

CALL FOR CHAPTERS FOR

True but Partial: Essential Critiques of Integral Theory

Edited by Sean Esbjörn-Hargens
SUNY Press 2011

Integral Theory as pioneered by American philosopher Ken Wilber is well known for its adage that various perspectives and different approaches are always “true but partial.” But does this not also apply to Integral Theory itself and might the viability of Integral Theory be linked to a recursive folding in of Integral Theory on itself—applying its own meta-principles to its theoretical distinctions and their application. This is the reflective spirit of this proposed volume.

Overview

I am very excited to announce a call for chapter submissions for what promises to be a groundbreaking new book on Integral Theory. This book will aim to showcase the 12-15 best critiques of Integral Theory ever articulated. These will be the critiques that really identify an Achilles heel in Integral Theory as it is currently understood and practiced. My hope is that these critiques will be so substantial, nuanced, and anchored in a deep understanding of the AQAL model that it will take the field of Integral Theory 10-20 years to address. This is why I’m calling these *essential critiques*. These are the critiques that the field must identify and begin addressing over the next two decades for it to grow into a fully mature integrative global offering. Furthermore, these critiques will be from scholar-practitioners who know Integral Theory both in a theoretical and applied context.

Background: Some Personal Reflections

For years I have wanted to read good critiques of Integral Theory and its AQAL model. For years I’ve been largely disappointed in the quality and caliber of critique available. While there have been some exceptions the majority of the critiques I am aware of fail to see Integral Theory on its own terms. As a result they are often more *partial* than they are true. This is the result, I believe, of these critiques often coming from individuals working outside of an AQAL context, failing to incorporate its most recent articulation (e.g., phase-V post-metaphysics) or ignoring its more subtle points (e.g., those often found in Wilber’s dense endnotes). I often think of this collection of critiques as the first wave of critiques (1995-2005) provided primarily by scholars looking in from the outside.

One of the reasons this first wave of critiques lacked practitioners looking in from the *inside* is those practitioners were too busy learning the model and applying it to their respective professional contexts. It is difficult to effectively critique something before you develop a certain degree of expertise in it. Thus, occurring alongside the first wave of *scholarly* critiques was the first wave of *practitioner* applications.

Over the last five years a new wave of engagement with Integral Theory has begun to emerge wherein *scholar-practitioners* versed both with the theory and its application are coming forward with important critiques. These critiques have been informed not only by theoretical insight but also by real-world applications of the AQAL model (or other integrative frameworks). Thus the field has been growing—more important and substantial critiques are beginning to emerge from within an AQAL context (i.e., by individuals well versed in Integral Theory and its AQAL model). Because these critiques come from scholar-practitioners looking in from the inside they have the potential to be more *true* than partial. These are the critiques I’m interested in locating or helping authors to develop for this volume.

This new wave of “insider” critiques is exciting and something that I have been working towards and supporting for years through my many academic activities (e.g., JFKU, JITP, SUNY, IRC, ITC). I love Integral Theory passionately and as an expression of that I want to showcase the best critiques of it so it can continue to develop and become something that serves humanity in a profound way.

Topics

If you think you have a strong offering for a bold volume like this then I would love to receive a 300-500 word abstract from you outlining the kind of critique you have or want to develop. See the general timeline below for relevant dates. There is a wide range of areas one can draw on for their critique including perspectives from areas such as: evolution, metatheory, developmental models, spirituality, embodiment, cross-cultural application, enactment, post-metaphysics, leadership, disciplinarity, research, pluralism, postmodernism, historical figures, community discourse, and practices of scholarship.

There are many kinds of critiques and here are a few examples:

Meta-theory: Critiquing Integral Theory by comparison to other metatheoretical frameworks or drawing on the emerging field of integral meta-studies.

Recursive: Using principles of Integral Theory to critique aspects of Integral Theory (e.g., doing a four quadrant analysis of the text *Integral Psychology* to show how one or more quadrants are underemphasized in certain ways)

Integrative: Critiquing how Integral Theory magnifies and distorts content that it draws on in developing its distinctions. This could also include what Integral Theory leaves out. In other words, this kind of critique exposes how non-integrative Integral Theory is in some contexts.

Applications: Critiquing specific applications of the AQAL model as exemplified in fields like Integral Ecology or Integral Psychotherapy.

Obviously, there are many other kinds of critiques and the five listed above could be combined in various ways. But hopefully, this will give you a sense of the kinds of content I’m looking for.

Criteria

The selection process is going to be quite competitive. My hope is to have a lot of submissions and to then pick the best 12-15. I will be looking for content that is hard hitting, academically sound, familiar with Integral Theory and its AQAL model, constructive, well aimed, provocative, and has a long “shelf life.”

I want to showcase critiques from insiders, outsiders, and folks who are somewhere in-between. What they will all have in common in the context of this volume is a fluency in the post-metaphysical commitments of Integral Theory and its AQAL model (i.e., the so-called phase-V material associated with Wilber’s Excerpts A-D & G, and Appendix II from *Integral Spirituality*). So even if an author focuses on a phase-IV issue like quadrants or holons they will be able to advance their critique within the post-metaphysical context that characterizes Integral Theory in its most sophisticated articulation.

While Wilber’s writings are central to Integral Theory it is important to note that critiques for this volume don’t need to focus solely or even mainly on his corpus. There is a growing body of academic and applied literature by other scholar-practitioners, which can and should be drawn on by authors for this volume. In fact, authors should demonstrate a familiarity with this wider range of literature. This book is not about Wilber as much as it is about Integral Theory.

This volume will include new voices, and lesser-known individuals alongside well-known and established names in the field. So even if you have never published something please consider submitting an abstract. I want to hear from everyone. Also I encourage authors to team up and co-author pieces.

My editorial involvement will range from a little to a lot depending on the chapter and issues it takes on. It is important to me that authors have their own voice. At the same time I want this volume to be extremely well written and a powerful contribution to the field, so I won’t hesitate to provide feedback and suggestions to authors throughout the process. I look forward to this collaborative aspect of this ambitious project.

General Timeline

Below are the general due dates for the various phases of this project:

April 2010:	Announcement made for call for chapters
July 1 st , 2010:	300-500 word abstracts due
September 30 th , 2010:	Final submissions due in APA format.
October 1 st , 2010:	Manuscript submitted to SUNY for peer review

As abstract submissions come in—if they are strong enough—I will include them in the table of contents right away. So in this sense there is an advantage to submitting something before the general deadline. Once I have 12-15 amazing critiques identified I will commit to those authors and begin moving the volume towards publication. This volume will be published as part of the SUNY Series in Integral Theory (see description

below). Note that the volume will be done in APA style so please plan on submitting your final chapter in this academic format.

To submit abstracts and chapters or to ask me any questions about the book or your potential contributions to it please email me at shargens@jfkku.edu. Thanks for considering contributing to this exciting and timely volume and please pass this call for chapters along to others who might have an important offering

Warmly,

Sean

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SUNY Series in Integral Theory

Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, Editor

The SUNY Series in Integral Theory presents authored and edited volumes that are committed to improving and diversifying integral thought and the application of the AQAL model. It proposes to do this by turning Integral Theory onto itself: an act of theoretical-applied self-reflection. In so doing, this series will play an important role in setting the stage for the continued emergence of Integral Theory as a legitimate field of academic discourse within multiple disciplines. This series proposes to do this by bringing together the best academics in the field of Integral Theory and showcasing their work through applications, theoretical extension and clarification, and critical reflection. Integral Theory will only thrive insofar as valuable contributions to its criticism, clarification, application, and expansion come from many individuals working within its context and not just taking aim from the outside (e.g., by people who have never really tried applying the AQAL model to some contemporary issue).

Thus one major intention for this series is to make Integral Theory the object of critical reflection and the subject of applied discussion. My aim is to provide an academic context where authors can explore the pressing questions concerning the state and potential growth of applying Integral Theory to numerous fields: What types of research and scholarly analysis need to be engaged to carry the field of Integral Theory forward?; What works and does not work in terms of applying Integral Theory in various professions?; and What are the strengths and limits of the AQAL model and what alternative views need to be considered and explored? My hope is that this series will create an invitation for a diversity of perspectives to join the conversation expressed through: free thought, respectful challenge, theoretical exploration, and shared celebration. I believe this series will help set the tone for the field of Integral Theory for years to come.

The series will publish 3-5 books each year that aim to deepen the conversation around Integral Theory and its application. While the majority of these books will be grounded in the AQAL model the series will also include alternative and complimentary approaches to Integral Theory in particular and integral thought in general. Currently there are 4 books being published with another 9 being reviewed (see below). As one can see from this list, many different kinds of scholar-practitioners will be featured as authors and editors within this series. Thus, this new book series will go a long way in helping to showcase the amazing integral work that is occurring around the planet.

2010 Publications

A Guide to Integral Psychotherapy: Complexity, Integration, and Spirituality in Practice by Mark Forman.

Integral Theory in Action: Applied, Theoretical, and Constructive Perspectives on the AQAL Model. Edited by Sean Esbjörn-Hargens

Integral Education: New Directions in Higher Learning. Edited by Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, Jonathan Reams and Olen Gunnlauson.

Integral Psychotherapy: Inside Out/Outside In by Elliott Ingersoll & David Zeitler

2011 Publications

Integral Approaches to Recovery and Addiction by John Dupuy

Emerging Visions of Men & Women: An Integral Exploration of Sex, Gender, and Spirituality edited by Vanessa Fisher and Sarah Nicholson.

Integral Christianity: Mystical Theology by Chris Dierkes

Developmental Religious Pluralism: A Brief Introduction to Integral Religious Studies by Dustin DiPerna

The Next Half-Step: Integral Leadership for the New Millennium by John Forman & Laurel Ross.

Big Picture Science: An Introduction to Integral Meta Studies by Mark Edwards, Markus Molz, and Wendelin Küpers

The Unique Self and Nondual Humanism by Marc Gafni

True but Partial: Essential Critiques of Integral Theory edited by Sean Esbjörn-Hargens

Enacting Integral Theory: Manifesting Wholeness in a Fragmented World edited by Sean Esbjörn-Hargens