

Citation:

Gidley, J 2009, 'An other view of integral futures: de/reconstructing the IF brand', *Futures: The Journal of Policy, Planning and Futures Studies*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 125-133.

An Other View of Integral Futures: De/reconstructing the IF Brand

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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*.

1. 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 faculty¹ 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 researchers² 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 unpublished³ 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].⁴ 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*.

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ Slaughter’s paper was published as a chapter in a book the following year [26].

⁴ 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].

2. 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 technician 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 technician 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].

3. Reconstructing *Integral Futures* as Macrohistorical and Planetary

3.1 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 26th 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*⁵ [42]

⁵ The integral approaches I consider here, including my own, need to be contextualised as *post-positivist*, in contrast to the early 20th century strivings of the Vienna Circle to create a *unified science* through *logical positivism*.

[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*⁶ [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*⁷ 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,⁸ 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.

3.2 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

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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 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.

⁸ 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].

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 19th 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.⁹

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 8th century CE in Baghdad. Steiner described the cultural leader, Haroun al Raschid as:

⁹ See website <http://www.projective.com/en/projective/historique/>

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.

3.3 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.¹⁰ 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

¹⁰ 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.

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 20th 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.¹¹ 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.¹² 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*.¹³ 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 20th century. In summary, I see Steiner, Gebser and Wilber as the most significant macro-integral theorists of the 20th 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

¹¹ I am using the terms *theorists* and *theory* in this section broadly to cover philosophy, epistemology and methodology.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

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 approach¹⁴ 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*¹⁵ 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

¹⁴ 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].

¹⁵ 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].

integral literature.¹⁶ 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 19th century [64]. By contrast the term *transdisciplinary*¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ See also the special issue on *transdisciplinarity* (*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*).

4. 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*¹⁹ [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

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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*.

¹⁸ 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].

¹⁹ After Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *delicate empiricism* [104] [105].

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 debate²⁰—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.

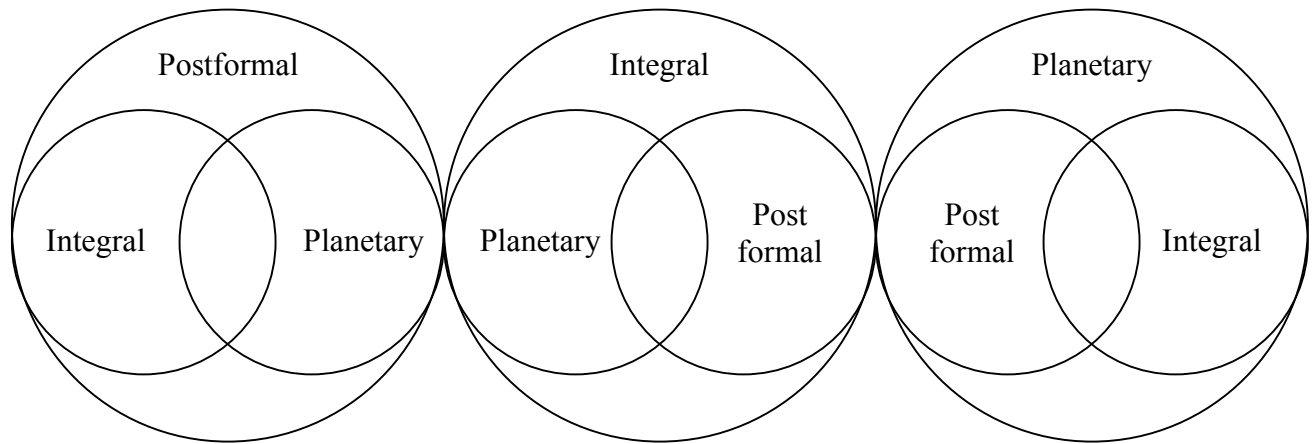


Figure 1a: A *Postformal* Perspective on Integral and Planetary Discourses

Figure 1b: An *Integral* Perspective on Planetary and Postformal Discourses

Figure 1c: A *Planetary* Perspective on Postformal and Integral Discourses

²⁰ 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).

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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