AQAL
JOURNAL OF INTEGRAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

Introducing Integral Art

Matt Rentschler

This article briefly outlines a general definition of art and the main approaches of art theory and practice. It then illustrates how those approaches coherently fit together via the four quadrants of AQAL theory. The article concludes that Integral Art preserves the important truths of these approaches (while negating their more extreme versions). Therefore, nothing short of an Integral approach will suffice in both tuning artists to their fullest expression and reminding critics of their widest embrace.

What Is Art?

For all of art's multiple uses, from social activism to psychotherapy to spiritual practice to education, its very nature can perhaps best be summarized by Ken Wilber's simple definition: Art is anything with a frame around it.

Even the Latin origin of art, the word "ars," literally means "arrangement," and thus art can be considered anything within that arrangement. Regardless of medium, style, genre, or school, art can generally be defined as anything selected, arranged, or framed for its significance. That frame may be an actual frame (such as around a painting), the velvet curtains of a theater screen, the air around a sculpture, or the front and back covers of a novel. Whatever the actual medium of expression, art says, "Look at me."

The Various Schools of Art Theory and Practice

Historically, different approaches to art have emphasized different aspects of that frame. Some approaches emphasize the formal qualities of the frame itself. Some focus on the artist behind the frame. Some emphasize the viewer's response to the frame. And some emphasize social forces

that affect the frame. Whichever the case, these various approaches have manifested in both the theory and practice of art, influencing how art is valued and created.

The Expressivist Approach

We begin with what can be summarized as the expressivist approach to art, which emerged most notably in the eighteenth century with the Romantic current of the modern Enlightenment. This approach, advanced by art theorists such as Benedetto Croce, R. G. Collingwood, and Leo Tolstoy, maintains that the power of art lies in its ability to *express* something: namely some intuition, vision, impulse, or feeling of the *artist*. Expressivist interpreters attempted to psychologically reconstruct the original intent of the maker, maintaining that the true meaning or value of art rests in that original impulse.

Likewise, this expressivist theory reverberated throughout the practice of art. Artists from this school predominantly used art not as a means of merely imitating an objective reality or focusing on the purely formal elements of their medium but as a vehicle for expressing some interior state. These "expressionists" included such artists as Van Gogh, Kandinsky, and Pollock in painting; Kafka and Joyce in fiction; Eugene O'Neil in drama; Rainer Maria Rilke in poetry; Richard Wagner in music; and Auguste Rodin in sculpture.

The Formalist Approach

Partly in response to those expressivist trends, the formalist approach emerged as the other main current of the Western Enlightenment. Formal approaches, fueled by an emphasis on scientific materialism and rationalism, argued that the true locus of art lies not in the artist's original intent (which they dubbed "the intentional fallacy") but rather in the structural integrity of the artwork itself. Theorists from the American New Criticism to the French Structuralists to the Russian formalists focused intensely on the formal elements of the public artwork (such as rhythm and melody in music, plot and character in narrative, or color and shape in visual art), and judged the relation of those elements according to a variety of criteria: symmetry, coherence, novelty, range,

etc. Thus, to the formalists, the meaning and value of art is found by identifying these formal structures and determining their relative success.

In art practice, formalist approaches enjoyed a major influence. Artists using this approach turned their focus away from the expression of feeling and concentrated on a more "realistic" attitude, usually recording exterior events as objectively as possible. These formalists included Balzac, Zola, and George Eliot in literature; and Monet, Renoir, and Courbet in painting.

The Reception and Response Approach

As we have seen, the expressivist and formalist approaches were largely the product of the romantic and rational wings of the Western Enlightenment. But as the modern art world gave way to postmodern trends during the latter twentieth century, two approaches in particular began to dominate postmodern art: reception and response and symptomatic.

Reception and response theorists, beginning most notably with Martin Heidegger's hermeneutic philosophy and flowering with the work of his student, Hans-Georg Gadamer, argued that the true meaning and value in art is located not only in the artist's original intent, nor merely in the structural nuances of the artwork itself, but also in the interpretation that a community of *viewers* assigns to it. Thus, any valid approach to interpreting art relies mainly on the recognition of what can be called the cultural background, the individual viewer response, historical reception, and historicity.

By and large, the *cultural background* refers to the types of cultural and linguistic meaning that we are often unaware of, much as a fish is unaware of the water in which it swims. In other words, this vast intersubjective background, upon which all linguistic and cultural meaning float, already shapes and molds the subjective intentions of the artist. In a narrow sense, the cultural background also refers to the fact that the artist typically has some viewer, some audience expectation already in mind while creating the artwork. The work of Shakespeare, for example,

is rife with puns, something that often tires present-day readers. But Elizabethans (the original audience) delighted in this and expected it from their plays.

Another (and very narrow) aspect of reception and response approaches is the *viewer* or *reader response*, particularly associated with critics like Stanley Fish. This simply means that the artwork has a unique meaning *to me*, the viewer. *Gone with the Wind* might mean or signify one thing to my mother, and something entirely different to me. According to these response approaches, both of those unique viewer interpretations are equally valid.

In general, reception and response approaches focus on the cumulative effect of viewer responses, or the sum total of interpretations bestowed upon an artwork, which can be called *historical reception*. The historical reception of Shakespeare, to use the bard for yet another illustration, is that he is one of the most significant authors in English literary history.

Lastly, there is the tenet of *historicity*. Historicity refers to the fact that all meaning is historically situated, and that as the historical stream swirls with change, so do the interpretations surrounding a work of art. Take D. W. Griffith's 1915 film, *The Birth of a Nation*, a movie that portrayed "heroic" Ku Klux Klansmen vanquishing "villainous" African Americans. In its own time, the film was the highest-grossing box-office hit to date, caused Ku Klux Klan membership to peak, and was generally lauded as a masterpiece. Now, in the era of political correctness, no film teacher can even think of showing it without a disclaimer for its overtly racist content. (One critic did however provide a balanced assessment of the film: "artistically groundbreaking, socially repulsive.")

Reception and response approaches, of course, also influenced the practice of art. Whereas many of the artists from the formalist and expressivist approaches regarded art as a largely autonomous or solitary affair, with little attention paid to the receptive audience, the majority of postmodern artists used their art as a means of facilitating a response in the viewer. In other words, artists

using this approach tend to emphasize the multiplicity of interpretations and responses available to an artwork. They include John Cage in music, Umberto Eco in literature, and Robert Venturi in architecture.

The Symptomatic Approach

The other prevalent school of art theory and practice in the postmodern scene is the symptomatic approach. In what is perhaps the most famous form of this approach, the meaning and nature of art is ultimately found in larger *social currents*, which operate mainly in the background of the artist and artwork. That is to say, the artwork is "symptomatic" of these overall social forces and their dysfunctions, which are typically investigated by approaches such as Marxism, feminism, racism, ecologism, imperialism, and so on. If we were to take a Marxist approach and examine the influence of forces of production in the work of Charles Dickens, for example, then we might note that Dickens originally tailored many of his novels according to the demands of serial publication.

The symptomatic approach found its way into art creation as well. Artists focused less on a particular feeling, or the formal aspects of their craft, and more on the depiction of social identities and social inequalities (e.g., economic, gender, political, ecological). As a result, their artwork became symptomatic of, say, what it is like to be black, to be a woman, to be gay, to live here or there, to be from a certain class-background. Some examples of artists using this approach are Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, and John Irving in literature; Cindy Sherman in photography; and Andy Warhol in painting.

True but Partial

As wonderful, fascinating, and true as these primary approaches to art may be, they are nonetheless significantly partial. The expressivist approach, taken alone, fails to acknowledge the cultural background's prominent role in molding the intentions of the artist from the very start

(as if the artist were an autonomous batch of isolated intentions, a *tabula rasa*, or blank slate). In turn, formalist approaches aggressively deny the significance of both the artist's original intent (the so-called *intentional fallacy*) and the viewer's response (the *affective fallacy*). At their most extreme, viewer-response approaches fail to recognize the artist or the artwork's important role in the creative endeavor, declaring that the meaning and value of art lies solely in the viewer's own unique interpretation (and thus, announcing the potential *narcissism* of this approach). And symptomatic approaches, for all of their social insights, have often devolved into *extreme relativism*, where truth, unanchored from the requirement of evidence, is proclaimed to be infinitely sliding and socially constructed.

An Integral Approach

Each of the major schools of art theory and practice are essentially right—they all contain a vital, if partial, truth. So how can we preserve their important contributions while jettisoning their more extreme versions? In other words, how do these approaches to art actually mesh?

Enter the Integral approach. The Integral approach uses a theoretical framework called AQAL (pronounced "ah-qwul"), which is one of the most comprehensive maps of human experience to date. We will focus on one element of AQAL theory called the four quadrants.

The four quadrants are simply the four most basic perspectives one can have on any given event or aspect of reality. These perspectives are so fundamental, they are embedded in virtually every human language as major pronouns. "I" refers to a first-person perspective, or the person speaking. "We" is technically first-person plural, but is used here to refer to a second-person perspective, or the person being spoken to, since "you" and "I" must understand each other in order to speak as "We." "It" or "Its" refers to a third-person perspective, or the person(s) being spoken about. Another way of saying this is that the four quadrants represent the interior and

exterior of the individual and collective. They are the Upper-Left quadrant ("I"), the Upper-Right quadrant ("It"), the Lower-Left quadrant ("We"), and the Lower-Right quadrant ("Its").

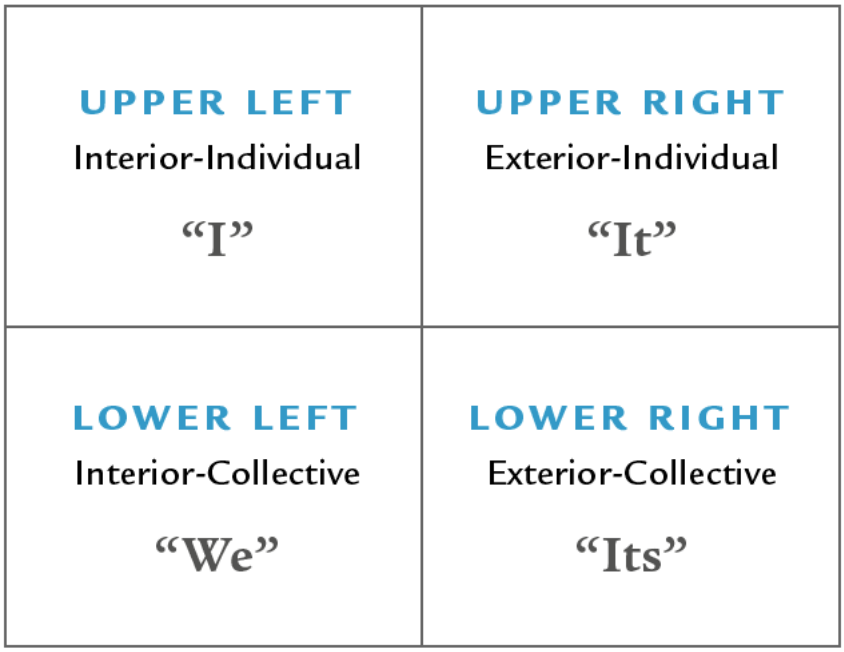

Figure 1. The Four Quadrants

Using the four quadrants, we can understand how the various schools of art theory and practice have historically emphasized one quadrant or perspective over others, and are thus different yet equally important snapshots of the artistic event. Expressivist theory is predominantly an UL approach because it places the locus of art in the first-person experience of the artist: his or her own individual interior. Formalist approaches, on the other hand, are an UR approach because they primarily use third-person descriptions to investigate the objective qualities of the artwork itself. Reception and response theories mainly focus on second-person intersubjectivity—the audience reaction, the history of reception surrounding an artwork—which makes them a LL approach. And symptomatic theories, of a social variety, use a third-person perspective in its plural form to focus on social forces such as geopolitical locations, socioeconomic factors, and ideological discourse, by way of what we would call a LR approach.

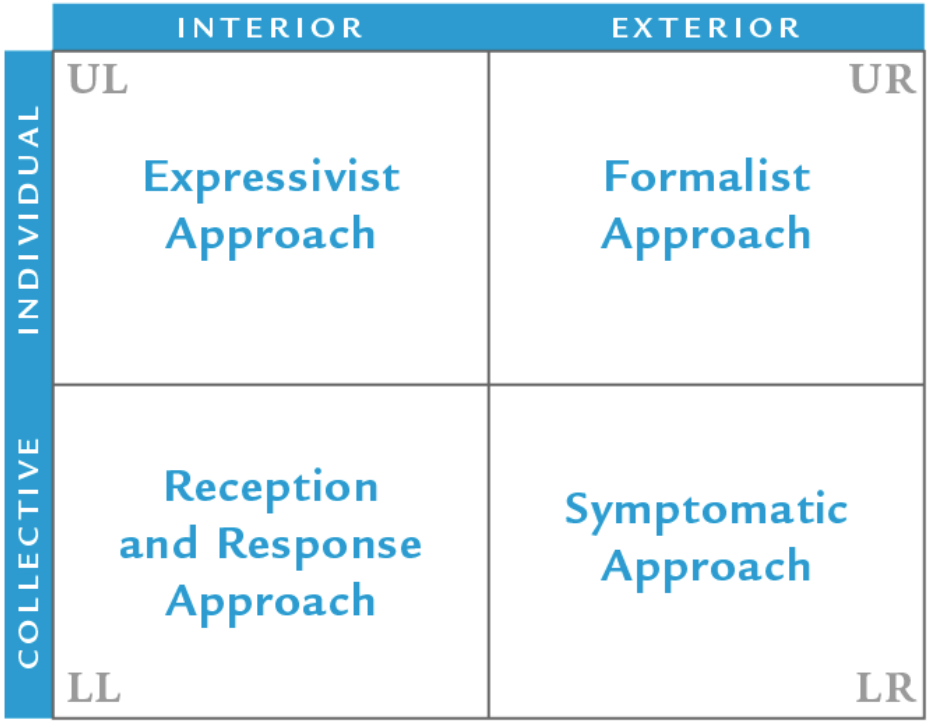

Figure 2. Major Approaches to Art in the Four Quadrants

All of this is to say that an Integral approach to art coherently integrates the major schools of art theory and practice, and does so in a way that preserves the enormous contribution of each of these schools, without absolutizing their specific truths or denying the importance of others.

For artists and the creation of art, the Integral approach can allow creators to be aware of the depth of their own intention, the skill of their technical execution, the scope of their potential audience, and the effect of larger social forces, from socioeconomic factors to modes of information delivery to art venues and institutions—all of which, we have seen, will exert a major influence on the artistic process. In short, practicing artists using an Integral approach can consciously marry inspiration with perspiration, muscle with muse, creativity with craft, and then skillfully pitch that artwork to their desired audience, or tune their art for an intended viewer response.

For viewers and critics, an Integral Art theory allows a more spacious criticism, one that highlights a majority of significant contexts that surround the artwork: the artist's original intent, the formal aspects of the artwork, the history of response to the artwork, and the social forces that have influenced all of the above. Such an approach to art criticism can perhaps ennoble a profession that is all too often described as "parasitic." In my opinion, the best critics cast the fullest, widest, most compassionate embrace they can on a given artwork, and then communicate that appreciation so we, the lay viewer, might understand or appreciate art just a little bit more.

Thus, for artists to give their fullest expression, and for critics to cast their widest embrace, nothing short of an Integral approach will do.

MATT RENTSCHLER is a poet, arts scholar, Co-Director of the Integral Art Center, and a member of the AQAL Review Team. He lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma with his mate, Channon.

AQAL
JOURNAL OF INTEGRAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

Understanding Integral Art

Matt Rentschler

This intermediate statement, building off of its predecessor, "Introducing Integral Art," explores the remaining elements of the AQAL model (levels, lines, states, and types) and their relevance to both the artist and the viewer. The paper examines a variety of developmental streams important to the making and viewing of art, as well as the waves of greater consciousness and complexity through which they proceed. States of awareness and their place in the practice and interpretation of art are also discussed, along with different styles or types that artists and viewers can use in orienting themselves to these elements.

Introduction

It is probably no exaggeration to suggest that the historical weakness of artists is personal balance, so much so that the notion of an "adjusted artist" might strike some as an oxymoron. Even critics themselves, arguably the guardians of artistic meaning, seem content to privilege one interpretive context at the expense of another, and thus offer an aesthetic guidance that feels just as fragmented and fractured as the lives of their creative counterparts. What is needed is a map that might help artists navigate both the trials and treasures of the creative path; a map that can indicate to viewers the cardinal contexts important in understanding any work of art.

To date, the most comprehensive map is a theoretical framework called AQAL, which stands for "all-quadrants, all-levels, all-lines, all-states, and all-types." Herein, I will focus on levels, lines, states, and types, since quadrants were discussed in the introductory statement, "Introducing Integral Art."[1] As we will see, artists can train those five basic elements in between moments of inspiration, thus improving both their artistry and their humanity as well as enticing the Muse to visit more often. Viewers can use those same elements as five major hermeneutic tools in order to gain a deeper reading of a work of art and thus a more fulfilling aesthetic experience. And

while Integral Art cannot guarantee you will become the most masterful artist or most sophisticated of viewers, it can certainly help you *approach* your fullest potential in either case.

Levels and Lines

Artists and viewers have available to them not just a single, monolithic intelligence, but a multitude of intelligences, skills, and abilities that can show growth and development. There is credible evidence for over a dozen of these developmental *lines* or *streams,* including psychosexual, religious faith, emotional, mathematical, interpersonal, and so on, as well as research showing that those streams proceed through discernable *levels, stages,* or *waves* of development.[2] (In the following subsections, I will focus on the development of cognition, self-related streams, aesthetics, creativity, and a variety of talent streams.)

Since lines develop relatively independent of one another, a person can be highly developed in some areas, mediocre in others, and poor or even pathological in others still. Artists have been notorious for these kinds of imbalances. Poet Hart Crane, for instance, was a linguistic genius, yet he was emotionally disturbed, often prone to bouts of narcissistic rage. Picasso was indeed a master of the visual-spatial domain, but he was morally reprehensible. Beach Boy Brian Wilson is by all accounts an incredibly talented musician and composer, yet he was crippled interpersonally and barely left his room for decades. These are just a sampling of incredible artists who nonetheless caused considerable suffering to themselves and others. What an Integral Art can do then is remind artists of other areas in their lives—family, finances, physical health, emotional well-being—thereby encouraging a more even development.

For viewers, the notion of levels and lines can help explain that sometimes jarring experience of encountering a fabulous artist who is also a miserable human being: How could Leni Riefenstahl revolutionize cinema yet glamorize the Nazis? Understanding levels and lines can help a viewer "free" an artist by limiting them. In other words, you become a better critic when you can

acknowledge any failures an artist might have as a human being without trashing their achievements as an artist.

Levels and lines are also valuable in assessing the qualities of the artwork itself. In understanding an artwork, a viewer might consider the artist's aesthetic vision to be powerful, their creativity highly innovative, and yet find their technical execution lacking. Or perhaps vice versa: the artwork might display the creator's technical mastery, but may not have anything creative or original to say. Whatever the case, levels and lines are yet another way an integrally informed viewer can more fully understand, and thus appreciate, a work of art.

Cognitive Stream

Fundamentally crucial to both artists and viewers is the cognitive stream, which, in a broad sense, measures one's awareness of what is, or one's ability to take perspectives.[3] So important is cognitive development that it is necessary but not sufficient for growth in virtually all other developmental capacities. Thus, a high level of cognitive awareness is necessary but not sufficient for high aesthetic awareness, or as Ken Wilber puts it, the more perspectives you can take, the more beauty you can see.[4] Stages of cognition, as studied by theorists such as Sri Aurobindo and Jean Piaget, can be summarized as preoperational ("thought representing environment"; first-person perspective: an awareness of one's self), concrete operational ("thought operating on environment"; second-person perspective: an awareness of an Other), formal operational ("thought operating on thought" itself; third-person perspective: an awareness of both self and other as distinct individuals), vision-logic (the ability to comprehend multiple systems of thought, perspectives, or variables, as well as integrate those perspectives into "systems of systems," or coherent wholes), along with further, transrational developments.[5]

To put it another way, an artist's ability to take deeper and wider perspectives is necessary (but not sufficient) for reaching and depicting higher modes of beauty, technique, creativity, and self-understanding, among other developments. Likewise, the more perspectives a viewer can

consider, the greater their chance of discovering a multitude of contexts that shed light on the meaning of a work of art.

Self-Related Streams

Interestingly enough, when the self identifies with a particular level of cognition, it generates a similar altitude within a series of developmental lines called the self-related streams, which include self-identity, morals, and needs. Self-identity, or one's sense of self, is a particularly solid indicator of an artist or viewer's "center of gravity" in their development. Jane Loevinger's stages of identity[6] can be said to unfold from a protective self (opportunistic, hedonistic), to a conformist self (bound to the expectations of the in-group), to a conscientious self (introspective, responsible, mature ego), to an individualistic self (tolerant, sensitive, unique, highly subjective), to an autonomous self (one "free of lesser motivations")[7] and then integrated self ("mind and body are both experiences of an integrated self"),[8] to finally what Susanne Cook-Greuter has termed a unitive self[9] (united with nature and with the evolutionary process of humanity).

Moral development, as studied by Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan, charts the awareness of "who I care for" or "who I take into moral consideration," and progresses from what Kohlberg called preconventional to conventional to postconventional stages.[10] AQAL often summarizes these as egocentric ("me"), ethnocentric ("us"), worldcentric ("all human beings"), and Kosmocentric ("all of manifestation"). An artist can feel into the ultimate scope of their audience: do they make art solely for themselves, unable to consider others? For their country? For anyone, regardless of race, sex, or creed? For all sentient beings?[11]

Lastly, the needs or motivational stream for artists can be phrased as "Why or for what do I create art?" and for viewers, "Why or for what do I view art?" Abraham Maslow's stages of needs include physiological needs (food, water, shelter), safety needs (the need for security and self-preservation), belongingness needs (love, emotional exchange, the need for sexual and non-sexual relationships), self-esteem needs (a sense of pride, success, recognition), self-actualization

needs (Maslow: "What a man can be, he must be."[12]), and self-transcendence needs (communion with God/Goddess, Creator, ground of Being).[13]

Aesthetic Stream

If cognition charts a person's awareness of what is, then aesthetic development measures their understanding of what is beautiful. Here the work of Harvard-trained researcher, Abigail Housen, will be a crucial guide. Housen interviewed over 2,000 subjects with diverse backgrounds in age, ethnicity, class, education, and art experience, and noticed that their aesthetic apprehensions unfolded across five broad stages. Because of the relevance of such a stream, to both artists and viewers, I will quote her findings at length.[14]

At the accountive stage, one uses "senses, memories, and personal associations," "makes concrete observations about the artwork," while aesthetic judgment is ultimately based on "what is known and what is liked."

The constructive stage uses "the values of their social, moral and conventional world" in judging an artwork. "If the work does not look the way it is 'supposed to'—if craft, skill, technique, hard work, utility, and function are not evident, or if the subject seems inappropriate—then these viewers judge the work to be 'weird,' lacking, or of no value."

The classifying stage takes the "analytical and critical stance of the art historian" and "identifies the work as to place, school, style, time and provenance. They decode the work using their library of facts and figures which they are ready and eager to expand. This viewer believes that properly categorized, the work of art's meaning and message can be explained and rationalized."

The interpretive stage seeks "a personal encounter with a work of art." Interpretive viewers put their critical skills "in the service of feelings and intuitions," and look for symbols and underlying meanings. They understand that an artwork's identity and value are "subject to reinterpretation," and that their own viewing process is subject to "chance and change."

The recreative stage is where a viewer can "willingly suspend disbelief." Recreative viewers want to know the "ecology of a work—its time, its history, its questions, its travels, its intricacies." "Drawing on their own history with one work in particular, and with viewing in general, these viewers combine personal contemplation with… universal concerns."

Housen's findings strongly suggest that a high degree of aesthetic exposure (frequent encounters with aesthetic objects where one repeatedly makes judgments of the beautiful) is one of the most significant factors in determining a high level of aesthetic awareness. Conversely, Housen reports that aesthetic growth may slow down or even atrophy without continued aesthetic exposure.[15] In this lamentable passage, Charles Darwin regrets his intense focus in cognitive and naturalist endeavors and describes his waning aesthetic sense:

> I took tremendous delight in Shakespeare, especially the historical plays.... But now for many years I cannot endure a line of poetry... I have also lost my taste for pictures and music.... My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which the higher states depend, I cannot conceive.... [If] I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for perhaps the parts of my brain not atrophied would thus have been kept active through use.[16]

Darwin's aesthetic neglect suggests how important beauty is, on one level or another, to most human beings, as well how vital a role aesthetic awareness plays in a more balanced, Integral approach to living.

Creative Stream

While artists are intimately involved with subjective judgments of the beautiful, they are equally enjoined to creative development, or one's ability to create novel solutions to problems. Developmental researcher Howard Gardner posits three broad stages through which creativity progresses.[17] The first can be called spontaneous solutions, where the creator playfully experiments with his or her domain of learning, all the while remaining largely "egocentric" and "unreflective" about what he or she does.[18] Secondly, a creator relies on faithful solutions, where he or she "masters the details of one corner of their domain before moving onto the next," and "relies on the rich knowledge base" of their domain, as well as the "criticism of informed others."[19] Finally, after having created solutions faithful to the conventions of their domain, a creator can produce truly innovative solutions that transcend but include the "right way" to create.

Artists (and viewers as well) also undergo development in various "talent streams." Gardner, along with his associates at Harvard's Project Zero, has studied the trajectories of a handful of talent streams for more than three decades. In particular, they have monitored learning in musical, linguistic, narrative, visual-spatial, drawing, kinesthetic, and symbolic play domains.[20]

Musical Stream

The musical stream, employed by composers, instrumentalists, conductors, and DJs, charts one's ability to master pitch, rhythm, and timbre, as well as grasp the general contour of a song. Musical development progresses through at least three major stages. The first, spontaneous notes, consists of short sequences of indistinct pitches. The second, characteristic bits, denotes a person's ability to adequately sing fragments of songs (such as "Old McDonald had a farm," and "Ashes, ashes, we all fall down!"). Finally, a person can competently sing what are called standard songs, or the songs of their culture. A composer often recapitulates this development

during the creative act: first they may hear certain notes, which soon become rhythms and melodies, which finally become whole songs or perhaps a movement within a larger work.[21]

Linguistic Stream

The linguistic stream, employed by poets, novelists, screenwriters, and playwrights, charts one's sensitivity to language (its semantic meanings, phonological sounds, syntactic ordering, and pragmatic functions), as well as the acquisition of language itself. The general course of linguistic development proceeds as follows: from babbling, to words, to phrases, to simple sentences, to complex sentences. All writers to some degree oscillate between these levels of linguistic awareness. Poets, for instance, might focus on a *word* that captivates their attention, around which they could spin a meaningful *phrase*, which they then embellish into a syntactic architecture of versified *sentences*, thus making a poem.[22]

Narrative Stream

A companion stream to linguistic development is what Gardner and associates call the narrative stream, or one's ability to create narrative accounts through words. Obviously this line of development is of particular importance to novelists, playwrights, screenwriters, and some poets. The first stage in narrative competence can be termed "elementary sequences," where a character's actions have consequences for another character or object. Next, there is "good versus evil," where two opposing forces engage one another for control. Finally, a person can develop "narrational distance," where the narrator maintains an "omniscience" regarding the story and allows the story to come to a resolve based on the given narrative information.[23]

Visual-Spatial Stream

Artists such as architects, painters, illustrators, designers, film directors, photographers, and performance artists likely emphasize the visual-spatial stream, or one's awareness of imagery and space. Piaget and Inhelder's pioneering research suggests that spatial reasoning begins first with an awareness of topological space, or an understanding of the topological properties of

isolated objects, such as opened/closed, near/far, in/out. Topological space is still very much "body-bound," and so it is only with the next stage, projective space, that a person can extend their spatial reasoning outside of themselves and begin to understand or rotate objects from different vantage points, such as before/behind and left/right. Eventually, a person can combine topological properties and projective perspectives in Euclidean space, where one can understand an abstract coordination of objects and the relations between them, like proportion, distance, angles, and parallels.[24] Other researchers have examined post-Euclidean developments as well.[25]

Drawing Stream

Intimately related to visual-spatial awareness is the development of drawing, or the skill for two-dimensional depiction, which is of fundamental importance to illustrators of any kind. Author and educator, Viktor Lowenfeld, has pinpointed five stages through which drawing proceeds: the scribbling stage, which consists of uncontrolled markings and lines on the page; the preschematic stage, where geometric shapes first emerge; the schematic stage, where depictions are situated within a definite base and skyline; the stage of dawning realism, where the illustrator obsesses over the detail of represented figures; and finally, the pseudorealistic stage, where the focus is less on the process and more on producing a naturalistic product, especially through the use of light and shadow, perspective, and so on.[26]

Kinesthetic Stream

The kinesthetic stream involves one's bodily awareness, as well as the ability to successfully manipulate objects using fine motor skills. While most artists require a general competency in certain motor skills—such as the use of a solder, a chisel, a paintbrush, or a guitar—it seems that artists like dancers, mimes, and actors particularly specialize in kinesthetic awareness. The kinesthetic stream goes through at least three broad stages of unfolding, as suggested by Wilber:[27] the first, sensorimotor grappling, involves physically handling the motion or the instrument; the second, concrete rules and operations, involves the performer purposively going

through each required motion, step by step; finally, a performer can progress to generalized abstractions, where the previous skills become second-nature, and can easily be applied to similar bodily tasks and instruments. This development can also be summarized as movement, tactic, and strategy.[28]

Symbolic Play Stream

Lastly, we come to the symbolic play stream, which measures one's ability to engage in pretend play, and is likely utilized by artists such as actors and comedians. The following is a variation of researcher Roberta Schomburg's main stages of pretend play: sensory play (play for the sheer sensory experience), intentional play (where the person uses their body or some other prop in a purposeful manner), representational play (where the "as-if" quality of play emerges and a person can pretend a prop is something it is not), and thematic play (where a theme or storyline becomes apparent, whether hospital play, superhero play, war play, etc.).[29]

I should note that throughout any developmental stream, an artist or viewer starts at square one and must develop a basic competence at each stage before progressing to the next. Also notice that each of the stage conceptions presented above, although unique to the phenomena within their specific developmental line, all tell a similar story of ever-increasing consciousness and complexity. It is likely that even higher stages of development are potentially available within each of these streams, but only ongoing research can determine the exact nature of those higher waves and their specific unfolding.

Finally, while each of the talent streams seems to be emphasized by a particular art form, the artistic act itself is actually an amalgam or combination of various developmental lines: from cognitive to aesthetic to creative to self-identity to kinesthetic motor skills to whatever talent stream(s) is most relevant.[30] Even the critical act is a variation on cognition, aesthetics, self-related streams, and any understanding the viewer might have of the talent stream(s) in question. Furthermore, if a viewer wishes to communicate their interpretation, as professional critics do in

the realm of art journalism, then the stream of communicative competence[31] (or one's ability to communicate effectively) will likely play an important role as well.

States

Within each of those developmental lines, artists and viewers can experience temporary changes of awareness—or states of consciousness—that might last anywhere from seconds to months. Everyone wakes, dreams, and sleeps, and thus everyone has access to three natural or "ordinary" states of consciousness: waking, dreaming, and deep, dreamless sleep.[32]

Each of these states is supported by a felt mass-energy or "body," which are called gross, subtle, and causal. In the waking state, for instance, you are supported by a gross body (skin, flesh, bones); in the dreaming state, a subtle body (astral, etheric, imaginative); and in the deep sleep state, a causal body (vast, infinite).[33]

People often experience variations of waking/gross, dreaming/subtle, and deep sleep/causal state/energies through altered or "non-ordinary" states of consciousness, which include flow states, peak experiences, meditative states, and near-death experiences.[34]

For artists, the creative cycle is one of the most common and important ways of encountering states. In fact, with an Integral approach, artists can deliberately prolong or cultivate artistic creativity. The technique of Presencing, as developed by C. Otto Scharmer, is an excellent way of consciously accessing creativity. Scharmer and associates outline seven capacities or steps one goes through in creative learning. These include: *downloading* past solutions; *seeing* a problem from the outside; *sensing* a problem from within; *presencing* from the Source; *crystallizing* one's intent; *prototyping* one's vision; and finally *embodying* that vision.[35] Furthermore, Wilber notes that these seven capacities are actually a "microtexture" of the cycling between the three natural states of consciousness: from waking/gross (downloading, seeing) to dreaming/subtle (sensing)

to deep dreamless sleep/causal (presencing) back into dreaming/subtle (crystallizing) to waking/gross (prototyping, embodying).[36]

Artists can also practice entering a variety of states as a means of broadening and deepening the subject matter conveyed thru their artworks. In other words, different states of consciousness provide artists with what singer-songwriter Stuart Davis so rightly phrased a "Kosmic candy store,"[37] or a treasure house of different state-experiences. Training with states can also allow an artist to energetically resonate with audiences, regardless of whether or not those audience members understand the message or informational component of an artwork.

Viewers, in turn, can utilize states in at least two ways. For one, they can use an understanding of states as an interpretive tool with which they might better understand the origin or subject matter of a work of art. Here, the Wilber-Combs Lattice, which provides a grid of state-experiences interpreted by different stages of consciousness, would prove helpful.[38]

The other use of states is that viewers can consciously enter states themselves during the viewing process. They can bring spaciousness to their critiques and thus better avoid the risk of distorting an artwork. Imagine a viewer who used the critical act as an opportunity to employ nonattachment, grounded equanimity, loving kindness, and compassion, as well as a discriminating intelligence, all put in the service of adequately and fairly judging a work of art.

Finally, a benefit for both artists and viewers is that every time a person changes states—whether intentionally or spontaneously—it can serve as a microtransformative event that loosens one's current level of self-identity, thus encouraging development.

By changing states, artists and viewers will by no means skip stages of development, but they can speed up their movement through those stages. In short, with an Integral approach, even art can be an effective path to personal growth.

Types

Each level, line, and state can be approached according to a particular style, type, or orientation. A person can "lead with their type," that is, feel into and pinpoint their own native dispositions in different areas of their lives and work. Or they can feel into other types, perhaps as a way of addressing their own weaknesses or broadening their horizons.

In essence, an artist can lead with their particular style or type, giving it their fullest expression, as well as play and experiment with different types, styles, and modes of artistic creation if they so wish. For viewers, an understanding of types, whether cognitive, aesthetic, or self-related, will undoubtedly shed new light on their own process of viewing art, as well as provide another hermeneutic tool for further understanding both artwork and artist.

In the cognitive stream, for example, an artist or viewer might have a natural affinity to a certain learning style, or preferred way of taking in information, including visual (by sight), auditory (by sound), kinesthetic (by moving), or tactile (by touch). As a result, a person's learning style might also influence their aesthetic orientation, or their affinity to certain media—from sound, sight, gesture, and touch—and thus incline them to favor particular art forms (whether music, dance, design and visual art, literature, textiles, etc.).[39]

Within the creative stream, M. D. Mumford and S. B. Gustafson make the distinction between "major" and "minor" creativity, or as J. Abra put it, "innovators" and "perfectors." Major creativity involves a significant breakthrough, while minor creativity entails broadening, consolidating, or perfecting that breakthrough over time.[40]

Investigating whether artists share a particular type of self-sense or personality has always been a popular vein of study. Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, for one, have noted that beginning with Aristotle, artists have often been associated with a melancholic type (based on one of

Hippocrates' four humors), and that later in Renaissance times, melancholy and the personality of the artist were coupled with the astrological type of Saturn, or the "saturnine temperament."[41]

Russ Hudson and Don Riso, authors of *The Wisdom of the Enneagram*, outline nine enneagram types, from type one (the reformer), type two (the helper), type three (the achiever), type four (the individualist), type five (the investigator), type six (the loyalist), type seven (the enthusiast), type eight (the challenger), and type nine (the peacemaker). They maintain that, while no one is a *pure* type, many accomplished artists have typically expressed traits of type 4, or "individualists," which they describe as "expressive, dramatic, self-absorbed, and temperamental."[42]

Author David Deida has been particularly thoughtful in regards to masculine and feminine dispositions. He advises that a balance between these two types would be most effective for an artist:

> If you are an artist and have too little masculine then you may be very intuitive and very sensitive, but you'll rarely complete a project. If you have too little feminine energy, then you may produce a lot because of your disciplined approach, but you may not be as sensitive to the elements of your medium. A balance of masculine and feminine is required to be creative, sensitive and disciplined as an artist.[43]

There is research suggesting various types or emphases can be made within the talent streams. For instance, in linguistic development, according to scholars such as Roman Jakobson and Ferdinand de Saussure, one can emphasize the use of metaphor (similarity) or metonym (contiguity).[44] In drawing (as well as painting and sculpture), illustrators can emphasize a haptic approach, which is more first-person expression, or a visual approach, which emphasizes what can be perceived with the eyes via third-person seeing.[45] In the visual-spatial stream there are

static and dynamic types of mental imagery.[46] In musical development, according to psychologist Jeanne Bamberger, one can emphasize either a figural mode (which is an intuitive, felt mode of musical perception) or a formal mode (which analyzes music in terms of notation and theoretical knowledge).[47]

Finally, Wilber tentatively suggests there are at least four major composition styles—realism, impressionism, expressionism, and symbolism—that can apply to any art form.[48] Recall that the artist develops through various levels of cognition and that they often depict or express the contents of these cognitive worldviews through a chosen style. Realism, for instance, involves the artist directly depicting their aesthetic insight exactly as they perceive it (e.g., the ancient Greeks in sculpture, Henry James in fiction, Charles Bukowski in poetry, Roberto Rossellini in film, and Modest Mussorgsky in music). Impressionism involves depicting an aesthetic perception more suggestively, in softer tones, sometimes with minimal execution (e.g., Edgar Degas in sculpture, Stephen Crane in fiction, Arthur Symons in poetry, Jean Vigo in film, and Claude Debussy in music). Expressionism almost always conveys a kind of struggle, sometimes a ravishment, a highly charged emphasis or exaggeration (e.g., Ernst Barlach in sculpture, Kafka in fiction, Rumi in poetry, Fritz Lang in film, Beethoven in music). And symbolism is an even further abstraction, where an artist uses symbols as means of referencing their aesthetic insight (e.g., Max Klinger in sculpture, George Orwell in fiction, Robert Frost in poetry, Ingmar Bergman in film, and Erik Satie in music).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have outlined the remaining elements of Integral Theory—levels, lines, states, and types—and have illustrated how they might balance and enrich the personal and professional lives of both artists and viewers. As an artist, Integral Art will never tell you what you should make art about. And as a viewer, Integral Art will never tell you what you should like. Rather, Integral Art's fundamental aim is to remind artists and viewers of these five major elements of

their own existence, elements that operate on artistic creation and reception whether we are aware of them or not.

That does not necessarily mean one should master all of these elements or that one cannot specialize and focus in one of these areas. But it stands to reason that if an artist is at least informed by quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types, then they will likely produce deeper, richer, fuller artworks, artworks that contain more of themselves and express that more forcefully. The integrally informed viewer, as well, will by default give wider, freer, more spacious interpretations and will cast an interpretive net that goes far beyond their own egoic reaction.

In the end, Integral Art, as a comprehensive map of the aesthetic territory, wishes to simply buckle you up for the ride of artistic creation, as well as the bumpy road of critical embrace. The map, however, should not be mistaken for the territory; the model should never get in the way of the Muse. Ultimately, it is you, along with a few friends perhaps, who will test and bootstrap this Integral approach—whether through poetry, cinema, sculpture, or dance—and sally forth into the infinite skyline of a greater tomorrow, where the likelihood of deeper, wider, *integral* art becomes all the more a reality.

Endnotes

[1] Rentschler, "Introducing integral art," 2006
[2] See the work of Sigmund Freud for psychosexual development; James Fowler for religious faith development; Daniel Goleman for emotional development; Jean Piaget for mathematical development; and Robert Selman for interpersonal development.
[3] Cognition can also be discussed in terms of developmental worldviews, which give one a sense of the way the world actually looks to artists and viewers. Artists primarily *express* or *depict* the contents of their worldview, while viewers must look through their worldview when interpreting art; both can only "see" as much as the constraints of their worldviews allow. Based on the work of Jean Gebser, the stages of worldview development can be described as follows: *archaic* (where subject and object are fused and predifferentiated), *magic* (where subject and object partially overlap, and inanimate objects are seen as alive or having spirits), *mythic* (where gods and goddesses directly influence human affairs), *rational* (the world of scientific cause and effect, where subject and object are clearly separate), *pluralistic* (where the world consists of a diversity of perspectives, none of which should be privileged), *holistic* (where one actually grasps the unity underlying that diversity of perspectives), and *transpersonal* (where that unity is increasingly felt as not merely an idea, but a direct experience).
[4] Wilber, personal communication, 2004
[5] Wilber, *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 4), 1999, p. 327. For a discussion of vision-logic, consult Wilber, *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 4), 1999, pp. 668-670, and *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 7), 2000, pp. 734-735. Consult Cook-Greuter, "A detailed description of the development of nine action logics: Adapted from ego development theory for the leadership development framework," 2002, for a discussion of the self's perspective-taking ability. Consult Aurobindo, *The integral yoga: Sri Aurobindo's teaching and method of practice*, 1993, pp. 62-65, for a discussion of transrational development (i.e., illumined mind, intuitive mind, overmind, and supermind).
[6] Loevinger & Blasi, *Ego development: Conceptions and theories,* 1976
[7] Wilber, *Boomeritis: A novel that will set you free,* 2003, p. 144
[8] Wilber, *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 4), 1999, p. 181
[9] Cook-Greuter, "A detailed description of the development of nine action logics: Adapted from ego development theory for the leadership development framework," 2002
[10] More specifically, Kohlberg and Gilligan's work focuses on the development of moral reasoning ("What should I do?"), while here I have chosen to frame their research in terms of moral span ("Whom do I deem worthy of consideration?"). Both are intimately related, however, since the deeper you progress through moral reasoning, the wider your circle of care and concern becomes. See Wilber, *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 4), 1999, p. 548.
[11] Wilber, *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 4), 1999
[12] Maslow, *Motivation and personality*, 1954, p. 46. The full quote: "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be."
[13] Wilber, *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 4), 1999
[14] The following quotes for aesthetic stages are from *VTS research and theory*, n.d.
[15] Housen, "The eye of the beholder: Measuring aesthetic development," 1983
[16] Gardner, *The arts and human development,* 1973/1994, pp. 322-323
[17] Gardner, Phelps & Wolf, "The roots of adult creativity in children's symbolic products," 1990
[18] Gardner et al., "The roots of adult creativity in children's symbolic products," 1990, p. 92
[19] Gardner et al., "The roots of adult creativity in children's symbolic products," 1990, p. 92
[20] Gardner et al., "The roots of adult creativity in children's symbolic products," 1990
[21] Gardner, *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (20th anniversary ed.)*,* 2004
[22] Gardner, *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (20th anniversary ed.), 2004
[23] Gardner et al., "The roots of adult creativity in children's symbolic products," 1990
[24] Piaget & Inhelder, *The child's conception of space*, 1956
[25] Consult Gow, "Spatial metaphor in the work of Marshall McLuhan," 2001 and Gebser, *The ever-present origin*, 1949/1985.
[26] Lowenfeld, *Creative and mental growth,* 1947
[27] Wilber, *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 4), 1999, p. 461

[28] Wilber, personal communication, 2005. "Tactic" simply means "a calculated action," or "action with intent." When one can coordinate a series of actions or tactics in a systematic plan, that is a "strategy."
[29] Schomburg, "Using symbolic play abilities to assess academic readiness," n.d.
[30] Wilber, personal communication, 2004
[31] Consult Habermas, "Towards a theory of communicative competence," 1970.
[32] Wilber, *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 4), 1999
[33] Wilber, *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 4), 1999
[34] Wilber, *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vol. 4), 1999
[35] Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski & Flowers, *Presence: Human purpose and the field of the future*, 2004
[36] Wilber & Scharmer, "Mapping the integral U: A conversation between Ken Wilber & Otto Scharmer," 2003
[37] Davis, personal communication, 2005
[38] Combs, *The radiance of being: Understanding the grand integral vision; Living the integral life* (2nd ed.), 2002
[39] *Learning styles*, n.d.
[40] Cropley, "Creative performance in older adults," 1995, p. 80
[41] Wittkower & Wittkower, *Born under Saturn: The character and conduct of artists: A documented history from antiquity to the French revolution,* 1963
[42] *Introduction to the Enneagram*, n.d.
[43] Deida, *It's a guy thing: An owner's manual for women*, 1997, p. 54
[44] Issacharoff, "Jakobson, Roman," 1997
[45] Gardner, *The arts and human development,* 1973/1994
[46] Gardner, *The arts and human development*, 1973/1994
[47] Gardner, *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (20th anniversary ed.), 2004
[48] Wilber, "To see a world: Some technical points," n.d.

REFERENCES

Aurobindo, Sri (1993). *The integral yoga: Sri Aurobindo's teaching and method of practice*. Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press.

Combs, Allan (2002). *The radiance of being: Understanding the grand integral vision; Living the integral life* (2nd ed.). New York: Paragon House.

Cook-Greuter, Susanne R. (2002). A detailed description of the development of nine action logics: Adapted from ego development theory for the leadership development framework. Retrieved June 19, 2005, from www.harthillusa.com/Detailed%20descrip.%20of%20ego%20develop%20stages.pdf

Cropley, Arthur (1995). Creative performance in older adults. In Wilifred Bos & Ranier H. Lehmann (Eds.), *Reflections on educational achievement* (pp. 75-87). New York: Waxmann Munster.

Deida, David (1997). *It's a guy thing: An owner's manual for women*. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications.

Gardner, Howard (1994). *The arts and human development*. New York: Basic Books. (Original work published 1973)

Gardner, Howard (2004). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (20th anniversary ed.). New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, Howard; Phelps, Erin & Wolf, Dennie (1990). The roots of adult creativity in children's symbolic products. In Charles Alexander & Ellen Langer (Eds.), *Higher stages of human development* (pp. 79-96). New York: Oxford University Press.

Gardner, Howard & Wolf, Dennie (1983). Waves and streams of symbolization: Notes on the development of symbolic capacities in young children. In D. Rogers & J. A. Sloboda (Eds.), *The acquisition of symbolic skills* (pp. 19-42). London: Plenum Press.

Gebser, Jean (1985). *The ever-present origin* (N. Barstad & A. Mickunas, Trans.). Athens: Ohio University Press. (Original work published 1949)

Gow, Gorden (2001). Spatial metaphor in the work of Marshall McLuhan. *Canadian Journal of Communication, 26 (4)*. Retrieved July 16, 2005, from http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php

Gowen, Jean (1995). The early development of symbolic play. *Young Children, 50 (3)*, 75-83.

Habermas, Jurgen (1970). Towards a theory of communicative competence. *Inquiry, 13 (4)*, 360-375.

Housen, Abigail (1983). The eye of the beholder: Measuring aesthetic development (Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1983). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 44* (06), 1945.

Introduction to the Enneagram (n.d.). Retrieved June 7, 2005, from http://www.enneagraminstitute.com/intro.asp

Issacharoff, Michael (1997). Jakobson, Roman. In Michael Groden & Martin Kreiswirth (Eds.), *The Johns Hopkins guide to literary theory and criticism*. Retrieved June 8, 2005, from http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/hopkins_guide_to_literary_theory/roman_jakobson.html

Learning styles (n.d.). Retrieved June 8, 2005, from http://www.learnativity.com/learningstyles.html

Loevinger, Jane & Blasi, Augusto (1976). *Ego development: Conceptions and theories*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lowenfeld, Viktor (1947). *Creative and mental growth*. New York: Macmillan.

Maslow, Abraham (1954). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper & Row.

Piaget, Jean & Inhelder, Barbel (1956). *The child's conception of space* (F. J. Langdon & J. L. Lunzer, Trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Rentschler, Matt (2006). Introducing integral art. *AQAL: Journal of Integral Theory and Practice, 1 (1)*, 41-49.

Schomburg, Roberta (n.d.). Using symbolic play abilities to assess academic readiness. Retrieved June 7, 2005, from

http://www.earlychildhood.com/Articles/index.cfm?FuseAction=Article&A=40&CFID=4405413&CFTOKEN=52793175

Senge, Peter; Scharmer, C. Otto; Jaworski, Joseph & Flowers, Betty Sue (2004). *Presence: Human purpose and the field of the future*. Cambridge, MA: The Society for Organizational Learning.

Urban, Klaus K. (1991). On the development of creativity in children. *Creativity Research Journal, 4 (2)*, 177-191.

VTS research and theory (n.d.). Retrieved June 6, 2005, from http://www.vue.org/research_theory.html

Wilber, Ken (1999-2000). *The collected works of Ken Wilber* (Vols. 4 & 7). Boston: Shambhala.

Wilber, Ken (2003). *Boomeritis: A novel that will set you free*. Boston: Shambhala.

Wilber, Ken (n.d.). To see a world: Some technical points. Retrieved June 6, 2005, from http://www.integralworld.net/kiefer.html

Wilber, Ken & Scharmer, Otto (2003). Mapping the integral U: A conversation between Ken Wilber & Otto Scharmer. Retrieved June 6, 2005, from http://www.dialogonleadership.org/wilber.htm

Wittkower, Rudolf & Wittkower, Margot (1963). *Born under Saturn: The character and conduct of artists: A documented history from antiquity to the French revolution*. New York: Random House.

MATT RENTSCHLER is a poet, arts scholar, Co-Director of the Integral Art Center, and member of the AQAL Review Team. He lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma with his mate, Channon.