Editorial

With this issue of *Integral Review* I launch a new practice of inviting contributions from the associate editors for these editorials. There are numerous reasons making this an appropriate time for such a change: the behind the scenes work of this group has enabled IR to grow as it has, we are spreading work around more than before, and each of them has contributed significantly to my own learning. In particular I would like to acknowledge the significant and tireless work of Assistant Editor Sara Ross in this regard. Not only has she contributed writing to our pages, she has also provided thoughtful reviews as well as invaluable networking to help us grow. This is not to mention the rigorous proof reading and copyediting she contributes to each issue in addition to taking care of the website itself. Yet it is not for these reasons that I invite Sara to take on the voice of writing this issue's editorial—it is because of the depth of thought, the ability to perceive and highlight complex and subtle interactions between articles, enabling you as the reader to engage this issue with an overview that does far more than merely introduce. So read on, and I will leave you in Sara's capable hands.

Jonathan Reams

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Editor-in Chief

Co-defining, Reflexive Recursions

Sometimes it is only quite close to a publication date that we know exactly which manuscripts will be ready for inclusion in a given issue of *Integral Review*. While it is always a source of satisfaction to me when there is a subtle weave of coherence through subjects that serendipitously end up in an issue's table of contents, it is even more delightful when a vigorous theme shows up at the very end that we could never know in advance would develop. Such is the case this time with Volume 4, Issue 2.

The name I coined for the theme I saw emerging here is *co-defining, reflexive recursions*. A recursion is an operation, an active performance. For example, in software, a code can "call itself" to re-perform its function over and over. If the software has a bug, the repetitions might be a mistake, an endless loop going nowhere. If the software is behaving, the repetitions keep functioning on new data, new relationships, and thus create new connections that could be made only by performing the recursions. For my purposes here, then, a recursion is an act of information processing, creating new insights, new theories—and as we shall see, even new evidence—by having *called itself to "do itself" again from a different place in the process*. The development of integral theories, interventions, and ways of being is characterized by recursions of many kinds, both within and among individuals and social groupings, and so it is germane to *IR's* publishing mission to shine a spotlight on them.

Recursions are nonlinear dynamics to experience, to *perform*. Not static, they require performance, else they do not exist. We can enter into recursions done by others in their writing,

and we can also "do" recursions ourselves in the course of reflecting on others' work (not to mention in the very living of our lives). This issue of *IR* affords opportunities for both kinds of recursions. Yet, because we cannot expect titles to communicate what we will find in the works themselves, editorials can offer signposts. In this case, I want to indicate the two kinds of recursions and some *co-defining* and *reflexive* properties or potentials that attend them. In introducing the authors' contributions comprising this issue, I highlight which contributors embed and invite a recursive agenda, as some do so more explicitly than others. These are opportunities to benefit from following along with and digesting the fruits of someone else's recursions. Yet there are also implicit opportunities, both within and across other works published here, and I want to point some of them out, as well.

Daniel Anderson's extended-length article, *Such a Body We Must Create: New Theses on Integral Micropolitics,* is a product of his developmental recursions on his previous work. His eight theses are qualitatively different from those we have been perhaps conditioned to expect when someone presents a theory. On its face, the list of eight implies a linear progression. Yet each thesis is a *system of understanding,* interdependent and co-defining or co-causal with the others. Both author and reader need to visit or revisit other theses in order to dive deeply into any of them: recursive visits when one thesis is "called from" its place in different theses. Thus does Anderson perform a recursive integration of meaningful systems in building theory to transform praxis. He wants to support the development of an "immanent and immediate, local, even under the skin" postmetaphysical integral praxis. He builds his theory critically yet with modest claims and a spirit of inquiry, inviting readers to "practice integral" transformations this way with robust results "more precise, more rigorous, more elegant, more effective" for theory, interventions, and radical living.

Invested in the necessity of strong theory-building in the social sciences, serendipitously Steven Wallis' *Validation of Theory: Exploring and Reframing Popper's Worlds* explains and demonstrates how such theories and methods can pass tests of robustness, if not hard-science style validation, when certain recursions are designed into them. Popper's demanding criteria for validating a theory, Wallis explains, can apply well enough to hard science but miss key assumptions when it comes to social science. Wallis re-frames Popper to offer an alternative theory-validation model, where "the idea of a theory constructed of co-defining propositions provides a robust alternative to axiomatic terms." Ah, is *that* why Anderson braids and folds theses over and around instead of laying straight track? In a sample application of his model, Wallis shows how the method's use of recursions on different "scales" of data, co-defining propositions, reflexivity of a theorist, and further reflexivity of the analyst assessing the theory manage to produce and integrate disparate sources of empirical data: such recursions generate evidence. Wallis, too, is modest in his claims and realistic about limitations at this stage of his theory development. One who wishes to evaluate Anderson's or any other social science theory for robustness could deploy Wallis's model and thereby evaluate its robustness too.

IR's tradition of a Russ Volckmann interview feature introduces us to the wide-ranging life and interests of *David Loye on Integral Evolution*. From many fascinating dimensions of Loye's long productive life, I highlight the recursion he and Russ invite us to make, in effect, by revisiting Darwin. Going to the scientist's primary source material, Loye discovered Darwin to be a quite integral theorist! What might happen if we revisit Darwinian evolution theory from the

different starting point offered by Loye? Hmm. Could Wallis' model be used to test the robustness of this much-contested theory (and opposing arguments) too? Loye infers that if Darwin himself rather than mutations of his theory had gained more traction, then the modern day institutionalized adoption of the mutation, "survival of the fittest," might not be so disturbingly evident; for example, in the following article.

Carol Hoare's analysis of *The Toxic Effect on Children of a Degraded U.S. Society, Family, and Educational Context: How Will This Nation Respond?* shows the spiraling, recursive effects of interrelated social system dysfunctions and their complex but obvious roles in degrading conditions for child education and learning. Rather than blame the schools, they should be seen for what the data indicate: schools "are but a microcosm of society, and that they alone cannot rectify educational deficits."

Harking back to Loye, then Hoare: How often might we trace our social deficits to the narratives that under gird them? What is it like, the process of constructing new narratives, new meaning making? In Sayyed Mohsen Fatemi's *In Search of Narratives* and *A Tour to the Flea Market of Signification,* stories of recursive "trips to the well" experiences offer clues for reflexion. A clue Andrew Campbell recognized when discerning the images he contributed to this issue: *The Resurrection ...Paradisio.*

This issue's reviewers of an article and two books keep the theme going while offering insightful reviews of substantive works. In *Advanced Change Theory Revisited: An Article Critique,* Scott Pochron notes the value of ACT's stepped model of adult development for more reflexive leaders, that in recursive terms I use here, to realize *how* difficult moments are opportunities for leadership to *call itself to "do itself."* Nathan Harter's philosophical astuteness challenges us to perform recursions on our assumptions about moral and ethical behavior as he reviews the book *Leadership Ethics: An Introduction.* There are no easy answers for constructing some moral narratives. Jan Inglis, a regular *IR* contributor, continues her examinations of climate change challenges from an integral perspective, reviewing a book that she recognizes as also employing an integral perspective, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability.* With its publication just barely predating the recent economic meltdown, she invites the book's author—and perhaps us, as well—to perform a recursion on his analyses from the new place created by the meltdown.

My own co-defining, reflexive recursions within domains of my life have been immensely enriched while working with each of these contributions to *IR*. Getting hooked into my own thematic, I see recursions, recursions, everywhere. And I hope some of these editorial offerings might enrich readers' appreciation for the work of this fine group of authors and artists. Enjoy!

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