson—or James Hillman, and Owen Barfield—if only to argue against their representations. Yet Slaughter does not address such literature. Instead, he seems to rely on an assumption that AQAL adequately represents depth. Yet AQAL’s approach to developmental levels is not without contestation [25]. Nor in integral studies is developmentalism the only possible outcome of vertical metaphors, whether holarchical (e.g., [80]) or not (e.g., [12]).

#### *Contexts of adequacy*

Pertinent also is address of the contexts for which Slaughter’s claim of inadequate depth is made. Specifically, he asserts that although CLA adequately represents depth for workshop uses, it does not adequately represent depth for “advanced research and enquiry” [40, p.132]. From this, one could perhaps surmise that he does not view Jung or Lakoff and Johnson’s representation of depth as being worthy of advanced research; I would hazard this to be a difficult position to maintain. And what would be made, for instance, of the seventeen scholarly pieces employing CLA in the *CLA Reader* [38]? Are they to be regarded as “non-advanced”? On what basis? What would be made of the book’s ten scholarly methodological contextualisations of CLA or the five pieces which discuss its openness to evolution? Would they to be regarded as “non-advanced”? On what basis? And indeed, in what way does his own article exemplify “advanced research”? Such questions are not addressed.

#### *Slaughter’s representation*

If not depth psychology or depth linguistics, then what approach *does* Slaughter take with respect to depth in this context? One response is that he interprets depth as involving “progressively more substantial and shaping influences” [40, p.132]. He elaborates by drawing attention to similarities with his “own original nomenclature” of *pop futures* → *problem-oriented futures* → *critical futures* → *epistemological futures* [40, pp.132-3]. By equating his schema with CLA’s schema, does he see his analysis as applicable to both his and Inayatullah’s schemas? This is left unclear. He then differentiates between two types of application—he comments that “those distinctions [regarding his own fourfold schema] were, and remain useful when applied to entities like the futures field” [40, p.133] but that their “[operation] as a method” has now been superseded by “the integral lens” [40, p.133]. It is unclear, however, what “[application] to entities like the futures field” means exactly: Slaughter infers such “application” is not also an “operation” but in what way could Slaughter interpret the manoeuvre of *application* to *not* be a form of operation? Also, what set of entities is he referring to in the phrase “entities like the futures field” and how are they to be distinguished from entities where his schema / CLA’s schema are inadequate compared to “the integral lens”? Specifically, Slaughter’s text seems to

imply that “the integral lens” would *not* (necessarily) improve the two schemas “when applied to entities like the futures field” but does not explain why this should be the case. Surely “the integral lens” is “a theory of everything” [32] and therefore could also improve Slaughter’s fourfold schema as “applied to...the futures field”? Regardless, he does not elaborate further on *depth as “progressively more substantial and shaping influences.”* Notably, he does not substantively address its possible relationship with the concept of holarchy (a nested hierarchy of holons) [80]. Instead, Slaughter states that “CLA ‘depth’ and holon ‘depth’ are clearly two very different things. Neither are right or wrong—they are useful for different purposes” [40, p.133]. It is unclear why he assumes clarity over the issue. Such assumption is problematised below. Meanwhile, how does Slaughter characterise their difference? He implies that CLA’s schema does not relate to holons—and therefore is not holararchical. He also refers to a “series of holons in all the quadrants” as involving more than “a progression in only one domain (the LL or cultural)” [40, p.133], and elsewhere that “there are...major problems to confront when we look for depth in the LL (cultural) quadrant where CLA is arguably grounded” [40, p.133]. Here, then, he states that CLA is *grounded* in the LL implying that it involves “a progression in only one domain” yet even Slaughter’s own analysis (in Table 4) identifies CLA in three of the four quadrants. Given this assortment of CLA-identified quadrants, how can CLA then refer to a progression in only *one* quadrant? Further, when he refers to CLA as being “grounded” in the LL, it is unclear whether this is because his analysis indicates that the LL is the most represented of the quadrants in the CLA schema or whether he associates *myth/metaphor* (identified by Slaughter as contained within LL) as the “ground” of the CLA because it is the *deepest* level (the most solid “anchor” upon which the other, more variegated, levels “float above”).

#### *CLA as a holarchy*

One reading of what Slaughter is saying is that he is interpreting a holonic perspective to be one necessarily comprising the four quadrants—and so, by his reasoning, if CLA does not address all quadrants then it cannot be understood as pertaining to holons. Yet holon theory, whether from Arthur Koestler [80]—or from Wilber’s primary text in this matter (*Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*) [65]—is not substantively in relation to such perspectives as the four quadrants, but rather to the identity of entities in relation to the bi-vectorialism of holism-and-reductionism, the Janus identity involving looking simultaneously toward the One and the Many [80, Chapter 3 & Appendix 1]. The twenty tenets of Wilber’s holon theory [75, pp.35-78] refer neither to the four quadrants nor to similar notions of *interiority/exteriority-individual/collective*.<sup>xxxii</sup> Here, *holon* refers to the vertical aspect of the holarchy within which it is identified as being situated, not horizontal aspects such as signified by the four quadrants.

Given this, it would be legitimate to consider the CLA schema as a holarchy—specifically, a semantic or meaning-making holarchy—in which there is, for instance, a move from the multiplicity of the litany layer toward singularity regarding the worldview and myth/metaphor layers within any one formulation (where other formulations might identify alternative myth/metaphors). Such an understanding could be identified in reference to AQAL *lines* (*vis-à-vis* a line of semantic depth), and/or arguably in reference to both Koestler’s plurality of holarchies [80, p. 341, §1.5].<sup>xxxiii</sup> Further, if desired, the move could be framed by Wilber’s nomenclature involving *wide-and-shallow* “fundamental”<sup>xxxiv</sup> data at the litany layer through to *narrow-and-deep* “significant” data at the myth-metaphor layer (see [75, pp.62-3]). In other words, the CLA schema can be seen to expand the identity of holonic bi-vectorialism across a fourfold vertical spread (in relation to the entity in question). In this way, “CLA depth” and “holonic depth” (interpreted as the verticality of holarchy) are not different in the way Slaughter asserts, but rather that the CLA schema is a specific example of a holarchy—one, perhaps, where data at the litany level might be interpreted as *parts* of a (*whole*) myth or metaphor.

#### *Social holons*

Another perspective on depth is forwarded by Slaughter. He says that in the LL quadrant, “the depth of a social holon is related to the potential depth of its members, and greater breadth (numbers of

individuals) implies less depth. This profoundly changes what we mean by ‘depth’ in this domain” [40, p.133]. There are four potential issues here.

Firstly, his comments regarding depth do not align with AQAL developmental depth as applying to all quadrants equally: he does not explain why depth and span do not apply across all four quadrants. The tenets of Wilber’s holon theory that address depth and span do not theoretically differentiate across the four quadrants [75, pp.56-61, §§7-8]. Rather, depth and span applies to holons regardless of interior-exterior or individual-social perspectives.

Secondly, in relation to his comments on depth and span, Slaughter does not acknowledge Wilber’s address of depth in the LL as *depth of worldview* (see, e.g., [32, p.43, fig. 3-1]). Wilberian depth in the LL is associated with changes in worldview, yet Slaughter does not specifically address depth in the LL as comprising changes in worldview by way of holarchy.

Thirdly, he does not reference contestability regarding discourse on the relationship between individual and social holons. Notably, he does not acknowledge the different usages made by Koestler and Wilber regarding the relationship between individual and social holons (where Koestler does not conjoin individual and social [80]) nor discourse problematising Wilber’s interpretation of the relationship between individual and social holons—e.g., [81] [82]. Specifically he seems to conflate the interior collective perspective of a holonic entity (LL of a holon) with the interior perspective of a social holon: the LL of a holon need not have “members” in the way Slaughter suggests.

Fourthly, it is unclear what Slaughter makes of the theoretical narrative regarding depth and span in relation to CLA. He says depth and span “profoundly changes what we mean by ‘depth’ in this domain” but does not explicate how this might effect possible understandings of CLA.

#### *Verticality and slippage*

Slaughter also asserts that, “what [CLA] cannot do, and was not designed to do, is to represent ‘depth’ in any of its more profound meanings; the meanings that emerge from holon theory and the expanded integral frame” [40, p.133] but Slaughter does not evidence in what particular ways AQAL addresses such profundity of depth or how CLA might benefit from such expansion.

*Depth* is a metaphor of verticality which would presumably be identified as corresponding to a theoretical framework which uses such a topology, yet Slaughter’s article makes no reference to *depth as a metaphor*. This is doubly curious given CLA’s explicit correspondence between depth and metaphor/myth (metaphor/myth as forming the *deepest* theoretical layer). Perhaps Slaughter assumes that it is self-evident that AQAL has depth? But in what particular way? Because it has the verticality of developmental levels and lines? If so, AQAL and CLA can be identified as having different *types* of depth. But on what basis does Slaughter think AQAL’s verticality is superior to CLA’s? Unfortunately, none of this is discussed.

Slaughter links postformal reasoning with the metaphor of verticality when he states that, “it is only through *vertical* shifts to the realm of post-conventional insight and capability that we can expect to see the truly new, the novel and the extraordinary” [40, p. 130]. With respect to earlier futures methods (when approached through “the integral lens,”) he elaborates that,

they each have become open not only to the significance of the human and social interiors, they are also informed by much clearer and sharper understandings of the structures and processes found there (lines, levels, stages and states of development) that involve a series of vertical discriminations. As noted above, ‘those focusing only on exterior solutions are contributing to the problem’ [40, p.130, §4.1].

Firstly, there is an inference here that human and social exteriors do not involve a series of vertical discriminations. But, according to AQAL, this is not the case. Developmental levels affect both interiors and exteriors (e.g., see [83] [84] [85]). Secondly, although Slaughter elsewhere generally identifies AQAL correctly, by addressing (an AQAL-sounding) “lines, levels, stages and states of development,” Slaughter’s text can be seen to skew the sensibility of AQAL in a particular direction



without acknowledging such a manoeuvre. AQAL involves quadrants/perspectives, levels, lines, states and types; *stages* are not identified by AQAL as a separate dimension to *levels*. The notion of “development” is covered by levels and lines: states and types should not be inherently “of development” in AQAL any more than levels and lines should be “of types.” Furthermore, Slaughter does not acknowledge *types*. This is unfortunate as *types* allows for heterarchic multiplicity more than any other dimension of AQAL. Indeed, this is the AQAL dimension which facilitates the move from *the future* to *an ecology of possible futures* (i.e. from future studies to futures studies), from a singular *integral* to *an ecology of possible integrals*, and so from *a singular interpretation of integral futures* to *an ecology of possible interpretations of integral futures*. In a similar way to the slippage regarding poststructuralism discussed above, Slaughter’s skewing over-implicates developmentalism in integral (“lines, levels, stages” and “of development”) whilst—like Wilber as discussed above—underplays a more rhizomatic heterarchy (*types*).

### On “unpacking” individual perspectives

The section explores Slaughter’s assertion that CLA inadequately “unpacks” individual perspectives. Issues of pertinent discourse, context-dependency and andragogy are brought into play.

Slaughter makes the following two assertions regarding possible relationships between CLA and human interiors:

1. “Being mainly focused on the LL, CLA has little to say about the human interiors” [40, p.133];  
and
2. “In the main,” CLA does not “unpack’ individual perspectives” [40, p.133].

Regarding the first assertion, how can this be the case? Both UL and LL refer to interiors; if *human* is the holon in question, then both UL and LL refer to human interiors. His assertion is thus incoherent from the perspective of Wilber’s holon theory. The second assertion is addressed in detail below.

#### *On evidence and literature review*

Slaughter asks the question, “Does CLA ‘unpack’ individual perspectives?” and answers, “in the main...‘no’.” [40, p.133]. This also accords with Chris Riedy’s understanding [39]. By way of evidence Slaughter notes the following: “As we saw above, it is not mainly ‘about’ the UL.” [40, p.133] “Above” we encounter Slaughter’s analysis in the form of a matrix—as described above. He refers to this as a “summary” although he does not address the methodological procedure conducted. Perhaps he believes his evaluation to be self-evident? If so, then it should surely be in agreement with the commentary of others upon the relationship between CLA and AQAL. Yet Slaughter reviews no such literature. Perhaps there is none? A glance, however, at Inayatullah’s introductory chapter of *The Causal Layered Analysis Reader* [55]—the main text on CLA—reveals such a commentary (as pointed to above):

CLA...fits perfectly into ...[the] four-quadrant method...[including an] inner *individual* world of meanings... The inner collective world is particularly useful in exploring the myths driving an organization—the inner story. One can ask workshop participants what they think is the inner story of their organisational culture and what role are they playing in it. Once this is determined, one can ask if this is the story and character they wish to play. What are alternative stories and characters that can perhaps more authentically express their desired futures [55]. (italics added)

Inayatullah, originator of CLA, has much experience with it in practice. From such concrete knowledge, he relates CLA to individual interiors (UL) in the above quotation by talking about CLA as involving: “an inner individual world of meanings”; the psychological role individual workshop participants are playing in their organizational culture; inquiry into whether this is the individual character they wish to play; and inquiry into the desired futures of individuals. As a whole, Inayatullah

infers CLA's *sufficient* address toward that which is signified by the four quadrants—indeed, he says, it “fits perfectly.” Discussion regarding the individual and CLA is also given by Colin Russo [47]: noting that “the formation of a community perspective is preceded by the formation of an individual’s perspective” [47, p.507], Russo proposes an expansion of CLA via a “breadth” dimension (to complement CLA’s verticality) comprising individual, local, state, and world perspectives. Slaughter does not engage with the material of either Russo or Inayatullah even though their work intimately links CLA with first-person perspectives. Slaughter’s uncontextualised view, rather, is that CLA does *not* sufficiently address that which is signified by the four quadrants, notably first-person perspectives. He fails to review pertinent literature—specifically to engage in dialogue with Inayatullah—and instead appears to operate monologically where CLA is regarded as an object to be evaluated in a modernistic Cartesian fashion—i.e. irrespective of the *interior* experience or viewpoint of that object-subject (in this instance, Inayatullah’s CLA). Dialogue with the Other in this case would, conversely, be evidenced by such features as acknowledging Inayatullah’s address of the CLA-AQAL conversation, and allowing space for CLA to inform—and not only be informed by—*integral*. The move from monologic consciousness to dialogic consciousness can be identified as one of the markers of the generic move from *formal/conventional* to *postformal/postconventional* [86] [87] [88] [25] [89] [90, p.209] [91].<sup>xxxv</sup>

#### *Context dependency*

Also, as suggested above (§ 3.1.3), CLA may *legitimately* not involve the UL due to context-dependency. If the context is collective then it would likely be the case that collective metaphors etc. would be regarded as a desirable outcome. The process, nonetheless, may involve and be relevant to particular individual perspectives. Conversely, if the context is an individual one then it would likely be the case that individual metaphors etc. would be regarded as a desirable outcome; the process, nonetheless, may inform collective considerations. If analysis of the current situation with CLA is that it appears to be mainly used in collective situations and that it is underused in individual situations (such as in psychotherapy) then this would be a different kind of evaluation to the one Slaughter is providing.

#### *Regarding andragogy and redemption*

A core redemptive or androgical aspect of AQAL could be identified as its potential ability to “systematically” indicate gaps relating to alternative perspectives and thence to explicate how such gaps might assist the particular entity under consideration, thus facilitating a transformative learning occasion. The gap Slaughter attempts to indicate centres around the UL. His argument, however, is not satisfactorily andragogical: he does not furnish the discussion with sufficient detail of how extended address of the UL might fruitfully extend CLA. Wilber’s extensive canvas of individual interiors may well offer something of value to potentially enrich CLA but Slaughter’s text does not readily facilitate such possibilities. Indeed, his *framing* of his inquiry tends toward foreclosure. He asks: “Does CLA ‘unpack’ individual perspectives?” [40, p.133] Assuming Slaughter’s overall interest is to demonstrate the efficacy of AQAL in relation to CLA, is Slaughter’s understanding (a) that AQAL can *enrich* individual perspectives regardless of the current status of their address, or (b) that the value of AQAL is only operative if individual perspectives are found to be *insufficiently* addressed?<sup>xxxvi</sup> If (a), then a comparison would need to be made between the current way CLA “unpacks” individual perspectives and the current way AQAL “unpacks” individual perspectives, and then a route shown of how to take advantage of this potential enrichment. If (b), then it would need to be shown that CLA does not substantively “unpack” individual perspectives. But if it is discovered that CLA *does* unpack individual perspectives, then the question would have been answered, thus indicating a closure of conversation. Unfortunately, it is the latter, relatively unproductive, framing which Slaughter chooses. Additionally, as indicated above, it is not difficult to show that CLA does indeed “unpack” individual perspectives—wherein, AQAL might consequently be inferred *not* to be efficacious in this context: a result, I would hazard, Slaughter would not intend. An alternative type of inquiry—one stemming from (a)—might have comprised: “In what ways might AQAL be able to facilitate CLA in furthering

CLA’s unpacking of individual perspectives?”; here, by contrast, the question would not so much revolve around the binary *whether or not* CLA “unpacks,” but would explore the way CLA *does* “unpack” and then detail how AQAL’s “unpacking of individual perspectives” might fruitfully extend the current situation. But we are left with the former, more barren concern.

### Reflexive perspective

Reflexively, in addition to drawing attention to certain inconsistencies and insubstantialities, my analysis includes both gap-finding (in relation to potentials of various dialogues), and the uncovering of hidden layers (such as the identification of modernistic manoeuvres). My map is partly pre-given, and partly created as I go. (It may not even “be” a map.) My evaluation attempts to honour both big-picture thinking and care for detail. Inevitably, however—as befits the human condition—this analysis is fallible, and, as such, I look forward to redemptive critique.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

Meanwhile, the redemptive aspect of *my* critique includes the following openings for dialogue and further research:

- New potential scenarios for integral futures stemming from a plurality of integral approaches;
- Further dialogue between CLA and *integral*;
- Deepening CLA’s relationship to myth and metaphor;
- Connecting *postformal-postconventional* and *poststructural*;
- Thinking postformally about *term-concepts* and *system*;
- Further critique of AQAL as currently configured;
- Forwarding Koestler’s holon theory;
- Metaphors of verticality, including *depth*;
- Theoretical ecologies;
- Developing new connections to *archetypes*;
- Valorising andradological considerations.

### Conclusion

Slaughter’s position is that, “at best the CLA is a part of a *preparation* for post-conventional inspiration and work” [40, p.134] (original italics) and that “CLA has little to say about the human interiors” [40, p.133]. This position is inaccurate. Rather, CLA can be identified as a postconventional approach which addresses human interiors. In contrast, Slaughter’s analysis insufficiently foregrounds the postconventionality of integral approaches; indeed, aspects of it bespeak of unhelpful modernistic tendencies.

Slaughter might himself wish to attend the following in relation to possible enactments of integral methodology: “One of the central insights to emerge from IF, in fact, is that it is the level of development of the practitioner that determines how well or badly any particular method will be used” [40, p.133]. He might also wish to problematise such a totalizing perspective regarding the evaluation of an entire person by way of a singular development level.

Further, as he himself says: “The success of any method brings with it a temptation to reify and overclaim” [40, p.131]. This includes the “meta-method” of Wilber’s *integral*, magnified by its self-identifying as “*post-postmodern*” (as implying *especially capable or advanced*). Even if AQAL has the capability to “un-freeze” methodologies “for further development, and greatly [expand] the range of options for study, research, workshopping and problem solving” [40, p.134] an unskillful presentation might have the reverse effect of entrenching positions and closing down transformative potentials.

### *Alternative futures of Integral*

Slaughter points to the transformative potential of AQAL implicit in *gap-finding*. CLA points in part to the transformative potential of *myth/metaphor-uncovering*. From this, each could be useful to the other. For “advanced research,” however, engagement requires sufficient skill and sensitivity to pertinent details and discourse so as not to be caught in the spell of a Riding Roughshod methodology. Slaughter himself points to this need: “Integrally informed futures practitioners” “understand that ‘solutions’ emerge from complex processes of which they are a part and can seldom be pre-programmed” [92, p.104]. But *integral* is not synonymous with AQAL. If *integral* is to be a living noetic entity then it should be aptly *open* to work *with* that which each researcher or methodology might bring *to it*. A resultant situation of being both *integrally-informed* and *integrally-informing* could be termed being *integrally-engaged*. To enter into dialogue with CLA would be not only to explore what integral approaches have to offer CLA but also vice versa: CLA’s semantic holarchy, for instance, is capable not only of locating Eros, Agape, Phobos and Thanatos as myths underlaying Wilber’s *integral* worldview, but of the metaphorical template characterising the way the four are employed—notably their Cartesian containment (*up-down, healthy/pathological*). A theory or methodology’s ability to locate “everything within it” does not preclude other theories or methodologies from being able to perform similar manoeuvres. Like an entangled forest canopy, holarchies and other theoretical arborescent structures can intertwine and interpenetrate [79] [93]. They may also be found in mixed ecologies with rhizomes [94] and animalisation [95]. Through such transformative openings, alternative futures of *integral* may arise.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> She identifies this interpretation as one of four. The other three comprise: integral as pertaining to “integral theory”; integral as pertaining to both “integral theory” and high-stage action logics; and “other.”

<sup>ii</sup> A transdisciplinary understanding of *postformal* can also include literature from other domains, notably education and integral studies itself [25].

<sup>iii</sup> In reference to the controversy caused by a blog by Wilber in which he attacks “some critics” by way of identifying himself as Wyatt Earp, an iconic American cowboy, and using controversially coarse cowboy language [33]. Also see [24].

<sup>iv</sup> For example, Jeff Meyerhoff, author of *Bald Ambition: A Critique of Ken Wilber’s Theory of Everything* [35] summarises that “Wilber’s techniques of avoidance...include: ignoring..., dismissiveness, mockery, caricaturing opponents positions, rarely quoting opponents, making criticisms but providing no examples, claims of private critical discussions, complaints of time constraints...” [35].

<sup>v</sup> As Chris Riedy notes: “Despite the efforts of postmodernists and poststructuralists, Western civilisation still focuses predominantly on the exterior reality revealed by rational scientific methods and either ignores interior reality...or reduces it to its exterior correlates” [39].

<sup>vi</sup> Although it is unlikely that either of these poles in extremum could be identified phenomenologically, it nonetheless remains pertinent to attempt to demonstrate the potential of such differentiation.

<sup>vii</sup> Although Riedy [39] devotes an entire article addressing “an integral extension” of CLA in the same special issue of *Futures* as Slaughter’s article, I find Slaughter’s analysis to be more generative in terms of opening up possible dialogic threads.

<sup>viii</sup> E.g., *system as AQAL quadrants, as levels, and as types; depth as AQAL levels; as archetypal myth; as metaphoric template, and as “progressively more substantial and shaping influences; integral as Wilber’s “Integral.”*



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<sup>ix</sup> By way of (an albeit necessarily oblique) positive affirmation of such a complex noetic entity, Derrida scholar John Caputo furthers that, “deconstruction is...the right to philosophy; the love of the Greeks; a community without community; justice; the messianic (a certain religion); and finally, yes, affirmation” [43].

<sup>x</sup> See section “The reflexive perspective”.

<sup>xi</sup> Slaughter’s [40] reference list as a whole comprises nine self-penned references, five further references regarding Wilber or integral futures, eight non-CLA-related futures-oriented references, and two CLA-related references, the one by Inayatullah detailed here, and another regarding how CLA emerged from Slaughter’s own work.

<sup>xii</sup> It should also be noted that, like AQAL’s locating of *system* in the Lower Right quadrant, CLA’s locates *system* (as systemic layer) as *one* of its four layers.

<sup>xiii</sup> Where verticality, as per AQAL, relates to developmental considerations, and horizontality to non-developmental dimensions. Wilber’s under-identification of quadrants as horizontal per se may suggest an undue bias against heterarchy.

<sup>xiv</sup> Noting that “systemic” is kin but not equivalent to “systematic.”

<sup>xv</sup> In this context I am using *genealogy* in reference to Davis’ [51] rather than Foucault’s interpretation.

<sup>xvi</sup> Wilber’s statement is nonetheless ambiguous in that he does not clarify here whether he means that (i) the four quadrants are different from developmental levels, or whether (ii) the four quadrants are different from each other and that each level is different from other levels, or (iii) both.

<sup>xvii</sup> Where, according to Wilber, each quadrant has its own validity claim—namely, Upper Left (individual interior): truthfulness; Upper Right (individual exterior): truth; Lower Left (collective interior): cultural meaning; Lower Right (collective exterior): functional fit.

<sup>xviii</sup> On this, Sean Kelly, integral theorist and practitioner, identifies the following: “At one point, Wilber writes that, ‘[a]pparently, each quadrant causes, and is caused by, the others in a circular and irreducible fashion....’ Wilber is on to something here, but he does not pursue this observation further—perhaps, I suspect, because the principle which is being invoked, without being named explicitly, is antithetical to the notion of ‘holarchical integration’ which, as we shall see, plays such a central role in Wilber’s overall model of consciousness” [54].

<sup>xix</sup> Noting Gidley’s delicate theorising [59].

<sup>xx</sup> After Nicolescu [60].

<sup>xxi</sup> The hyphenated *term-concept* allows for the dynamic interplay between the two (after Edgar Morin)

<sup>xxii</sup> Theorised as *conceptual metaphor*.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Acknowledgement to Jenny Gidley (personal communication).

<sup>xxiv</sup> Brown [69] furthers that ecosystems (i) “are comprised of many parts”; (ii) “are open systems”; (iii) “are adaptive”; (iv) “have irreversible histories”; and (v) “exhibit a rich variety of complex, non-linear dynamics” [64]

<sup>xxv</sup> Postformal systems also have the “option” of “mimicking” closed systems—depending on context. As Bertalanffy indicates: “Open systems *may*, provided certain conditions are given, attain a stationary state” [63].

<sup>xxvi</sup> Where AQAL would be configured according to vertical and horizontal metaphors; quadrants represent different (but not developmental) perspectives of the same holon.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Also in relation to male/female.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Jung’s book also discusses *archetype* in relation to other integrally-relevant items such as Brahmanic understandings, Chinese philosophy, Schiller, relativism and empiricism.

<sup>xxix</sup> Wilber’s narrative uses Eros, Agape, Phobos and Thanatos as mythic archetypes in his model of the cosmos comprising the dimension of developmental ascent/descent with the either/or possibilities of healthy inclusion and pathological exclusion (namely, Eros as transcend-and-include; Agape as descend-and-include; Phobos as transcend-and-exclude; Thanatos as descend-and-exclude). He forwards, for instance, Charles Taylor’s comment that Eros and Agape “make a vast circle of love through the universe” [76].

<sup>xxx</sup> Archetype as coterminous with myth.

<sup>xxxi</sup> A causal layered analysis on Wilber is also provided by Marcus Anthony [77].

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<sup>xxxii</sup> Wilber's comments on the interiority and exteriority of holons are not identified in the twenty tenets of holon theory but constitute a subsequent discussion. In this, he aligns with Koestler's sixty six tenets of holon theory: the Janus-like perspective is applied to the vertical only. By identifying holons as having interior and exterior perspectives, a Janus-quality can nonetheless be identified for the quadrants, too, but the case for *this* Janus-like extension from Koestler's original concept has not been formally identified by Wilber. Instead, there appears to be the possibility of an unevidenced slippage: In *A Theory of Everything* he states, "Simplest of all, I refer to this model [of an "all quadrant, all level approach] as 'holonic'" and that "the fundamental entities in all of the quadrants, levels, and lines are simply holons (see SES for a full elaboration on this topic)" [32]. One interpretation of this is that quadrants and levels are *both necessary* to fulfil Wilber's definition of "holonic"—this seems to be Slaughter's position—but the extension of Koestler's levels-identified holon to the possibility of *quadrant (per se) as holon* is not addressed: there is no discussion, for instance, of the dimensionality of interiors and exteriors possibly going on ad infinitum (and even where Wilber puts forward the eight native perspectives, he does not do this in relation to this horizontal interpretation of holon, even though each quadrant can itself now be seen as double-faced); there is no discussion regarding the different characteristics between interiority-exteriority (such as their apparently more dualistic nature) and vertical holarchic considerations (such as their channels of communication). Another interpretation is that, as in *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality (SES)* [75], *holon* only refers to verticality, and that quadrants relate to holons only via the primacy of a *levels*-identification. The confusion arising from these different interpretations leads to a situation *not* being as "simple" as Wilber claims. Specifically, it would seem that Slaughter has possibly been misled by Wilber's characterisation of such *simplicity* with regard to holons, or else indeed, Wilber has misinterpreted Koestler's *holon* too simplistically (without a necessary substantive discussion regarding the consequences of such extension). So, in relation to Wilber's comment, although it *is* the case that Wilber provides an elaboration of his version of holon theory in *SES*, it is *not* the case that he does so in reference to the four quadrants. (Despite the presence of the now-well-used four-quadrant diagram in the covers of the book, the index of *SES* does not reference quadrants, nor does Wilber substantively elaborate on *interiority-exteriority* or *individual-collective* in those tenets. Thus, in relation to quadrants, a full elaboration is *not* given in *SES*.)

<sup>xxxiii</sup> A question here would be to ascertain CLA's schema in relation to the possibility of it displaying "rule-governed behaviour and/or structural Gestalt-constancy" [80].

<sup>xxxiv</sup> When Slaughter says that "the integral approach suggests that the detailed developmental structures of the UL...turn out to be fundamental" [40], I note, by way of clarification, that he appears to be using the term "fundamental" as synonymous with "significant" rather than in the Wilberian sense of *that which is (holarchically) contrasted to 'significant'* (see [75]).

<sup>xxxv</sup> In keeping with thinking postformally, this understanding should be held complexly rather than monolithically.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> I have framed this as an either/or to assist clarity in this particular context.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> E.g., What inaccuracies might there be in my text? Have I been sufficiently andragogical? What subtexts can be identified that may lend a certain deconstruction?

## Rethinking moral futures

David Turnbull

### Abstract

*In the context of a wider discussion on 'integral futures' this paper reconsiders the openly integrative tendency of some moral-hermeneutic agendas. In relating a story that includes a personal failure to bring about 'integrality' despite having the best of intentions, a third space is opened as a way to rethink moral futures.*

### On finding what one does not, after all, *know*

I've been intrigued, for a very long time, not so much with the question, *what am I* (made of), as if body organs and molecular bits were intrinsically interesting, but with the question *who am I*? A strange question, this one, and it led me into exploring philosophy and from there into considering a possible connection between the question 'who am I' and being (or not being) *a good person*. So I got into exploring the presuppositions and ramifications of a *single* question: what is a good life? And just because there are lots of interesting angles on this I did studies in moral philosophy and what is nowadays called 'applied' or 'practical' ethics.

Such explorations encompass the terms 'good' and 'life' and there are diverse understandings of what these terms mean. Diversity does not mean that all understandings are equally worthy of being followed. Practical moral inquiry into what is said by various people to be good becomes a process of clarification (seeking mutual understanding and appreciation) and of appraisal (examining justifications for what is put forward as being good). There is no guarantee that agreement will be reached or mutual understanding arrived at. Indeed, according to hermeneutical theorists such as Gadamer and (long ago) Schleiermacher, the contrary is more likely, so the very project is exceedingly difficult from the outset.

Now clearly (for many people), life comes from somewhere and goes somewhere else (it is a journey of sorts) and what counts as being good may differ at different stages. Part of that journey remains in the future, and that, being relatively more unknown than the past, places futures inquiry on an uncertain footing. But this uncertainty contains for some people a sort of hope. Because the future is not yet, some people continue trying to unravel the mix of possible clues and messages that exist in an admittedly less than readily intelligible universe. The view of the universe as being intelligible, is not in the form of abstract equations of physics but relates in part to a poetical-moral sense of human identity, for example that as a speaker, comprehending words, one is summoned into caring for or about *whatever* else speaks. This ultimately means for a thinker such as Heidegger, one is a 'shepherd', or 'guardian' of 'Being' itself (and here one is reminded that for some poets, *everything* this is, speaks). [1] The idea of a far-reaching guardianship in Heidegger's thought has since been taken up by environmentalists concerned that under humanism, humans have forgotten their protective responsibilities concerning *alterity*, and preserving the differences that occur on the earth and outside it. [2] Now against this specifically poetical formulation of 'Being' as the warrant of human responsibility, there has been mounted a sustained attack by postmodernists, among others, Derrida and his followers. Heidegger confidently expressed an awareness of the presence of Being in statements such as "Being speaks always and everywhere throughout language". [3] Derrida, however, could only express what he termed "a simulated affirmation" in the

deconstructed sentence “Being / speaks / always and everywhere / throughout / language”. [4] On this view, there is no warrant for maintaining that language contains a coherent poetic-moral whole: there are bits and pieces of language (some of which is poetical and/or moralist) located randomly in diverse cultures; that’s all.

For this reason, even though an inquiry into ‘the good’ may seek to be integrative of *diverse and contrary* perspectives and understandings on a procedural or methodological level, it is prone to fail as a result of deep antagonisms over the validity of poetical insight, and thus is only *uneasily* participatory and collaborative. The inquiry is also *uneasily* transformative: what good do we (who fail to agree about so much) propose to project into the future? Is there *any* such good? Moral theorists Isaacs and Massey—with whom I studied—have identified four domains in what they term the ‘applied ethics agenda’ that are peculiar to practical moral inquiry: hermeneutical (understanding the other in a culturally embedded context), appreciative (regarding the other, nevertheless, as unique), appraisive (or evaluative, particularly in regards ‘human wickedness’) and transformative (of disempowering, demeaning and insensitive social environments). [5] This agenda has a weakness in that it is not anchored to anything other than the moral hermeneutist, and this is unreliable, given that his or her social/cultural context is impregnated with similar flaws to those that are being addressed.

### Insiders and outsiders

It was this problem I encountered during a number of years using the integrative model proposed by Isaacs and Massey. In practice one finds similar intractable ‘problems’ within one’s social identity or environment that one attempts to oppose in others. One might listen to others in part; one rarely if ever truly has an opportunity to integrate them or their thoughts. Integrality, as Jayne Clapton explains, is not about assimilating another person, an outsider, into a particular field of practice. [6] It involves changing the field of practice to allow for the unique contributions of the person. In practice, practices are not that adaptable. One of the reasons for this problem is that organisations depend for their identity on maintaining a distinctive core set of values and pronouncements concerning the state of the world outside their boundaries.

As an aspiring ‘applied ethics’ practitioner, I recognised that stating the world to be a certain way is part of constructing that world (taking a constructivist view). Worlds of insiders and outsiders, of allies and enemies, had already been constructed before I arrived. For a time I contributed to keeping these worlds in place. Contemporary medical and scientific practices, I argued when working in the field of disability advocacy, were just continuations of historical inequalities and atrocities, dressed up a bit better for public consumption. Then I realised that the argument itself was a form of litany. It was being stated over and over, and sheer repetition was considered sufficient by the organisation for which I worked. I began to suspect that the litany was itself a social cause of the indifference of outsiders to the issues in question. We were co-contributors to our own condition of inequality. I began to ask, how would it be if we were to engage with outsiders *as equals*? I wondered whether we could allow the recognition of a universal position of moral-hermeneutic uncertainty, of being unsure about which message was *most fitting* to an audience when speaking into a situation. I began to question the adversarial posture of directly calling people into account. What would happen to our potential discourses if something gentler, but equally searching, was the posture? I began to ask questions that took a less adversarial trajectory, like: what is the place for people with serious genetic conditions in a geneticised world? [7] The question went beyond the familiar litanies of complaint and asked everyone to consider the collective impact of our actions *on people who do not exist yet*. I invited other people to give their answers. And very few seemed to want to respond, not only (I theorised) because some were caught up in the concerns of self, but because for others, communitarian commitments made it impossible to go there. Nevertheless this line

of futures questioning was threatening to disintegrate the boundaries that kept the familiar ‘I/we versus you’ discourses intact. From the perspective of preserving my own selfhood and communal associations, I was on a dangerous journey.

If one sets out to engage with an outsider or an enemy *as an equal* one is perceived by insiders and allies to undermine these distinctions. Outsiders and enemies are always *less than*. I set out to engage questioningly with the values and worldviews of others, not in order to change my organisation’s commitments, but in order to build bridges that demonstrated a sincere attempt at developing mutual understanding. Sometimes this openness to inquiry was appreciated by people on the outside of organisations from which I spoke. However, increasingly, I too became treated as an outsider by influential people within the organisation. I was not sufficiently committed, they thought, to the organisation’s key values and propositions. It tends to bring one back to the drawing board. Was I truly ready to face up to the inherent limitations of the human social condition?

Having experienced being treated as an outsider but not really wanting to be one, I began to consciously think towards an alternative future from the position of an insider-as-outsider. I decided I would no longer regard myself as a *definitive identity* speaking from ‘inside’ the discourses of ethics, advocacies and the like. As part of this project I engaged with Ross Barnard, Biotechnology Program Coordinator at the University of Queensland. Together we discussed the incoherence of axioms used by geneticists in their work with those used by most people invoking ethics. We both saw people on different sides talking right past each other, and we agreed that the incoherence over axioms necessitated a space in which assumptions of genetics and ethics were questioned, not from the point of view of the other, but from a position of epistemic uncertainty, and not assuming we knew what is going on inside the ‘black box’ whether that be genes, molecules or consciousness, ultimately admitting the pervasiveness of metaphor when it comes to describing the nature of time, for instance. Together we understood this space of radical questioning a ‘third’ space for ethical deliberation, unable to make concrete suggestions as to how to produce such a space. [8] One might suggest that the technological production of such a space would be to undermine it from the very beginning. Indeed, finding that I was out of joint with technocratic approaches originating in Baconian science [9] is the very reason why rethinking moral futures has become an ongoing challenge.

## Rethinking moral futures

In a schematic approach to moral futures I assume (or postulate) three spaces. There is an originating point or ‘first’ moral space. This can be conceptually clarified as any space that contains an individual’s thinking, willing and action, such that willing turns thought into an action *promoting the individual concerned*. There is also a space where any embodied ‘self’ that thinks, wills and acts, comes into *social* existence as having an identity of who others say they are. In this way, first and second moral spaces, even whilst they are mutually supportive, give rise to tensions and hostilities. Beyond its social existence, the space of ‘the self’ remains a mere point-postulation because ‘fleshing it out’ requires the defining space of language and social interactions, of prescriptions and prohibitions. It is, moreover, within a relatively small number of (socially) defining events that one becomes a recognised self. The ‘who’ one becomes, is of one having initiated an action, or being responsible for something e.g. ‘This is the house that Jack built’ designates Jack as a builder. Prior to such events, there is no definitive self to consider. There is thus something alarmingly tenuous about the existence of such a self: it is ‘socially constructed’ rather than innately ‘authentic’.

In the name of an authentic self some have tried to defy or alternatively reappropriate social conventions of being named and described by others. There is a rebellion undertaken by many people against ‘the big other’ of social approval and disapproval. [10] There is an attempt to

wrest back ‘the self’ as a self-authenticated agent of moral action. Against this rebellious agency, defenders of social order may proclaim a transcendent basis for its power. The contest over which moral space is authentic thereafter takes many shapes and forms, and continues interminably, and yet is fraught with an oft-hidden problematic.

The problematic of first and second moral spaces is that, on the one hand, thinking, willing and acting are not simply socially given. They require someone who thinks, wills and acts. And yet the existence of the ‘someone’ has no mandate in the absence of a social linguistic context. The originating self is no true self-standing originator. It is socially derived: a metaphor without an external substance, the metaphor itself disintegrating the very notion of substance. And yet thinking, willing and acting do take place. In a social context this is descriptively presented as ‘power’. When the locus of thought-willing-action is confronted by an opposite (another agency), willing is tempted to become will to power. If so, a struggle between individuals or individual and society ensues.

Alternatively, a third moral space coincides with, and originates in, a deferral of will, especially of will to power, as suggested in Heidegger’s terminology ‘willing not to will’ or ‘letting be’. [11] In this space the self apprehends insubstantiality, both in itself and in the big other. The big other has no power over the self because the self apprehends its own insubstantial essence and that of the other. There is no substantial self to defend, no other substantial self to attack. But what the big other promotes or seeks to authorise, typically, is a regime of power in which the self is invited or intimidated into participation. Participation in such an instance is a form of will to power. Deferral of will to power—of not willing along with the big other—instantiates a form of resistance. One thinks, one speaks, one even argues. But one does not act in the way that one is being summoned to act. The big other is then allowed to continue on its way without having gained an adherent, thus letting it be. The difference from a first space kind of resistance is that the concern is not for the self in terms of being ‘who’ one defines oneself to be.

The space that occurs here, a space of thought, deferred willing and consequent resistance is an opening for a potential meeting with others on a completely different basis to that of will to power. Without seeking power (of a self or society), the essential moral concern is *for others* (including other species) and with making arrangements for accommodating them (in the world, the home or the environment). These relationships begin with and remain rooted within the ordinary tasks of the everyday; of hospitality and friendship. They are not, or at least do not require, the grandiose and oft-obnoxious roles of property ownership, citizenship and bringing others into subjection within a political community. A pre-occupation with those roles is the greatest threat to an open future.

At this threshold one task of moral thinking has now been completed: naming the kinds of actions required. Of course there are many tasks of thinking that must go on indefinitely, regardless in what form the future is being presented, for example, enabling and promoting the comprehension of how a condition of ontological simplicity (of not being substantially a ‘self’), the disintegration of will to power, and the formation of caring relationships with others are mutually supporting aspects of this space. This may well require processes of unthinking, that is, of undoing what was previously thought. And, as a way of exemplifying this critical component of third moral space, I will here briefly enter a contemporary debate in the field of futures studies.

### Unthinking the prospect of ‘Integral futures’

A chapter I wrote in the Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) Reader [12] speaks about integral futures as “the possibility for the integration of different perspectives, that is, for post-normal science”, citing Ziauddin Sardar. [13] Now thinking of possibilities is fine: yet one does not

think of all possibilities. Finding some previously unthought possibilities like a comprehensive research program for integral futures as proposed by Richard Slaughter, [14] brings about some further reflection. The discovery of what for me lay unthought within the idea of integral futures now impels me to reflect on how thinking in one way may contain an inherent vulnerability to being subjugated by something quite alien and unwanted.

Writing that chapter in the *Reader* required, for me, an effort to think across epistemic and disciplinary boundaries in science and ethics, and predisposed me, albeit unconsciously, to a dangerous narrowing of the future. Thinking, by way of a critical hermeneutics, to collapse the distinction between ‘cultural/interpretive’ and ‘critical’ in Sohail Inayatullah’s outline of epistemologies, [15] I maintained that “There are, broadly speaking, two ways of addressing the future: the ‘predictive’ and the ‘deliberative’.” [16] Yet that approach is far too prescriptive, loading the future, as it were, with deliberation, collectively, as the only alternative to prediction. Deliberation tends to *favour* hermeneutics, or seeking understanding, so that *together, we* can go to work on the future. That is far too presumptive about who ‘we the deliberators’ are and what deliberation might achieve.

There are processes at work that no amount of deliberation can capture or control. There are futures-shaping spaces on the borders of the social/cultural in which deliberation is problematic and elusive at best. Some are, indeed, disintegrative spaces, and it would be facile to assume that all they need is to be re-integrated into a greater whole. At this point one might speak of desire, and hope, but not, or not prescriptively, of ‘integral futures’.

It is not surprising, in hindsight, that crucial differences between Slaughter’s approach to critical futures studies (CFS) and that of Inayatullah’s are emerging. Insofar as I understand it, Inayatullah’s adoption of a poststructural/Tantric approach to CFS is about opening up the future to influences from beyond ‘the dominant paradigm’ whereas Slaughter’s seeks to *be* such a paradigm. Inayatullah’s approach opens up ways (albeit fragile) to help address deep-seated dislocations and frustrations within the contemporary social/cultural world. And for some, it provides ways of transferring hope into the future, whilst at the same time working actively towards it, without actually *defining* what ‘it’ is. Contrary to futures approaches that are concerned to define, to concretise, to grasp as a whole, the poststructuralist version of CFS is partly to undefine, to lessen the tight hold on the future that some crave. And this means the approach *has to be* at least suspicious of a hermeneutical agenda (‘hermeneutical’ is seeking for ways to ‘grasp’ a truth) whilst at the same time seeking to be understood as a process of not grasping, of allowing for not being captured, interrogated, colonised and subjugated.

Rather than being integrative, such an approach is, at least in part, *disintegrative* of a tendency towards being subjugated or engaging in acts of subjugation of the other. There is a shifting of the location of hope. Hope shifts, not from integration to disintegration (as if terrorism was justified) but into the array of ill-defined, fluid, oscillating processes and events that occur somewhere between integration and disintegration. Having hope is not to say that there will not be a very great universally experienced trauma, or pockets of trauma in which particular environments, cultures and social arrangements fall apart. Part of a drive towards raising spiritual awareness is the perceived need to prepare for trauma, already being experienced in many places across the planet. However—and this is the crucial difference being considered here—the very last thing to desire or hope is a program explicitly designed to ensure that all the conceptual, emotional and cultural baggage *that defines us* at the present time is somehow made *integral* to the future. Yet quite explicitly, this is the agenda of Integral Futures (IF) announced by Slaughter and taken up positively by other writers in *Futures 40* (2008).

What I find particularly disturbing is a claim by Slaughter that CFS lacks “deeper insight into the nature of human beings, and in particular, the structure of their own unique interior worlds”, as if indeed, IF already has that on offer. [17] And that precisely is what Slaughter does claim:

“By finally addressing this ‘missing dimension’, IF has, in a sense, completed a 40 year process of disciplinary development.”[18] Slaughter then goes on to assure his readers that everything involving human beings can be accounted for within four quadrants of analysis: interior/individual (corresponding to self and consciousness), interior/collective (culture and worldview), exterior/individual (brain and organism), and exterior/collective (social and environment).

Against this proclamation one may well be reminded that ‘human nature’ is not something that could be tested and analysed under research conditions no matter how grand or comprehensive the program. Such an entity remains forever elusive for describing it would require, as Hannah Arendt put it poetically, ‘jumping over our own shadows.’[19] Those who proclaim the idea of human nature fail to recognise that, if it is up to humans to analyse it, then whatever distortions introduced by the analyst will also be part of the result: at best reflecting a particular sort of research culture, one that claims, above all, *to know* people as if they were subjects or objects. And this as the foregoing essay has argued, is precisely what cannot be claimed, at least if there has been signalled a transition to a third moral space.

### In transition to a third moral space

Admittedly, third moral space appears at the outset something both intangible and ephemeral. It is not a well-defined first space of individual self-consciousness, of happiness or pain, or a second space of distinct moral obligations. As I write this particular story, third moral space seems tantalisingly near, and yet it is also remote. The prospect exists at the level of ‘myth/metaphor’, which opens up the possibility that it will only find expression if experience of hidden trauma or unfulfilled longing drives one outside the familiar boundaries of self and community. It remains a space in a time out of joint with the given and the now.

If one hears, ‘we aren’t ready for this’, or ‘this is too far fetched’, or ‘you aren’t in touch with reality’, third moral space looms as a prospect. And here there is a justification for a pre-occupation with keeping the future open in this prospective space: one does not have to expend energy trying to make oneself into a social cause of the defeat of another. There is instead another activity of stretching forward in time, of bringing yet unthought possibilities into consciousness, so that these possibilities have an opportunity to touch upon and transform inwardly the apparent solid reality of the present. The present in any case, along with self and community, disappears like a vapour. We are, in our current seeming individual or communal solidity, defeated by the future, and so the greatest integrative act is to acknowledge disintegration, to live through it in time, allowing that even trauma disintegrates, leaving behind, only residual influences. As Hannah Arendt describes it, everything that once was undergoes a ‘sea-change’ so that what we may receive, historically, are ‘*fragments from the past, after their sea-change.*’ [20] Even as worlds are disintegrating and changing, there are the ‘rich and strange’, the ‘coral’ and ‘pearls’ discoverable among the wreckages of time, and there is a ‘timeless track that *thinking* beats into the world of space and time.’[21]

Now this is being speculative: In the midst of the disintegration of the past one may feel something of a longing to return, not as if to a field of individual atoms jostling angrily against one another, but to a field of united consciousness. The process by which this uniting takes place can be understood and identified as a form of longing. That longing is part of a force of attraction that cannot be explained by many of the theories that inform the therapeutic sciences. These by and large seem to operate under the assumption that almost everything from family relationships to genes can be mechanistically replaced. In contradistinction to this, the longing for particular but unknown others causes strangers to give ear to each other’s voice in order to listen for a particular theme or message or relationship brought by the other that strengthens nourishes uplifts and ennobles. Thus one may become so bold as to say that a third moral space



is one constituted by an unfulfilled longing for a return to bliss, whilst even now retaining an essential connection with trauma.

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# Self-reflexive challenges of Integrative futures

Anthony Judge

## Abstract

*Contrasts the approach to "futures" characteristic of Ken Wilber, and Integral Futures, with the approach taken by David Lorimer, and the Scientific and Medical Network. The differences between these approaches, for any integrative understanding of futures, are presented as arising from stylistic preferences and biases which are usefully highlighted with a range of metaphors. These however highlight the challenge of any more integrative understanding, especially in the light of hidden dynamics of exclusion in a questionable effort to demonstrate that one approach is "better" than another in a complex human endeavour—especially when the future is sensed strategically through other metaphors than "vision". Consideration is given to the possible use of a pattern language to address such issues, especially given questions regarding the adequacy of text on a conventional surface to hold complex significance and interrelationships. It is concluded that integrative futures is then the strange quest for how cognitively to embody the extremes represented by Wilber and Lorimer in the present—to evoke the greater harmony through engaging creatively with the dissonant pattern of imperfections.*

**Keywords:** futures, metaphor, epistemological bias, forms of presentation, comprehension

## Introduction

This exploration is about "everything" as exemplified by the initiatives of Ken Wilber and David Lorimer. More precisely it is about how such reflections affect me and enhance or inhibit my own integrative understanding.

Part of the fascination in endeavouring to craft a comment on the special edition on "integral futures" [1] lies outside the technicalities of academic discourse through which positions are presented, criticized and debated. The question for me, and I assume for others, is how a coherent understanding is enabled in the face of a spray of "points" and "lines" of argument—to say nothing of the very "volume" of such discourse which somehow makes up the "body" of available knowledge at this time. At the same time one knows full well that pre-logical biases and preferences swing into play in filtering, weighting or dismissing content considered (highly) significant by others. One may also be aware that the body of knowledge, like any planet, has "curvature"—giving rise to "horizon effects" that ensure that some knowledge will not be available to me and that some I prefer will be cast into shadow when those others are appropriately enlightened.

It is for such reasons that it is valuable to consider the challenge for anyone coming to integrative questions for the first time and struggling to work out what are the integrative relationships between positions that seem to be at odds with each other—especially when those differences and dynamics are not integrated into what are put forward as integrative frameworks. My own early attempt to honour those who took integrative matters seriously was the profiling in 1976 of 421 "Integrative, Unitary and Transdisciplinary Concepts" within the context of the *Yearbook of World Problems and Human Potential* [2] with a bibliography of relevant studies. That exercise also endeavoured to associate those understandings with the separate extant set of understandings of "human development" and of "human values" as described in *Futures* at that time [3]. However one of the obvious challenges was whether the degree of integration of any integrative endeavour got beyond the binding of the book in which the various approaches were presented (delightfully named as *Buchbindersynthese* in German).

There is also something subtle to be questioned in any "confrontation" between one's own "integrative" efforts over the years and those of any other—however wise, experienced or honourable. This is the context for considering here the work of Ken Wilber (and "integral futures"), in contrast with that of David Lorimer (notably as director and principal bibliographer of the Scientific and Medical Network and its *Network Review* [4]).

## Ken Wilber

The achievements of Ken Wilber in addressing a wide range of issues articulated in many traditions and disciplines are truly heroic. His energy and productivity with regard to "consciousness" have been widely acknowledged. His books touch in various ways on these topics [5, 6, 7].

Ken Wilber is necessarily a controversial figure. Part of the purpose here is to explore how what he has achieved, and how he has achieved it, challenges my own understanding. This is given a particular focus by the seeming completeness of his understanding expressed through his much-cited AQAL "quadrant model"—and the certainty of his perspective in terms of what he terms the Witness.

### *Controversy*

In what way does any "Theory of Everything", like Wilber's, allow for, or predict, controversy? In such a model, where are those who do not subscribe to it? How do they "have their place" within the framework with which they disagree? Is their state of consciousness to be understood as being of a less refined form? To what extent does Wilber's model imply that those who disagree with it are necessarily less aware—namely that agreement with it is an indicator of a subtler state of awareness?

There are many insightful spiritual traditions with strong advocates. Without questioning the merits of the synthesis achieved by Wilber, surely a major challenge is to position the variety of other patterns of insight in a manner that honours the decades (if not centuries) of dedication to such disciplines?

The delicate question here is how to position understanding that may be perceived as "lesser" in the light of some other model without precluding the possibility that from some other perspective it may indeed offer a worthy pathway and ultimate insight, that may be equal, if not "superior" to that advanced by Wilber. Is it possible that appropriateness may be a function of education, culture, genetic disposition, or other predetermining factors?

More fundamentally however, what role does controversy—and the clash of perspectives—have in relation to the subtler states of consciousness? Is the dynamic it represents fundamental to life and awareness in some way—in a world in which many aspire to "make a difference" and are extolled to do so in a competitive environment?

### *Doubt vs. certainty*

Wilber's work appears notably lacking in doubt. Certainty has been sought and achieved and wrapped into a model. Where is doubt in that model? Is it in some way implicit in the challenge of understanding the transition between various levels of the model?

In many traditions the struggle with doubt and the accommodation with uncertainty are important dynamics. Mathematics has had to become resigned to its failure to achieve the level of certainty that was its original goal (Kurt Gödel, etc). The poet John Keats is renowned for recognition of the essence of maturity in terms of "negative capability". This is the capacity of "being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason".

Does the absence of doubt preclude dialogue of a quality from which mutual learning can emerge? No doubt, No dialogue?

How does Wilber provide for such dialogue in a context in which his model, as with many others, generates controversy? He himself deliberately avoids the conventional pattern of conferences and

dialogues—with occasional exceptions where these are primarily centered on his work. Is this a form of avoidance of challenge by those who might consider themselves his peers—however erroneously? As a lifestyle choice, this may not be cause for criticism, but it does raise the question of how his model catalyzes fruitful dialogue in contexts where others prefer other models.

#### *Questions vs. answers*

As with much spiritually-oriented discourse, Wilber positions himself through his model as an answerer of questions. This is the traditional guru-disciple relationship that is honoured in many traditions. The disciple asks the questions. The guru answers them.

Does the guru have questions that he might appropriately address to other gurus in a dynamic in which all are questioners and answerers? Why is the dialogue between gurus of very different persuasion so impoverished—given their undoubted wisdom?

What is the status of "question" or "answer" in relation to theories of Everything? Do questions and answers occur at certain boundaries? To what extent do they reflect a dualistic dynamic that needs to be transcended to hold any subtler modes of awareness? More intriguing still, why is a Theory of Everything framed as a noun, when it might be a verb or some other grammatical device?

#### *Future development*

A major challenge for any model is its status in time. As a Theory of Everything, how eternal and sustainable is Wilber's model? There are many models that claim to be unchanging, notably those associated with scriptures. Their relationship to other models constitutes a major challenge for society.

When such models are effectively "set in stone", one must either subscribe to them—thereby automatically distancing oneself from others—or subscribe to some other model, thereby finding oneself marked or stereotyped by the first.

How does Wilber's model account for development of understanding over time? Whilst he gives considerable attention to the development of understandings of consciousness, he positions his model as the culmination of such development. How then does such a Theory of Everything provide for its own development? Its structure would seem to preclude any analogue to growth rings in a tree trunk.

Such development may derive from evolution in Wilber's own thinking, within his lifetime. Others may offer ways forward that supercede his Theory of Everything—as suggested by David Lorimer with respect to the recently published work of Jorge Ferrer [8]. To what extent does any model of the status of Wilber's constitute an act of colonizing the future of the development of consciousness and understanding—a form of conceptual imperialism? By saying what "is" for others, to what extent does it preclude new insight as has tended to be the case of those models "set in stone" in the past?

This question is rendered all the more complex because, as a model that identifies the awareness of timelessness, how new insight emerges over time to challenge a particular model is a dynamic that constitutes a paradox. In a sense there is "nowhere" to go in space-time because one is already "there". But movement in space-time nevertheless has its "place" in a model that transcends space-time.

#### *Witness*

Wilber attributes the highest value to the awareness of the Witness through which the essence of "everything" is "tasted" [9]. He positions this awareness as the culmination of many disciplines requiring years of training to which only the very few are prepared to submit themselves.

Whilst few would question his dedication in achieving such awareness, his account of it does position him as having an exclusive insight from which he can make pronouncements that only the foolhardy—from the perspective of his model—would dare to challenge. To what extent has he designed and built himself an impregnable castle or prison? To what extent are the insights of that castle more accessible to others than his claims imply? This possibility is highlighted by the contrast in many traditions

between rapid enlightenment and that which is the fruit of long effort as reviewed by Peter Gregory [10]. In Christianity any such rapidity is indicated in terms of "grace".

The "centro-centric" understanding of Everything through Witness awareness precludes the possibility of distributive understanding of Everything. By this might be meant the possibility that, as with the fingers of a hand endeavouring to hold a ball, Everything can only be "grasped" by several fingers together. Is it possible that his Witness awareness is but one of the fingers and that fingers from other models are required for larger awareness? Of course "grasp" is an entirely inappropriate metaphor as he would indeed argue.

### *"Shadow"*

There is a long tradition of considering that gurus who have struggled towards wisdom and subtler modes of awareness, as in the case of Wilber, are in many ways above criticism—to the point of being "shadow free". Indeed the problematic facets of their characters are not a matter for reflection by their disciples, typically urged into "positive thinking". Such facets only emerge in accounts by the disaffected whose objectivity is itself questionable—as "negative thinking". Is the existence of such problematic facets of relevance to the insights of any Theory of Everything? Is the failure to address them in a non-dualistic manner evidence of the kind of polarized thinking such a model seeks to transcend?

Of what relevance are the insights of depth psychologists suggesting that it is through such "shadow" features that greater integration and maturity lie? Is it not the case that such shadow features are precisely what undermines meaningful interaction between those of differing traditions and approaches to subtler forms of awareness? Again, is concern about such shadow dynamics not a healthy corrective to false certainty—enabling the degree of doubt vital to new learning?

### *Formal metaphors*

Wilber's core model takes the geometric form of concentric circles divided into four quadrants. As such it resembles a mandala or yantra. But there are many kinds of mandala or yantra that are used to carry other insights into the realms of consciousness. More generally still, to what extent do many features of mathematics (and especially geometry) not have the capacity to act as templates to carry insights of relevance to a Theory of Everything? The point to be made is that it is possible that is the class of such features that may have the capacity to carry the degree of diversity characteristic of Everything—and that the geometrically simple form selected by Wilber is not adequate for some purposes that the model is required to serve.

Whilst a circle may indeed be understood as a basic means of carrying the notion of Everything, Emptiness and and Nothingness, what functions might other mathematical features have that are not well-carried by that chosen for the expression of Wilber's model?

What mathematical transformation could usefully be applied to complexify the basic model? What would be the additional significance of representing the model in three dimensions as concentric spheres—with eight quadrants instead of four, for example?

### **David Lorimer**

Whereas Ken Wilber's strength may be understood as a synthesizer who has positioned his output in a manner to gather a network of enthusiastic supporters for his work, David Lorimer is an exemplar of a quite different strategy. The mission of the Scientific and Medical Network (SMN), and its journal (*Network Review*) has been declared to be: "To challenge the adequacy of scientific materialism as an explanation of reality". In fulfillment of this mission it organizes conferences and workshops, notably on consciousness-related issues. The journal carries articles on a wide range of topics in conformity with this mission.

Whereas Ken Wilber's efforts result in a synthesis, in the formal construction of which the contributions of others are barely relevant, the *Network Review* carries the variety of perspectives that point in various ways to such a synthesis. However any reading of a whole issue makes it absolutely clear that, although there may be some resonant associations between some contributions, it is the contrasting features of the diversity of contributions which is most striking as described by the author in that journal [11]. The image that comes to mind is of a conference hall with the many contributors each pointing to where the overarching truth is to be located—but pointing in quite different directions. There is no synthesis in the wilberian sense. Many contrasting Theories of Everything—and ultimate states of consciousness—are presented. This might be said to respond to the concern expressed by Marcus Bussey in this issue [12]:

There is a paradox lying at the heart of integral futures (IF). This paradox is built into the word integral which, as Joseph Voros points out, is rooted in a meaning base which includes: “whole, complete; essential; balanced; joined into a greater unity” [13, p.197]. It is this word ‘unity’ that troubles me and explains why, although as Jennifer Gidley and Gary Hampson [14] point out there are multiple ‘integrals’ in circulation, I generally avoid both the noun and the adjective in my work.

However, for the purposes of this discussion, the focus here is on David Lorimer's role in providing extensive reviews of numerous books for the thrice-yearly issues of the journal. The argument here is that there is an interesting sense in which, in contrast to Wilber's static model, it is the dynamic of Lorimer's continuing passage amongst this diversity of perspectives—effectively “walking their talk” through his brief, but assiduous and sympathetic identification, with each such worldview—that provides a form of distributive synthesis. The coherence binding the disparate and competing (and occasionally mutually disparaging) theories of Everything is the proactive awareness of David Lorimer. It is his dynamic awareness that is a crude analogue to Wilber's Witness awareness—for indeed Lorimer is bearing witness to the variety of endeavours to give form to a Theory of Everything (including that of Wilber).

Lorimer's achievement is to provide a framework through his activity through SMN to transcend the phenomenon identified by Mara Bellar [15], namely how world famous scientists associated with the development of quantum theory promoted their views by dismissing their opponents as “unreasonable” and championing their own not-so-coherent ideas as “inevitable”.

This dynamic synthesis does not lend itself to articulation in some closed and final form. In fact it is Lorimer's receptivity to further insights that is vital to ensuring the viability of SMN as an attractor. He may however venture such a partial synthesis in the moment for particular purposes [16].

The point to be made here is that the larger perspective is poorly represented through any one Theory of Everything at this time—especially because of the way in which each such theory is challenged to account for theories that do not fully accord with it. Such discordant theories are nevertheless part of the reality to which all are exposed and from which all must elicit a synthesis, if only by excluding as inadequate all but the one which they prefer.

Perhaps it might be useful to see the Scientific and Medical Network as an orchestra in which the various instrumentalists are pursuing different theories of harmony. Certain chords and melodies may briefly articulate and give coherence to the whole, but the creative dedication of each musical explorer is not (yet) to be sacrificed to an overriding pattern of concord. It is within this context that David Lorimer moves as a new type of “conductor” whose role is specifically not to impose order upon the whole. Rather through indirection he must seek to ensure that one instrumentalist is at least aware of the experiments undertaken by another, in the hopes that from this awareness may emerge a collective responsiveness to a larger understanding. As a conductor of the most *avant garde* form, it is his role to bridge between the most disparate musical experiments and to hear the “overtones” that justify their seemingly discordant preoccupations.

## A question of style?

As a philosopher, Nicholas Rescher [17] responded to such distinctly unintegrative conflict by concluding:

For centuries, most philosophers who have reflected on the matter have been intimidated by the strife of systems. But the time has come to put this behind us—not the strife, that is, which is ineliminable, but the felt need to somehow end it rather than simply accept it and take it in stride. To reemphasize the salient point: it would be bizarre to think that philosophy is not of value because philosophical positions are bound to reflect the particular values we hold.

This said however, Rescher's argument does not necessarily preclude the possibility of new ways to take the strife "in stride". Indeed it has been argued elsewhere by the author that new forms of transdisciplinarity may effectively emerge from "striding" [18].

A largely forgotten philosopher, W T Jones [19] responded to the curiously conflictual dynamics of the many authors seeking to define the "romantic period" and produced a set of seven axes of bias on which they were variously positioned—thereby predicting the nature of the dynamics between them in academic discourse. He generalized the approach to other domains, presumably making it relevant to the debate on matters "integrative". There are several other authors who have produced other such characterizations that could be used to the same end .

A more specific approach might be to identify interesting metaphors by which to characterize and distinguish approaches to matters "integrative", raising the possibility of metaphorical challenges and resonances between them:

- **spatial metaphor:** To what extent can the AQAL structure be compared to the biblical Tower of Babel on which people progress upwards to greater insight? Is the approach of Lorimer then to be seen as equivalent to the management style of "walking the floor", exploring the many buildings in a more or less urbanized knowledge environment that continues to develop organically?
- **garden metaphor:** Is the AQAL structure to be compared to a highly formal garden, whereas that of Lorimer to an untamed wilderness garden—or perhaps an extensive botanical garden specifically seeking to include a wide range of exotic species?
- **symbolic space:** Is the highly structured integral approach to be compared to the eternal qualities of the imperial Forbidden City of Beijing, or the Imperial Palace of Tokyo? Does that suggest that the challenge offered by Lorimer is the contemplation offered by the empty spaces and varied perspectives in a classic meditative Zen temple garden—in which underdefinition is the highest art?
- **culinary metaphor:** Is Wilber to be compared to a French master chef, distinguished by the taste he has brought to the categories presented [9], with Lorimer to be compared to a Japanese master chef distinguished by it being impossible to determine whether he has done anything to the categories presented in the raw?
- **gallery metaphor:** Is Wilber to be seen as offering a collection of carefully chosen paintings in a viewing gallery forming a gentle spiral from the ground level up to the top of the building—precisely ordered into stages along the way (as at the [Guggenheim Museum](#) in New York). By contrast Lorimer might be understood as offering a vast and "rambling" collection across the years—which can be systematically explored, as with the [Hermitage Museum](#) in St Petersburg, only over a lifetime.
- **music metaphor:** As a symbol of integration *par excellence*, is Wilber effectively promoting what the Catholic Church distinguishes as "sacred music"—uplifting to the human spirit understood in a particular way—in contrast with the vast array of other musical forms by which people are

variously "uplifted" according to their own lights? Is "integral futures" then to be challenged by its *diabolus in musica*—the forbidden chord?

In terms of the gallery metaphor, one may like or not like any piece to some degree. But it is surely unhelpful to focus on whether this or that piece is true in some unique sense that marginalizes all others. They may be facets of a larger understanding, but it is less helpful to be attached to any one as especially true. Is this saying that we are moving into an era (if we are not already there) in which the collection of such pieces will become more vast than those of the works in the Hermitage collection. In the quest for "integrative", what can one hope to derive from walking its galleries? Is it rather the case that in the new era many will have their works "hung" in special collections on the web to be perused with a variety of agendas? Many others will be hung more discretely—if not privately.

### Integrative implications and the hidden dynamics of denial

The issue then is what does all that constitute? What happened to simplicity? What happened to a simple integrative truth or insight—philosophical or religious? The inconvenient truth about truth would seem to be that its simplicity is not to be found where it would be most convenient for it to be. Is the very size of the collection in process of creating a cognitive analogue to that of overpopulation? Of course many of the integrative works on display are pushing for the uniqueness of their own perspective. But why the assumption that the rest of the world should be persuaded of the merit of that truth above all others?

The challenge is then of how one prefers to explore competing alternative understandings of "integrative". It is within such a context that causal layered analysis has a role to play as presented by Sohail Inayatullah [20].

There is something unsatisfactory about discourse with strategic implications when it is challenged by lack of self-reflexivity—especially when those who disagree with the implications exploit any such weakness to oppose them. Is "integral futures" to be assessed in relation to CLA as a "better mousetrap" as the arguments of the critiques of C Riedy [21], R S Slaughter [22] and J Voros [13] would seem to imply? Or should be assessed as a "mousetrap" which subsumes the functionality of CLA, rendering the latter of problematic significance. Marcus Bussey [12] skillfully explores the implications of this attitude as he detects its manifestation in their arguments.

The irritation for any observer of the quest for "integrative" is this obsessive need to be right and to marginalize others as wrong or inferior—with little consideration of for whom this evaluation may usefully hold. From the perspective of Jones 7-fold axes of bias, it is the degree of separation of preferred integration within that space that then determines how wrong each perceives the other to be. The challenge is what then?

Perhaps most tragic—in a period when contrasting perspectives are presumably essential to governance in crisis—is the manner in which preferences and problematic dynamics engender forms of discourse that are rarely if ever "integrated" into "integrative" frameworks.

This is most evident between the leaders of distinct approaches—who are not renowned for enhancing the quality of their dialogue (if they ever meet) to ensure the emergence of higher levels of integrative insight. To make the point as vividly as possible this has been described elsewhere by the author using the metaphor of body odour [23]. It is not so much whether we can share each other's "vision", it is that many of our decisions are based on whether the initiative of the other "smells" right. Decision-makers, especially entrepreneurs, may talk about "vision" in public but they may well act on "smell" in private—whether attracted or repelled by cognitive pheromones, as discussed previously [24]. Rather than "vision" or "smell", Wilber has favoured "taste" [9].

This ignored integrative issue is currently exemplified in the very specific case of the future strategic integration for a future Mediterranean Union as proposed by Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France and opposed by Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany. As indicated by Ian Traynor [25]:



Diplomats say the fundamental problem is one of personal chemistry, with Merkel's self-effacing sobriety jarring with Sarkozy's attention-seeking theatricality.

### A pattern language for design of appropriate complexity?

In considering the above metaphors it is tempting to consider that "integration" could be treated as a challenge of design in response to taste—as a matter of "cognitive decor". Such an approach could be given considerable focus through the work of environmental architect Christopher Alexander by generalizing his approach to the design of spaces—places in which it is a pleasure to be. His work had been based on abstract principles [26] followed by insights into a set of practical patterns [27]—then related to the widely recognized nature of the attractiveness of such spaces to which he refers as the "quality without a name" [28].

Of significance however is Alexander's approach to participative design, namely how people and communities choose from patterns and combine them to enhance the "quality without a name". This must surely qualify as an integrative approach of a high order. However, with similar concerns, it is appropriate to note the possibility of cognitive analogues to the arguments of Lars Lerup [29] who rejects the "behaviourism" of established architecture and its attempt to create a perfect fit between people and their physical settings—thereby neglecting the manner in which people subsequently act upon their surroundings. This view was also strongly promoted by an early architectural futurist Yona Friedman. What indeed are the cognitive analogues to the design of integrative spaces—perhaps as envisaged by Marsilio Ficino?

The very use of the term "pattern" reinforces the particular visual bias through which patterns are recognized. It is therefore valuable to recognize the challenge offered by Michael Schiltz [30] in relation to the calculus of indications of [George Spencer-Brown](#) [31]. Schiltz notes that form/medium is "the image for systemic connectivity and concatenation", as described by [Humberto Maturana](#) and [Francesco Varela](#). he further notes, that the notion of "space" is the key to reflexivity appropriate to any discussion of form and medium:

It was our choice to write in a plane surface that has made that distinctions indeed do cut off an inside from an outside, that 'differences do make a difference' ([Gregory Bateson](#)). Covert conventions at a level deeper than the level of form, preceding the level of form, have determined what the form would do. There lies a chance for developing a medium theory here. In this concrete case: the medium of the plane surface makes the difference. And in general: the topology of the medium makes the difference between distinctions making a difference and distinctions not making a difference. "It is now evident that if a different surface is used, what is written on it, although identical in marking may be not identical in meaning"... Spencer-Brown has shown us that the 'medium is the message' ([Marshall MacLuhan](#)) ...

**Hence, we are writing in a space that connects the level of first-order (operand) and second-order (operator) observations. That space is a torus. If considered operationally, distinctions written on a torus can subvert their boundaries and re-enter the space they distinguish, turning up in their own form.** The marked state cannot be clearly distinguished from the unmarked state anymore, leading to the 'indeterminacy' of the form. As the calculus explains, the state envisaged as such is a state not hitherto envisaged in the form. It is neither marked nor unmarked. It is an imaginary value, flipping between marked and unmarked, thanks to the employment of *time*. The form of the **re-entry**, as described here, has been the source of many commentaries....

Such conceptualization diverts sharply from an intuitive understanding of a medium. As seen here, a medium is far from a Euclidean container. Rather is it introverted space, it is identical to the *topology of the form*, it is the form's 'deep structure'.

What is then to be said of integrative approaches variously engraved as linear text on a planar surface—or the consequent inhibition of their possible connectivity with other such approaches? Does

the integration of spiral dynamics into integral futures respond to the concerns raised by Schiltz? Does the approach exemplified by Lorimer allow for the emergence of such complexity even if it does not reduce it to a conveniently comprehensible formula? Such questions have notably been addressed by the author in relation to Wilber's "one-way" use of the conveyor metaphor [32].

## Conclusion

The bias of this commentary lies in a preference for an understanding of "integrative" that accepts and transcends the challenge of Wilber vs Lorimer vs Anyother Theory of Everything. This challenge welcomes the formal garden offered by Wilber and the charming disorder for which Lorimer offers a hands-off curatorial role. Life is enriched by the co-existence of papal dynamics and stewardship dynamics—but it is their relationship that calls for more complex insights.

Integral futures is necessarily challenged by the difficulty of Ken Wilber in having positioned himself and his ventures in a style to be caricatured as the Craig Venter [33] of memetics (rather than genetics)! One is concerned with mapping and "cracking" the human psychosocial "genome" and the other with mapping and "cracking" the human genome—and then exploiting any exclusive patents to the full. Both might even be said to be equally concerned with "spiral dynamics".

There are learnings to be derived from the comparison with both the papacy and Venter. This is evident in the efforts made to control or marginalize the intellectual/memetic copyright of others. In the case of Venter, the predictability expected from his success has been undermined by the complex dynamics of folding proteins. The Pope has been faced with the legacy of his predecessor's excommunication of Galileo and Luther centuries ago—with a degree of rehabilitation being offered only in this current decade. What is the nature of the "excommunication" that "integral futures" might now practice and how long might it take for that to be regretted? How does "excommunication" feature in integrative thinking? What dialogue guidance does "integral futures" offer to those who might find reason to disagree with it? [34].

One designer of complex modern airport buildings makes the valuable distinction that appropriate integration may be sought through the simulated representation of the flow of people and goods through the airport—a conventional systems explanation. This view "from another plane" he distinguishes from the valuable insights to be obtained by viewing the airport from within the reality of any flow through it. It might be argued that "integral futures" offers a judgemental **explanation** from the plane of a "cyclopean" meta/virtual perspective, as in the first case. Is there also a need for insight from within the flow—an "**implanation**", as argued elsewhere [35]? Above all, however, there is surely a need for processes that reconcile the tendency to assert primacy for particular methodologies and philosophies—a paradoxical need that could be understood as a self-reflexive joke.

The strategic challenge over centuries has been framed as the normative reduction of multiple incommensurable prescriptions to a single integrative variant—the same "hymn sheet"—whether by persuasion, manipulation or violence. Resources continue to be allocated desperately to this end, despite only too evident incapacity in the delivery of remedies, and abetted by both skillful "positive" reframing ("spin") and deep denial. Almost no attention is given to the challenge of interrelating incommensurables and minimizing the violence done to them in the process—the challenge of "poly-ocular vision", essential to the avoidance of "sub-understanding", as argued by Magoroh Maruyama [36].

This is a challenge of embodiment that calls for a new order of self-reflexivity, as presented by [George Lakoff](#) and [Mark Johnson](#) [37] and by [Francisco Varela](#) [38]. It is again paradoxical given that this can itself be understood as just another prescription—even though, following Schiltz, its "inscription" needs to be on a more complex surface that evokes a "postscription" as a self-reflexive feedback loop. More elegantly, borrowing from the famous poem of [Omar Khayyám](#): When "The Moving Finger" has written, the challenge is to where it then "Moves On".

As one provocative source of learning on the new thinking required—returning to the musical metaphor—what could possibly be the secret of the counter-intuitive success of the [Really Terrible Orchestra](#), as reported by Alexander McCall Smith [39]? Lorimer's role in striving to include the painfully challenged might indeed be compared to that of its conductor, where Wilber would necessarily exclude those instrumentalists who undermined the music of the spheres to which he is so well attuned. Integrative futures is then the strange quest for how cognitively to embody both roles in the present—to evoke the greater harmony through engaging creatively with the dissonant pattern of imperfections.

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## Models and methods in motion: Declining the dogma dance

Wendy Schultz

***Author's note:** Messrs. Barber, Marcus Bussey, Gary Hampson and other colleagues have already offered elegant intellectual commentaries on Slaughter and Riedy's essays. What follows are merely a few thoughts from the arena of technology transfer: my experiences communicating and using the integral framework and CLA with clients.*

### Abstract

*In this essay, I take a communicative pragmatist and realist approach to futures studies. This implies a sensitivity to understanding what the audience can absorb and using futures methods effectively to create spaces for new futures. While Wilber's work affords us with new insights to engage with methodology, it is not the only path. Indeed, it is intellectual bigotry to demand that everyone master the tools one personally deems most appropriate. Critical conversations about futures must remain open, where post-modernist and integral thinking widen our horizons, they are welcomed, where they straitjacket our thoughts, they are not.*

A gleam in the eye, it hatches, you raise it, it flies from the nest ...

The most powerful pieces of thinking by their very nature do not remain pure. They escape the control of their progenitors and run rampant through the world mind. These are memes. They collide with other memes—some powerful and profound, others simplistic and silly. Mutations and evolutions result, emergent properties of new ideas interacting with the existing ecology of thought.

In short, when in play, ideas morph. What transforms them? Knocking around inside heads on the bad side of the worldview tracks; getting caught in the gear mechanism of some teacher or speaker or consultant asking, “how is this best communicated? how is it best applied?” Take, for example, Joseph Voros' article on environmental scanning [1]: it was brilliant, a tour de force, a delightful, sophisticated, meaty essay. An essay that is very difficult to convey in all its complexity in five minutes or less: *conop, formop, sys-op bebop*.

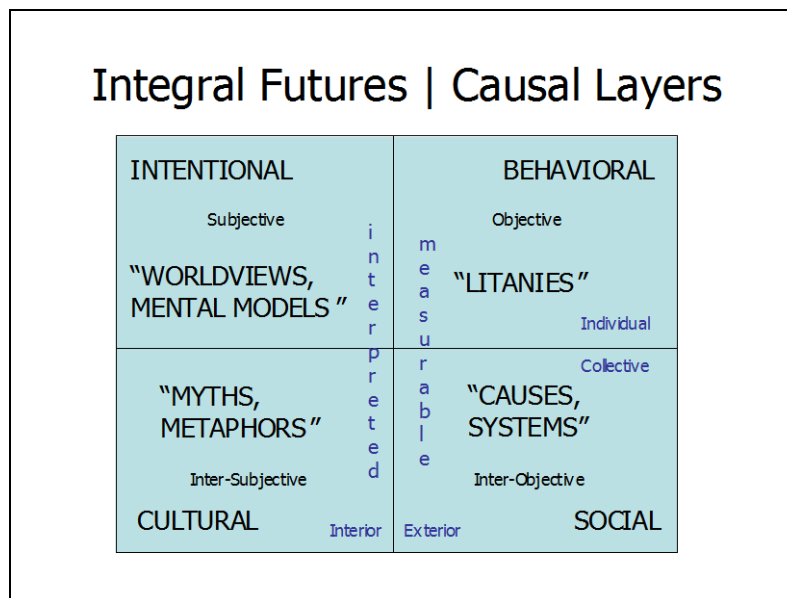
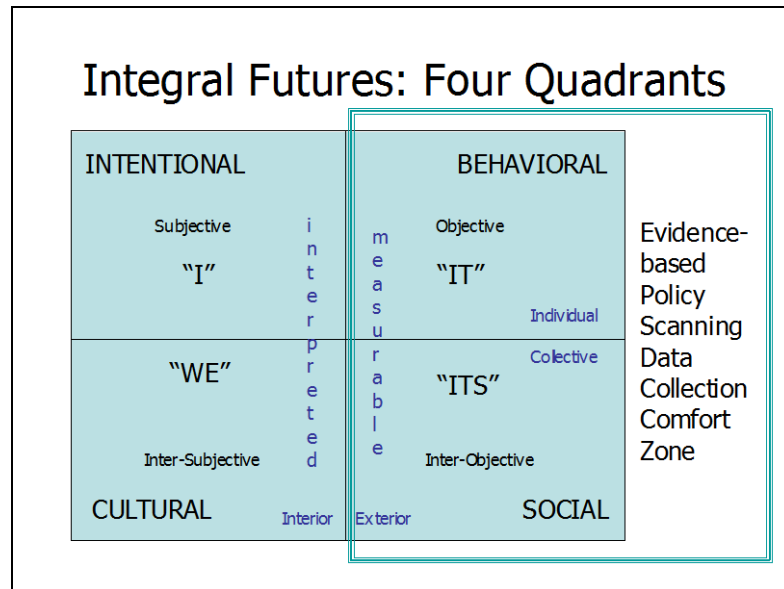
Frankly, I simplify. Do I risk being glib? Possibly. Yet when teaching I find that a risky unfamiliar is made more accessible by attaching it to immediate audience concerns. Are the people I'm addressing educated and intelligent enough to appreciate Voros? Undoubtedly, given the luxury of time to pore over the article. Which they lack. For better or for worse, I digest the article and render it as critical questions they can raise when considering change—or considering how to perceive change.

Creation and application... the slip twixt cup and lip

So the ideas fly free and you cannot control how they are absorbed. They are absorbed, and then re-transmitted, by people like me. My 'sociology of knowledge' gear was simply not engaged when I first prepared a slide deck on integral futures and CLA for a UK policy audience. I did not even think to ask whether Wilbur or Foucault or Sarkar or Habermas was the precursor for CLA. I just thought “huh. The four layers pattern-match onto the four quadrants pretty neatly:”

Guess I'll run with that: simple, elegant, easy to explain. Also—bonus!—fractal: self-similar and reflexive within any layer or quadrant, and at any level of human grouping, whether regional, national,

organizational, or individual. As for the spiral dynamics optional extra—the ‘where in the world are your filters and biases?’—I can refer to that in one slide, and explore it fully at the next workshop—meeting—phase of the analysis. Let’s face it: communicating with leaders always seems to be about the triage of elegant conceptual edifices in the battlefield of time.



Is this epistemological pragmatism? No. Epistemological pragmatism would imply that the insights of either integral futures or CLA are *untrue* if they cannot be verified by interaction with the world (and we can take that to mean the world in all four quadrants, not merely the external ‘right-hand’ world). What I am referring to is *communicative* pragmatism and realism: understanding what your audience can absorb, and how, at any given moment in order to render the relationship between insight and process most effective in opening up new spaces for all our futures.

So here on the front lines we focus on making it workable (and sometimes I fail, because I spent twenty years at university and it's a culture and a worldview I love) and that means clear, concise, and concrete: what's the question or action that embodies this theory? As groundbreaking as Voros' article was, Hines' article [2] giving examples of different scanning sources relevant to the four quadrants was actually more useful in changing how I scan. As was Kaipō Lum and Michele Bowman's ethnographic futures framework, 'Verge' [3]: Verge raises questions and vectors of analysis similar to those within integral futures, but in a way I find—and clients find—easier to apply.

But you know what I love most? Mashing them all up: use them all at once: pick'n'mix. Collisions generate creativity; chaotic, turbulent waters where the ocean slams into the continents are home to the most life. Categories and their boundaries are useful to tidy our desktops and our mental landscapes, but we must be wary of their ability to hobble both imagination and insight.

### Declining the invitation to dogma

We must be wary because any transformative, visionary idea has a life cycle. It emerges, rearranges people's perceptions, and creates revolutions. It solidifies: people document it and discuss it and then codify it so they can teach it and transmit it. Then it reifies into ideology and finally, dogma. From spurring the imagination, our revolutionary idea has hardened to constraining it. Where on this path is the integral framework?

Ken Wilbur's oeuvre is a phenomenal achievement, even if—or perhaps because—it is an achievement of synthesis. Upon reading *A Brief History of Everything* [4], my first thoughts were, "Doesn't everyone know this? Isn't this what the liberal education teaches (mine did; thank you, Justin Morrill College faculty!)" Aren't the left-hand quadrants merely another way of constructing, "an unconsidered life is not worth living"? Yes, futurists should examine their own hidden structures of sense-making and meaning, of myth and metaphor, of assumption and motivation, before facilitating those exercises with clients. But the integral path is not the only path.

The integral framework is one biome within a larger ecology (a holon within the knowledge holon), an ecology of perception and process. Some few people can master many tools within that ecology; some attempt many and master none; and most focus on one or two to master those alone. And that's not necessarily a bad thing: we aren't all Ken Wilbur. We aren't all Sohail Inayatullah. Neither of those gentlemen are Donella Meadows or Susan Greenfield. Do we disdain astrophysicists or biochemists because their work lies primarily in the right-hand quadrants? Some individuals are gifted in the analysis, formulation, and computation required for quantitative system modelling, and use that path to forecasts and scenarios. It makes no sense to demand they adopt an approach they might perform badly, and discard methods that make the best use of their gifts. It is intellectual bigotry to demand that everyone master the tools you choose to use.

An insistence that everyone adopt the integral framework for every futures study does a disservice not only to the innate gifts of individuals, but also to the integral approach itself: not every single researcher can encompass it—or CLA—and it *can* be applied badly. For either integral futures or CLA (since this debate has separated the two), a more apt approach might be using them as prompts to compose foresight teams of independent intellects of varying talents and perspectives and cultures: easier to find than the rare cross-cultural Renaissance mind, and better in the long-run to engender a sense of community in which to base the fundamental conversation: the conversation about futures for humanity and the planet.

In summary, find some open air and laugh

We acknowledge ourselves to be absurd. We respect all attempts at understanding as worthy for *being* attempts. We recognize the conversation about our futures as the most critical conversation we can

have. It must be an open conversation. Where post-modernist and integral thinking widen our horizons, they are welcomed; where they straitjacket our thoughts, they are not. Namaste.

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# CLA: An evolving methodology in a learning community

Colin Russo

## Abstract

*In this article, I argue that the Integral framework should not be welded onto CLA. Rather, the relationship between Wilber's and Inayatullah's work should be considered liminal, open and complex. Indeed, CLA stands up independently as a core theory and methodology in Futures Studies, and is growing within a learning community. Using the vinculum approach, methods can be bolted to each other temporarily, on a case by case basis. This allows and indeed supports epistemological pluralism.*

## Introduction

Aaah Judith,<sup>i</sup> ... your flare illuminates a dalliance...

We with our quick dividing eyes  
Measure, distinguish and are gone.  
The forest burns, the tree frog dies,  
Yet one is all and all are one. [1]

In my view, Wilber's Integral Operating System is meant to weave shared understanding and appreciation, yet Chris Riedy in his paper [2] assumes a judgemental role, which could be divisive:

When the fight is over before it is begun,  
Foresight democracy is left undone,  
Yet together we strive to write and create  
What through division we can not unite.

In this paper, I argue that readers should not be inveigled into a view that Slaughter and Riedy's interpretation of Wilber's framework should be welded on to CLA. Rather, I argue that CLA is useful in that it helps educate and emancipate, both the researcher and the researched. Brands that insulate CLA against its own emancipation probably fall short of the expectations and approval of the designers both of CLA and of Integral. In seeking to ascertain my focus for my response to Slaughter and Riedy's interpretation, I found value in Buddhism's Diamond Sūtra. The Sūtra teaches the practice of the avoidance of abiding in extremes of mental attachment:

All conditioned phenomena  
Are like a dream, an illusion, a bubble, a shadow  
Like the dew, or like lightning  
You should discern them like this [3]

Hence, it seems to me that the togetherness of the relationship between the CLA and All Quadrants, All Levels (AQAL) approaches should be considered liminal, open and complex. The occasional togetherness of CLA and AQAL is, in my view, sensible; but permanently bolting or welding them together is mechanical reification and is neither flexible nor viable.

This paper explores Riedy's inferences, in addition to methods that work well with CLA and which contextualise CLA. These explorations extend from my chapter "The CLA Questioning Methodology" [4], in Inayatullah's *The Causal Layered Analysis Reader*. The context of my comment is my work as a CLA practitioner in my work as a community consultant and facilitator in a wide variety of situations in south-east Queensland.

The major methodological points made in this paper are:

- CLA stands up independently.
- CLA is growing within a learning community.
- By permanently uniting methods, a field becomes narrowed and is not necessarily strengthened.
- Improper discussion about 'integral vs. other models' may also distract from the natural evolution of the field by, for example, diverting time and creating fearful barriers.
- The consideration of temporary methodological togetherness is salient.
- Where CLA can grow with a new method, it evolves.

But first, I turn to CLA itself, and its particular strengths.

### The CLA Questioning Methodology

Like fractals and their intricate offspring, a source method (CLA) can inspire an infinite number of explanatory methods. My discussion focuses around CLA's questioning methodology (CLA QM) [4]. The method asks how a community learns about the issues involved (including what their psychology/worldview is) and whether perceptions formed were premised correctly. This discovery process acts as a prelude to remodelling desired action. The questioning, deconstructing and reconstructing/layering inherent in CLA QM inform futures decision making.

CLA QM utilises individual, local, state, national, global and other perspectives. I posit that each of the following can have a meta view; for example, there can be an individual view of an individual, a local view of a locale, a national view of a nation and a global view of worldview. This unfolded complexity is in contrast to CLA's simplicity and mobility; CLA travels with a rich inherent complexity. Indeed, there are further permutations of complexity possible: there can be an individual view of an individual, of a locality, a state, a nation and of the globe. There can be a local view of an individual, a locality, a state, a nation and the world, and so on. In brief, the observer may have a view and understanding of his or herself and of "everything" else. Thus, this paper explores the inherent character and capacity of CLA and of methodological evolution. I argue that these models would be less effective if the source model were taken away and permanently bound to AQAL, and propose some alternative ways of understanding the relationship between CLA and other methodologies.

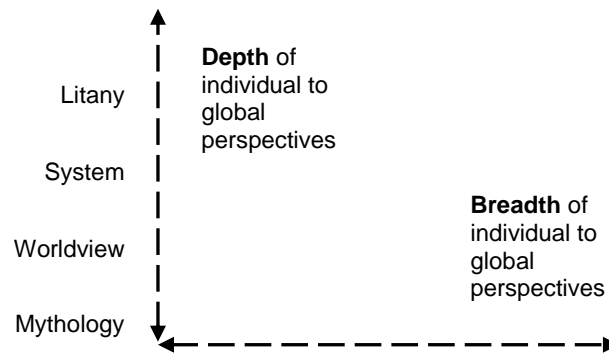
#### *Investigating and transposing global regional characteristics*

CLA can help us to remove ourselves from our localised view of an issue, to generate empathy for a cultural perspective.<sup>ii</sup> Whatever our own view of the Earth, it can be added to or enhanced by investigating the character of other perspectives from, say, North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania or Antarctica. We can thus comprehend a fuller generalisation than if we merely accept our own view in isolation. Generalisations at a wider scale ("Eastern" or "western", for example) are also helpful, though they bring their own assumptions (and what of the 'middle' position: eastern people with a western view, and the converse?). When we talk about a regional perspective, we can use CLA to attribute economic, cultural or other layers to bring a relevant view closer. We can also ask, "what is the general cultural view from particular annals and eras?", enabling us to:

- develop and consider a more accurate regional view from its position in time and chronotope<sup>iii</sup> (pertaining to ideology or worldview) [5], identifying the derivation of methods and theory; and

- apply the enthymematic process: What is the view, not yet expressed by a particular culture, that could (a) help build a truly global view, and (b) by its very omission indicate a global view?.

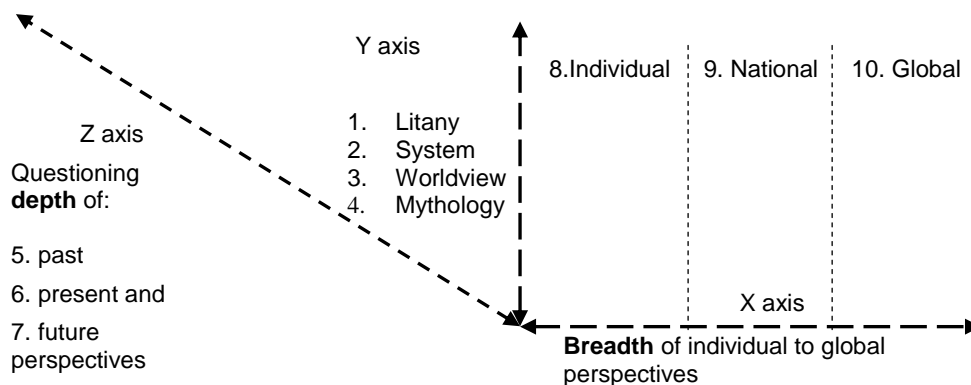
Figure 1 models CLA's depth and breadth layers [6]. The multilateral movement indicated in the figure is intended to show that each view combines with numerous meta views. These meta views are termed perspectives, not 'reality', yet they are often given the credibility of reality. For example, the view of a local community group can become powerful through popular belief, even when largely unexamined and unconfirmed.



**Figure 1. Linear layers and deep lateral perspectives**

I see CLA beginning with investigating the litany that can overlay the afore-described individual to global perspectives. In CLA's individual perspective lies the opportunity to question the individual. This investigates the psychological view—the deeper personal assumptions. I thus stand in opposition to claims by Riedy and Slaughter that CLA does not adequately address the psychological, a theme to which I will return in the next section.

Figure 1 can be developed to include past, present and future (see Figure 2 below). In my work in community consultation, as well as utilising CLA's Y axis elements of litany, system, worldview and myth, I bring in the breadth of the individual and the depth of the individual. CLA QM's depth concept asks a respondent to think back (for the issue of choice) into the past to significant incidents. This is repeated for each of the four CLA layers on the . The breadth axis (X) is initially about expanding the number of topics for each significant incident identified and repeating the process for the individual to global perspectives.



## Figure 2. Including psychological perspectives in CLA QM

Revealing the complexity of each past, present, and future perspective represented on the Z Axis (see Figure 2) is guided by questioning and other potential methodological tools. Futures research methods assist the enquirer to identify and to refine their perspectives in order to achieve them [4].

### CLA bolted to Integral alliance—the need for flux

In contrast to the depth and complexity that I suggest above, Chris Riedy implies that only two options are possible: either that CLA belongs to Integral already, or that CLA will be complemented by the Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP) approach. In other words, CLA must be ‘bolted on’ to one (as a sub-discipline) or the other. He writes, “I will consider whether CLA is an Integral method in its own right or needs to be complemented by other methods within the broader framework of IMP” [7]. But this is too strong and sets too restrictive a frame. Rather, CLA is used independently within a thriving futures community who can consider on a case by case basis whether to include IMP as a brand-name. My own position allows for associating methods temporarily, without bolting on one to the exclusion of others.

Riedy predetermines CLA’s capacity to interact and or stand alone outside of Integral. But which method stands alone? Clearly the AQAL method is not the only reference when comparing models, to ascertain and add value. Riedy’s statement that “CLA neglects almost entirely the psychological quadrant” falls into the trap that Slaughter sets: saying that those who only explore AQAL miss the rich intent of Integral, “[s]ince it (AQAL) is easy to understand at a superficial level, it is unfortunately something that is reified, frozen and perhaps misused” [8]. (Also, I believe CLA favors more than a cultural perspective as is argued; but this paper is for those who prefer Warhol over warhorses, the positive over the pejorative and intellectual liquidity over imposed limits.)

Earlier, I mentioned claims by Riedy and Slaughter that CLA does not adequately address the psychological. Given that psychology is about “the science of the mind or of mental states and processes”<sup>iv</sup>, I rebuff these claims as CLA systematically organizes inner and outer states and processes. It is well positioned to:

contribute to subconscious and conscious formation of perspectives, which might be synonymous with subconscious and conscious choices/decisions about how individuals act and become involved in society. An awareness of this premise can assist the re-interpretation/reconstruction of our subconscious and conscious perspectives and/or beliefs in order to make better decisions that affect the futures of individuals, organizations and communities ... The behavior of men and women is ‘caused’ not so much by forces within themselves (instincts, drives, needs, for example), or by external forces impinging upon them (social forces and the like), but by what lies in between: a reflective and socially derived interpretation of the internal and external stimuli that are present. [9]

Furthermore, I argue in my discussion about the CLA QM that “this is the duality of human nature: to develop personal perspectives and human experience of and through interaction with others” (interaction itself brings new ideas). This is brought together in workshop settings (by government and other consultants), where CLA can help to “test the workability, plausibility of community perspectives against:

- the information that was intended to be communicated; and

- experience and imagined futures” [9].

Part of the need for different perspectives is to break free of ways of thinking or seeing arising between epochs. In futures, it is essential to consciously acknowledge and work with (and break free of) problems of memory that can be built up over generations. At times, because of trauma or shock and other constraints, imagining peace, economic stability or eco-sustainability might be difficult. But if these are identified preferences there can be a way forward. CLA provides a starting point for this work.

Now it would not be hard to accept Riedy’s aforementioned statement about psychological value to the futures process, and to simply add another psychological framework. In a community consultation workshop setting, for example, the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator assessment could be used to determine a representative group’s psychology. This is an easy addition. Most consultations (I oversee more than 100 annually) gain validity by considering the perspectives of representatives from government, community and industry—fleshing out an interest group’s perspective, but not necessarily encompassing a psychological investigation. Indeed, if we were to countenance the use of one psychological indicator, we would need to assess the viability of others ... I have experimented with 14 other personality type indicators in my work. Again, need merits application, but consultants use methods of choice and variety creates the innovation. However, more than fifteen years as a community consultation practitioner in three levels of government have taught me that most psychological inroads into community consultation foresight are valid but not mandatory. The psychological perspective is inherent but not explicit in the more than 1000 consultations I have overseen. Instead, psychology is explored most often through the subjective experience. Kant’s ‘transcendental unity of apperception’ [10] infers that we can think differently about our own experiences of the same thing. In some consultations I have noticed that the community changes their view of the same question, once they have understood the different opinions of those who have more knowledge of consequences.

This movement can be explained using CLA as an analytic framework and by mapping stakeholder perceptions, triggers for change, and influence. Again, this is not necessarily achieved through AQAL, but is a fundamental question in a democratic community consultation process. Elsewhere, I have explored how CLA creates a valid community consultation process by investigating cultural values (using questioning). In “Establishing a Valid Consultation Focus with CLA”, I noted that “internal staff should be asked about their perceptions of their stakeholders”, and I discussed transitions in community consultation, quoting staff from sixteen councils working in six countries [11]. Not only do methods change, but the programs they are used within, their resources and the capacity of participants to apply methods and to answer questions also changes. So, while it might not be mandatory to apply a psychological perspective at all times in all methods, there is inherent value in CLA to coordinate mental states and processes, hence increasing the consistency and validity of community consultation and other processes.

CLA takes layers and asks the user to filter their perspectives of a situation through them, in part and, equally possibly, as a joint narrative. CLA only leans toward the cultural in the sense that it explicates the eye of the beholder, the personal bias construction of the user. Thus CLA is balanced across its four layers and is interpreted into political science or behavioural and organisational psychology and other disciplines. As soon as you include in a method the official unquestioned view of reality (one quarter of the aspects of CLA), then you immediately assume you can research all aspects of the individual: how they form their view, how they act/react as a result of having their view, and how to change or inform their view. This is, of course, the classical function of a clinical psychologist: a client enters a room asking for their view to be changed. And such a view is closely related to the person’s view of their own future and all that generates it. Individuals can influence the future, including their own. CLA begins and ends, as a process, by questioning the future.

To be very literal about CLA and psychology in action, let us look at a psychology CLA of a ‘disillusionment’ scenario, seen repeatedly over years of community visioning and consultation (Table 1).

**Table 1. Disillusionment scenario**

Litany	One’s own identity (client feels disillusioned)
Systemic causes	The system hasn’t allowed a feeling of achievement—(lists reasons specific to why it appears the system is doing this, e.g., offers few opportunities to influence the bigger picture)
Discourse Worldview	One’s broader institutional or global frameworks that support the problem (locked into a broader view ‘it’s the same everywhere’)
Myth/Metaphor	One’s own or other’s stories that have generated reinforcement of that feeling or experience.

Now the immediate learning here is that CLA has the capacity for deep layered diagnosis. Questioning at each layer can provide options that could lead to solutions. CLA works to identify psychological or cultural paradigms and begins to identify areas where change should be supported. CLA QM then is clearly inclusive of psychology and can be used by those wishing to inform a psychological perspective *or* to engage in cultural change. If one persists with the view that CLA is cultural, then the psychology within all four layers can be explored through the definition of culture: ‘the way things are done around here’. CLA then, is designed not just to diagnose, but to change the way things are done, to move people upwards through Maslow’s hierarchy to self actualisation [12].

### CLA and Integral unbolted

Riedy posits that “some of the participants in a CLA workshop may not have developed the capacity to reflect on their society, discourse or worldview”. It is true that participants may well be unfamiliar with reflection, but this position ignores the talent and perspective that the non-expert brings, as well as their capacity to learn. In addition, it denies the ability of the facilitator to apply methods to draw out the existing thinking of the individual. It also reveals something of the "expert" worldview that is embedded in Integralism/Wilberism. However, whether working with non-experts and experts, such drawing out is no less achievable with CLA than with Integral; indeed, immediate education of participants or introducing knowledgeable participants is equally possible whether using a pure CLA method or one filtered through an Integral framework. There is no additional benefit to using the Integral framework on this count.

The Riedy paper is an attempt to bolt on CLA to a filter methodology. He does this not in any fine academic or practical tradition of interchangeability, that would otherwise leave CLA as a pure nucleus in the field, but one that is sub-optimised through a magnetic attempt to imagine their permanent togetherness. If left unchecked, this approach could weaken CLA’s present availability to a range of methodological approaches. Also, the two methods need space to develop in the minds of the user. Derrida, on respect and responsibility, writes: “there is no respect, as its name connotes, without the vision and distance of a *spacing*. No responsibility without response, without what speaking and hearing *invisibly* say to the ear, and which takes *time*” [13].

I would suggest that CLA works equally well outside or with the IOS/IMP/AQAL framework. But some harder questions follow: Is Riedy’s paper an all quadrants all levels reveal or a Wilber-centric one? Is this the balanced perspective we would have hoped for considering the privileged position of judgment Riedy embraces? Shouldn’t the future of a driving methodology remain in the hands of all who would grow it and grow with it?

## How can we describe the togetherness of methodological variables?

My way forward is based on complex and chaotic bolting and unbolting. That is, what is the spacing between two methods? Are two methods in the same field ‘holons’ (a holon is defined as something that is a whole in itself as well as simultaneously being part of a larger system), or is there a more apt word? A more useful notion may be that of the vinculum: a tie which shows that two variables are to be considered together, while also allowing the variables to attach and re-attach.<sup>v</sup> They can be together and together apart. Importantly, a vinculum emphasises the tie or bond—when and why, where and who/what, and how the variables are together. In this higher order framework, a holon is an element within the larger vinculum, which does not discriminate against components that are not formally in the same system or that are non-whole variables. Collections of variables are nonetheless variables and their togetherness can be considered as they are invoked voluntarily or involuntarily, regularly or spasmodically.

A vinculum, then, may encompass a holon and a non holon. Not every part is holographic or functional, but belongs to one or more variables in some way, because of function, notion or other value. So the vinculum enables us to consider the togetherness of the variables in terms of the ways in which those variables are together, what the variables are and why and where they are together, and when they will be together (i.e. ‘will they be together in the future?’). Vinculums change within themselves over time. They are not always ‘whole’, but in transition. For example, human psychology changes over a lifetime (the vinculum might be drawn over, say, early childhood, adolescence, and adulthood).

Others have also understood the need for a term which describes the linking of separate and not always related concepts. Kurt Vonnegut’s ‘karass’ [14] is a notional example of a vinculum. Here individuals are considered to be in a vinculum because they contribute to the same cause, although they do not know it. And the Greek Heraclitus said, “all things come out of the one and the one out of all things”; we are one on the planet in the one multiverse. The vinculum, then:

- is non-discriminatory—includes non-holons and holons, inanimate and living, closed and open systems;
- links variables (that are accessible) that can attach and re-attach and change over time;
- works through past(s), present(s) and future(s); and
- has multi-directionality to recognize perspective or relative perception.

It is important to note, however, that variables that make direct contact are not the only ones to be considered together—we can not know that particular variables are not together until real study is undertaken (for example, a variable may be in chain with another it has never connected with directly). Relativism tells us that two feats may look diametrically opposed to one another, but from another perspective, say Gaian [15], actually contribute to the same outcomes (sustainability) within the ‘Earth system’—and are part of one meta vinculum. Again the logic in this relativism is that these components are vinculum variables.

So, how can we know when variables are within a vinculum? They do not have to be alive in the system, nor on standby, waiting for use. They simply need to be accessible and valuable (at some point) to other variables (human, animate or inanimate).

CLA can function by itself and is part of a larger futures studies vinculum. Testing what would happen if they were apart would be pointless, because they are still accessible to other variables. Methodologies can be accessible to some, and not to others, so accessibility is of value; people must be aware of the methods and interested or know of the benefits of their use to be able to access their availability. So what is salient is not whether the variables in the vinculum are mostly together or not, it is whether those in and outside the vinculum can access them. There is a doctrine around the vinculum that the effects of variables and accessibility of variables add value to the vinculum. Thus, if CLA remains accessible, it has value. If it is bound into another vinculum, and not seen as a whole

methodology in itself, it would be less accessible and less valuable. Within a vinculum, it can be attached to some users and unattached from other users (it is also salient that users have choice).

What of Wilber's doctrine of 'fundamental and significant' (which resembles Maslow's hierarchy of needs)? Unlike the vinculum concept, Wilber's definition is subtractive: the removal of all parts to determine the severity of affect on the system. Perhaps it should be about what gives most life to the system. What about the ability of a variable to attach and re-attach and to be significant in some parts of its life and less significant in others? For example, in a child's body, protein is highly significant, while carbohydrates and fats (lipid layers) are significant to an extent. We need these things in moderation, and more so at different times. The fact that at different times the lack of them is without consequence means that they can be together or apart and still have high order significance in a living system. The system might actually function better when certain components are outside the system. Equilibrium and balance are necessary when determining this. It seems to me that Wilber's doctrine is supported by his relational statement that "the more destruction to the system the departure of a category of holons causes, the more value it has". This seems to be a tenuous relational statement when applied to, say, a university system. The departure of no single person or suite of persons could cause its destruction, yet those persons could be most valuable (e.g., the removal of all lecturers could be temporarily recitative, until more lecturers were found and the overarching system of governance could organise to sustain the students in the interim). CLA and Wilber's quadrants should be considered entirely separately as individual methodological variables.

Why the vinculum? Okay, so what if we are not interested in whether the part is significant or not? What if we are interested in only whether the part can attach and re-attach safely, i.e. transience? And secondly, what if our interest extends to why the parts attach and reattach? For example, we can consider whether the parts are in fact together or just temporary neighbours. In terms of process, the concept of the vinculum alludes to who, when, where, why, and importantly, how the variables exist and how collections of variables exist, in addition to what the variables are.

The vinculum does not discriminate against the regularity of contribution or type of involvement of parts (information, phenotypes or inanimate): the cause is not the determinant of the value of the parts—there is only consideration of togetherness. Sets, parts and interaction are triggers for consideration of the vinculum. Attachment and re-attachment are not considered dysfunctional but necessary to reproduce value. The argument for efficiency is related to resources and objectives and the enthymematic process—what is not said informs what is said.

There is certainly room for a method that produces sectoral vinculum. Various sectoral views can also be considered as not always in the same system. That is, some of the views could be considered by some to be sustainable and industrially advantageous, but not to all. Defining them as holons would be dangerous. Local and global views are also 'vinculum', to be considered together on a case by case basis—let's use the term innovatively. Let's use 'vinculum' as a noun to discuss local sectoral systems balanced across further sectors that are further defined as cities, or across cities, that together become state or national systems. Vinculum works here, because it starts with the tie, the bond. It doesn't make process secondary. It makes process invaluable. The tie and the variable can be considered as one. The way you tie something together is its own indicator of whether it will hold or not. Process is as important as content.

In terms of Bakhtin's dialogism [16], there is an ongoing vinculum from the past to the present and the present to the past. Of course there must also be elasticity from the present to the future and the future to the present. But ultimately reality must impress itself upon the present, thereby influencing any futuristic chronotope in any of CLA's layers.

In the search for meaning we leap from one vinculum to another in any chronotope. We are sure that everything must be part of a system, but are less certain which system we should refer to. This is not so much described in terms of hypertextuality or Kristeva's intertextuality [17] as it is by a response to external stimuli. We leap from the textual paradigm to another to find meaning. This is what we do between CLA and Wilber's quadrants. We try to define our methods by the system they are in.



External stimuli come in the form of the consideration of multiple textual analyses. Ultimately we must consider that vinculum form out of phonology, function, similar action, chronotope, and so forth. But defining, categorising and finding similarity does not equate necessarily to demonstrating 'family'.

### The methodological community

A plethora of models adds value outside the existing Integral framework. In the future more frameworks will be written. Many will work directly from CLA as I have done. Asserting that they must work through Riedy's attachment of Wilber's version (now named Integral Futures by Slaughter) denies the inevitable. This is like a train pulling carriages of passengers. Carriages can change and more can be added to the engine, as necessary. Their temporary or even regular connection does not mean that the two should be declared 'always together'. Wilber's AQAL is not the only framework worth comparing any model with—it is not the only possible carriage for all possible destinations. Bakhtin's heteroglossia [16] (multilayered nature of language) refers to the qualities of a language that are extralinguistic, but common to all languages. These include qualities such as perspective, evaluation, and ideological positioning. In this way, most languages are incapable of neutrality, for every word is inextricably bound to the context in which it exists. The aspects above are not necessarily considered by Wilber's framework. Frameworks are carriages, not a single engine. Or at best, engines, and not the engines' makers—this requires the sentient human being and a touch of genius.

In community consultation terms, best practice is reflected through worldview to individual standards, thus the meta-cyclic process continues. CLA parents best practice, best practice parents CLA, until further improvement/learning occurs in the mind and experience of the user. Art imitates life, life imitates art. In that regard CLA imitates best practice and best practice becomes a CLA and the framework component carriages appropriate to the situation. The user becomes further enlightened. That matters. The finest destination is to replace methodological scarcity with methodological multiplicity, avoiding singularity by building a respectful methodological community. Hello diversity, hello communal security! Farewell defensive unity, welcome community of emancipated futurists! The methods between us merge in our minds at stations, some central, some regional. But we are never really stationary, only stationing.

In the so called 'real world' don't things always happen that way? By a divergence, a trajectory, a curve which is not at all the linear curve of evolution? We could perhaps develop a model of drifting planes, to speak in seismic terms, in the theory of catastrophes. The seismic and sliding of the referential. The end of the infrastructure. Nothing remains but shifting movements that provoke raw events. We no longer take events as revolutions or effects of the superstructure, but as underground effects of skidding, fractal zones in which things happen. Between the plates, continents do not quite fit together, they slip under and over each other. There is no more system of reference to tell us what happened to the geography of things. We can only take a geo-seismic view. Perhaps this is also true in the constructions of a society, a mentality or value system. Things no longer meet head-on, they slip past one another. [18]

CLA is closely tied to other futures methodologies, however AQAL is not necessarily directed toward 'futurists' as an audience, or perhaps to only one school of futurists. This discussion is more about the capacity for futurists to choose to work in and/or outside of AQAL, within their own brands of IMP and the IOS, with (as futurists) an undeniable capacity to help define our futures.

### Conclusion

Galleries internationally display art from evolving schools of thought. I recently provided surveys and futures activities as part of the international Cityscope exhibition at Queensland's Gold Coast Arts Centre, Gallery 1. In this process, I found that new paintings and sculptures were elevated onto display

points around the gallery about every six weeks. To some people, then, the best galleries are the living galleries. They change their display of artistic works faster than the change of seasons. The art works within are in constant flux, and the special touring displays within galleries are also in constant flux. Other galleries, however, might retain their major works in unchanging displays for decades.

Perhaps the point is that CLA can house methods within its midst. The methods can be from grander traditions and remain for decades, or they can be whisked away, to be compared to other methods in other parts of the globe. But education occurs in either format. Education also occurs from an examination of how a method evolves. Like still images merged and set into motion, the bringing together of versions of a method will tell a story. Involving authors in that story promotes learning. Pluralism will mean that CLA will parent many schools of thought. I suggest that its author will continue in the academic tradition he started, in the spirit of foresight education, and that CLA will continue to be defined by the community who use it. The simplicity of the original CLA model belies the substantial literature that seeds its applications.

Why the *vinculum*? A *vinculum* over variables remains flexible. Yes variables are also ‘variable’ and can be subsets of one thing and not of another, but they may also be subsets of all things if that is in the eye of the beholder. However, variety is the spice of life, and not everything will merge into togetherness. Order and disorder coexist. Let’s not think about everything together, but in terms of diversity, transitions and the future. In the future, CLA is not CLA and therefore it is CLA—‘the logic of the not’.

We should consider the uniqueness of CLA and then its links or symbioses with other models on a case-by-case basis, dependant on, for example, relevance and context of application. Written discourse is not necessarily democratic. Perhaps intertextual references allow its evolution. However, interwoven methodological communities need to be sensitive to the writers who sustain methodological communities, as well as to the best interests of users of methods, hence sustainability of ‘the field’. An attempt to permanently bind CLA to another methodology would, rather than creating accessibility to grow CLA, narrow the field and result in our being ruined by the thing we kill (Judith Wright again):

I praise the scouring drought, the flying dust,  
the drying creek, the furious animal,  
that they oppose us still;  
that we are ruined by the thing we kill. [19]

A cogent AQAL is the distinction between democracy and ruthless interaction on one axis, combined with all for one; but instead of one for all, we see one for some. Our perspectives will determine where we stand. What I have found in writing this paper is that the incandescence of CLA provides for other methods and models to grow within and alongside it. These support the futures field. In response to Riedy, I argue that CLA grows from a substantial body of work and has the capacity already to live alongside the AQAL framework—while not diminishing its own role. But this should not be predetermined by any individual or body. It should be considered on a case-by-case, project-by-project or theory-by-theory basis and by the community who use it. A permanent association between CLA and AQAL may harm CLA and its author’s reflexivity. That subtracts from who the author is and from CLA as a foresight idiom. In my view, CLA’s *temporary* association with AQAL is however a rapprochement that is expansive, not recitative.

The main authors discussed in this essay are woven into the fabric of society; we know them. Have they ever written, anywhere, that they would not evolve any of their methods in the future? In fact, Wilber states that “Understanding the structures of your own mind helps you understand the structures that you are bringing forth, and ultimately how to transcend all of them” [20]. In this age we can map a multiplicity of possible futures, of presents and of pasts, but futures will always remain unknown. Perhaps we should sustain our futures with a meta-constitution that allows evolution, respect for education about all methods, and numerous theories of everything. But, not even with a duality of theory and reality will we have finality—surely after we have explored every alternative forwards and backwards and into great specificity and outwards to great magnitude, surely there will be a rule

changing and a life giving nexus to further vinculum. My view is that CLA remains available to them all and should even have a role in parenting some of them. We live in an evolving methodological community working with evolving methodology. As Derrida writes:

I am responsible to anyone only by failing in my responsibility to all the others, to the ethical or political generality. And I can never justify this sacrifice; I must always hold my peace about it... What binds me to this one or that one, remains finally unjustifiable.  
[21]

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## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Judith Wright (1915–2000) was a significant Australian poet.

<sup>ii</sup> ‘Cultural perspective’ is used here as a reference point, not a device for cloaking ideology or psychological perspective.

<sup>iii</sup> The chronotope, according to Bakhtin (1981, p. 250), is the place where the “knots of narrative are tied”.

<sup>iv</sup> This is the number one definition of ‘psychology’ sourced from [www.edictionary.com](http://www.edictionary.com).

<sup>v</sup> A vinculum is a “line drawn over several terms to show that they have a common relation to what follows or precedes” (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*).

## Solving the Futures Challenge – All you need is a 3LA

Marcus Barber<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*In this article, the author responds to a number of claims regarding the Integral Operating System, Causal Layered Analysis and the field of Futures. In particular, the author takes aim at those who claim that the reason the futures field has been lacking in influencing change towards more positive world is the result of not having an effective tool kit. To the contrary, the author suggests that the Futures community's failure at changing the existing 'market driven paradigm' has more to do with "... an unwillingness to get our hands dirty and to play in the same sandbox as our clients." To that end the author targets in particular, a piece suggesting that making the Causal Layered Analysis more complex, exclusionary and 'new and improved' is the best way to make inroads into the economic liberalism model now in control. In counterpoint the author suggests that not only is this a flawed approach, it is unlikely to assist those with greatest need – the wider Futures Community*

In Richard Slaughter's introduction to the special Integral Futures Methodologies issue of Futures, we are alerted to the challenge facing futures work:

Despite some successes the futures field remained a social and cultural side-show, that was unable to effectively counter or respond to the immense challenges posed for it (and the world) by the spread of economic liberalism – the ultimately futile but, in the short term, extremely powerful view that markets were the dominant mechanism by which humanity would order its affairs and thus select its main pathway(s) into the future... [1]

The main thrust of edition 40 of Futures is, then, well established – it offers a way for futures and foresight as a field to move beyond mere side-show status. For that end, we are brought to the altar of the Integral Operating System (IOS), an approach (its many proponents suggest) overcomes the inherent limitations of existing approaches to engaging with futures work.

But herein lay the biggest blind-spot of the edition. Almost as one, the authors of the various pieces (in the main well written and valuable perspectives of the IOS approach) suggest that the failure of futures to date has simply been caused by the lack of appropriate tools for undertaking effective futures work and that these limitations will be addressed by the incorporation of the IOS to AFW (Advanced Futures Work).

And, almost as one, they seem to overlook their starting positions.

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The failure of the futures field to date, its inherent inability to move from the side-show to centre stage, has almost nothing to do with the assortment of futures tools available. Instead, I suggest that the critical failure has been an unwillingness or inability of futures practitioners to play in the same sandbox as their key clients. By and large, the deep thinking and prognostication has been theoretical and non pragmatic and it is for this reason that the ‘short term, extremely powerful’ paradigm of market forces has remained unchallenged.<sup>1</sup>

The futures field has attempted to change from with-out, rather than from within. It has taken the approach that it is up to ‘others’ to see the error of their ways and not for the futures field to get their hands dirty in the real world, working from within the existing paradigms.

Yet this version of reality is generally ignored (or unrecognised) by many within the futures community; it is also one which a Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) [2] approach might have alerted the journal to. The problem is the tools, not the practitioners. The problem is the dominant market-driven paradigm, not the inability of the futures field to play in the same arena. The problem is with the path that humanity has selected, not the fact that the futures community has just gone about merely suggesting arguably better alternatives and has been unwilling to pick up some tools to carve and or grow that alternative path. The futures community has been great at talking the talk which is why the dominant market paradigm has been left to walk the walk.

Thankfully for the futures field, we have the NAI (new and improved) approach to futures seen through the lens of the IOS [3]. Sleep easy people, salvation is upon us! Let me say from the outset that I quite enjoy the thinking that emerges through the IOS model and there’s much to be learned from the edition with regard to an IOS view of the world. But if the issue is about tackling a dominant paradigm, then the paradigm of NAI for AFW, exhibited in the IOS edition of Futures, must also be open to challenge.

I am particularly concerned by Chris Riedy’s piece ‘An Integral extension of causal layered analysis’ [4]. For those who’ve yet to read the paper, allow me to suggest a summary of what the paper is about:

- CLA aims to include cultural development as a key area of consideration
- CLA fails to take an Integral view
- By making it far more complex than what it is now, one can shift CLA from beyond its inherent limitations to a model that is Integral and therein more likely to deliver better futures outcomes.
- In making it Integral you’ll need other methods to fill in the gaps.

That pretty much sums up the paper. The presuppositions abound – that CLA must have been designed in the first place to consider all quadrants, levels and lines in the IOS; that CLA is a futures tool to be used in isolation; that CLA doesn’t allow for the inclusion of psychological or cultural perspectives; and that churning it through an IOS manufacturing plant will turn it into NIA-CLA.

But before addressing those presuppositions, first let me summarise what CLA is about:

- CLA is an approach to considering the depth of thinking we are applying to a particular area of focus
- It has four main levels which can be summed up as:

- What we say (Litany)
  - What we do (Social causes)
  - How we think (Worldviews)
  - Who we are (Myth & Metaphor)
- At its core it seeks to answer: ‘Who wins?’ ‘Who loses?’ and ‘Who is doing the saying?’

Given that positioning, one could posit that CLA is not a futures methodology per se, but a means through which discussions about the future can be more openly considered, for it has the potential to expose bias, winners, losers, favoured positions and ‘fight to the death’ values. It is easy then to see how bringing CLA to the table can provide a wonderful base from which a more ‘complete’ or – dare I suggest – ‘Integral’ perspective of the future might be created. Yet when assessing CLA through an IOS lens, Chris Riedy’s paper misses. As a practitioner I’ve used multiple methods in futures work of which CLA is but one.

Let’s start with the first presupposition – that CLA must have been designed to consider the full IOS model. We know this to be Riedy’s position for he states, ‘the layers in CLA confuse quadrants, developmental levels and developmental lines’ [4, p.150]. I’m not entirely convinced that is the case and really it is beside the point for CLA was not designed for the explicit purpose of addressing the quadrants, lines and levels of the IOS. That it does so anyway is a side benefit.

As a straightforward case in point, let’s apply CLA to the presupposition that CLA does not include all quadrants, lines and levels of the IOS, as Riedy suggests. If we agree with the Litany (that CLA does not include them), who wins? Well, the author, suggesting that CLA is not an Integral method and that he has an answer for improvement, certainly wins. That is of course the author’s internal view and others may agree or not. Who loses if we agree with the perspective? Well, those who are said to be using a less than adequate CLA method. That is also their internally derived individual perspective(s). By the way, who is doing the ‘saying’? The saying is being done by someone whose cultural perspective (collective interior) is formed through an IOS movement – a collective of persons passionate about IOS as a futures model, who suggest systemic change is required and encourage us to change our behaviours accordingly.

We could continue to look at the Social Causes (what we do) and point out that the suggested NIA-CLA is an attempt to ‘fix’ the problem that exists with CLA proper. That’s assuming we buy into the Worldview (how we think) that there is a problem with CLA in the world of futures applications in the first place, and that we have now had presented to us, a mode by which futures discourse (we) shall overcome the dominant paradigm of market forces (myth and metaphor). Who wins, who loses, who is doing the saying?

Those three simple CLA styled questions expose the cultural biases, the individual perspectives, the behavioural attributes and the systemic codes that exist when considering an issue. I suggest then that though CLA does not explicitly use the labels associated with the IOS, it does not exclude them and more often than not explicitly exposes them to the light of day. As an example of the deliberate use of CLA (that by default considers social, behavioural, cultural and internal thinking across multiple levels and lines), take a look at ‘A Drop in the Ocean for Foresight Practitioners’ that uses CLA to assess global variations in how societies and individuals use water [5]. Many other examples found in publications such as Inayatullah’s Questioning the Future [6] also indicate the fullness of perspectives that CLA brings that seem to more than adequately draw out much that could be covered via an IOS approach [7].

The second presupposition is that CLA is a futures tool to be used in isolation. We know Riedy thinks this when he says that ‘...I will consider whether CLA is an Integral method in its own right or

whether it needs to be complemented by other methods within the broader framework of IMP' [4, p.151] and 'allows us to identify where CLA might be located compared to other futures methods and what might be missed when CLA is applied alone' [4, p.154]. I am unaware of any writing on the subject of CLA that suggests or encourages practitioners to rely solely on CLA in their work or to do so in isolation from other methodologies. On the contrary, Inayatullah warns proponents of CLA that 'Like all methods, CLA has its limits... and is best used in conjunction with other methods such as...' [6, p.45]. To suggest CLA is an isolationist method would be as flawed as suggesting that the only futures tools anyone ought to utilise in the field are those of an IOS nature. And I'll go one step further by suggesting that CLA works best in conjunction with additional tools – whether or not those tools are taken from the IOS toolkit.

The third presupposition I've highlighted is also questionable and I've already made one example that implies otherwise. It is not my personal experience that CLA would fail to uncover all four elements of the intentional, the social, the behavioural and the cultural, as Riedy suggests when he says:

... but the second level adds interpretation, technical explanations and academic analysis of economic, social, political and historical factors. In Integral terms I would argue that both layers are concerned with exterior or quantitative realities (i.e. the behavioural and systemic quadrants) and marginalise important interior realities (psychological and cultural quadrants)... [4, p.154]

To suggest that CLA ignores or fails to allow for cultural or psychological inclusiveness at levels one and two is flawed. Where else does 'interpretation' come from if not from within cultural and psychological levels and from within an individual's perspective and understanding? How are the thematics of 'political, economic, social and historical' derived if not through cultural and psychological lenses? Inayatullah states explicitly that a key benefit of CLA is that 'when used in a workshop setting, it leads to the inclusion of different ways of knowing among participants' [6, p.24]. That CLA is most often used in a workshop setting of multiple perspectives in no way excludes or denies the individual perspective from being present in discussion and formation of multiple shared collectives or recognition and surfacing of individual perspectives.

In the application of CLA, one of its greatest strengths in group settings is to show how, even at the Litany level, cultural biases or personal interpretations of the same data can deliver varied, confirming, disconfirming and alternative perspectives. Consider the following newspaper headline as an example of CLA being used to draw out cultural and psychological perspectives in abundance: 'Interest Rates Set to Climb'.

In the same room it would be possible when considering the Litany, that the 'almost home-owner' would be concerned, the cashed-up pensioner delighted, the exporter worried and the importer overjoyed. Each would have their own individual interior interpretation of the same data, might exhibit variances in individual behaviour as a result (Social Causes), could look to form a shared-response systemic mechanism like Reserve Bank market forces interventions (Worldview) or consider that the volatility of rates is 'un-Australian' and a cultural disgrace (Myth & Metaphor). Depending on where the question was asked, it would also draw out different cultural interpretations. Riedy's suggestion that CLA excludes the Individual Interior and the Collective Interior is inaccurate.

Presupposition Four – that forcing CLA through a fitness regime residing inside IOS will deliver a NAI-CLA – is just plain wrong and it is here that we see the all too evangelical nature of a number of IOS proponents at their disconcerting worst.

Riedy sets forth his own bias of IOS as the panacea to flaws in existing futures methodologies – and in particular CLA – when he says that using CLA is potentially flawed where '...participants in a CLA workshop are not developmentally equipped to reflect on their deep worldview commitments' [4, p.156]. I am uncertain how such a position is exclusive to a CLA workshop or, as is implied, miraculously disappears when an NAI-CLA might be used instead.



Further, we discover that choosing to site CLA within an IOS framework, forces us to use additional tools to make it fit. In other words, the practitioner is forced to make his/her approach more complex than the original starting framework, yet apparently doing so will not challenge individual worldviews or cultural perspectives because, it must be assumed, participants to an IOS designed CLA process are ‘developmentally equipped to reflect on their deep worldview commitments’.

There is the additional suggestion that IOS (unlike CLA?) ‘does not conceive of development as a simple linear progression through levels’ [4, p.153]. The inference here is that CLA does conceive of development occurring in a linear fashion. Yet within IOS we have ‘lines’ (‘...a fluid process that occurs along many, relatively independent developmental lines...’) [4, p.157] and I ponder whether there can be anything more linear in progression than a line? Of course it would be ridiculous, reductionist and ‘flatland-ish’<sup>ii</sup> to select one element of the IOS and hold it out in isolation as representative of the much fuller model. I wish Riedy would offer the same courtesy to CLA.

Next we learn that the NAI-CLA is about selectiveness – ‘An advantage of this Integral version of CLA would be the ability to judge which scenarios are preferable’ [4, p.157]. Yet I thought that the first principle of IMP is that of ‘non-exclusion’ [4, p.157].

Finally, we learn that the starting point of an NAI-CLA are participants who are IOS aware [16] – a suggestion that rules out the vast majority of people who might attend ANY workshop, let alone those working through a CLA or futures process. Again, we see the flaw is said to be the existing CLA model, and NOT the failure of the practitioner to work from within and with the worldview of the client. We are also encouraged that ‘...three levels could suffice...’ [4, p.157], provided we then also work across and over, down and around.

The end result is a suggested approach to CLA that has less utility, is more complex in operation, demands greater abilities of participants and does little to tackle the fundamental issue behind the failure of futures work to gain greater leverage for change – the willingness to play in the client’s sandbox.

For all that, there is hope contained within Riedy’s paper: if, as Slaughter suggests, IOS will be the means through which the dominant market based paradigm might be tackled head on, IOS has much to offer – an abundance of 2LAs, 3LAs and 4LAs effectively: UL, UR, LR, LL, CLA, IOS, IMP, Integral CLA and AQAL. I’ve offered in addition NAI and AFW. Surely a rich tapestry that appeals to the dominant paradigm driven by MBAs and their ATL & BTL ROI driven activities.

The IOS is an impressive model with much to offer and the many papers offered in this edition suggest a number of reasons that IOS could assist the quality of futures work emanating from the field. But it’s just a model. The evangelical nature of many proponents who seem to think that the existing models need ‘fixing’ and improving shares much in common with the Abrahamic religions, especially Christianity, whose consistent ability to incorporate already existing cultural modes of being, values and icons, and call them their own whilst slowly changing the dominant worldview is impressive. It is what Clare W. Graves might suggest is a Level 4 into Level 5 operational code<sup>iii</sup> that so heavily delights in complexity and NAI. And it is ultimately flawed for it sets in concrete the very notion of futures work being unable to include multiple perspectives, instead striving to place one above another on a hierarchy of merit. And it does so in a manner much more closely aligned with the existing market driven paradigm in need of replacement.

I appreciate Riedy’s passion for the model and enthusiasm for assessing CLA to see how it might be developed further. But replacing structurally sound, relatively straightforward methods with highly complex, iterative and exclusionary approaches is not, in my opinion, a way for the futures community to endear itself to those in arguably greatest need of assistance – us.

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## Acronyms

2LA	Two Letter Acronym
3LA	Three Letter Acronym
4LA	Four Letter Acronym
4Q	Four Quadrants
AFW	Advanced Futures Work
AQAL	All Quadrants, All Levels
ATL	Above the Line (advertising methodologies)
BTL	Below the Line (advertising methodologies)
CLA	Causal Layered Analysis
IMP	Integral Methodological Pluralism
IOS	Integral Operating System
LL	Lower Left (quadrant of Wilber's Four Quadrant model)
LR	Lower Right (quadrant of Wilber's Four Quadrant model)
MBA	Masters of Business Administration
NAI	New and Improved
ROI	Return on Investment
UL	Upper Left (quadrant of Wilber's Four Quadrant model)
UR	Upper Right (quadrant of Wilber's Four Quadrant model)

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> For anyone interested they may care to contact the author for a copy of 'A View from Inside the Turret', an unpublished paper submitted as part of my Masters program in Strategic Foresight, that detailed an experience of a futurist trying to move from the theoretical approach to a hands on implementation approach. 2004, AFI.

<sup>ii</sup> The term 'Flatland' is more fully described in Ken Wilber's 'A Theory of Everything' (Shambhala, 2001) and (briefly) is said to be a process by which depth of understanding is squashed so that everything can be measured or categorised as an 'it' and that anything that cannot be measured is deemed to be lacking in value or unworthy of further consideration.

<sup>iii</sup> C. W. Graves referred to his model as a 'bio-psycho-social' model of adult human behaviour. The model identified a series of stages through which an entity **may** move in a progressive state as the entity learns to cope with more complex existential problems. There is no guarantee that an entity might move or is required to move beyond their current state and Graves determined that each stage had very distinct operational codes of behaviour. The model is more fully explained in 'Spiral Dynamics – Mastering Values, Leadership and Change' (Blackwood 1996) by Don Beck & Chris Cowan. Beck has worked closely with Wilber assisting him in the development of his 4Q model.

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