

# Introduction

## Integral Philosophy on the Verge

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The title of this volume, *Dancing with Sophia*, conjures the spirit of twentieth-century Russian philosopher, poet, and mystic Vladimir Solovyov, who wrote his first book, *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge* in 1874 when he was twenty-four-years old. It was published three years later in 1877. Solovyov (2000) was perhaps the first modern writer to use the phrase *integral philosophy* (p. 57), advancing a philosophically informed integral way of knowing and knowledge-formation that “must be free of any exclusiveness or one-sidedness” (p. 71) in “answer[ing] to all the requirements of the human spirit” (p. 109). Solovyov was deeply inspired by visions he had of Sophia over the course of his life.<sup>1</sup> We ourselves are inspired by his fearless call for rigorous and critical inclusiveness—especially germane today for any philosophy to address the complexity of our planetary moment and its globalizing processes—and perhaps even more so by his bold invocation of Sophia as the guiding light of philosophy: Wisdom to retake her rightful seat as a core regulative principle of philosophy itself.

The subtitle, “Integral Philosophy on the Verge,” echoes and honors contemporary American Continental philosopher John Sallis’s *The Verge of Philosophy* (Sallis, 2008) and in its articulation of philosophy as always already at the limit, on the verge, never finished, always already underway and emergent (as in the twisting free of its metaphysical inheritance)—here adapted to the situation of contemporary integral theory on the verge of

its own clarification *as* philosophical. Together the title and subtitle signal our sense that integral theory has a unique and important contribution to make to the contemporary philosophical landscape in its capacity to orient wise, skillful action for the well-being and flourishing of our hypercomplex planetary civilization.

What, then, is integral theory? It is an ironically self-titled “theory of everything.”<sup>2</sup> More technically and centrally, it is an integrative metatheory that discerns and organizes the interrelationships among existing (first and second order) theories, methodologies, and epistemologies in a given discipline or across disciplines, as these are proper to and conditioned by differing regional ontologies. In this way, it invites and enacts meta-systemic to cross-paradigmatic modes of post-formal cognition in opening up interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary domains of inquiry and insight.<sup>3</sup> Its fruition in the present moment has been seeded by American Ken Wilber, author of over two dozen books translated into over twenty languages. Drawing on an impressive range of knowledge and research domains, Wilber has for the past four decades been developing a metatheory that has had a wide impact on fields as diverse as ecological studies, sustainability, leadership training, cognitive development, business management, psychology, psychiatry, contemplative Christianity, esoteric Buddhism, comparative religion, spiritual practice, and metatheorizing itself. Many prominent artists and musicians, such as Saul Williams, Alex Grey, Ed Kowalczyk, Lana and Lilly Wachowski, to name a few, have attested to being deeply influenced by Wilber’s work.

Pointedly, Wilber is not an academic, nor has he ever held a university teaching position. His books are written purposely for a wider audience. As Clint Fuhs once reported,<sup>4</sup> early in his twenties Wilber decided that his life aims were soteriological, concerned with individual and collective emancipation; where a more direct writing style would reach a wider audience. When turning to his texts, some professional academics tend to complain about their populist, nonspecialist, and generalizing-sweeping tenor—the kinds of detailed argumentation, proper to academic conventions, not always at the forefront or even discernable by inference. Nonetheless, in our view, his vast corpus of published and unpublished texts, interviews, and talks contain, if sometimes in the margins of a footnote or in pith form, novel insights and formulations deserving of sustained academic attention and debate. He is, in the Heideggerian sense, an *orginary thinker*; or, to echo Deleuze and Guattari, an *inventor of concepts*.<sup>5</sup>

While Wilber has been the principle inaugurator of present-day integral theory, there has emerged over the past two decades a large and

diverse international community of scholar-practitioners who are advancing integral in ever more novel ways. As of this writing, there have been four international integral theory conferences in San Francisco's Bay Area (2008, 2010, 2013, and 2015), each with presenters from all five continents. There is also a flourishing scholarly book series at SUNY Press (to which this volume belongs) and a peer-reviewed academic periodical—the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*—with nearly a decade of quarterly publications.<sup>6</sup> Slowly but surely, integral's entry into academic debate and scrutiny is taking shape; as in the recent and ongoing dialogue of integral theory with one of the other most important academic metatheories available, that of critical realism founded by the late Roy Bhaskar.<sup>7</sup>

Given the scope and ambition of integral theory, it has at times been referenced, if loosely, as a philosophy—in fact, some academic authors refer to Wilber in their own work as “an American philosopher.” And, to be sure, Wilber has drawn upon and engaged a vast number of North Atlantic and Asian philosophers: from Plato to Foucault and from Nagarjuna to Aurobindo. Taking this topic up with directness, this volume explores the philosophical dimensions and implications of integral theory. It is, as the title announces, a dancing with Sophia, the movement of integral at its own (metatheoretical) limit, on the verge of its own philosophical emergence. Which invites the questions: What or when is philosophy?

While the term *philosophy* is used regularly in both professional and popular circles, there is no clear agreement in the academy on the delimitation of its meaning and sense—more so than in most academic fields once deemed part of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. To take up a purposely generic source of definition, this from a Wikipedia entry:

*Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems, such as those connected with reality, existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language. Philosophy is distinguished from other ways of addressing such problems by its critical, generally systematic approach and its reliance on rational argument.*<sup>8</sup>

Although from a Wikipedia entry, this definition draws upon several academic source texts. And, to be sure, it is a clear and fair characterization. Yet does it apply only to the *Fach* of philosophy? For instance, one can make the case that the system theorizing of Niklas Luhmann satisfies many of the basic points of this definition, where his monumental project incorporates or translates operations from philosophical streams like phenomenology and deconstruction into system theory terms.<sup>9</sup> Conversely, widely recognized philosophers might find themselves at odds with some or many aspects of the above definition. A number of prominent Continental philosophers

of recent times would call into question the desirability or possibility of a philosophy that is “systematic” in orientation (raising the question of what such philosophers mean by “system” vis-à-vis the sense of system in a Luhmann). The characterization of philosophy’s “reliance on rational argument” itself is complicated in certain circles, as one of the themes descending from strains of German Idealism is the question of the limits of rationality—the relation of reason and non-reason. The Nietzschean and Derridean thematic explorations and performance of philosophical metaphor are cases in point. John Sallis, in turn, sees philosophy as emerging in ancient Greece around the question of the relation between of being and logos. He goes on to develop a novel philosophy of the “logic of the imagination” that includes *both* rational non-contradictory as well as exorbitant logics—making room for a range of logoi that are rational and a-rational.<sup>10</sup> And the American pragmatist tradition has often looked to developmental psychology for clarification on matters of rational thought, where today a number of lines of leading-edge empirical research no longer posit analytic reason as the pinnacle of human cognition.

Centering on the life-practice of the philosopher herself, Michel Foucault, at the end of his life, posited that philosophy in its descent from the ancient Greeks bequeaths at least two distinct strains of inquiry that have complexly intersected and diverged over the centuries: 1) an analytics of truth, and 2) an ontology of who we are—the latter as philosophy a way of life, a bios replete with practices of self (Foucault here inspired by the scholarship of Pierre Hadot).<sup>11</sup> In the ancient world these two strains intersected in the figure of Socrates, giving rise to the philosopher as *parrhesiastes*—the one who tells the truth or incites truth-telling on behalf of obligations beyond the self, going so far as to risk his or her very life.

Other lines of recent philosophy have broached the theme of the other of modern and postmodern philosophy in terms to the side of that of transformational practices—the relation then of philosophy to non-philosophy. Jürgen Habermas sees philosophy in the modern university as having been decentered by the rise of specialized domains of inquiry, such that many of the themes and claims proper to premodern philosophy have become taken up by these disciplines with a new specialized methodological rigor, displacing philosophy’s claim to superior knowledge: Philosophy assuming, then, a new role as placeholder of critical reflection (Habermas, 1993). For Bhaskar, philosophy has a special and crucial role as *underlaboring* for existing disciplines and domains of being, clarifying these disciplines while never standing above them, an interlocutor in mutual learning processes.

He also offers critical genealogies that go back to the ancient Greeks (e.g., Parmenides) and forward to the postmodern moment (e.g., Rorty); arguing further that the “non-philosophy” of historical-social conditions and everyday practices readily affect a given philosophy’s character, pointing inquiry into what he terms the field of the “meta-philosophical” as required for a meta-critique of philosophical problems and their resolution.<sup>12</sup> As a kind of twist on this theme of philosophy and the social, the later Wittgenstein, according to some recent readings of his work, practiced philosophy as a kind of therapeutic of our language games, in instances examining seeming deep philosophical problems or puzzles, showing how these dissolve and clarify (and thereby “purify”) a form of life already underway.<sup>13</sup>

From this brief sampling, it is clear that the Wikipedia definition, as fine as it is, cannot cover the range of what counts as philosophy today—which is not a fault, but a symptom of the overlapping-*cum*-diverging senses and practices of philosophy. While this is not to say that all views of what philosophy is are equally valid, it is to acknowledge that the professional practice and status of philosophy today is “singular plural.” And this is even without turning to so-called non-Western philosophy and to the enterprise of comparative philosophy now underway, which countenances the validity of a view of the “Greek miracle” of the West as the origin of what can count as philosophy proper.<sup>14</sup>

Nonetheless, within this plurality of philosophical practice there are emergent trends of pregnant import that transverse the various philosophy lineages. Stepping back to look more broadly at the human and natural sciences, we see an upsurge in the call for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary theoretical models and knowledge-integration. Rather than a mere fashion of the times—and despite the majority of this activity in the human sciences leaving much to be desired—this endeavor is well-intended to counter the fragmentation of ever-increasingly specialized disciplines (and even fragmentation within a given discipline) in generating higher order modes of insight that in their epistemic complexity and ontological nuance are better able to engage our planetary situation.<sup>15</sup> In philosophy too one can detect trends toward the more integrative and inclusive: the revival and theoretical reformulation (as responsive to modern and postmodern critiques) of what might count as systematic philosophies (e.g., Puntel, 2008), as synthetic philosophies (e.g., Zalamea, 2012), and even as meta-philosophies (e.g., Bhaskar, 2012a and 2012b). In cases, there is a conscious striving to retrieve and reintegrate discarded elements of prior philosophizing while honoring modern and postmodern philosophical insights and critiques, as

with the effort to vindicate strong ontology and re-enliven the question of substance in strains of speculative realism and object-oriented ontology (e.g., Harman, 2010).

A symptom of this trend is the expanding use of the term *meta*: meta-metaphysics (e.g., Chalmers et al., 2009), metaontology (e.g., Berto, 2015), metaethics (e.g., van Roojen, 2015; Miller, 2013), and metaphilosophy (e.g., Overgaard et al., 2013). So while postmodern philosophers like Lyotard critiqued our inherited meta-narratives, it would seem that today all kinds of meta-views are making a comeback, albeit in more sophisticated philosophical forms—leaving behind what Mark Edwards (2009) calls “integrative monisms” (taken in a vulgar sense as closed, subsumptive without remainder, and naively totalizing) to explore “integrative pluralisms” (taken in one of many interrelated senses as open dynamic wholeness inclusive of tensions, singularities, absence, and the non-reduction of otherness). Integral theory, in its best moments, has gestured toward versions of the latter—even, as some of the authors in this volume contend, these latter approaches themselves entail philosophical complication and critique.

Having affinities with integral theory itself, Peter Sloterdijk has posited a philosophically motivated general disciplinics for the future that

would integrally encompass the spectrum of ability systems composed of knowledge and practical acts. This spectrum extends from 1) acrobatics and aesthetics, including the system of art forms and genres—NB: in the post-university House of Knowledge, the *studium generale* consists of artistry, not philosophy—via 2) athletics (the general study of sporting forms) to 3) rhetoric or sophistry, then 4) therapeutics in all its specialized branches, 5) epistemics (including philosophy), 6) a general study of professions (including the ‘applied arts,’ which are assigned to the field of *arts et metiers*), and 7) the study of machinistic technologies. It also includes 8) administrativics, which constitutes both the static substructure of the political or governmental and the universe of legal systems, as well as 9) the encyclopedia of meditation systems in their dual role as self-techniques and not-self-techniques (the distinction between declared and undeclared meditations comes into play here), 10) ritualistics (as humans, according to Wittgenstein, are ceremonial animals and the ceremonies form trainable behavioral modules whose carriers appear as ‘peoples’—which is why the linguistic sciences, like the theory

of games and ‘religions,’ form a sub-discipline of ritualistics), 11) the study of sexual practices, 12) gastronomics, and finally 13) the open list of cultivatable activities, whose openness means the interminability of the discipline-forming and thus subjectification-enabling field itself.

He states that “ordinary philosophers restrict themselves to field 5, with occasional excursions to 8 or 3 and 1,” a claim, to be sure, which is not beyond questioning—whereas, for Sloterdijk, Foucault was unusual in that his “interventions touch on fields 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 11” (Sloterdijk, 2013, pp. 156–157).

Significantly, integral theory plays in more of these than does Foucault, opening spaces of inquiry into domain-interrelationships among virtually all the fields that Sloterdijk lists. And it does so in ways that often align with a number of the philosophical ventures and themes cited above, as various essays in this volume will make clear. What we can say, in light of the plurality of contemporary philosophical projects, is that integral theory has genuine philosophical dimensions and potencies, which the subsequent chapters venture forth. And that it is a certain rigorous openness and critical inclusiveness—what Wilber (2003, pp. 16–21) has called the principle of non-exclusion—which is perhaps a signal feature of any philosophy that might be called integral: An inclusiveness, moreover, that holds to an ethos that philosophy recognize and acknowledge its own allergies, blind spots, and reactivity, ready to adjust itself accordingly, as always already oriented toward individual and planetary well-being and flourishing. This radical critical openness and non-exclusiveness entails, in the philosophical register, a remarkable drawing together into dialogue and critique diverse voices, this volume’s chapters including those of Derrida, Schelling, Dōgen, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Levinas, Whitehead, Habermas, Kierkegaard, Žižek, Buber, Dewey, Nancy, Kant, Irigaray, Serres, Latour, Hegel, Hume, Levi Bryant, Harman, Wittgenstein, among others.

Before we present an overview of each chapter in the volume, it is to be noted up front that all the authors in this volume are men. There are, to be sure, brilliant and active women scholar-practitioners in the integral worlds; many of them of outstanding philosophical acumen, such as Bonnitta Roy—who is cited in the volume—and who were invited to contribute. And yet despite the editors’ sincerest efforts, including delaying the volume to secure at least one contribution from a woman writer, this did not come to pass for a variety of circumstantial reasons. We, as editors,

painfully acknowledge this lacuna. And while we did make strong efforts in this regard—and from the start of the project titling the book wisdom as feminine (Sophia)—the fault for not securing a more balanced gender array of authors lies with us alone. We wonder too if this is not also a symptom of a decisive masculine imbalance in the integral worlds, perhaps (in echoing Freeman’s chapter) that integral theory has been centered in embracing and performing a Lacanian-Žižekian masculine logic of the All over that of a feminine logic of the Non-All. Some of the chapters address this and related philosophical topics. The following overview of the volume proceeds in the order that chapters appear by each author listed.

**Zachary Stein** situates Wilber’s integral theory within the tradition of American pragmatism and that lineage’s commitments to: 1) philosophical psychology, 2) epistemic comprehensiveness, 3) action-oriented theorizing, 4) the integration of science and religion, 5) evolutionary metaphysics, and 6) social emancipation. For Stein, integral opens important vistas for the future of philosophy in its responding to the current moment of geo-historical planetization. Propounding a unique mode of meta-theorizing, which can be traced to earlier pragmatists like Peirce and Baldwin, integral organizes knowledge across many domains via principled distinctions with emancipatory aims, countering the modern research university’s increasing bureaucratization and fragmentation of knowledge, which renders inquiry and knowledge formation incapable of addressing the complexity of contemporary planetary problematics.

**Martin Beck Matušík**, who studied philosophy under Habermas, opens his contribution boldly: “Ken Wilber has articulated a remarkably robust postmetaphysical spirituality after post/modernity at the same time Jürgen Habermas has been reconsidering some of his earlier dismissals of religious thinking.” For Matušík, integral is dangerous for the current age in its capacity and acumen for criticizing both dogmatic secularizing reason and religious belief retreating into premodern fundamentalist waves of development. In turn, Matušík forwards a project of an *integral critical theory* (ICT) that with emancipatory care attends to three dimensions of human existence and need: material, sociopolitical, and spiritual. As regards the last or spiritual domain, integral theory has posited two discrete axes—*stages* and *states* of consciousness. Drawing on Kierkegaard, Matušík posits a third axis transversing these first two (and with regard the Dustin DiPerna’s spiritual developmental cube, also transversing its dimension of vantage points), what

he terms *modes of existence*; thus enabling linkage of individual existential and collective political-economic concerns, a theme earlier explored (if unsatisfactorily for the author) by Marcuse, Sartre, and Habermas himself—ICT will thus be able to advance a multidimensional view of redemptive hope.

**Michael Schwartz** takes up Levinasian insights about the call of the Good through the face of the other and reworks these in light of integral views of the quadrants and the elemental nature of perspectives. Given the integral view of a non-dual Kosmos and the twining of being and becoming, of stillness and dance, all is always already perfect, Goodness pervades all that is—even as the Good incessantly calls Being to be otherwise. Schwartz invites us to attune to the call of the Good as tetra-arising, as multi-perspectival: the always already calling of us into ever greater 1) freedom, 2) vitality, 3) responsibility, and 4) justice—where these four “hyper-goods” and their interrelationships help us see anew the moral orientations of a number of Continental philosophies.

For **Michael E. Zimmerman** integral theory “addresses the problem of nihilism that arose in modernity and that became even more pronounced in postmodernity,” by moving us from the negative evaluations of modernity offered by Nietzsche and Heidegger to the critique-infused appreciation offered by Wilber. Rather than a deflationary narrative, as in Heidegger’s history of being, Wilber cites evidence for a nuanced view of an evolving Kosmos in which humanity is always already situated and participates. This also separates Wilber’s views from that of early Buddhism, which also sees history as decline. While agreeing with Heidegger that human being is a clearing, a nothing, no-thing, Wilber presses this non-dual insight in the direction of the spiritual saturation of all that arises, such that nothing *matters*—and matters profoundly for an evolving Kosmos, where the local outcome of humanity and earth is an open question, one worthy of our concern and energies.

**David E. Storey** sees the integral ecology of Sean Esbjörn-Hargens and Michael E. Zimmerman (both contributors to this volume as coeditor and author respectively) as a “sounder basis for a philosophy of nature than Heidegger’s thought.” Heidegger, especially in the earlier moment of the Dasein analytic, tries to steer a middle way through realist and constructivist views of nature; yet he does not account for how the domains of intentionality and causality relate. Later Heidegger offers first a repetition of the

Greek notion of *physis*—elemental earth—eventually forwarding an account of the fourfold of earth and sky, mortals and gods within the embrace of Godhead. For Storey, despite these efforts, the later Heidegger “does scant justice to the rich world being explored and charted by the biological and ecological sciences.” While honoring Heidegger’s various, often nuanced, approaches to nature and life, including his philosophical adapting of the notion of *Umwelt* (environment) from von Uexküll, Storey argues for the robustness of the senses of nature as forwarded in integral ecology.

**Jason M. Wirth’s** chapter directly echoes the title of this volume by exploring the dance between *Naturphilosophie* and integral ecology. Wirth is particularly interested in how an “ecology of thinking” can be an expression of integral philosophy. Drawing on the figures of Schelling and Dōgen, Wirth (himself a leading Schelling scholar) explores integral ecology’s distinction among “nature,” “Nature,” and “NATURE.” This sets the stage for Wirth to consider the role of transrational practice in “thinking on the verge.” (It is worth noting that Schelling is an important historical figure for any exploration of integral philosophy; Wilber evoking Schelling at crucial junctures in his 1995 study *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution*, often considered the inaugural moment of contemporary integral theory.) Wirth’s chapter is particularly valuable in the way it anchors an exploration of key philosophical distinctions within integral ecology where Western philosophy and Eastern contemplative practice move to the exquisite music of the rain dripping off pine needles as a crisp breeze passes.

**Sam Mickey** interprets integral theory as a philosophy of touch, with the integral approach able to honor, map, and coordinate varieties of Continental thought that entertain this theme—as with phenomenology, postmodernism, feminist theory, and speculative realism—integral is able to offer a rigorous and critical meta-philosophical overview of these philosophical theories. Yet integral, in its movement to coordinate a vast array of perspectives, need take up a *lightness of touch*. Thus, this study opens with an inquiry into what this lightness might be: which, paradoxically, integral in touching perspectives must also leave it all untouched—the withdrawal of sense in non-sense. Mickey drawing upon Jean-Luc Nancy, speculative realism, and other recent modes of philosophizing in articulating a philosophical lightness of touch.

**Zayin Cabot** challenges the coherence of classical integral theory’s non-dual account of novelty and change. He draws on distinctions in process phi-

losophy between novative-transformational and innovative-creative regimes of thought. He cites classic integral as falling for the most part into the novative-transformational camp, where what changes is theory superficial and hence less real than what does not change. He argues that in integral's case spirit sides toward a primacy of timeless spirit. If classic integral theory is, by its own account, process philosophy in a microgenetic sense, Cabot is pointing to a reformulation of integral theory. He seeks to bring together enlightenment and evolution in the context of a process thought that takes on a macrogenetic turn as it locates creativity as ontologically primary and particularly capable of addressing the dance of spirit and world.

**Gregory Desilet** considers the respective (and what for the author are incompatible) views on the nature of being in the philosophies of Ken Wilber and Jacques Derrida. Desilet opens his comparative commentary on what he diagnoses as Wilber's misreading of Derrida on the theme of the transcendental signifier/signified—Wilber positing spirit in a manner that in the end Derrida would consider baldly (and badly) metaphysical, despite the former's claim of advancing an integral "post-metaphysics." If there is a question of transcendence in Derrida, it is that of a radical atheism, where the call of justice-yet-to-come is less a metaphysical "substantive" in its timelessness and more a temporally displaced/displacing moral "regulative" as undeconstructable promise. While confessing to being divided in his loyalties to the respective positions and contributions of Wilber and Derrida, Desilet concludes that a Derridean "general economic metaphysic," rather than the more closed metaphysical economic of Wilber, is the philosophically more justifiable position.

For **Nicholas Hedlund** critical realism (CR) and integral theory (IT) are among the most comprehensive and sophisticated expressions of a still yet-to-be fully consolidated integral, post-postmodern philosophy. Both CR and IT explicitly situate themselves not only as alternatives to postmodernism, but claim to go beyond both positivism and social constructivism while integrating key aspects of those respective philosophical discourses. In the face of radicalized forms of post-Kantian skepticism and anti-realism characteristic of postmodernism, both approaches champion a return to ontology at a higher turn of the developmental spiral—a return to some form of realism that substantially integrates the epistemic advances of both positivism and social constructivism and thus is not a regression to a form of precritical, first philosophy (*prima philosophia*) or dogmatic metaphysics. In this chapter,

Hedlund explores the ontological and epistemological strengths and weaknesses of CR and IT, highlighting their key points of complementarity on the way to forging the outlines of a provisional synthesis of these two approaches to being and knowing, what the author calls critical realist integral theory (CRIT)—thus attempting to do with CR and IT what they each attempt to do with the philosophical discourse of modernity and postmodernity: Transcend and integrate them into an emergent intellectual formation.

**Tom Murray** is successful in drawing on the embodied philosophy of Mark Johnson and George Lakoff to explore issues of ontology and epistemology. Johnson and Lakoff's groundbreaking work into "metaphors we live by" and the resulting "philosophy in the flesh" are fertile soils for integral philosophies to explore how to anchor "vision-logic" in the centauric embodiment associated with integral thinking. A particularly important aspect of Murray's chapter is the ways in which he foregrounds the importance of integral philosophy being a self-critical philosophy that is not only embodied, but is self-reflexive and turns its integral lenses onto itself. This self-critical openness is one of the defining characteristics of integral philosophy on the verge.

Drawing on key figures such as Hegel, Schelling, Žižek, and Derrida, **Cameron Stewart Rees Freeman** explores the implications of Lacan's "Non-All" for Ken Wilber's post-metaphysics. In particular he cites the "Non-All" as a "feminine logic" in contrast to the totalizing impulse of Wilber's more (masculine) integral approach as a logic of the All. Freeman's deconstructive reading of integral philosophy places it on the verge of something perhaps even more integrative by allowing for the uncertainty and the non-totalizing expression of the Non-All. This chapter echoes others in the volume by making room in integral philosophy for what Roy Bhaskar calls absence, negativity, and non-identity in the latter's critique of the ontological monovalence of Western philosophical thought.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Freeman's contribution serves to help raise important questions around what is or can be integrated in an integral philosophy, what lies outside of that integration—and what is meant by "integration" itself.

For **Bruce Alderman** the four pronouns at the center of the integral model have yielded impressive explanatory and integrative power. While they are useful for classifying disciplines according to their primary epistemological orientations, they are not sufficient to account for or disclose the ontological views that inform our perspectives. After situating integral theory in a longer

lineage of “pronoun philosophies,” Alderman introduces an expanded set of grammatical lenses to complement integral’s four fundamental perspectives. These lenses, based on six common parts of speech, can serve both metaphysical and meta-metaphysical ends, helping to identify the ontological views that inform our person perspectives, and providing an integrative architecture for correlating and interfacing various metaphysical systems and integrative meta-theories—advancing a meta-philosophical grammar of philosophies.

In addition to the volume’s chapters, just summarized, we include as afterword a fresh piece by **Ken Wilber** himself, the principle inaugurator of integral theory—the written version of his keynote presentation at July 2015’s Fourth International Integral Theory Conference in Sonoma County, California, titled “Realism and Idealism in Integral Theory,” which extends his many previous discussions of the differences between and intertwining of ontology and epistemology; on this occasion responding to the recent metatheory dialogues between critical realism and integral theory (mentioned above). We are grateful to be able to include this bonus in the volume.

In putting this volume together there are a number of questions that emerged for us. We offer some of these here as a way of setting the stage for the chapters you are about to read:

- Are there masculine and feminine modes of philosophy (cf. Nietzsche’s Apollonian and Dionysian forces, or the Lacanian-Žižekian ontologies of the All and non-All)? If so, what would be their productive, dynamic, and wisest relationship?
- In what ways might the transformation of the philosopher transform his or her philosophizing, hence philosophy itself? What might be the dimensions—psychological, spiritual, emancipatory, etc.—of such capacity training and how might all this impact philosophical views and claims about themes like being and knowing?
- What might be the proper and productive relationship between philosophy and nonphilosophy? How can or should philosophy draw on and include nonphilosophical sources?
- What is one to make of the relationship between philosophy and expanding claims about “meta”: metatheory, metaethics, metaphilosophy, etc.?

- What is the role of the history of philosophy—and more broadly, the role of sociocultural history itself—in the generation of an integral philosophy?
- In what ways can philosophy be responsive to and relevant for our evermore hyper-complex world?
- What are the historical threads and antecedents (e.g., Solovyov) of integral philosophy on the verge?
- Given the populist (and deeply compassionate) intent of Wilber’s writings in seeding contemporary integral theory, how might certain entrenched integral phrasings, as these have been circulating outside of academic circles for over three to four decades, be reworked so to twist them free of their pre-philosophical and precritical resonances (as the latter senses have accrued through the diverse and populist uses of Wilber’s generative concepts)?

As you engage the chapters in this volume, we invite you to dance with us exploring integral philosophy on the verge. Together we feel the authors in this volume are successful in naming and shining the light of wisdom on some of the key issues that an emerging integral philosophy is uniquely positioned to address.

## Notes

1. See Kornblatt (2009) for a detailed exploration on the role of Solovyov’s visions of Sophia and their influence on his poetry and philosophy.

2. Wilber (2001). Esbjörn-Hargens (2015) has re-envisioned integral metatheory as a “theory of anything.” For an overview of integral theory, see Esbjörn-Hargens (2010).

3. On post-formal modes of cognition, see Cook-Greuter (2013) and also Fischer (1980). On the developmental demands for bringing forth actual, rather than so-called, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary projects, see Stein (2007). On the question of metatheory itself (the nuanced debates about which are beyond the confines of this Introduction), see Bhaskar et al. (2015) and Hedlund and Esbjörn-Hargens (in press).

4. At the first Critical Realism and Integral Theory Symposium, John F. Kennedy University, September 2011.

5. Deleuze and Guattari (1994). For more on Wilber, see Visser (2003).
6. The *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* was founded in 2006 and published approximately 400 pages of material each year for 9 consecutive years (2006–2015) for a total of approximately 4000 pages of academic peer-reviewed debate and discussion of integral theory applied in over 35 distinct disciplines by several hundred academics and professionals.
7. There have been four symposia bringing together leading practitioners in critical realism and in integral theory: in the Bay Area in 2011, 2013, and 2015; and at the University of London in 2014. Initially, this sparked a brief “exchange” between Bhaskar and Wilber (see Bhaskar, 2012a, 2012b, and Wilber, 2012). The more substantial outcome of these symposia is a two-volume collection of essays: Bhaskar et al. (2015) and Hedlund and Esbjörn-Hargens (in press).
8. See “Philosophy” (n.d.).
9. For example, Luhmann (1993). For commentary, see Moeller (2012).
10. See Sallis (2012). On stages of post-formal rationality, see Cook-Greuter (2013) and also Fischer (1980). For a critique of the limits of analytic reasoning in light of a Bhaskarean view of a four-stadia dialectic, see Laske (2008).
11. See Foucault (1984, 2001) and Hador (1995). On the transformation of the contemporary philosopher, a study assuming a Foucaultian line of thought reworked through the integral theory distinction between transformation and translation (Schwartz, 2010).
12. On philosophy as underlabor, see Bhaskar (1987). On the meta-critique of the philosophical tradition, see Bhaskar (1993) and especially Bhaskar (1994).
13. Along these lines of a Wittgenstein interpretation, see Sloterdijk (2013).
14. On the “Greek miracle” of philosophy as innovatively re-articulated by Deleuze and Guattari, see Gasché (2014). And on the comparative enterprise itself, see the journal *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* (Maney Publishing: <http://www.maneyonline.com/loi/ccp>; retrieved February 27, 2015); the complementary book series of the same title (Northwestern University Press: <http://www.nupress.northwestern.edu/series/comparative-and-continental-philosophy>); and the Comparative and Continental Philosophy Circle’s annual scholarly events (<http://www.comcontphilosophy.org/>).
15. This kind of integrative activity is already underway, in practice, as exemplified in the medical sciences, for example, through such approaches as systematic reviews (Gough et al., 2012). Rather than some precritical theoretical mistake, it has become essential for the advancement of knowledge on the one hand, and on the other has practical import in, for example, integrative approaches to the treatment of diseases like cancer, enhancing such treatment. With regard to ecological and sustainability studies, cf. Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman (2009).
16. See Bhaskar (1993). Non-identity of the three depth of the Real is proper to the first moment of the four stadia proper to this dialectic scheme. Negativity and the reality of absence are proper to the second stadia. These are two of the

key components in Bhaskar's critique of ontological monovalence. For an argument that a Žižekian ontology of Non-All being must, in the end, be distinguished from and rejected in light of a robust Bhaskarean ontology (due to the former's lack of depth strata, hence falling toward the trap of what critical realism calls *actualism*), see Rutzou (2012). Rutzou's approach, couched as immanent critique, while a strong argument, seems by and large predetermined to defeat what is projected as a rival position rather than or in addition to engage in a mutual learning process—for example, what Žižekian ontology and philosophy might offer a critical realist dialectic, shedding light on what might be absences or edges in critical realism's own continuing maturation and unfolding.

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