

On the development of beliefs vs. capacities: Post-metaphysics and second tier skillfulness¹

Tom Murray²

Introduction

This article explores what an integral or second tier approach to belief-holding might entail. What do integralists believe and want others to believe? What relationship *to* belief (and knowledge, truth, and certainty) might be characteristic of "integral" or "second tier" consciousness?³ Current developments in Integral Theory (including "Wilber-5" and allusions to post-Wilberian integral theories) are fundamentally concerned about epistemology and method—i.e. questions such as "How do we know?" "What can we know is true or real?" and "How do we justify and promote what we think is true or good?" Any deep investigation into such questions entails developmental, philosophical, psycho-therapeutic, social, and ethical concerns. The ultimate concern is not so much with how we develop beliefs within the integral community, but in how we intend to disseminate or build up worldviews, knowledge, or capacity in our attempts to be of service to the wider circle of humanity (and kosmos). Certainly the goal is not to turn as many of "them" into "us" as we can—or is it? To contextualize these general questions, in Part I of this article I will focus on a specific domain of integral beliefs and models: human development. In Part II will focus on what it might mean to enact a post-metaphysical stance to belief-holding, which is an important aspect of second tier development.

Perhaps the most prominent big idea or foundational principle of integral theories (broadly construed) is that human capacity, along with everything else in the universe, develops and evolves, and does so in ways that are now partially understood. Along with this is a common belief that this evolution (often described as being towards increasing complexity and connectivity) is quasi-teleological or spiritual (or soteriological)—that the cosmic progression of matter, which begot life, and the evolution of life, which begot consciousness, and the evolution of consciousness through human history, and finally the development of consciousness in each individual, are all pointing toward something ever more adequate, more in-spirited, more wonderful, or, at the teleological extreme, cosmologically *meant* to be or *wanting* to become. The predominant integral narratives, which I assume my readers know well, describe a sequence of levels of worldviews, value-systems, and/or capacities that people (cultures or

¹ A shorter version accepted for the 2010 Integral Theory Conference. This is a DRAFT of an extended version for a book chapter.

² Independent Scholar at Pespegrity Solutions; Associate Editor at Integral Review; email: tommurray.us@gmail.com.

³ Second tier is a term used within the integral community to refer to a level of adult cognitive/emotional/social/spiritual development that is post-formal. Associated terms include vision logic, post-rational, meta-systemic, dialectical thinking, and construct aware.

individuals, depending on the model) pass through if conditions are right.⁴ In alignment with the concept of multiple intelligences put forth by Gardner (1983), integralists posit a variety of lines of such development. Along with this is a valuing of higher states and stages of consciousness to the extent that they contribute to meeting important human needs and advancing human potential.

There are many variations to this basic developmental narrative, and substantial differences in the degree of empirical evidence supporting them. My purpose here is not to argue against this predominant developmental narrative, as I hold to it myself, if lightly, as something that has an uneasy role between tentative scientific theory and useful story or chosen mythology. My purpose is to shed a particular light upon the integral community's treatment of human evolution and development. In particular, I will distinguish two types of narratives that are often woven together in integral treatments of development, one involving *worldviews, values, and beliefs*, and another involving *capacities and skills*. I will argue that, though both types of narrative are important, the predominance of the first is potentially troublesome. I propose that we need to (1) hold a clearer differentiation between these two interpretations of development, and (2) properly frame the belief-centered ones to mitigate their problems, and (3) make more use of skills-based frames.

The term "skill" has diverse interpretations. The skills I am pointing to are *higher order skills*, what some would call capacities, capabilities, or "skillful means" that include both cognitive skills and social/ethical/emotional skills, for example systemic thinking, ego awareness, critical thinking, construct awareness, leadership and communication skills, and empathic ability. Also, the *beliefs* in our lens are not (at least at first) of the type considered as established scientific or empirical "knowledge" or "facts," but are more metaphysical, spiritual, cultural, philosophical, or contentious types of beliefs.

In this paper I will refer to the work of several prominent integral thinkers (including Wilber, Beck, Cohen, Torbert, and Cook-Greuter, and McIntosh). The ideas being put forth by these scholars include both descriptive theories of how mind, culture, and growth work, and prescriptive notions about what we ought to strive for. I will not belabor the importance of trying to keep clear the is/ought (fact/value) distinction, as has been adequately argued for by Zachary Stein (2008).⁵ For the purposes of this discussion I will take for granted the prescriptive elements and assume that there is moral/ethical/spiritual validity in the general goals to not only study and understand but support human development in the general terms put forward by integral developmental narratives (though, as with all grand

⁴ Integralists generally acknowledge that each new level of development brings with it new issues not previously encountered.

⁵ In a somewhat paradoxical, or perhaps just pragmatic sense, it is important to try differentiate truth-claim vs. ethical/normative claims, yet philosophers have also shown that arguing for truths and arguing for norms are intimately and subtly intertwined (Habermas, 1992, 2003).

generalizations, questions of how to realize this goal in any real context involve great complexity). Thus I will allow for the assumption that promoting development is somehow aligned with the general goals to help people become somehow happier, wiser, more spiritually enlightened, or more adequately skilled to address the personal and global problems they face.⁶ I also am in agreement with a common element in these narratives which states that humanity faces a number of urgent and complex challenges at this moment in history and that new ways of thinking and new levels of consciousness are required to address these challenges.

If, as I will assume during our discussion, we have a goal to support some sort of change or transformation in individuals and societies, then we will want to equip the leaders, workforce, or "army" engaged in realizing this goal with some inner resources. The question put here is: when and how is it better to instill beliefs and when and how is it better to build skills (capacities)? My conclusion will be that each is vital, but for different reasons. I will also argue that, though the inculcation of beliefs is an ancient process widely understood and often used, the process of teasing apart and identifying skills, and of working out how to support them, is, while less well understood, much rarer, and more labor intensive. Teasing apart skills and beliefs is a critical element for integral theory and practice that is needing more attention.

Within the integral community there is not only a general interest in promoting human development (to the extent that it allows people to better address the challenges of their situations) but also a particular interest in studying and supporting *higher* levels of development that include high levels of self-awareness, social/emotional/moral intelligence, and systemic/ecological thinking. This "second tier" level of skill development is seen as an important fulcrum for society in our current struggles; especially for leaders (using the broadest meaning of the term). It is argued that second tier capacities began to noticeably emerge in post-modern cultures, and that a transition to a "post-post-modern" worldview and skill set, which has outgrown the limitations of the post-modern phase, points in the direction of hope for solving our complex problems. The term "post-metaphysical" is associated with the post-post-modern, second tier, or integral approach. Post-metaphysics is about one's understanding of and relationship to things such as knowledge, truth, reality, and *belief*. At the end of Part I I will begin to dive deeper to explore post-metaphysics as an approach or *skill-set* for *belief-holding*. In Part II I continue the exploration of post-metaphysics by framing it in terms of pragmatic skills and psychological (or epistemic) drives. I will outline several principles and methods appropriate to post-metaphysical knowledge building and belief dissemination, including negative capability, indeterminacy analysis, epistemic drives, and an investigation into the

⁶ For example, Craig Hamilton (2008) puts it this way, in describing the "enlightened humanity" or admirable qualities we see and seek in ourselves and others: "we can acknowledge that there is something... which has to do with the depth of our interiors, our moral sense, our character, our values, our wisdom, our decency, our compassion, our willingness to risk for a greater good."

nature of abstract concepts. This exploratory article can only serve to introduce the main themes and begin a conversation on such matters.

PART I

Developmental Narratives Based on Belief Systems vs. Skill Sets

I will start by illustrating how several of the most prominent figures and texts in the integral community fall generally into the categories of belief-system/worldview promotion (as opposed to skill-set/capacity articulation). Later I will unpack these two categories to show how the terrain is more complicated, but, admitting to a degree of simplification and caricaturing, I claim that the examples below point to real trends. First I will describe the works of Andrew Cohen, Don Beck, Steve McIntosh, and Nancy Roof's Kosmos journal, as promoting variations on an integral worldview. Then I will mention the works of Robert Kegan, Bill Torbert, and Suzanne Cook-Greuter, and others as investigating well-defined skills and capacities.⁷ I also mention Ken Wilber's AQAL model, which has both worldview and skill-set aspects.

Cohen & Hamilton's Evolutionary Enlightenment. Spiritual leaders Andrew Cohen and Craig Hamilton (one time student of Cohen) promote a grand "evolutionary context" in which "who and what God is can no longer be taken as fixed—that from a developmental perspective, God is *also* evolving, just as we are" (Cohen & Wilber, 2006, p. 69). Cohen argues for a belief system that puts humans at the forefront of the evolution of consciousness itself. To deeply experience ourselves in this way (or to experience this inherent aspect of our nature), he argues, gives access to the motivation (ecstatic impulse) to break free of our egoic and narcissistic tendencies and align with a strong moral and spiritual sense of purpose and service.

This Context is more than a surface belief system for its adherents—it is a lived experience that deeply implicates self identity. Cohen's ecstatic impulse points to a powerful universally (though rarely) experienced felt sense or deep intuition that he attaches to a particular cosmic meaning-frame.⁸ This framework speaks of human capacities in spiritual and moral terms, but in general does not get specific about teachable and measurable skill sets

⁷ My analysis is mostly constrained to published work. In workshops and other change work these authors may be addressing areas that are not apparent in the sources I cite.

⁸ Cohen's framework (belief system) also includes a model of the "Authentic Self" and the "False Self," and "Five Tenets" that define an enlightened or liberated relationship to life (see www.andrewcohen.org/teachings). Cohen and his students and associates are clearly interested in the types of skill development mentioned in this article and by skills-centered developmentalists—my point is that the core of what they are promoting and teaching is about a particular worldview.

in the way that developmental theories allow for.⁹

Kosmos Journal. Kosmos is a major publisher of authors ascribing to integral and evolutionary developmental worldviews. The magazine (edited by Nancy Roof) has published a wide range of articles and interviews, and though many of these are *compatible* with the notion that human development is about developing *skills and capacities*, in a general sense the journal conveys a particular worldview (*belief system*) that has two components: one sounds the sharp alarm of impending global crisis, and the other plays the inviting horn of hope, looking for signs at the leading edge of human development. These two elements of the worldview are illustrated by the following typical quotes:

"The ever-multiplying sighs suggesting that the modern world [is] at the end of its tether."	[A] "new era of conscious co-evolution" that could harness an "appreciative approach to global inquiry and accelerated world learning."	Cooperrider, p. 9; Kosmos Vol. 6 No. 2, 2007
"Today we can say that we have a world political crisis...the world is even more dangerous than the world of the mid-1980's."	[We] "are witnessing the formation of a global civil society" that can be steered towards world preservation through dialog, a focus on common human interests, and mechanisms of coordinated decentralized power structures.	Gorbachev, p. 6-9; Kosmos Vol. 6 No. 2, 2007
"We live in an era of intense conflict and massive institutional failures, a time of painful endings and of hopeful beginnings [involving] the loss of norms and values and [the] breakdown of social structures."	[A] "new form of presence and power that starts to grow spontaneously from and through...networks of people...[and allows us to] "better sense and connect with a future possibility that is seeking to emerge."	Scharmer, p. 31, 33; Kosmos Vol. 6 No. 2, 2007
[Our] "current planetary hyper-acceleration... civilization has been careening out of balance for some time now...our leaders have lived in denial..."	"in the midst of a huge planetary shift in how people identify with 'otherness'... a compelling vision of inclusion and protection for all human beings..."	O'Dea, pg 5, 6; Kosmos Vol. 8 No. 2, 2009

These quotes are not meant to be fair representations of the core content of the articles they are taken from, but are selected to illustrate a common theme that runs through many of the 15-20 articles in each issue. The point is that, like much of what we see in the integral community, the magazine as a whole promotes a certain worldview—it enjoins us to see our personal and global situation in a particular way, one closely aligned with progressive spiritual and integral beliefs, with a goal to instill both urgency and hopeful action.

Beck & Cowan's *Spiral Dynamics*. Don Beck and Chris Cowan's text, a primary one in the integral community, has several implied purposes. One is to *describe* a model of human development and evolution, originally discovered by Clair Graves, which has, for many, become a powerful meaning-making tool for understanding the psycho-social world. The second goal is to facilitate people in becoming adept at *using* the model.¹⁰ The third goal is to *promote healthy development* within and up the "spiral" of development, as a means to

⁹ It should be noted that the magazine EnlightenNext put out by Cohen and associates has included articles that focus on second tier skills as well as those that focus on second tier belief systems.

¹⁰ Including recognizing (diagnosing) how the developmental states (v-Memes) manifest in individuals and groups, and understanding how transformational change happens in human systems.

create a better world. A fourth implied goal is to increase the degree of "*second tier*" consciousness in the world (the 7th and 8th v-memes and beyond), as only at these levels can one adequately understand the model and use it to promote healthy growth.

Because the theory speaks of developmental levels in terms of "core intelligences" it addresses skills and capacities—but at a relatively shallow level. Spiral Dynamics describes a developmental sequence of core intelligences or memes, that each "reflects a worldview, a valuing system...a belief structure, an organizing principle, a way of thinking or mode of adjustment [and is a] structure for thinking, not just a set of ideas" (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 4). It might appear that describing core intelligences in terms of *how* we think as opposed to *what* we think implies a focus on skills and capacities rather than on beliefs or worldviews. Yet the descriptions don't quite drive down to (or live up to) the operational level of skills. For example, at the higher developmental levels a "Spiral Wizard appreciates chaos and thinks more like a designer than an reengineer...links functions, people, and ideas into new, more natural flows that add precision, flexibility, rapid response, humanity and fun to getting the work done" (p. 3). The authors talk about and around skills without getting sufficiently specific about exactly what they are (or how to build them), and focus more on human drives, needs, motivation, and values than on skills per se. The book describes each meme in terms of response to life conditions (p. 56), concerns and priorities (p. 65), decision making style, education modes, family dynamics, community interactions, and life space structures (p. 332).¹¹ Each of these certainly imply skill sets. Yet, as someone trained in cognitive and learning sciences, I find the book missing a sufficient description of exactly what these ways of thinking *are*, as opposed to what they are *like*.

Beck and associates' professionals services in Spiral Dynamics include a set of assessment tools for determining an individual's memetic level (Values Profile) and readiness to transform (Change State Indicator). The primary assessment presents subjects with a set of questions. Each question has a list of possible answerers designed to represent developmental levels; subjects rate the answers according to how closely each one reflects their own thoughts and feelings ("most like me" and "least like me"). That this instrument measure beliefs and values is further evidence that the Spiral Dynamics framework is more oriented to these than capacities and skills.

Spiral Dynamics and similar theories imply that there are developmental skill sets necessary for holding each developmental worldview level. For example, being a second tier Spiral Wizard requires that one have the ability to objectify mental functions such as beliefs, values, and action logics to a systemic level of abstraction. Though there is certainly some truth in this, later I will argue later that the correlation between skills and beliefs is

¹¹ It also mentions how people at each level orient to self-concept, authority and autonomy, relationships, dialog, truth (epistemology), and work.

not as close as is assumed. Also we can note that learning a *model* such as Spiral Dynamics does not directly lead to a particular set of skills (as Beck readily admits), and the question of how we develop such underlying skills is left unanswered in Beck & Cowan's book.

McIntosh's *Integral Consciousness*. Steve McIntosh describes and promotes an emerging "integral worldview" and "integral consciousness [that is] a new perspective on the world that expands our perception of reality and provides fresh motivation to make a positive differences. This new way of seeing and living arises from an enlarged set of values framed by an expanded understanding of cultural evolution" (McIntosh, 2007, p. 12). Similar to the other frameworks described above, McIntosh's worldview is described as a meaning-making framework that can "increase the scope of our awareness" (p. 15). Even more explicitly than Beck and Cowan, McIntosh is pointing to a belief system more than a set of skills. He claims that "[if] you read and consider the ideas in this book, they will literally raise your consciousness" (p. 17). Like Beck and Cowan, McIntosh alludes to skills and capacities, but does not describe them sufficiently to allow them to be evaluated or directly supported. For example he speaks of integral consciousness as having "a new way of arriving at creative solutions—a new epistemological capacity" (p. 89); of vision logic as being able to establish "networks of [higher creative relationships, with a] panoramic [apprehension of] a mass network of ideas [and] how they influence each other" (p. 90); of "dialectical evaluation" that "unlike reason or logic...is centered on volition rather than cognition [and is] informed by head and heart" (p. 90). He links integral consciousness to Robert Kegan's description of "the capacity to see conflict as a signal of our overidentification with a single system" (p. 91). These are excellent pointers to skill sets, but only that. McIntosh describes his approach as an arguing for a philosophical framework, and he does not claim to be describing skills. Yet for me the term "consciousness" in the book's title raises the issue central to this article: is consciousness (its development or its 'integral' manifestation) more about what one believes or one's skill set (which is essentially what one is able to do)?

The frameworks and worldviews mentioned above have served as highly inspiring, relevant, useful sense-making tools for me, and many others. Their description of culture in terms of past and emerging worldview shifts is compelling, and I accept the prescription that the world needs more people to achieve an integral or second tier worldview or consciousness.¹² My present analysis of these works is to point out an important element that is missing, i.e. skill/capacity orientation and articulation. In a sense one can not fault these authors for omitting skill-

¹² And I align with the more fundamental goal to support all people in healthy development up the spiral, including horizontal growth, to the extent that doing so meets real needs.

based analysis; it is difficult and benefits from specialized and relatively rare knowledge gained in the study of cognition and learning. Also, the study of adult developmental skills is still in its infancy and, being as much of an art as a science, there are limits to the depth, breadth, or precision of its application in many contexts. But knowledge and resources exist that allow for more skills-based approaches, and I suggest that they be more fully integrated into integral (and "evolutionary") narratives, given the potential problems with belief-based approaches that I outline later.

Thus my analysis is not to critique these authors and leaders per se, but to suggest that the field of integral studies as a whole can and should look more to understanding and promoting skills. As I do so I will be slightly exaggerating the belief-system vs. skill-set distinction to more clearly delineate them; and am guilty of a temporary caricature in describing these works. My goal here is not to vilify any particular framework, but to valorize clearer differentiation of the belief vs. skill components of each, and deepen the discussion about the merits of focusing on skills vs. beliefs.¹³

Wilber's AQAL Model. Wilber's substantial corpus of work refers to both beliefs, in the form of models, frameworks, and orienting generalizations; *and* to skills as he heavily references developmental theorists in some detail. Thus as a whole his approach does not have the same imbalance toward belief-promotion as those mentioned above. However, it is important to note that to the extent that integral or second tier capacity is described in terms of facility with the AQAL *model* (Wilber, 2006) as opposed to a set of *capacities*, as is the case in many applications of integral theory, such an approach may be over-emphasizing belief systems at the expense of underlying skills.

Skills-based approaches to development. Both belief systems and skills are interior phenomena, but a skills orientation is more closely connected with action (observable exteriors). What the psychology-based skills approach adds is a deeper understanding of human thought, behavior, and learning, and thus sheds light on the mechanisms and challenges in taking up beliefs, values and virtues, which in turn can lead to more effective change methodologies. Skills-based approaches are more useful than worldview or values-based approaches where the rubber of human psychological and spiritual potential meets the bumpy road of enacted life. Kurt Fischer & Samuel Rose note that "most traditional...developmental research has centered on cognitive or socio-emotional development, not actions" (1999, p. 6) and take an alternative approach by focusing on skills defined by actionable tasks. Skills, even highly advanced developmental capacities, demonstrate their true merit in the action contexts of

¹³ I should admit here that, though in my work and use and reference cognitive science, I am not a cognitive scientist, researcher in human development, or designer of adult skill development curricula. By the end of this article I too will be vulnerable to the charge that I have merely mentioned a number of important skills without defining them to an operational or measurable depth. In my defense I will say that my skills-based approach to post-metaphysics, and my argument for the importance of skills-based approaches, constitutes some contribution toward these ends.

communication (including dialog, deliberation, and written communication), problem solving (including planning and design), decision-making, collaboration (including group dynamics), leadership (and parenting), and learning (including adaptation and self-improvement) (as Robert Kegan explored in *In Over Our Heads* (1994); and see Fischer's Skill Theory (1980)). Basing human growth and transformation projects on skills facilitates clear goals, measurable outcomes, and the use of theoretically sound models of human learning and change.¹⁴

The literature on the development of various human skills and capacities is vast and it is not our goal to summarize it here. Readers will do doubt be familiar with the lineage of developmentalists often mentioned by Wilber, beginning with Piaget and Baldwin, and including Kohlberg, Perry, Maslow, Loevinger, and Graves (Wilber 2000; 2006). Contemporary developmental theories (and theorists) referenced within or working within the integral community include Kegan's subject-object theory; Cook-Greuter's and Torbert's ego development and action logic framework; and Dawson and Stein's work, which is based on Fisher's Skill Theory and Commons' Hierarchical Complexity Theory (Dawson & Stein, 2008). These scholars have engaged in rigorous empirical research into various lines of development. Integral theory applications in the areas of leadership and organizational development, education, and psychotherapy, have made use of skills-oriented approaches.

Much of the research focuses on *defining and measuring* skills/capacities. For example Suzanne Cook-Greuter and associates specialize in assessing development in the area of ego-development (also described as meaning making capacity or "leadership maturity", progressing through a series of "action logics") (Cook-Greuter, 2000). Cook-Greuter's published works are more about capacity assessment than capacity development, but her associate Terri O'Fallon, through programs at Pacific Integral, has been co-developing a coaching and leadership program that speaks of transformational change in terms of building capacities (including self-awareness, personal presence, assumption-questioning, collaboration and co-creative skills, innovative thinking and problem solving skills) (O'Fallon et al. 2008).

Other examples of skills-based frameworks include Bill Torbert (and Associates) Leadership Development work (which makes heavy use of Cook-Greuter's framework) and Bill Joiner & Stephen Joseph's Leadership Agility work (Torbert, 2004; Joiner & Josephs, 2007). Both groups are oriented toward building skill/capacity in communication, decision making, and leadership. Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey's *Immunity to Change* (2009) applies developmental theory to personal and organizational transformation. They describe studies that show how developmental level of complexity correlates with problem solving, leadership, and relational skills.

¹⁴ Skills-oriented approaches are most valid when based on research results that have show high levels of statistical validity, but orienting towards skills is possible even when not completely backed up by rigorous studies.

Wisdom skills. In Murray (2008) I use the term "wisdom skills" to denote a set of generic integral or second tier skills applicable across all life contexts such as collaboration, communication, leadership, knowledge building, and parenting.¹⁵ These are essentially the same higher level skills described by adult developmental theorists, organized into four intermeshing categories: ego-, relationship-, construct-, and systems-awareness (adapted from the frameworks of Cook-Greuter and Kegan, and paralleling the AQAL model's I, We, It, and Its quadrants, respectively). This is one of many frameworks illustrating the skills or capacities of interest to us:

- *Ego-awareness* (self/ego/will and being/spirit/essence) includes reflective awareness of one's identity and sense of self, social roles, fears and attachments, strengths and weaknesses, unconscious motives and shadow, and how one's emotional state effects one's thinking and actions.
- *Relational-awareness* (emotional/social/ethical/interpersonal intelligence) includes empathic skills, communication and collaboration skills, and the capacity for compassion.
- *Construct-awareness* (related to cognitive and meta-cognitive capacity) is about understanding the nature of mind, thought, knowledge, and the symbolic/linguistic, concept-forming and reality-forming functions of the mind. Includes metacognition (thinking about thinking), epistemic knowledge (knowing about knowledge), and awareness of the limits and fallibilities of the mind.
- *Systems-awareness* (related to "context awareness", another cognitive capacity) is about seeing the bigger picture of interconnections in any situation. It is about seeing dynamics, hierarchies, meshworks, ecologies, fractals, dialectics, and past/present/future possibilities in a system.

Some Problems with Development as a Worldview or Belief System

In the previous section I gave examples of belief-based narratives of human development, and illustrated variations on skill-based treatments, going into more detail on second tier skills. It might be readily evident that those working in belief-system frameworks could benefit by supplementing their approach with a deeper elaboration of skills and by referencing skills-based frameworks. But, in addition to a basic lack of precision or depth about the human capacities they are promoting, there are other reasons to be cautious about belief-system and worldview based frameworks, as discussed next.

The Green Meme as an example. To illustrate some problems of speaking of development in terms of worldviews and belief systems, lets take a close look at what is meant by the postmodern level of development, also called green meme.¹⁶ Much has been said in the Integral Theory literature about the "Mean Green Meme" and the psycho-social pathologies associated with this level. In decrying these problems all are clear to note that the green meme represents a positive set of capacities that emerge out of the needs established at the prior developmental

¹⁵ In Murray (2008) I also describe second tier thinking in terms of meta- capacities such as meta-cognition, -dialog, -learning, -affect, -leadership, and -decision making. In considering such "definitions" we should be clear that "second tier" is an emerging construct—its meaning, which I try to both describe and influence, is being co-constructed within the community of discourse.

¹⁶ Also called sensitive-self, cultural creative, pluralist, or individualist (non-synonymous terms used to reference more or less the same cultural developmental level).

level, but there tends to be a focus on its problematic aspects.¹⁷ We associate certain worldviews, values, and beliefs with the Green Meme, including those that go along with environmentalism, human rights, egalitarianism, radical equality and freedom, inclusive forms of decision making and dialog, and new-age orientations to spirituality and human potential. These *beliefs* established themselves culturally as a result of emerging cognitive and social/emotional *skills* that expanded *thought-leaders'* capacities to see complex patterns (such as ecosystems and family dynamics), reflect critically and objectively on self and society, and have an empathic understanding and connection to ever wider circles of others.

A key point is that, though having a certain critical mass of people at this developmental level is required for it to emerge as a stable self-replicating cultural phenomena, once that cultural meme emerges and establishes itself, individuals *from any developmental level*, and in particular developmentally prior levels, might be attracted to its worldview. And this is what we find. Many people who ascribe to Green Meme worldview assumptions and values and move within new age, political activist, or progressive circles do not seem to have the cognitive, self-reflective, or emotional intelligence capacities that are associated with the green level of development. Some are drawn in for pre-conventional, narcissistic, authority-rebellion, or pleasure-seeking reasons, and some others because new age culture accepts magical thinking about non-conventional topics. Some members of this post-conventional worldview hold onto their beliefs with a rigidity implying a conventional (blue meme) mindset. Wilber, in *Boomeritis* (2002) and elsewhere, was one of the first to clearly articulate this phenomena (which he calls the Mean Green Meme), but he attributes it to a pathological manifestation of green level consciousness, when it may be more accurate to describe it as pre-green (pre-conventional or conventional) level of consciousness or development being attracted to the surface features of a post-conventional cultural belief system.

So there is a confusion in our developmental narrative: is the "Green Meme" (or any other meme) really about worldviews and values or about skills and capacities? A trivial answer is that "Green Meme" is a term originally used by Beck and others to point to a worldview and value system. But in fact we (and Beck) use the term in a loose way that implicates certain developmental skills/capacities as well. The deeper question is, when we point to a developmental level such as green or turquoise in the context of critiquing or promoting it, what is it *most useful* to talk about or promote—belief systems or skill sets? Or, to put it less dualistically, for what purposes is each type of narrative most useful?

Problems with prescribing belief systems. A focus on belief systems and values is appropriate for

¹⁷ This is understandable because, in a sense, the integral project is largely aimed at audiences ready for a transition into second tier. Clarifying the problems with progressive and cultural creative modes helps with articulating the benefits of second tier modes.

analyzing large scale cultural change in societies for descriptive purposes; generating narratives to try to explain large trends, and making meaning of the complex phenomena that is culture. Understanding a developmental spectrum of belief systems is also useful in one's attempt to develop empathy for others and a critical reflection on one's own beliefs. But when the objective is to assess or prescriptively support the development of human capacities in others, an emphasis on values and belief systems can be problematic. If one's goal is to support the development of individuals and organizations that can more adequately address the opportunities and problems of our world, wouldn't it be better to support skills (such as the ability to take many perspectives and the ability to objectively consider one's biases) than beliefs and values (such as that capitalism is dangerous, the personal is political, or that Consciousness or god evolves through humans) or even teach models (such as AQAL)?

For example, if I had a choice between trusting the decisions of a group with a Turquoise (second tier) skill set vs. a Turquoise belief system I would choose the skill set. I would trust as valuable whatever belief and value system that emerged from a group with solid second tier capacities, even if it differed drastically from the assumptions we in the integral community associate with second tier thought. And I would tend to trust as wise their decisions and actions, even if they differed from mine. On the contrary, I would not *necessarily* trust that a group that espouses to a Turquoise belief system and value set would have second tier skills nor follow through with actions that we would judge as second tier actions. Of course real situations do not present such simple either-or choices—this example was to help differentiate belief-based vs. skill-based approaches (categories which themselves are being treated in an oversimplified manner for now).

Chris Argyris (1985) makes the important distinction between theories in use vs. espoused theories, or tacit vs. explicit beliefs. A "theory in use" is actually pointing to a skill set, capacity, or trait while an espoused theory can describe what one *thinks* their skills are or should be. The invitation behind Argyris' framework is to pay more attention to actions (and thus skills) than beliefs, and to pay attention to (and illuminate) non-conscious mental processes as well as consciously held beliefs. We can note that within workshops and communities working with worldview and belief-system frameworks (such as Spiral Dynamics or Evolutionary Enlightenment), participants *are* being supported in substantial skill or capacity building. So my point is not that capability building is not happening around these approaches, but that all would benefit if such projects tried to explicitly define the target skills and how they are supported/taught. Then, those who don't fully "buy into" a specific set of beliefs and values can still find common ground and more easily benefit from the ground-breaking work being done. Many in the integrally-informed leadership development community have commented on the difficulty of gaining acceptance of

integral models or belief systems with certain audiences, while noting that if the conversation focuses on the importance of building skills such as perspective taking and systems thinking, then common ground seems easier to establish.

Beliefs are fundamentally perspectival, culturally bound, particular, and fallible. Beliefs have a natural tendency to support in/out-group formation (we naturally identify with others who share our beliefs, which can stimulate primitive human drives to "otherize"). People differ widely on what they believe and value, and the well-meaning goal of inculcating a particular belief system in others is, though not as wrong-headed as some postmodernists might claim, still potentially problematic. Skills, on the other hand, are less problematic. The wisdom skills referred to above are generic, highly useful across a broad range of human contexts, and are "cognitive tools" not susceptible to being "wrong" per se (unlike beliefs, skills can't disagree). Both skills and beliefs can be used for good and misused for evil, but not in the same ways. For example, there is more danger that green *beliefs* will be appropriated to unacceptable or useless ends than that green level *skills* will be.¹⁸

Changing skills vs. beliefs. Unlike skill sets, beliefs-systems can become ideologies and dogmas. The potential for unintended consequences, such as people being attracted to beliefs for the wrong reasons, misunderstanding and abuse of a framework, and calcification and entrenchment of thought, is greater in promoting belief systems than for supporting wisdom skills. Beliefs can be changed with impassioned and charismatic speeches, propaganda, peer pressure, induced experiences of extreme states or emotions ("whipping the crowd up" into ecstasy or dread), or the force of a good argument. Skills cannot be transferred this way—they develop gradually through education, experience, and practice (though state-enhancement can help create optimal conditions for development).¹⁹ While changing a belief often takes time and effort, beliefs can also have a mercurial quality (as in the depraved rock-n-roller who is "born again" and suddenly converts to fundamentalist Christianity, denouncing the excesses of his recent colleagues).

Even though both belief system promotion and skill set support may require perseverance, the *design* of skill set support is more difficult and requires more expertise and precision. This is one reason that development is more often described in terms of belief than skill change. Supporting development of skill sets requires analyzing

¹⁸ An overdevelopment of the cognitive line, without development of ego, emotional/social, and moral lines, *can* be just as problematic. Also note that the capacity or meta-skill needed to *discern* when and how to use both skills and beliefs is itself a *skill*.

¹⁹ Also, belief systems, more than skill sets, are susceptible to being co-opted by forces that are unethical yet at a higher cognitive level. For example assume a group has both a cognitive capacity (skill level) and belief set at, say, Green. Someone with significantly higher than Green cognitive skills, who can objectively see and manipulate Green level ways of thinking, could manipulate and distort the Green belief set toward unethical ends in ways practically invisible to Green cognition.

general capacities and target behaviors in terms of specific behaviors and skills, and then determining how each skill is to be supported or taught. Promoting the development of belief systems, as in the skillful persuasiveness rhetoric, argument and persuasion in politics and marketing, has been studied and refined for thousands of years—it is ancient and works on relatively primitive parts of the mind. In contrast, our understanding of skill acquisition is relatively recent.

The value of belief systems. Now let us argue from the other side, in support of the importance of world views, values and beliefs. These are primarily about motivation, including intention and vision. Skills and capacities are like tools which are impotent until called to action in the service of some goal or vision. Regardless of the vision or goal, commitment, drive, enthusiasm, and focus provide the realizing energy from conception to fruition. In short, our beliefs are what give us to use our skills in action.²⁰

Shared world views form stable bases for new levels of emergence and cultural evolution. Commonality in beliefs and goals enable synergetic action, which can be orders of magnitude more effective than poorly coordinated individual action. The power of story, myth, and narrative in human affairs is widely acknowledged, as is the psychological need for deep meaning and purpose, which is at risk in the existential ennui of postmodern society. Certain beliefs, if shared, might support the ethical goals of humans feeling deeply connected to each other and responsible for the fate of the planet. (Knowledge of predictable causal laws is also essential to disseminate.)

It could be argued that people need new belief systems before they are ready to learn new skills; that belief systems explain why a skill is pragmatically or ethically important, and also provide the context for the social interactions that allow for learning, practice, and skill development. For integralists at least, there is a chicken-egg phenomena at work, suggesting that attention needs to be balanced on both sides. For, as was argued with the Green Meme example above, to take on an integral (or "evolutionary") world view *as it is intended to be interpreted and put to use* requires a certain sophistication (skill) in thinking about systems, self, and other.

In sum, the importance of beliefs and world views is thereby acknowledged. Nothing (much) would come from people without beliefs and their energizing and focusing forces. The integral, transformative, and evolutionary visions laid out by the integrally-informed leaders mentioned earlier are, in my opinion, high quality compelling belief systems with the potential to move culture and consciousness in the directions humanity needs to go. In this article I am arguing that overall in the integral community we focus too much on beliefs, values and world views, and not enough on skills and capacities—but we don't want to throw out babies *or* bathwater, just supplement the

²⁰ In a way capacities and skills define where one is implicitly "coming from" and beliefs and values define where they are intentionally "going to."

tub with important ingredients.

Knowledge, belief, and skill. Next we will move away from the simplistic belief (and worldview) vs. skill (and capacity) dichotomy established above. Figure 1 illustrates a spectrum from Beliefs & Worldviews to Skills and Capacities, and shows a number of related constructs which usually have some characteristics of beliefs and some characteristics of skills. A primary characteristic of beliefs is that they are or can be verbally stated—they are espoused or explicit; while skills and capacities are automatic or non-conscious—we may or may not be able to verbally describe our skills.^{21 22} (Think of the expert tennis player who can't explain what she does; vs. the bookish fan who knows everything about tennis but cannot skillfully play it.) "Values, Identity, Virtues, and Habits" are included in the diagram to note that these terms are common elements of integral treatments of human development and have some characteristics of beliefs and some of skills. They are not as central to our focus here as are "Models, Theories, Facts, and Knowledge" which also fall anywhere within the belief vs. skill spectrum, depending on their use.

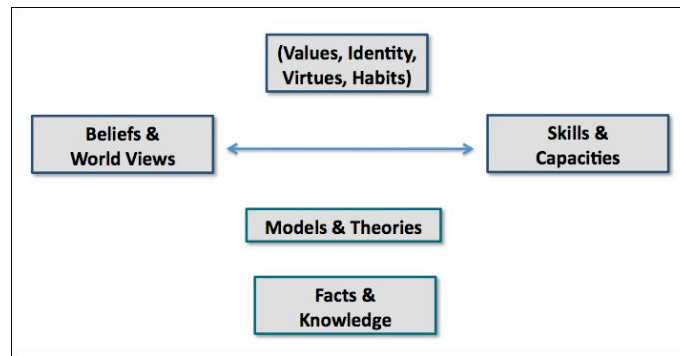


Figure 1: Constructs in the belief vs. skills spectrum

One might respond to the arguments made earlier in this article with "but the beliefs I am interested in are not just subjective or casual beliefs, they are more like theoretical or factual *knowledge*." This brings up larger questions of how beliefs of any type are justified in dialog and how we assign certainty, reality, contingency, or importance to them. We could construct another spectrum that highlights the *Certainty* dimension with personal, hypothetical, and unsubstantiated beliefs on the low-certainty extreme, generally but contingently accepted

²¹ Defining all of these terms is problematic, and we ask the reader's allowance for the indeterminacies involved. For example, many philosophers once held that "knowledge is justified true belief"; a definition that has now been shown to be fallible. The terms shown in the diagram have numerous co-dependencies and their use can be characterized along a number of spectra, including implicit-to-explicit, contingent-to-certain, fact-vs-value, and specific-to-global. We do not have the space nor need to propose rigorous definitions for these terms in this article.

²² In particular when one speaks of models and theories it is often important to distinguish whether one is talking about implicit "mental models" (theories in use") or explicit symbolic/formal models (espoused theories). The context may provide enough clarity, for example when we are talking about integral theories and models we usually refer to explicit ones such as AQAL and Spiral Dynamics. However, as a theory or model becomes more expansive and complex, as both of these are, and becomes a "framework" or "belief system" it takes on an implicit character and it becomes part of one's unnoticed interpretive lens, making the explicit-vs-tacit boundary fuzzy.

knowledge and theories in the middle, and high-certainty facts on the other extreme. We can also note that what is considered more certain or generally known is a strong function of what group or subgroup one is referring to. Properties of ideas like certainty, importance, social acceptance, and specificity all play a part as we decide how to justify or promote an idea; and how we do so varies for in-group vs. out-group (i.e. certain things can be taken for granted as more obviously true for in-group). But what is of importance to us here are not individual beliefs but our *relationship to belief*; i.e. the ability to reflect upon one's beliefs and the importance and certainty assigned to them; how they are explained and justified in various contexts; how multiple and conflicting or paradoxical beliefs and perspectives are held.

All of this points to second tier skills and, ultimately, to post-metaphysical approaches to belief and knowledge. Because one characteristic of second tier thinking is an appreciation of the interdependence of knowledge and morals (or fact and value; for example, that there is no perfectly objective value-free scientific investigation), it also points to second tier ethical considerations. In terms of an important belief system such as the Integrally informed developmental narrative discussed above (a belief which is considered "knowledge" and consists of a model or a framework), integralists would generally agree that this belief should be held with the contingency of any quasi-scientific theory, open to the power of new evidence and superior argumentation. And that it should not be portrayed dogmatically or zealously, especially to those outside the circle of its proponents. But achieving this level of distance and flexibility with our beloved, very useful, and very powerful Integral ideas turns out to require a surprising amount of effort and skill. Enacting it certainly takes more than intoning "the map is not the territory." Specifically, it requires two things: first, a perpetual type of vigilance and gentle self-critique, and second, a deeper understanding of the types of errors of thought (both epistemological errors in knowledge production and ethical errors of communicative action) that we wish to avoid.²³ To support this deeper understanding I will take the remainder of the to paper explore post-metaphysical thinking. Along the way, to support the necessary vigilance, I will describe a set of "epistemic drives" that work covertly to distort valid knowledge and infuse it with metaphysical thinking, and which operate perpetually under the surface of thought.

Post-metaphysics and Second Tier Approaches to Belief

Second tier beliefs and epistemic wisdom. The integral community is particularly focused on, and has a particular contribution to make, in exploring and supporting what has been called "second tier," integral, post-

²³ Henri Bergson said that a "a theory of [life or reality must be] accompanied by a criticism of knowledge... it is necessary that these two inquiries, theory of knowledge and theory of [life or reality], should join each other, and by a circular process, push each other on unceasingly" (Bergson 1944 p. xxii, as quoted in Graham 1981, p. 143).

formal, and/or post-post-modern levels of development (and in supporting the transition from immediately prior stages into these stages). Above I described second tier skills in terms of types of "wisdom skills" (or types of awareness). This level of development includes a high level of reflective understanding of self and the human condition. I have also used the term "epistemic wisdom" to point specifically to the application of second tier skills (especially construct awareness) to questions of knowledge, belief, and truth (Murray, 2008). This is essentially the skill set involved in taking a post-metaphysical stance. It involves moving further away from black and white, us versus them, and either-or thinking into ever more nuanced, complex, and dynamic perspectives ("perspectival range" in Walsh, 2009). It includes moving further from basing beliefs on authority, peer pressure, magical thinking, and emotional and unconscious drives; and toward basing beliefs on rational systematic thought, critical thinking, multiple perspectives, cognitive empathy, and intuitions grounded in deep ethical sensibilities. It includes the skills of understanding the nature of communication, concepts, and models, including their inherent indeterminacy and fallibility; the ability to take multiple perspectives; and tolerance of paradox and ambiguity (Murray, 2008). It even includes understanding how authority, peer pressure, magical thinking, and emotional and unconscious drives are unavoidable and important aspects of belief formation. That is, it tries to see these aspects of thought more objectively for what they are, and use that understanding in forming and defending one's beliefs.²⁴

As was mentioned for the pluralistic or Green developmental level, one can ascribe to second tier beliefs without having second tier capacities, and vice versa. There is a certain tension in, on the one hand, promoting or instilling a second tier world view or belief system and, on the other hand, wanting to support second tier thinking (and enacting). To the extent that an approach promotes second tier beliefs and worldviews rather than allowing them to emerge developmentally and be held *critically and reflectively*, one may be reinforcing a dependency on developmentally prior forms of knowing.

How does one promote valuable second tier belief systems, instill the sense of commitment, solidarity, even urgency that is needed to ground beliefs in sustained collective action, while still allowing for—*actively supporting*—a reflective distance from those beliefs, so that they are clearly seen *as* beliefs (as objects of reflection), in the context of alternative perspectives, and with their limitations fully exposed? What it looks and feels like to strike this balance in second tier communities is an ongoing inquiry. Integralists often employ the adages to "not confuse the map with the territory" and avoid the "myth of the given," but closer inspection shows that enacting these slogans is indeed difficult, and subtle forms of metaphysical thinking and "misplaced concreteness" exist

²⁴ As is commonly understood, we transcend, include, and transform the earlier modes, rather than leaving them behind.

throughout integral discourse.

Integralists beliefs and metaphysics. Above I fleshed out some issues around belief-having and belief-sharing in terms of developmental theories, a primary theme in integral studies. To ground the succeeding inquiry we will shift from looking at a single complex mega-model (or family of them) to a number of smaller scale beliefs. We integralists define ourselves in part in relation to how we differ from the prior developmental meme level, i.e. Green, or from other cultural groups, such as New Age or Postmodern. We also live with the challenge of trying to describe and defend our beliefs to friends and colleagues who hold different world views. In Table 1 I list some common integral community ideas (concepts and beliefs) and contrast them with New Age ideas. In the Table I focus on contentious beliefs (about what is real or true), though one could list many others less ontologically problematic or "edgy."²⁵ Most readers have probably had frustrating experiences trying to explain integral ideas to peers or trying to critique New Age beliefs. Interesting questions include: How confident can we be in such discourses? How can we characterize the difference between these two sets of ideas? and Are there particularly integral ways to justify and critique?

<i>New Age</i>	<i>New Age and Integral</i>	<i>Integral</i>
UFOs and lost ancient advanced civilizations; the healing power of crystals; the earth is a living conscious being (Gaia); we can manifest our wishes through intention alone; astrology, and other prognostication systems and personality typing systems; various schools of mystical and occult beliefs; "all you need is love" (and peace); everything is perfect as it is.	Channeling and the existence of non-physical beings; ESP and psychic phenomena; intuitions can offer sturdy truths and directives; existence of a soul/spirit (and constructs such as Over-soul, Authentic Self), reincarnation and past lives; synchronicity; psychic energy and the chakra system; the reality of collective consciousness and parts of the self such as ego and shadow; all is one.	The universe is evolving – through us; Eros, Agape, involution, morphogenetic fields, Omega Point; the 4 quadrants (or 8 zones) are discrete and ontologically fundamental; cultures and people can be categorized in terms of general developmental levels like Blue, Green, and Turquoise; there is a non-dual ground of being beyond space, time, energy, matter, and mind.

Table 1: New Age vs. Integralist Beliefs

First I will point out that some of the items in the Table are centrally about controversial questions about what is real or what exists, while others are statements or principles that make a claim *about* things that are less problematically assumed to exist (while a few are in both categories). For example, contentions about Gaia, flying saucers, ESP, Omega Point, and morphogenetic fields are largely or firstly about whether such constructs are objectively real. In contrast "healing" and "crystals" are thought to exist without contention, while "crystals have a healing power" is controversial. This rough distinction between existence claims and other types of claims built upon them is not philosophically air-tight by any means, but is made because there are different points I want to

²⁵ This table is provided merely to anchor the discussion. It was wrought through rough brainstorming, not any sort of analysis.

make about *concepts vs. statements vs. models/theories*. Concepts are things that exist in some way; statements are claims *about* (and built up using) multiple concepts; and models/theories are more complex ideas built from multiple statements.²⁶ In a very rough sense, concepts are about what is *real*, statements are about what is *true*, and models/theories are about what is *useful*. (See the Appendix for a diagram illustrating these distinctions.)

A main point is that statements and theories/models are built up from concepts, and thus any indeterminacy or assumptions at the level of concepts (the things we point to as definitively existing) will strongly effect the validity of statements and models/theories. Questions about the existence of many of the phenomena listed in Table 1 have metaphysical implications. Metaphysics deals with questions of what is real (vs. not real), and the fundamental nature of, essence of, or first principles behind abstract ideas such as being, substance, cause, time, and space.

Metaphysics is often about objects or phenomena that are said to exist both outside physical reality *and* independently outside the subjective realm of human thought forms.²⁷ Metaphysical claims, whether made by esteemed philosophers or by your hairdresser cousin, are particularly problematic because of this. We have methods and conventions, including the scientific paradigm, for justifying and testing claims about physical reality. We also have methods and conventions, albeit less rigorous, for justifying and testing claims about subjective realities. But on what basis does one make a metaphysical claim? How could one ever test such a claim when it refers to something beyond both matter and mind? This problem is what lead to so-called post-metaphysical approaches.

Post-metaphysics. The concept of post-metaphysics figures large in recent integral discourse. Integralists have aligned themselves with the post-metaphysical turn in philosophy and a post-metaphysical orientation to truth and knowledge. Integralists follow Wilber in repudiating "confusing the map with the territory" and "the myth of the given."²⁸ Wilber describes his latest work ("Wilber-5") as AQAL plus post-metaphysics.²⁹ Indeed, it could be argued that the post-metaphysical perspective is at the heart of the evolution of human meaning-making capacity that integral theory points to. Post-metaphysics constitutes a post-post-modern approach to what and how we think is real or true; i.e. it is about our evolving relationship to *belief* and the *skills* we use to construct and reflect upon beliefs. Below we will look into the concept of post-metaphysics to see how it is understood and then propose some alternative perspectives on its use. As we will see in the quotes below, the construct of post-metaphysics exists as a

²⁶ Also, I will avoid the quagmire of defining what is meant by reality, and simply assume, in alignment with both New Age and integral world views, that interior (human mental) realities have an equal ontological status with external physical realities.

²⁷ Metaphysics originally meant the body of Aristotle's work *after* his Physics, but later took on its current meaning of the science of things transcending the physical or natural.

²⁸ "Myth of the given" was coined by Sellars (1956). The map/territory phrase is attributed to Korzybski (1948).

²⁹ See Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman, 2009 pg. 564 note 38.

family of related ideas, with different authors having somewhat different interpretations.

In *Integral Spirituality* Wilber says that "[arguably,] metaphysics...ended with Kant [who realized that] we do not perceive empirical objects in a completely realistic, pregiven fashion; but rather, structures of the knowing subject import various characteristics to the known object...Metaphysics is then a broad name for the type of thinking that can't figure [out that] reality is not a perception, but a conception...thinking that falls prey to the myth of the given" (p. 231). In terms of philosophy, Wilber says that post-metaphysical approaches avoid "postulating fixed, eternal, [ahistorical,] independently existing archetypes" [or Platonic Forms] (p. 247).

In a transcribed dialog with Wilber, Andrew Cohen says: "Your ideas about a post-metaphysical spirituality have had a powerful impact on me...Specifically, I am endlessly compelled by the notion that higher stages or levels do not preexist, that is, they are not 'given' but are literally created by brave individuals who actually venture into new, uncharted territory...A post-metaphysical worldview means we are not separate from the creative principles or God-impulse itself" (Cohen & Wilber, 2006). This interpretation of post-metaphysics replaces the fixed and eternal aspects of metaphysical ideas with an emergent dynamics, but seems to retain some of metaphysics' sense of essentialism and esotericism.

In *Integral Ecology*, Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman draw from Wilber's work and emphasize the multi-perspectival and participatory nature of post-metaphysics, which "avoids positing realities independent of the viewer" (2009, p. 65) and notes that all claims must be understood as "perspectives from somewhere by someone" (p. 484). They link the post-metaphysical approach to Wilber's four quadrants and eight indigenous perspectives (methodological families), and to his method of Kosmic Addresses, which I describe later. They echo above descriptions of post-metaphysics avoiding preordained and eternal metaphysical constructs (p. 141).

In *Integral Consciousness* McIntosh proposes some problems with the post-metaphysical turn, and says that metaphysics will remain with us: "in between the hard facts of science and the revealed truths of religion, there are to be found questions about the nature of reality that seek answers within the realm of reason. Metaphysics can thus be understood as philosophy's attempt to discern that which is beyond the external, material realm without resorting to explanations that rely solely on the unquestioned authority of spiritual teachers of sacred texts" (p. 205). He points out that Wilber routinely uses what could be called metaphysical concepts (e.g. involution, Agape, Eros, morphogenetic field; p. 215-216). McIntosh's point that metaphysical questions and metaphysical thinking will remain with us is important; a topic I take up further below. But he misunderstands the post-metaphysical project (and Habermas' and Wilber's approach to it) as being anti-metaphysical as opposed to post-metaphysical (he

assumes that it rejects metaphysical concerns and thinking rather than transcending and including them).

Stein links post-metaphysics to the scientific method and, more fundamentally, to a reflective (or meta-) perspective on, not just the contents of our beliefs, but the methods by which we produce and justify knowledge (i.e. "the conditions that allow us to get on with inquiry") (2008b, p. 20).³⁰ "Understanding philosophy in this way entails turning away from speculative metaphysics and toward the rigorous analysis and critique of inquiry itself" (p. 2). He claims that "to adopt a properly post-metaphysical approach to development [is to] turn away from the stories describing development and toward the making of the metrics that justify these stories" (2008a, p. 1).

Stein's approach follows closely that of contemporary philosopher Jürgen Habermas, the acknowledged expert on the topic of post-metaphysics. Cooke (1994) summarizes Habermas' notion of post-metaphysical philosophical trends as having: (1) called into question the substantive conceptions of rationality (e.g. "a rational person thinks this") and put forward procedural or formal conceptions instead (e.g. "a rational person thinks like this"); (2) replaced foundationalism with fallibilism with regard to valid knowledge and how it may be achieved; (3) cast doubt on the idea that reason should be conceived abstractly beyond history and the complexities of social life; and has contextualized or situated reason in actual historical practices (i.e. collaborative action and dialog); and (4) given up philosophy's traditional fixation on theoretical truth, to the extent that they also recognize the moral and expressive functions of language as part of the [reasoning process] [which is thus affected by notions of rightness, sincerity, and authenticity].

The post-metaphysical turn in philosophy and culture can be understood as a product of an "epistemic turn" of increasing human understanding of the role of human thought processes in the production of knowledge and belief.³¹ This trend began with Kant, blossomed with the American Pragmatists, then deepened with the advent of modern cognitive and social sciences.³²

³⁰ Stein (2008) credits Pierce as a founder of the post-metaphysical approach: "by relinquishing philosophy's claim to a unique privileged mode of insight, Peirce...recast philosophy in terms of the same fallibilistic self-understanding that characterizes scientific endeavors" (p. 2).

³¹ In Murray (2006; 2008) I quote Bohm and Einstein in support of the idea that contemporary global mega-issues can be traced to a general lack of understanding of how the human mind works, individually and collectively. We can see in Walsh's (2009) analysis of common factors of the great wisdom traditions that, even though "know thyself" is implied and contemplative traditions focus on awareness of thought, the wisdom traditions had little to say in the way of what we are calling epistemic wisdom. We can posit that the complexity of thought and culture has reached a level that an epistemic turn is greatly needed.

³² The post-metaphysical turn is closely related to the philosophy of pragmatism, which has strongly influenced Wilber and integral theory (through scholars including James, Whitehead, and Habermas). Louis Menand described pragmatism as *an idea about ideas*: "The idea is that ideas—theories, beliefs, convictions, principles, concepts, hypotheses—are essentially means of adaptation...Ideas are not "out there" waiting to be discovered, but are tools that people devise" (2004, pg. 1, 8).

PART II

Psychological and epistemological issues in post-metaphysics

The epistemic turn as a deeper understanding of the mind. The last 500 years of human history from the Renaissance through the scientific and industrial revolutions can be viewed in terms of humanity's accelerating understanding, and partial mastery, of the *physical world*. Both the accomplishments and the calamities of this period, marked by increasingly sophisticated use of the rational mind to penetrate the truths of the physical world, have been established at length by scholars and pundits.

In the last one to two hundred years another type of understanding has emerged: an *understanding of the mind*, including advances in psychology, consciousness studies, language, culture, meaning, cognition, and neuroscience. This "epistemic turn" (which includes the linguistic turn in philosophy) embraces an evolving acknowledgment that human flourishing is mind-bound in several senses. First the human happiness or satisfaction that is the ultimate goal of rational problem solving and efforts to control the physical world is itself a mental state that depends on much more than external realities. That is: "happiness is all in our heads," at least after basic physical needs are met, and creating happiness is very much about understanding the mind (as Buddhists have always said). Second, most if not all of the major problems facing humanity are problems ("crises") in rationality, imagination, education, and/or compassion, not hard limitations put up by the physical world. They have been caused more by human thought, including short sightedness, greed, ignorance, and the "negative emotions," than by "natural causes."³³ Third, the primary source of techno-scientific advancement, the rational mind, is seen to be seriously flawed or limited. From a post-rational perspective, we can see that logic has limited scope, rational thought is systematically distorted, and that the constructs and models that form the building blocks of language and theories are unsettlingly indeterminate and fallible (Kahneman et al. 1982; Gilbert, 2006; Gilovich, 1991). Again, a deeper understanding of the workings of the human mind is called for.

George Lakoff warns that "what we take truth to be is...a matter for cognitive science because it depends on the nature of human understanding" (Lakoff & Johnson 1999, p. 108). Thus, a central element of this epistemic (or post-metaphysical) turn is to understand mind, in its individual and collective manifestations, which, like nature in the prior period, can be seen to hold both the shackles to and the means of liberation from man's current predicaments.

³³ Of course, the current developmental state of humanity is simply what it has become, and thus in one sense a product of the natural world.

The emerging understanding of mind has many branches. Scholars are coming to understand the nature of ego, identity, motivational drives, adult cognitive development, and the unconscious (including shadow); the nature of group dynamics and cultural development; and the nature of concepts and reasoning itself. It is this last set that is central to epistemic wisdom and the post-metaphysical turn.

Research and theory on human cognitive development has provided deep insights into epistemic questions about the nature of belief and knowledge. Wilber's Integral Post-metaphysics uses these theories to clarify questions about what seems true or real for different observers.

Integral Post-metaphysics. Wilber's Integral Post-metaphysics (Wilber 2006; Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman 2009) proposes an elegant framework for addressing many perennial ontological, metaphysical, and epistemological conundrums and what is true or real. It follows from Schumacher's (and, earlier, Plotinus') notion of *adequatio* which says that "the understanding of the knower must be adequate to the thing to be known" (Schumacher, 1977, p. 39). That is, what we perceive as real or true is determined in part by our perceptual and cognitive apparatus, and thus both our developmental level (along all of the numerous lines relevant to any situation) and the perspective we are taking. It shifts the blunt question of *whether* objects (e.g. Santa Clause, past lives, Agape, morphogenetic fields) exist, to *in what way* do they exist *for whom?*

Integral post-metaphysics includes a model for representing what Wilber calls the "Kosmic Address" of a claim, which includes the AQAL-based developmental altitude and perspectival quadrant of both the perceiver (claimant) and the object of perception (plus additional parameters if more precision is needed). For example, Santa Claus can be said to "exist," to be real, for those within a circle of 5 year old believers having a conversation about him. "What kind of cookies does Santa Clause like best?" is a valid question in such a circle. Santa Clause can also exist for *us* if we take the magical-thought perspective of that developmental level, which remains ever-available within our consciousness (some would call it suspension of disbelief). One might say "but Santa Clause doesn't *really* exist at all." But someone living 1000 years from now may see concepts such as "gravity," "the flu," "consciousness," and "spirit" to be as naïvely insubstantial and imaginary as Santa Claus seems to us, yet contemporary adults treat these constructs as very real indeed. This illustrates the perspectival nature of all claims about truth and reality. We must assume that an objective reality exists beyond the self (to do otherwise is absurd), but any particular claim about that reality must be made by a person (or people) and is thus fallible and perspectival. Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman give the example of "ecosystem." An ecosystem can exist, and claims about one can be made, only for those who have an adequate understanding of the concept, which in itself requires the capacity

to think at a certain level of complexity (one that can understand how phenomena and wholes emerge from the chaotic and extremely complex interdependencies of a large number of parts). Similarly for a "legal system of common law." For those who, due to inexperience or insufficient developmental capacity, have not built up and worked with the concept of one, it cannot exist.

These are questions about the *adequatio* of the *who* of a claim. In terms of the *how* of a claim, i.e. methodology (and the types of *what* enacted by different methods) we can turn to Wilber, Habermas, and others who explain how different methods give access to different types of knowledge (e.g.: *look* through this telescope at...; *imagine* a body traveling faster than light...). In particular subjective, objective, and intersubjective truths or knowledge are discovered and argued for differently.³⁴ For example a community of practitioners who have practiced a certain contemplative method are in a position to dialog about the causes and nature of what they experience. Those who have not enacted this practice or spoken deeply with those who have are in less of a position to engage in the conversation. To give a blunt example, we give little credence to someone pontificating about romantic love when we know they have little or very distorted experiences of romantic love.

Integral Post-metaphysics and positive vs. negative capability. Integral Post-metaphysics is a powerful framework. Yet its full potential remains to be seen (especially outside the integral community) in part because it is not yet apparent whether the concept of Kosmic Address is sufficiently determinate. In contentious dialogs about the validity of specific claims, will participants be able to agree on the parameters of the Kosmic Address itself? How contentious will the specification of the developmental levels or formal perspective of interlocutors become?³⁵ In general this illustrates the *positivistic* style of Wilber and AQAL-centered approaches—they provide high level models and concepts enabling more reasoning power, and thus may increase clarity and confidence of beliefs. This contrasts with approaches that expose indeterminacy (uncertainty, fallibility, paradox, dissonance) in human beliefs. The evolving understanding of mind and thought that enabled the "post-metaphysical turn" reveals ever higher layers of positive knowledge (increasing abstraction and nuance thought reflection, differentiation and integration), but *also* reveals ever deeper unsettling territories of unknowing and fallibility that call for the "*negative capability*" of being able to tolerate and work within this indeterminacy (in Murray, 2006, I elaborate on this concept, first

³⁴ The details of Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action and the eight primordial methodologies of Wilber's integral methodological pluralism are beyond our scope here (see Habermas, 1981 ; and Wilber, 2008).

³⁵ The strategy of concluding that another person is developmentally not up to snuff and accepting that they simply don't have the capacity to engage with our beliefs or engage at the level of discourse we hope for is, though sometimes perfectly valid, also problematic. In doing so we (a) risk misdiagnosing the other using a simplistic categorization system; (b) miss an opportunity to connect more deeply with both the person and the ideas in front of us, and (c) miss an opportunity to more seriously reflect on our beliefs and selves in the face of an authentic encounter with another (and see Kögler, 1992). Admitting that I, and all of us, unavoidably constantly make these sorts of calls to judge the "*adequatio*" of the listener and gauge how deeply we will engage, we want to take seriously the question of how integral beliefs are explained and argued for in rational public discourse.

coined by the poet John Keats). This territory is acknowledged by Wilber but not much explored or highlighted in his work.

For Wilber post-metaphysics as a method for avoiding the errors of metaphysical (and magical) thinking, mostly through an analysis of different categories of truths or claims (based on categories of the who, what, and how of a claim). My approach is to add to this a perspective on post-metaphysics that is about acknowledging what is unknown, fallible, or uncertain about *any* claim, and to base this on what we know about human thought processes.

Integral Post-metaphysics includes Wilber's "three strands of good knowledge" which frame the justification of claims in terms of *injunctions* (*if you do X then you will see or conclude Y*) and *social deliberation*, (*a group of the adequate has followed the injunction and agreed upon the conclusion*). This framing, again, has a positivist slant in the following sense. For the critical question of "What if people carry out the method but come away with different beliefs?" Integral Post-metaphysics leaves us only with the implied answer that they must not all have followed the injunction accurately; or must not all be operating from an adequate developmental level or perspective. Potentially useful answers, but not particularly applicable to many real contentious questions. The question of how we account for the inherent indeterminacy and variation of concepts, perceptions, worldviews, etc., yet still "get on with it," is not fully addressed. Wilber's Three Strands model for knowledge validation allows for, but does not include, the following important knowledge validation questions which are more acknowledging of indeterminacy and fallibility, and the calling for negative capability (and reflect the approach of the Habermasian school):

- What are my/our biases and assumptions (i.e. "systematic distortions" of thought)?
- How far are we removed from experiential data along the Ladder of Inference (see below)?
- How indeterminate (fuzzy, ambiguous) are the fundamental concepts?
- What are the known alternatives, limitations, and fallibilities of this idea?
- What other parties/perspectives should be invited into the inquiry?³⁶

Enacting the injunctions to ask the above questions requires the development of both knowledge and skill: knowledge of certain aspects of how one's mind works, and the skills of negative capability that come with practice in applying this knowledge.

Post-metaphysical Principles and Negative Capability

In this section I will briefly outline several post-metaphysical epistemic principles or approaches to belief-holding that address negative capability. These form a preliminary and incomplete set of answers to the question

³⁶ Of course, to avoid the postmodern trap, we also must attend to the meta-question of: How urgent and important is the decision and how much effort should be expended before we end the inquiry process (for now) and act upon our (ever fallible) conclusions?

"What would a post-metaphysical or second tier approach to belief-holding look like?" In one sense to even propose concrete ways to deal with indeterminacy and fallibility is a more of a positivist "problem solving" than a negative "opening to the unknown," but we will let this paradox be.³⁷ As described above from Habermas, post-metaphysics is a term pointing to a set of related positions that are in a corrective relation to historically certain prior dominant modes of thought. But, as the term implies, at its core it is corrective toward "metaphysical" modes. As we will see below, metaphysical thinking is like a type of magical thinking but at a higher developmental octave. Both metaphysical and magical thinking are essentially about how we attribute aspects of physical reality to ideas; concrete ideas in the case of magical thought, and abstract ideas in the case of metaphysical thinking. Because the nature of abstract concepts is a common theme to several principles in post-metaphysics, I take some time to elaborate on this topic next.

The indeterminate nature of concepts and abstractions. As has been mentioned, statements, models, and theories are built up from basic conceptual building blocks. Concepts, for our purposes here, are the categories we explicitly use to differentiate things—for example: "chair," "democracy," "god," "red," and "love" (almost every word or phrase we use points to a conceptual category). A concept can be characterized through two interdependent aspects: its definition and its exemplars. The definition is any general or abstract description, such as a tree being "a woody perennial plant."³⁸ Exemplars are individual examples of the things that are contained in the category.³⁹ Both aspects are important to consider. Exemplars must be given to help ground abstract concepts; and general definitions must be given because it is impossible to list every example. But there are often problems in alignment between definitions and examples. For example, a group engaged in deliberation about "scarce resources" or "indigenous people" or "concealed weapons" may at first seem to be in agreement about the wording of definitions, conclusions, or policy. But further discussions about concrete implementation may reveal great disparity in the things participants consider to be valid examples—they may "draw the line" in very different ways. One person's "scarce resource" or "concealed weapon" is not another's.

Researchers have shown how the nature of concepts differs from what we normally assume about them (Mervis & Rosch 1981; Lakoff & Johnson 1999). We often treat conceptual categories as if they were a well-defined boxes that things either fall within or outside of. But this is almost never the case. Concepts as

³⁷ It is like the paradox that fully "letting go" takes a kind of effort and commitment; or the paradox that achieving "beginners mind" requires a kind of sophistication. Epistemic wisdom includes an understanding that such paradoxes point to characteristics of language and thought, not to deep puzzles about reality (some such paradoxes are resolved with a "pre/trans" analysis).

³⁸ Abstract concept definitions are often thought of as having necessary and/or sufficient conditions, but our intention is to include more informal definitions as well.

³⁹ To clearly specify or teach the boundaries of a conceptual category it is most useful to give central exemplars, clear non-exemplars, and also positive and negative exemplars near the boundary (Tennyson, 1980).

psychological phenomena are "graded," meaning they have fuzzy boundaries such that (1) we can always think of things that are in the fuzzy gray area between being X and not-X; and (2) the meaning associated with a concept varies within each individual or group because they rely on different exemplars.⁴⁰

Due to the indeterminate nature of concepts, when we say "X is Y" it would be more useful to interpret it as in "any X is Y to the extent that X falls near the central meaning of X" (X is marginally or contingently Y for X's near the boundary of the central meaning of X). We can ameliorate this indeterminacy by trying to be as specific as possible about definitions and exemplars, to minimize the fuzzy grey areas, which is a necessary positivistic strategy, but we must not lose sight of the inevitable indeterminacy in any concept, which calls for an ongoing humility and openness (i.e. negative capability). Interlocutors who disagree about claims, for example "democracy supports economic growth" or "Blue Meme cultures rely on authorities to validate beliefs," often erroneously assume they have the same meanings or exemplars for the concepts, and thus waste effort arguing about the statement per se rather than clarifying the non-overlap in concept meaning.

Lakoff's work on conceptual structures indicates that the indeterminacy of concepts becomes progressively worse the more abstract they are, i.e. the further removed from concrete sensory experience and exemplars. Here are examples of sequences of concepts of increasing abstraction (these are from Dawson & Wilson's, 2004, and Dawson & Gabrielian, S., 2003).⁴¹

1. boys, camping, puppies, school, friend
2. know, guess, think, learn, question
3. believe, certain, trust, imagine, possible
4. actual, accuracy, certainty, plausible, justify
5. cognizant, rationality, skepticism, plausibility, materiality

Concepts at each level of abstraction can be shown to be (in their typical use) built up from (they coordinate, organize, and/or transform) concepts at lower levels of abstraction. Concrete level concepts relate to sensory experiences. Abstract concepts are ideas *about* concrete concepts, and more highly abstract concepts are ideas about ideas (about ideas, about ideas, etc.) about concrete concepts. The natural world of physical reality (the AQAL Right hand side) has certain characteristics that make it amenable to scientific study and repeatable, reliable conclusions. It is *relatively* stable and consistent in its lawfulness. The world of *ideas*, in contrast, is more

⁴⁰ In addition, Lakatos' (1976) investigation of the knowledge building processes illustrates the dynamic interplay between abstract definitions and the examples we consider important; each of which evolves continuously through inquiry. Therefore, in any area where there is active inquiry, such as in science or the law, meanings evolve continuously.

⁴¹ Dawson's research shows that the probability of observing higher indexed concepts increases notably with age and developmental level (as measured here in a task involving thinking about knowledge and other epistemological themes). Dawson & Wilson give these as examples of increasing "hierarchical order of abstraction." They do *not* make claims (to my knowledge), as Lakoff does, about the metaphorical nature abstract concepts and the problems with increasingly abstract concepts I mention here.

ephemeral (the world of ideas covers much of, but not all of AQAL's Left hand side). A claim about the healing power of crystals is fairly concrete. There is a fair chance that, with appropriate resources, it can be tested in a fashion agreeable to many stakeholder perspectives. But with ideas about more abstract concepts such as spirit, omega points, holons, collective consciousness, or non-duality, how do we account for the indeterminacies in our arguments? How can we claim anything with certainty?

Moving from Concepts to Statements, this is related to Argyris' (1958) "Ladder of Inference" description of belief formation.⁴² We select *data* from our raw sensory observations, add personal and cultural *meaning* to that data, make *assumptions* based on those meanings, draw *conclusions* based on those assumptions, adopt *beliefs* about the world from the conclusions (these beliefs then effect both our actions and our selection of data in the first place). Argyris says "*the likelihood of differences in the interpretations of different observers increases the higher one goes on the ladder of inference*" (my emphasis).⁴³ More abstract concepts are less likely to be automatically accepted by out-group, and special care is needed in establishing mutual understanding with out group when in-group is disseminating its valued beliefs (I am conflating the indeterminacy analysis of concepts and statements here, with more precise treatment in Murray, in progress).

To summarize the above treatment of abstract concepts: (1) both definitions and exemplars play a role in how concepts are understood, and interlocutors may agree on one of these while diverging on the other; (2) we can differentiate between the "espoused" intellectual understanding of a concept (in terms of definitions or exemplars) vs. its tacit or unconscious manifestation which determines how it is enacted; (3) abstract concepts have graded boundaries; (4) statements made with abstract concepts therefore have a graded validity or truthfulness; (5) more highly abstract concepts and statements are more susceptible to these communicative and epistemic indeterminacies.

Indeterminacy analysis of Integral constructs. We can apply the above principles to Integral Theory through an "indeterminacy analysis" (Murray 2008), which makes explicit how the fallibility of constructs impacts generalizations made about them. The principle that anything we treat as a rigid category is really more like a graded spectrum is easy to understand with concepts like "Third-world country" where the category is clearly not intrinsic to the object but is an abstract property that is assigned. "Third-world country" is clearly a useful though fallible conceptual tool that works well for some countries that fall within its central meaning, and becomes problematic for

⁴² See the Appendix for more on addressing indeterminacy in Concepts vs. Statements.

⁴³ Argyris continues with "Hence some cardinal rules of action science are: Begin at the lowest rung of the ladder of inference, state the meanings at the next higher rung and check for agreement, and continue to the next higher rung only if there is agreement at lower rungs. These rules are meant not only for action scientists but also for agents in everyday life whenever they are dealing with important and threatening issues" (Argyris, 1985, p. 58). Along similar lines Senge (1990) instructs us to recognize "leaps of abstraction" in our and others' mental models (p. 186).

case at the boundary. But consider how the more foundational categories "subjective vs. objective" and "singular vs. plural" are often treated as distinct categories (the AQAL Left hand side vs. Right and Upper vs. Lower Quadrants), as if nothing falls in the grey area between them and nothing falls outside each pair of opposites. As *ideas* they can certainly be defined as distinct, but in *practice* (and in cognition) the objects and phenomena of reality do not pre-exist in definite categories. For example, unconscious mental processes are not exactly subjective, but are they objective? It seems to me that the category fails to be useful here.⁴⁴ As to the category singular vs. plural, we can find or imagine things that are sort of singular but also sort of plural, for example a county (set of towns within a state) which does not have a strong central county government (here there is only a partial or incomplete "dominant monad"). The problem with primarily positivistic approaches that are not balanced with negative capability is that phenomena that don't fit the normative definitions of key concepts become marginalized. They will seem to be merely outliers, special cases that are easily and rightly ignored.

We can also apply indeterminacy analysis to the Integral Theory concept of holon. The Four Quadrant model and Wilber's Twenty Tenets are essentially about the nature of holons. Interpreters of the theory have raised questions about what counts as a holon. Wilber addressed these in a positivistic way by clarifying the difference between holons and heaps, and later as other counter-examples were discovered, clarifying that artifacts are not holons. This process of clarification can and should continue (perhaps indefinitely, as pointed out by Lakatos), but what is also needed is an acknowledgement, including examples, that some objects of interest may fall into a gray area between heaps and holons, or between holons and artifacts, and that AQAL-based conclusions for these objects will be less definite.⁴⁵ Other central concepts within integral theory that have significant indeterminacy include "the true the good and the beautiful," I/we/it, gross/subtle/causal, and state/stage treatments.^{46 47}

Issues with abstract concepts arise with Wilber's Three Strands method as well. He acknowledges but does not dwell on the fact that between the steps of in injunction (look this way) and the social agreement (many with adequate cognition see the same thing) is a step of *interpretation*. Interpretive differences do not go away simply by

⁴⁴ An individual who feels as if unconscious processes *must* fall into one category or other will find a way to interpret the concepts so that everything seems to fit tidily, but in doing so may deny some important aspects or exemplars (the dross left when the conceptual knife makes its cut).

⁴⁵ It may be too much to expect the creators of exceptional theories to do a thorough indeterminacy analysis—they are too close (if they were not they may not have had the focused insight and perseverance to birth the theory in the first place). That is the job of the knowledge-building and practice community as a whole.

⁴⁶ Truth, Goodness, and Beauty are highly useful and meaning-generative concepts. But they are also highly abstract. This does not mean we should avoid making claims using them, but it does call for a non-positivistic approach to making claims using them.

⁴⁷ The phenomena of human states, even if we limit it to those aspects relevant to development, epistemology, and spiritual growth, is much more complex than can be captured in the "gross/subtle/causal" or "waking/dreaming/deep sleep" classification. The paucity of this vocabulary limits our ability to inquire. Also, the difficulties in teasing apart state-relevant and stage-relevant phenomena point to a possible need to revisit whether this dichotomy is overused and an alternative is needed.

constraining participants to operate from and point to the same Kosmic Address (even assuming this was possible and desirable). This is less problematic (but not unproblematic) in areas where the exemplars are experiential. The examples that Wilber gives include looking through microscopes and telescopes and using meditative practices. We gain direct experience through such practices and can (1) give clear injunctions to others on how to access those experiences; and (2) have some clarity about what we are pointing to as we engage in intersubjective processes (dialog) to give meaning to those experiences. Wilber makes the critical point that the same sort of reasoning process (i.e. the Three Strands) that is used for scientific conclusions based on sense data ("the eye of the body") can be used to make valid conclusions in the realm of pure ideas ("the eye of the mind") and in the spiritual realm ("the eye of spirit") (Wilber, 1997). This point provides an important launch pad for rigorous inquiry into realms ignored and devalued in the Western scientific paradigm, but we must not mislead ourselves into thinking that conclusions based on the datum of ideas or intuitions will have the same character as that based on physical realities and sense experiences. Cognitive science has illustrated that ideas have significant indeterminacy.

The realm of mathematics and logic aside,⁴⁸ conclusions grounded in ideas about ideas (the eye of the mind) will be more problematic, more indeterminate, than those grounded in the senses. And what can be said of "the eye of spirit?" Contemplative practices yield direct experiences and insightful ideas—but what third type of data would constitute spiritual data? In my experience there *is* a certain character to what we might call spiritual insights—a kind of deep and quite certainty. But once that experience is translated into the realm of words and shared ideas it falls prey to all the usual forms of indeterminacy that post-metaphysics recognizes. How are to treat these insights as valuable while not being constrained by modernist rational modes of justification—yet not fall prey to metaphysical thought? I return to this question in the section on "meaning generative claims" but next I will continue our exploration of the nature of abstract concepts.

Misplaced Concreteness through developmental levels. Underlying the "myth of the given" and the "map/territory confusion" is a cognitive phenomena that Whitehead called "misplaced concreteness" (Whitehead, 1929), wherein one treats an abstract concept as if it had physical reality (or a reality outside of human interiors). Philosophers and cognitive psychologists arguing from the "embodied mind" perspective note that misplaced concreteness (and related phenomena) are an unavoidable consequence of the fact that the development of the human mind has its foundation in concrete physical interactions and needs (this argument is made from two directions: genetic evolution and individual cognitive development) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Clark 1996; Varela et

⁴⁸ Which some argue are essentially tautologies, and are at least special cases not relevant to the claims in integral theories.

al. 1993). There is something deep and strong within us that wants to treat abstract concepts (e.g. democracy, African-American, god, ego, compassion, spirit, evolution, formal operational thinking, left hand quadrant, Green Meme, or Eros) as if they somehow really existed in the way that we perceive them—we "reify" them.⁴⁹ And as mentioned, there is also the strong tendency to treat the boundaries defined by concepts and models as fixed or concrete, and ignore their fuzziness, malleability, ephemerality, and indeterminacy.⁵⁰ The deeply metaphorical nature of thought causes us to imbue abstract ideas with traces of the properties of concrete objects (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

We can take a developmental perspective on misplaced concreteness (I am not aware of others having done this). Misplaced concreteness and its repudiation begins at more concrete levels and persists through ever more abstract constructs. In magical, concrete operational, and early pre-conventional modes of thought there is insufficient differentiation between imagined and perceived events. The monster under the bed and the mermaid said to live in the pond are very real. With mythic and early conventional forms of thought we differentiate imagination from reality but the beliefs given to us by culture are taken as inherent aspects of reality. We believe the "stories" and myths given to us by authorities and peers. My team *is* the best, my country the strongest, my holy text contains the truth. Moving into late-conventional and modernist/rationalist forms of thought we enact the types of misplaced concreteness Whitehead was referring to, and give *abstractions* the gloss of concrete reality. We take our maps and models too seriously (treating them as "the territory"), and tacitly expect reality to conform to them as if these models and equations were properties of matter rather than tools invented by minds. At each succeeding level the limitations of the prior level are seen and transcended, but new forms of misplaced concreteness or reification await us. At each level it is the newly developed capacity (rules at Blue; models at Orange; systems at Green) that seem over-real. It should also be noted that all prior forms of thinking and misplaced concreteness remain active, though we develop habits to avoid or compensate them (e.g. "knock on wood," "the weather is out to get me today").

How this phenomena continues into second tier is less explored. At construct aware or vision logic we more fully understand that the map is not the territory, that our theories are fallible approximations, and that we are perceiving the world through a thick worldview bubble. But we still maintain habits of language use and enaction that treat abstract categories such as subject/object, singular/plural, and state/stage with fixed and well-defined boundaries. At first the realizations of the indeterminacy and fallibility of ideas is unsettling and overwhelming (the

⁴⁹ It seems clear that properties, patterns, systemic relationships and other abstractions (and emergent properties) are not "objects" out there--but it still can seem like they are more or less accurate perceptions *about* what is really "out there."

⁵⁰ Whitehead warned against misplaced concreteness but did not, to my knowledge, discuss its psychological source or natural persistence.

post-modern or relativist position), but with deeper understanding and development we eventually understand such phenomena not as unsophisticated or faulty thought modes to be outgrown, but as inevitable dimensions of thought that must be accounted for and, when appropriate, compensated for or neutralized to the extent that we can. We can allow for the meaning-generative power of myths, magical thinking, metaphysical entities, and elegant models and maintain some objective clarity of these beliefs as useful tools for certain purposes. We can flexibly assume perspectives that reveal the valid "reality" of a wide range of cultural world views, personal beliefs, and developmental thinking modalities. We begin to be able to observe concreteness-producing and certainty-producing mental processes as they arise within us.⁵¹

Epistemic drives. Misplaced concreteness is a natural tendency of thought. I will call such tendencies that influence what we think is real or true "epistemic drives." If we inspect our own thoughts, and evaluate the ideas of others, it is clear that the human mind is propelled in part by drives toward oneness, completeness, and wholeness. Some of this can be linked to low-level brain processes that turn perception into categories. One of the most basic functions of animal cognition is to group experiences into more abstract or encompassing categories; to efficiently distinguish friend from foe, food from poisonous plant, for instance. Beyond or abstracted from the basic biological imperative to categorize, in *human* thought we can see at work an interior ecology of polarities of epistemic drives that expose important fundamentals of thought itself. I call it an ecology because for each drive there is one or more opposing drives, all competing for attention and keeping each other in check. For instance, there is a drive to notice differences as well as one to perceive wholes. In Table 2 I list some polarities of epistemic drives that are significant to epistemology and metaphysical thinking. This is not intended as rigorous treatment but as a rough brainstorming list of overlapping phenomena to illustrate the concept of epistemic drive.

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstract (ideas) vs. concrete (tangible, sensory, real) • General (generalization) vs. specific (specialization) • Universal vs. relative (or contextual) • Fundamental (essential, central, root) vs. consequential (peripheral or subordinate) • Permanent (unchanging, fixed, predictable) vs. changing (transient, unpredictable, chaotic) • Oneness/singularity/unity vs. multiplicity (the many) • Whole (holism; integration) vs. part (differentiation) • Completeness (comprehensiveness; totality; systemic) vs. partiality (details, deconstruction) • Perfection and purity vs. imperfection |
|--|

Table 2: Some Polarities in Epistemic Drives

⁵¹ As is alluded to in the Appendix, we can show related but distinct types of developmental progressions related to Experiences, Concepts, Statements, and Models.

It seems that Integralists, and those drawn to theories and models in general, have a particular unconscious affiliation with the first item in each pair above. There is something in the human mind that wants to pull the disparate, the many, the diverse into a unifying whole; to achieve the simplicity and power of a general concept or rule; to determine and rest in what is at the center of, or underneath things. We can identify these drives or urges working within us at the level of felt experience. There is a sense of ease, certainty, and mastery when we can ignore details and differences and trust a sturdy generality. There is a sense of elegance and wholeness when we can embrace many things into a circle of unity. We get a certain satisfaction from ordering things or collecting them into tidy groups. The inquisitive and meaning-hungry mind wants to know the causal root, foundation, source, or origin of things. The constructs of the good/true/beautiful and I/we/it and gross/subtle/causal have a pleasing epistemic pull to them that makes it more difficult to see the manifestations of misplaced concreteness.

I use the term "drives" in analogy with other biologically innate "emotional" drives such as the drive to reproduce, the fight/flight/freeze responses, territoriality, maternal/paternal care, and social dominance/submissiveness drives. A plethora of drives exist within us, mostly dormant until conditions trigger them, and often in competition (will I eat or play? fight or run?). Our drives are essential tools for surviving and thriving, and can also create problems. In humans basic drives get transformed or built upon, sometimes in ways that seem quite distorted compared to their original intent (fear becomes anxiety, sexual drives become fetishes, the drive for hygiene becomes OCD, etc.). In naming "epistemic drives" I call attention to their unconsciousness and pervasiveness, but also to our ability to meta-manage them. With our drives to eat (or over-eat), sexually flirt, become angry when challenged, etc. our lives are improved when we reach a stage of development where we are aware of and can control or compensate for them (i.e. when subject becomes object for any given drive). The term epistemic *drive* also emphasizes that we never completely outgrow or eliminate them, that they can raise their heads unexpectedly in many contexts, calling for an ongoing awareness and cognitive management. As shown with misplaced concreteness, epistemic drives are like emotional drives in that we become aware of and learn to manage them at ever deeper and more nuanced levels, but meanwhile they keep showing up in ever subtler ways, so the developmental learning process continues indefinitely.

The epistemic drives toward wholeness, completeness, and essentialness not only help us accurately understand and make meaning of the world but can over-function to create biases, errors, and ethical problems. Phenomena such as grandiosity, hegemony, elitism, and proto-fascism are extreme cases. But in less extreme ways the subtle influence of such drives pervades the creation, consumption, and promotion of theories, models, and

belief systems. As with prescriptions to avoid bias and be objective or avoid selfishness and be altruistic, avoiding metaphysical thinking to take a post-metaphysical stance is more about ongoing attention and deepening wisdom (i.e. skill building) than adopting a belief or philosophical position.

Enacting post-metaphysics, integrity, and the role of emotion. This brings us to the issue of *enacting* the post-metaphysical stance. First, as mentioned above, we can distinguish between the explicit or "espoused" belief in or knowledge of post-metaphysical principles (such as "don't confuse the map with the territory") and their skillful enactment. Second, we see that enactment requires both a deep familiarity with a number of habits of mind (misplaced concreteness and other epistemic drives) and the multi-context practice and trail-and-error learning required for development. Third, we can acknowledge how the emotional and ego-related characteristics of each situation affect our ability to enact the post-metaphysical stance. Developmental capacities can "gear down" to lower levels in the face of stress or complexity. The drives to have our abstractions and ideas be more true, more real, encompassing, fundamental, and essential is exacerbated to the extent that there is fear, anger, urgency, or ego-attachment involved.

Phenomenologically (and epistemologically), the ascription of Reality or Truth to an idea is a matter of intensity or degree of certainty, rather than an all-or-nothing matter. We assign more concreteness to abstract ideas that matter more and that we are more certain of (and vice versa). One's degree of certainty in an idea (how strongly we hold to its reality or truth) is tied up in emotion-laden evaluations of the importance, urgency, and consequences of an idea. Thus we can acknowledge that, regardless of one's developmental level, misplaced concreteness and a number of other epistemic drives and cognitive biases are affected by emotional context. Though a description of the findings in this area are beyond my scope here, I will merely point to the vast body of scientific work showing strong connections between emotional processes and reasoning processes (Goleman, 1995; Damasio, 1999; Matthews et al., 2002; Fischer et al., 1990).

Integralists, in embodying their philosophies and visions, are called to a particularly high level of *integrity* and ethical development. I define integrity as congruence between four levels of human phenomena (in order of increasing difficulty and development): that actions follow words (e.g. we do what we say we will do); that words follow conscious beliefs and thoughts (i.e. authenticity and transparency); that conscious thoughts and beliefs align with unconscious ones.⁵² The final step can be expected only in the high developmental levels of self-reflective capacity that turn emotional reactions, unconscious drives and motives, and even the processes of thought and

⁵² Integrity also implies congruence among the objects within any of the four levels (actions, words, conscious beliefs, unconscious beliefs) in different life contexts. For example: acting or speaking to one group in ways that contradict what one does or says to another group constitutes lack of integrity. Also, if conscious beliefs or unconscious drives exist within us in a kind of unhealthy conflict or turmoil, this points to a subtler lack of integrity. Technically we can not know what is in the unconscious, but a large body of work deals with revealing this territory and healing it (making it whole and harmonious).

language themselves, into objects of inquiry. Thus, though it is difficult, integralists are called to hold deeper reflective meta-perspectives on how their own cognitive and social belief-generation processes work, in able to hold their beliefs post-metaphysically.

Allowing for epistemic drives and meaning-generative claims. Yet even as we call for a more fully post-metaphysical approach to integral beliefs, post-metaphysics, based on modern revelations about how the mind works, brings with it the humbling understanding that we are wired with epistemic drives that unavoidably compel us into magical, mythical, and conventional modes of thought. The more that useful prescriptions like "don't confuse the map with the territory" become slogans that are repeated without an acknowledgement that doing so can be difficult and subtle, the greater the social pressure against admitting the natural prevalence of such phenomena. The social pressure to avoid these sorts of errors hinders authenticity and inquiry. One measure of second tier community is a group's capacity to empathically consider, allow for, and learn from such vulnerabilities.⁵³

As alluded to above, one way to approach the validity of metaphysical or philosophical beliefs is to appeal to their *meaning-generative* potential. Though Wilber's Three Strands method can bring a type of scientific validity to non-concrete claims, it assumes a goal of justifying claims that might be universally held by all who are adequate judges. In contrast, many beliefs are held for personal and pragmatic reasons. Beliefs that cannot be "proven," or that we don't care whether they can be proven, can nevertheless be quite valuable to hold and communicate to others. I propose that, 200 years after Kant saw that human reasoning had differentiated validity claims according to the True, the Good (or Just), and the Beautiful, culture may have progressed to needing a fourth type of validity claim: "the Meaningful" (or the meaning-generative). This provides a path for a type of validity that is sufficiently different from truth, ethical rightness, and aesthetic appeal, that it warrants a new category.

For example, I "believe in" reincarnation because, though I have no direct empirical experience supporting it, it counteracts existential despair, is held by people I admire, and coordinates well with a number of other beliefs and intuitions I have—I do not expect to or need to convince anyone that reincarnation is real.⁵⁴ The claim is valid for many because it is meaning-generative, not so much "true;" yet it is more than merely "good" or "beautiful". The same approach can be taken with the teleological "evolutionary spirituality" perspective on human development: that "the universe is evolving—through us." This Eros-based belief has strong meaning-generative power for many,

⁵³ Shifting from the mundane uses of metaphysical thinking to its philosophical uses, we can note that the post-metaphysical approach has been made possible only with relatively recent understandings of mind and epistemology. Great philosophers including Plato and Hegel were trapped in metaphysical binds. Habermas notes (2006, p. 6) that "even Nietzsche, in his rejection of Platonism, remained attached to the tradition's strong concept of theory, its grasp of the totality, and its claim to a privileged access to truth." Metaphysical thinking is in esteemed company, and not to be discounted out of hand.

⁵⁴ See the Appendix for an explanation of how most beliefs have multi-sourced justifications.

but to have to "prove" it in any logical way is impossible and beside the point, yet it is not merely a moral/ethical/normative claim.

If we can speak in terms of meaning generative potential we gain some freedom from the straightjacket of conforming to either logical or normative justifications and have more flexibility in talking about beliefs that might be called metaphysical or unprovable (un-falsifiable). This also provides a way to dialog about quasi-scientific (even pseudo-scientific) principles. For example, though personality and capacity typing systems such as Meyers Briggs, Enneagram, Spiral Dynamics vary greatly in their demonstrated empirical validity, all suffer from discrepancies and challenges within the body of empirical research. In addition users and adherents to each type of framework have an affinity to their chosen model that can only be explained by pointing to its meaning-generative potential for them. Empirical studies may or may not impact their affinity to the model. I am not suggesting even more rampant lack of rigor or "truthiness" (or "bullshit," as described by philosopher Harry Frankfurt, 2005). Rather, the current valorization of logical and scientific results, in providing no way to speak to meaning-generativity as a validity type, creates an unhealthy pressure to use and misuse scientific (or pseudo-scientific) evidence as a false justification for ideas and frameworks that are used largely because of their meaning-generative potential. The suggestion here is not to de-valorize rigor, but to provide valid alternative justification modes that allow us to more rigorously and reflectively differentiate when we need scientific rigor (or modernist forms of rationality) and when we don't.

Conclusions

In this paper I have argued that the human developmental narratives and frameworks used within the integral community would benefit from a greater focus on specific skills and capacities that reveal themselves in action contexts such as collaboration, dialog, problem solving, knowledge building, and leadership. I have also argued that developmental narratives and frameworks based on belief systems and worldviews engender a number of concerns calling for care in their use. Finally, I explored the concept of post-metaphysics and what it might mean to entertain a deeply post-metaphysical approach to integral beliefs and frameworks.

I have mentioned the developmental progression in the way people hold and justify beliefs. Developmentally earlier modes, including magical, mythical, and conventional thinking, are less concerned with the universality or portability of claims. I.E. at first tier one is less aware of how those who do not hold one's worldview might interpret one's claims. The New Age beliefs listed in Table 1 are often held in this way. As in all communities of affiliation, inquiry and/or practice, the integral community also demonstrates an insular belief reproduction "echo chamber" effect. Constructs such as "non-dual," "development," and "Agape" take on a particular meaning that is

treated as if it is the only meaning, and certain ideas like "the cognitive line precedes other lines" get passed around the circle as truths taken for granted. A deeper analysis of the truth or reality of these constructs and beliefs is all too rare.

Though this phenomenon is not only typical but it is an unavoidable aspect of group belief formation (including academic disciplines), there are several things to note about it relative to the integral community. First, because (we will assume that) the integral vision tends to attract individuals at relatively high developmental levels (compared to other communities of theory or practice), it has a relatively high capacity to reflect with epistemic wisdom upon its constructs and beliefs. Second, counteracting this, the integral community is unusual (though far from unique) in how much of its core constructs and truths are attributed to one (extremely talented and productive) person or founder, i.e. Wilber. This, and the fact that the integral project blurs the lines between scholarly and social spheres (e.g. with Integral Institute sponsoring Integral Life as well as academic programs) has the effect that much of the knowledge passed around is not viewed as critically as it might be. "Wilber is brilliant, and we are all pretty smart, so these things I keep hearing others say over and over are pretty likely to be valid." Third, because integral theory is so fundamentally interdisciplinary, broad, and far-reaching, and has such great potential for wide impact, it must pay exceptional attention to the portability of its constructs and beliefs to realize its potential.

Thus, within the integral community there is great potential and a particular calling to bring epistemic wisdom to our inquiries, yet factors exist that make it more difficult to do so. In this paper I have tried to offer some preliminary suggestions and tools supporting the enactment of post-metaphysical approaches to the creation, critique, and proliferation of integral knowledge and belief systems. These focus on epistemic skillfulness around one's relationship to belief, knowledge, truth, reality, critique, justification, and certainty. These suggestions and tools include:

- Pointing out some **dangers of belief-promotion** that does not acknowledge a post-metaphysical humility and fallibility;
- Clearer differentiation of **skills vs. beliefs** in narratives about development as a form of enacting second tier skills;
- Suggesting that enacting post-metaphysics (and second tier development) involves a deeper understanding and awareness of **cognitive processes** as mentioned below;
- Highlighting how the indeterminate nature of **abstract concepts** influences the fallibility of statements and models;

- Mapping out the different epistemic concerns involved in **concepts, statements, and models/theories**;
- Relating epistemic questions of truth, reality to psychological phenomena such as **misplaced concreteness, epistemic drives**, and emotion; one's judgment of certainty or reality is influenced by factors such as importance, fear, and urgency;
- Pointing out how **magical and metaphysical thinking** are manifestations of misplaced concreteness; which occurs in different ways at different developmental levels;
- Articulating the difference between positivist approaches and **negative capability** in integral theories, and suggesting additional focus on or balance of the later;
- Suggesting how **indeterminacy analysis** can bring a more post-metaphysical perspective to models and theories;
- Suggesting that **meaning-generativity** be used more widely as a way to justify claims that have metaphysical implications.

In conclusion, for second tier thinking wisdom skills are more fundamental than any particular set of belief or models. *Whether* we believe in a god, or in capitalism, or an evolutionary Omega Point, is less important than *how* we hold that belief, and *how* we hold it is a matter of skills. I have made an early exploratory stab at describing some approaches useful for post-metaphysical belief-holding. With these and further developments, we can aim for the *ego-awareness* to reflect on our attachment to it; the *relational-awareness* to listen deeply to someone with an opposing belief; the *construct-awareness* to hold the paradoxes implied in the belief; and the *systems awareness* to see how that belief relates to other beliefs and to systems of action. And we can aim for the second tier wisdom to reflectively choose what and how to believe and to use that belief as a sturdy tool in ethically-relevant work, and let go of it when it is not useful. The long road ahead brings the challenges of how we will define, assess, and support such skills in our domains of application.

References

- Argyris, C., Putnam, R. & Smith, D. (1985). *Action Science*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Beck, D. E. & Cowan, C. C. (1996). *Spiral Dynamics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd.
- Bergson, H. (1935). *Creative Evolution*. New York: Modern Library.
- Clark, A. (1996). *Being There: Putting Brain, Body and World Together Again*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Cohen, A. & Wilber, K. (2006). God's playing a new game: Integral Post-Metaphysics and the Myth of the Given, *What is Enlightenment*, June–August 2006.
- Cook-Greuter, S. R. (2000). Mature ego development: A gateway to ego transcendence. *J. of Adult Development*, 7(4), 227-240.
- Cooke, Maeve. *Language and Reason: A Study of Habermas' Pragmatics*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994.

- Damasio, A. (1999). *The feeling of what happens: Body and emotion in the making of consciousness*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace.
- Dawson, T. L. & Stein, Z. (2008). Cycles of Research and Application in Science Education. *Mind, Brain, and Education*. Vol 2, 2. 90-103.
- Dawson, T. L., & Wilson, M. (2004). The LAAS: A computerized developmental scoring system for small- and large-scale assessments. *Educational Assessment*, 9, 153-191.
- Dawson, T. L., & Gabrielian, S. (2003). Developing conceptions of authority and contract across the lifespan: Two perspectives. *Developmental Review*, 23(2), 162-218.
- Esbjörn-Hargens, S. & Zimmerman, M.E. (2009). *Integral Ecology*. Boston: Integral Books.
- Fischer, K. (1980). A theory of cognitive development: The control and construction of hierarchies of skills. *Psychological Review*, 87(6), 477-531.
- Fischer, K. W., & Rose, S. P. (1999). Rulers, clocks, and nonlinear dynamics: Measurement and method in developmental research. In G. Savelsbergh, H. van der Maas, & P. van Geert (Eds.), *Nonlinear developmental processes* (pp. 197-212). Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- Fischer, K.W., Shaver, P.R., & Carnochan, P. (1990). How Emotions Develop and How the Organize Development. *Cognition and Emotion*. 4(2), 81-127.
- Frankfurt, H.G. (2005). *On Bullshit*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gettier, E.L. (1963). Is Justified True Belief Knowledge? *Analysis* 23, p. 121-123.
- Gilbert, D. (2006). *Stumbling on Happiness*. NY: Knopf Random House.
- Gilovich, T. (1991). *How we know what isn't so: the fallibility of human reason in everyday life*. NY; Free Press.
- Graham, L. R. (1981). *Between Science and Values*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Habermas, J. (1981). "Some Characteristics of the Mythical and the Modern Ways of Understanding the World," Chapter 2 of *The Theory Of Communicative Action, Volume One: Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1992). *Postmetaphysical Thinking*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (2003). *Truth and Justification*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hamilton, C. (2008). Integral Enlightenment: Why Authentic Spirituality Is Much More Than A Line Of Development. Presented at the First Integral Theory Conf., avail. at http://craighamilton.us/component/option,com_jd-wp/Itemid,77/p,10/.
- Hanly, C. (1992) *The Problem of Truth in Applied Psychoanalysis*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Joiner, B. & Joseph, S. (2007). *Leadership Agility*. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons.
- Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kegan, R. & Lahey, L.L (2009). *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome It and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Kahneman, D., Slovic, P. & Tversky, A. (1982). *Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases*. NY: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Kögler, H. H. (1992). *The power of dialog: Critical hermeneutics after Gadamer and Foucault*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Lakatos, I. (1976). Proofs and refutations: The logic of mathematical discovery. J. Worrall & E. Zahar, (Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought*. New York, NY: Basic Books/Perseus Books Group.
- Matthews, G, Zeidner, M, and Roberts, R (2002). *Emotional intelligence: Science & myth*. Cambridge, MA: Bradford Book/MIT Press.
- McIntosh, S. (2007). *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution*. St. Paul, MN: Paragon House.
- Menand, L (2001). *The Metaphysical Club*. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.
- Mervis, B. & Rosch, E. (1981). Categories of natural objects. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 32. p. 89-115.
- Murray, T. (2006). Collaborative knowledge building and integral theory: On perspectives, uncertainty, and mutual regard. *Integral Review*, 2., 210-268.
- Murray, T. (2008). Exploring Epistemic Wisdom: Ethical and Practical Implications of Integral Theory and Methodological Pluralism for Collaboration and Knowledge-Building. Presented at the 1st Biannual Integral Theory Conference, John F. Kennedy University. Pleasant Hill, CA, August, 2008.
- Murray, T. (in preparation). Post-metaphysical perspectives on integral theories: The real vs. the idea. Draft available at <http://www.perspegrity.com/papers>.
- Murray, T. (in submission). Warnings and Suggestions from a Users Guide to Integral Developmental Theories.
- O'Fallon, T., Fitch, G. Carman, D. (2008). Experiments in Second-Tier Community: Collective Individualism. Presented at the First Integral Theory Conference, August, 2008.
- Schumacher, E.F. (1977). *A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Sellars, W. (1956). "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", in *The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Vol. I, H. Feigl and M. Scriven, Eds, U. of Minnesota Press.
- Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Stein, Z. (2008a) Myth busting and metric making: Refashioning the discourse about development. Excursus for Integral Leadership Review. *Integral Leadership Review*. Vol 8. No. 5.
- Stein, Z. (2008b) Intuitions of altitude: researching the conditions for the possibility of developmental assessment. Paper presented at Biannual Integral Theory Conference, John F. Kennedy University. Pleasant Hill, CA.

Tennyson, R. & Park, O. (1980). "The Teaching of Concepts: A Re- view of Instructional Design Research Literature," Review of Educational Research, Vol. 50 No. 1.

Varela, F., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (1993). *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive science and human experience*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Walsh, R. (2009). The state of the integral enterprise. *J. of Integral Theory and Practice*, 4(3), pp. 1-22.

Whitehead, A.N. (1929). *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. Free Press.

Wilber, K. (1997). *The Eye of Spirit*. Boston and London: Shambala Publications.

Wilber, K. (2000). *Integral Psychology: Consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications.

Wilber, K. (2002). *Boomeritis*. Boston, : Shambhala Press.

Wilber, K. (2006). *Integral Spirituality*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Press.

Appendix: From concepts to statements: Modes of justification and critique

In discussing post-metaphysical approaches to knowledge it is useful to differentiate several types of knowledge as in the following figure:

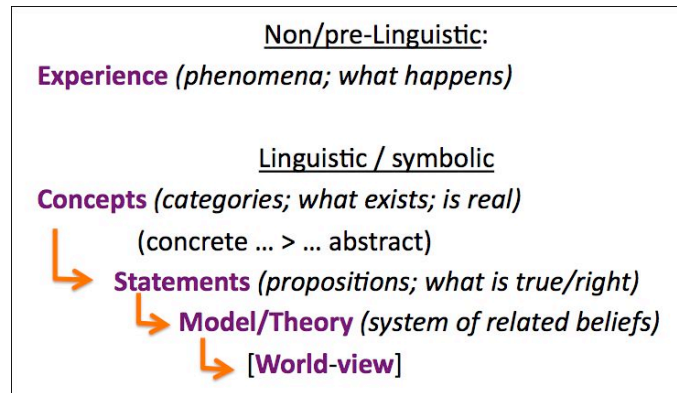


Figure 2: Categories of Knowledge/Belief

Experience and other non-linguistic or pre-linguistic phenomena exist in the top category. These form the basis of (symbolic) concepts and ideas. These are not meant to be completely raw or unfiltered, as all experience and sensation gets filtered at a very early point. This category points to my belief that "this is a tree" or "I should take this job" before I put words to it (internally or verbally). Included in this category are "intuitions" before they are conceived in words and symbolic categories. This category is a catch-all that points to everything that we "know" prior to (or without its) manifestation into symbols and language. I offer no detailed or scientific treatment for this vast category (though many exist; see Martin Heidegger; Jason Brown; Antonio Damasio), but name it to point out that all attempts to ground knowledge, belief, or mutual understanding draw upon this level. The validity of verbal abstractions, i.e. the linguistic/symbolic forms listed in the figure, depends on references to this Experiential level.

I will make one interesting point about Experience in light of our discussion of metaphysical thinking. Though we treat an experience such as the taste of chocolate as mundane and an experience such as a meditative state of witness-consciousness or non-dual oneness as sublime, they share some interesting properties along with all

experiences. They are essentially indescribable to any who have not experienced them. In the movement from experience into language describing the experience both lose what they are and become something else. Concepts and abstractions built upon the taste of chocolate are not so different than concepts built upon sublime spiritual experiences in that they are equally susceptible to indeterminacies. Both are equally beyond words and in that sense mysterious. The main difference is that tasting chocolate is common whereas advanced meditative states are not. Therefore there is more intersubjective commonality about the taste of chocolate—less ambiguity about what one means when they speak of it. Because of our tendency to take abstractions too seriously (misplaced concreteness) it seems to us that that *concepts*, the *ideas*, and the *theories about* meditative states are particularly sublime, esoteric, and special. When it seems more accurate to say that it is only the *experience* that is sublime and special.

The primary purpose of the diagram in Figure 2 is to illustrate that (a) models/theories are built from statements and statements from concepts; (b) that indeterminacies at any level accumulate from indeterminacies at lower levels; and (c) that each level has its own epistemic concerns. Example Experiences include the taste of chocolate; a gut certainty; a meditative state; and what it is like being a parent. Example concepts include tree, democracy, interior, and consciousness. Statements have forms such as "trees are..." "we should..." and "the cognitive line leads other lines..." Example models/theories include AQAL, Spiral Dynamics, Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Concepts are primarily about what we think exists (or can be differentiated from other things). Statements are claims about what is true, good, right, beautiful, etc. Models and theories are systems of related beliefs. I include "world view" in the diagram to note that we also speak of larger scale belief systems.

In this paper I emphasize the ontological functions of the mind that infer what is *real*, i.e. the conceptual level in the Figure. But the post-metaphysical turn also involves the related epistemological functions that infer what is *true* and determine how we argue for claims—i.e. the level of Statements and their justification. Figure 3 lists most of the modes we use to justify or explain claims.

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First hand experience • Deep intuition (or gut feeling) • Reasonable assumptions/bases/premises • Logical inference (supporting truth) • It is ethically right • It is pragmatically useful (it works) • Consistent with other knowledge • Support of experts/authorities • Trusted sources (journal, NPR, etc.) • Someone I know and trust believes it • Most people (peers in my group/tribe) believe it • I used a trusted method |
|---|

Figure 3: A list of knowledge justification modes

In the section on misplaced concreteness I gave an account of how misplaced concreteness, or the reality with which we treat abstract concepts, manifests itself through developmental levels. We can do the same for the level of Statements and justification types. Many theorists have demonstrated a developmental progression in the ways that humans (explicitly and tacitly) understand and justify beliefs (e.g. Perry; Fisher; Kegan). Very roughly, early forms are based on appeals to authoritative people and texts, sacred objects or beings, group norms, intuition, and direct experience. Later forms are based on logical inference, coherence with foundational tenets and existing "truths," and methodologies and sources that minimize bias. Yet later forms acknowledge and try to compensate for the fundamental indeterminacies and fallibilities of all of the validity bases. *All* of the mentioned modes of justification are (almost) *always* combined in complex life deliberations; it is not a matter of leaving any behind but of having more options to choose from and becoming more skilled in when to use each.

As compared with Modernist or Integral modes, beliefs associated with New Age (and Green) culture rely less on logic, bias-checking, and rigorous methodologies (such as the scientific method). Assessing the Green worldview is complicated because of a combination of influences from both higher and lower developmental levels. Though sometimes the more primitive thought modes are embraced unreflectively, in other cases sophisticated postmodern arguments (e.g. deconstructive arguments) are used to justify their intentional use.

In rejecting Modernist ways, Green opens the door to magical thinking (indulging non-differentiation of ideas and concrete realities) and narcissistic thinking (including grandiosity and wishful thinking) (see Hanley 1992; Habermas 1991; Murray in progress). Green thinking also applies valid postmodern insights to the fallibilities of rational thought and the scientific method, and the inevitability of human bias (it also is drawn to Romanticism which values feeling good and aesthetic value over rationality). The topic of *intuition* becomes particularly interesting, because, while basing belief on intuition can be a cover for non-rigorous thinking, Habermas' entire project is based on the 'rational reconstruction' of quasi-universal intuitions.