1 The rise of neo-integrative worldviews

Towards a rational spirituality for the coming planetary civilization?[1]

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> Only this life, this culture . . . which does not exclude anything . . . may provide a genuine, solid satisfaction of all the requirements of human feeling, thought, and will . . ..
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> (Vladimir Solovyov 1877)

This chapter provides an introductory overview of contemporary developments in the field of worldviews related to neo-integrative efforts. The current constellation in the European-Western hemisphere is witnessing a significant increase in 'spiritually' informed paradigms that claim to be at the same time 'rational'. Though these paradigms sometimes deploy ambiguous concepts of 'spirituality' and 'rationality', have very diverse features, are not infrequently opposed to each other and are of varying quality, their common core aspiration can be said to be, in the majority of cases, integrative, inclusive and integral. These terms imply an attempt to reconcile spirituality and rationality, transcendence and secularism, as well as 'realism' and 'nominalism', with the goal of building a more balanced worldview at the heart of Western civilization than the ones we have had so far, which have by and large been biased either towards secular nominalism, on the one hand, or religious transcendentalism on the other.

To put the current attempts at and developments toward integrative worldviews into perspective, this text first lists some of the most important features of the current worldview constellation in the Western hemisphere; second, problematizes some of the paradigmatic attempts towards integrative, inclusive or integral thought of the present, including some transitional movements between the late 1960s and today; and third, outlines a view of some of the currently most influential tendencies and trajectories towards integral worldviews, i.e. towards the conciliation of rationality and spirituality.

The result of our critical investigation of this topic is that, if deployed appropriately, i.e. in full accordance with the rules set by contemporary academic scrutiny, integrative worldviews may provide at least potentially useful 'layers of stratification' (Thomas Fararo) as tools complementary

to the ones we have in mainstream science and culture, in order to facilitate the build up of a more balanced civilizational paradigm appropriate to the needs of the upcoming first 'planetary civilization' (Michiko Kaku, Jennifer Gidley). Adapted to the bigger picture of the pressing questions of today, neo-integrative worldviews may potentially contribute (self-)critical blueprints for dealing inclusively with some of the most important challenges of our time.

1 Introduction

The concept of integral within the shift from first to scond modernity: the worldview constellation in the European-Western hemisphere from the rise of early modern capitalistic societies to oday – a multi-faceted, deeply ambiguous and continuously changing picture

As most observers agree, during the epoch of classical capitalistic modernity in the nineteenth century – as well as in the first half of the twentieth – the worldview constellation in the European-Western hemisphere was shaped primarily by big overarching ideological blueprints.

An ideology is by definition a normative set of ideas with suggestive value that claims to legitimate the social, political and sometimes even economic life of a given society in a given historical period for a given time. Its legitimacy – above all since the ground-breaking work of the German philosophers G. W. F. Hegel, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the nineteenth century, which paved the way for modernity as we know it – is usually asserted on the assumption of 'scientifically proven' theoretical insight into the origins, causes, functions, laws and mechanisms of a greater societal whole, which is sometimes even depicted as insight into '*the* whole'. While the concepts of ideology and theory are to a certain extent closely related, because the Greek word theory literally means 'the view of the whole' or, more precisely, 'God's view', an ideology, unlike a theory, is about 'instilling habits or beliefs in people' by 'providing the capacities needed for the maintenance of a given culture and its institutions'.[2] Ideologies were (and still are) in most cases based on the effects of media and on propaganda, and they were and still are trying to integrate 'assertions, theories and aims' in order to constitute a unifying, complete (if not totality-oriented) and overarching 'sociopolitical program'.[3]

The word ideology thus in many cases is defined as 'to favour one point of view above all others and to adhere to this point of view. The ideologue sees the world from a single point of view, [and] can thus "explain" it and attempt to "change" it'.[4] It is worth noting that this 'single point of view', proclaimed as the 'holistic' one, is in almost all cases made possible by the explicit claim of every ideology to 'integrate' all other possible viewpoints and to have an overview over 'the whole' or 'everything', and to be more mature, if not more evolved, than every other viewpoint. In this

sense, an ideology functions mainly as a 'set of beliefs and goals of a social or political group that explain or justify the group's decisions and behavior'[5] with regard to the greater whole of society. In that role, ideologies have claimed since the nineteenth century to be the integrative theory *par excellence*, integrating or subsuming all other theories of their time.

Precisely by following – and continuously exemplifying – this integrative claim, the ideologies of modernity (and modernization) of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the great majority of cases deliberately and consciously aspired to be mono-developmental.[6] That means that they were – at their core – legitimated and guided by unifying macro-paradigms: a paradigm being by definition nothing else – i.e. nothing less, and nothing more – than a guiding prejudice or leading bias in the general mind-set of a time, valid in, and accepted by, a particular society under particular cultural, technological, demographical and civilizational preconditions at a given historical moment in a given place.[7]

Interestingly, there is quite a similar relationship between the term paradigm and the term worldview to the one we saw between the terms ideology and theory. While these terms and their contents are closely connected, the difference is that a worldview denotes a standpoint that is more or less open to recognizing other standpoints besides itself, whereas a paradigm denotes the ambition to define what is valid and what not for the whole of the ideological constellation of a given time in a given place, thus implying universally integrative features by the explicit exclusion of other viewpoints.

To mitigate (and sometimes also to mask) their exclusive character, paradigms were – and still are – manifested, expressed, implemented and symbolically represented through so-called 'grand narratives' – i.e. through 'story' projections of what a 'good life' can be in the interplay between society and the individual.[8] Most of these story projections are of a mainly monological character and provide suggestions rather than descriptions of reality, and legitimation patterns rather than explanations for choices of inclusion and exclusion.

These grand narratives, or hierarchically structured, segregative systems of ideas[9] that dominated the Western mind throughout the last two centuries of capitalistic modernity usually followed a linear (or diachronic) projection of progress and evolution in space–time – with capital (be it private capital, as in the liberal West, or state capital, as in the communist East) as the main driving force of history, and with nation states as the main political agents and juridical protectors of what was understood as collective achievement through socio-economic development.[10]

One point is decisive here if we want to understand the implicit logics of this development, as well as related claims and assumptions. All these ideologies, understood as integrative paradigms or grand narratives, notwithstanding huge differences in detail and in the potential scope of their respective projections, departed factually from the assumption that a

guiding prejudice or leading bias about the sense and perspective of the whole, i.e. a paradigm in the strict sense of the term,[11] was needed for any historical period to guarantee the unfolding of its full potential for progress. That implied the view that the whole was more important than its constituent parts, and that the whole had to follow different, 'higher', logics from those followed by its parts. It implied the view that it was not an accident, but a historical necessity to define integration and inclusion by means of exclusion, and – if necessary – even by forced unification. Ideologies, defined as paradigms, claimed to serve the greater good if necessary also by sanctioning a resort to violence to achieve a (frequently forced) unification and wholeness, defined falsely as 'integration'.

In other words, ideologies unconsciously followed an early holistic paradigm, but in their own sense, defining holistic as 'all of one piece'. The primary contribution of paradigms here was a hierarchy of 'good' and 'bad' ideas, i.e. the ideological 'superstructure' needed to internalize the given social order within the broad majority of the population, and thus render it most efficient. That attitude did not exclude the possibility that paradigms themselves would evolve and improve continuously: on the contrary, as Marx famously put it, paradigms are nothing other than an aspect of the 'cultural superstructure' of hard-core socio-economic progress, and thus dependent on it. In short, in the era of modern ideologies paradigms were seen continually to pave the way to new, more evolved paradigmatic socio-cultural prejudices and biases arising from the previous ones, and depending on the stage of economic, social and technological progress. The modern belief in paradigms was the belief that in this ever-continuing torch-relay of progress through a torch-relay of ideologies and superstructural self-reflection, the continuous – and thus rational overall – evolution of humanity would be achieved.[12]

Today's world is no longer structured like this. It is no longer the ideological world of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It functions in different ways, and according to different principles and mechanisms.[13] Perhaps most importantly of all, it has coined very different ideas of what integral, integration, holistic, the whole and progress can and should mean. We could obviously dispute whether today's paradigmatic attempts are really 'post-ideological' (Francis Fukuyama) in the strict sense, as claimed by some of the main theorists of our time (interestingly mostly neoliberals and neoconservatives, who in many cases simultaneously speculate that their own paradigm may be the 'final one in history' or even 'the end of history', i.e. the end of all paradigms).[14] Nevertheless, in the present stage of what sociologists, cultural analysts and philosophers are denominating more or less similarly, if not – at least in relation to the core idea – unanimously, as the 'second stage of modernity',[15] 'developed modernity',[16] 'mature modernity',[17] 'postindustrial modernity'[18] or (even if already 'late') 'meta-postmodernity',[19] there seems to be a relatively broad consensus among experts and the public that contemporary Western societies,

at least in their centre of gravity, are evolving as multi-developmental clusters of synchronically interacting variations on very diverse paradigms and grand narratives, accompanied by an often contradictory myriad of self-interpretations, legitimation claims and myths. Most of these are no longer normative, but descriptive in their nature, scope and orientation.

Additionally, most of the contemporary (again, usually at least avowedly post-ideological) paradigms and narratives follow a rather diachronic, i.e. cyclical and interactive, time–space projection, and they no longer conceive themselves as being directly dependent on the level of socio-economic development. On the contrary, many late postmodern paradigms arising from the specific 'meta-materialistic' background of postindustrial internet-capitalism (including the increasingly important branch of the so-called 'attention economy',[20] which imposes very different laws and procedures of production and distribution on the capitalistic system from those that obtained in the industrial economy[21]) conceive themselves as rather free projections of ideas into the socio-economic sphere, created by insight into that which is concretely productive and enhances life, rather than as the 'superstructure' of economic realities, and thus as their causal derivative. This is due not least to the fact that the socio-economic environment itself is continually changing faster, thereby speeding up cultural and behavioural contingency, and thus providing less of a linear basis for the evolution and 'reality check' of related worldviews.[22] The main agents of progress within worldviews are no longer nation states with their hierarchical and unifying inner structural order, their implications of integrative uniformity and conformity, and their competing 'outer' interests. Instead, the main emerging agents of contemporary integrative paradigm formations are composed of a colourful, to a large extent de-hierarchicized, multiplicity of increasingly multi- and meta-national civil society initiatives, non-profit organizations, pre- and proto-political movements, as well as of scientific, religious and cultural 'value formations' of very different levels of quality and formalization. These new agents on the one hand exchange and interact among themselves, creating a vast plurality of 'hybrid' paradigmatic patterns which are in continuous flux, often with blurred boundaries and little continuity. On the other hand, they interact with the remnants of traditional notions of national and cultural 'order' patterns, as well as with an increasing number of attempts at specifically trans- and supra-national institutions of governance and regulation.[23]

This constellation as a whole has, of course, many implications for the history of ideas and for the paradigmatic character of our time. Not for nothing has it been called 'post-national', 'post-ideological' or even 'a-perspectival',[24] though it would perhaps be more appropriately designated by terms like 'multi-positional', 'pluri-ideological'[25] or 'inter- and trans-perspectival'.[26] However it is referred to, it has led to:

(1) An increased awareness of the productivity and relative advantage of multiple positions, forces and interests in play in mature modern

'patchwork' environments on micro-, meso- and macro-scales alike,[27] as compared with the uniformity of modern norms and paradigms.

(2) This insight has induced a modification of, if not a fundamental change in, the notion of integral. Integral, integrative, inclusive or holistic, while not being fully identical in their denotation, cognitive interest and core concept, have shifted their meaning from depicting an imaginary whole by claiming the legitimacy of some and denying the validity of other worldviews and by stipulating uniformity and unity (as they had in 'first' modernity) to the search for inclusion for the largest number of possible viewpoints on one and the same issue or question, even if those viewpoints may be conflicting with each other. The meaning of these terms has moved towards a 'contradiction-capable' – and thus paradoxically constituted – overarching view that captures the potential unity of the issue *only through* the full recognition of its differences, inbuilt dialectics and paradoxes ('second' modernity). This shift in the notion of integral (and related notions) could rightly be described as a passage from mono-dimensionality to multi-dimensionality, and from authoritarianism to pluralism. It constitutes a shift from normative to descriptive values as already demonstrated by the sheer range of paradigms, signifying a different approach to the cognitive and analytical value of paradigms as such. Therefore, we can describe this shift in a more general way as a shift from an ideological towards a worldview understanding of paradigms. 'Integration only *through* and *after* differentiation' could be regarded as its main slogan.

(3) This development has led to a growing interest in how equality and inequality within such pluri-dimensional patchworks of belief are forged, legitimated and distributed, not by traditional pools of institutionalized power, but by the subtle use of pre- and proto-political cultures and sub-cultures, movements, terminologies and languages (in the broad sense) that are currently creating their own, non-institutional points of reference by using the mere 'force of ideas' to create 'settings of validity and legitimacy'. These 'subversive' patterns of legitimation and distribution are slowly, but continuously ascending to become co-decisive pre-political and/or contextual[28] political tools of influence and power within the new dialectical antagonisms between, on the one hand, contextual (cultural and paradigm-innovative) formations, and on the other, systemically institutionalized (democratic) power institutions in Western societies.[29]

(4) Fourth, and probably most importantly if measured by applicability to reality, this constellation has led to the recent breakthrough of a specific insight which has become more or less commonly accepted among decision-makers, opinion-leaders, scientists and analysts around the globe. This is the notion that no nation, no country, no culture and no political actor 'can meet the world's challenges alone'[30] any longer. No nation can face the problems we face in today's world alone, because all

> problems are increasingly interconnected and multi-faceted. Indeed, all of them show different sides and ask different, sometimes opposing questions at the same time, and thus they are becoming far too complex to be solved from one or two perspectives alone.

Taken together, the result of these four 'paradigmatically relevant' trajectories can be summed up (approximately) in the following way. If the phase between the end of World War II and the great political changes in 1989 (the fall of the Berlin Wall) and 1991 (the collapse of Communism) has been designated the transition from controlled mono-dimensional modernity towards a radically pluralistic and thus rather uncontrolled, at times even semi-anarchic, postmodernity, then the present state of worldviews in which we live as 'our' most intimate reality is the conscious and unconscious (and as such uncontrolled, non-uniform and thus sometimes experienced as threatening, but free) late postmodern (or perhaps even already 'post-postmodern'[31]) pluralism at, it can be assumed, the first peak of its radical unfolding.

This condition of centrifugal (paradigmatic) pluralism is the overall worldview perspective of the present. Indeed, there is a question as to whether it should be called a perspective at all, or whether it should rather be depicted as an open assembly of viewpoints, or even more precisely as a puzzle of often contradictory elements of an ever-changing mixture of insights, speculations and assumptions. Be that as it may, it seems highly probable that this present constellation must sooner or later tend, by its own means and inbuilt proclivities, towards a 'newly controllable' (if not 'humanistically confluent') pluralistic neo-integration. This is (among other things) because, due to the 'shrinking of the present'[32] brought about by technologization, virtualization and globalization and by rapid political and social development towards multi-polarity on all levels, things become so complex that they can no longer be addressed properly either by any single viewpoint, discipline or mode of rationality, or by the loose and often chaotic unordered pluralism enacted so far. In fact, an increasing part of the population of Western countries senses that some sort of re-integration of the at times all too wild, chaotic and fragmented incubator of worldviews that is late postmodernity is needed; and this is one main cause for the growing tendencies towards regressive or at least retro-conservative worldviews across Western cultures.[33]

To be sure, the integration needed might not be such a retro-conservativism, nor any kind of 're'-integration, but rather a new kind of integration. Nobody in the end may want to go back to the often oppressive ideas of integration of old modernity. Therefore, the question arises as to *what kind* of integration might be needed today – i.e. what kind of integration, inclusion or holistic worldview, however one may put it, might be best suited to the specific needs of our time. It might be an integration that we can hope to witness or that can become a reality only far beyond our own

lifetime, or even one that we unconsciously dare to aspire to at this present moment in time as much as we are fearful of it.

Admittedly, if the main outcome of the overall development is the transformation of the notion of integral, inclusive and holistic as such, as well as a shift in its role as a basic blueprint for evolution within complex environments, then a second crucial question arises, the answer to which might be the prerequisite for answering the first one: what exactly is the difference between ideological and integral from a contemporary paradigmatic viewpoint? It could even be that this second question is the more important one. Although it is very striking, it has seldom been addressed in-depth to date.

Sure enough, ideological blueprints are also often idealistic in their aspirations, and they may even be (proto-)spiritual in nature at times (although in most cases they constitute 'secular religions'[34]). To a certain extent, some of them even present holistic features, if we subsume 'totality-oriented' under this term. Nevertheless, in many ways, integral – at least in its contemporary sense – is not synonymous with ideological. This is because, by contrast with ideologies, the paradigmatic integral approaches of our time claim to be about the whole without totalizing, i.e. to be worldviews in the full modern sense, but without pushing for uniformity or imposing exclusion or oppression. Integral blueprints thus aspire to be worldviews, not paradigms in the sense described above. Nevertheless, it should be noted that sometimes (and this seems to be valid particularly for less sophisticated and evolved approaches) 'integral' unconsciously implies 'meta-integral', i.e. 'more integral than other integral approaches'; such interpretations of integral are sometimes dangerously close to ideology. It is also a fact that many integral approaches do not practise what they preach; and thus some seem to be – contrary to their own self-interpretation – not 'neo'-, but 'retro'-integral, if not in their theory, then in their practice.[35]

Viewed as a whole, the shape and character of integral approaches of our time frequently remain ambiguous, and it often has to be decided case by case whether an approach fully conforms with 'new', forward-oriented features. In other words, what we see currently developing is a multiplicity of very diverse, and in many cases ambiguous, attempts to understand – and thus to shape – social reality through the integration of the guiding principles of modernity with the guiding principles of postmodernity. Most are attempts to create a 'unity-in-diversity' or 'diversity-in-unity' paradigm specifically for the post-ideological (and post-national) constellation of our time (if, of course, in an age of radical individualization there remains any such thing as 'our time').[36] Indeed, to put it even more precisely, the point is that what we seem to observe in the present conjuncture of the history of ideas (i.e. at the start of the post-Bush era, and with regard to its *progressively* inbuilt perspectives) as one main (and probably core) pattern of development – among others – of 'globalized' societies is a burgeoning ecology of a variety of attempts towards neo-integrative and neo-inclusive worldviews.[37]

To what extent is this the case? And what exactly is meant by the contemporary notion of neo-integral as compared with the classical notion of integral (and their related guiding concepts) within the cultural and socio-political spheres of the West)?

2 The all-encompassing neo-integrative element of the present

The new interest in the 'state of the world' as a pluralistic meta-disciplinary whole

If what we have discussed so far is in principle rendered plausible by observing trends in contemporary consciousness, for many of us – mainly in the practical sphere of our aspirations, as well as of our ideals – one more question arises. What does all this mean in reality – i.e. not only for (philosophical) specialists, but in everyday life? This question is closely related to the two posed above. In other words, is there any larger motive involved in – and thus bridging – all these sometimes confusing paradigmatic Western societal developments towards inclusion and integration? And if so, what exactly is it?

At first glance, one of the few features that seem to interconnect the comparatively broad diversity, differentiation and to a large extent even incommensurability[38] of the current attempts at an integrative, inclusive or holistic paradigm for our epoch is that almost all claim to conceive themselves as an active response to the specific challenges of 'the contemporary state of the world'.[39] In other words, old and new approaches alike seem to share, in their basic paradigmatic attempt at integration, as well as in their founding argument of self-legitimation, a specific concern for the development of contemporary society, in the majority of cases with particular emphasis on the fourfold interplay between politics, culture, spirituality and religion.[40] It is the alleged contemporary state of the world that – in most cases – provides the projection screen of integrative worldviews. And it is the increasing 'complexity'[41] of its characteristically multi-dimensional, inter- and trans-disciplinary features and challenges as the specific combination of politics, culture and the discursive rationalities of spirituality and religion (which are not identical to each other) that serves as the measure of their concrete inclusive capacities.[42]

This (fundamentally fourfold) challenge seems to have been brought about by the 'global systemic shift' of our epoch:[43] that is to say, by the main development patterns in the dominant political, cultural, spiritual and religious discourses and system logics arising with the post-1989 and post-1991 world of globalization.[44] By increasingly producing conflicts between their different societal projections, these four discourses and logics imperatively demand a specifically integrative, trans-cultural as well as trans-national and trans-religious 'paradigm evolution'.[45] Or, put from another perspective, the more Western societies of the present move slowly forward – willingly

or unwillingly – towards a 'planetary civilization',[46] the more their different stages of development necessarily evolve towards a greater interchange with each other and with less developed societies and are thus integrated at least to a certain extent, if they do not want to be fragmented at their centres (inter alia by uncontrolled amalgamation and hybridization) to the point at which they either implode or break apart. Thus they must necessarily become a pro-active part of a patchwork destined to constitute a diverse and pluralistic, but at least primordially inclusive, planetary culture.

Insight into this necessity, which is not an option or choice but an exigency, is possibly the main cultural (and worldview) driving force today behind manifest events. This insight is also the core of a potentially new concept of integration, as well as one of the main forces behind the paradigmatic shift towards a new transcultural and 'inter-spiritual' worldview balance of the present and near future.[47] The more the demand for a worldview capable of bridging the ideological, cultural and institutional gaps between the different angles, facets and perspectives of the first planetary civilization arises, the more the challenges to build a newly integrative paradigm designed for the specific needs of our transitional age seem to be growing.

As seen through the lens of the majority of recent attempts at a neo-integrative worldview, these challenges consist, in more detail, of the following.

(1) A 'philosophical' mood that is leading to a specific contemporary cultural psychology of proto-integral transition. This psychology can be described as, so to speak, Immanuel Kant's 'antinomy of pure reason' pushed into extreme forms of 'unifying diversity' under contemporary radically pluralistic conditions: if everything can be judged from very different viewpoints that are in principle equally valid and legimitated (as in Kant's law of perfect antinomy), and therefore if everything becomes indistinguishable as it is impossible to decide between the paradigmatically available benchmarks, because everything is equally valid and legitimate, then a proto-integrative or even pre-integral situation is already factually created. This is because, within this situation, a balance between conflicting viewpoints becomes necessary to save the principle of equality, and thus the system as such.[48] This is a core mood within the present zeitgeist, which precisely denotes that this zeitgeist is already moving beyond postmodernism – which stipulated that no integrative picture whatsoever was possible anywhere beyond Kant's antinomy.[49] In fact, the zeitgeist of the present is already moving beyond this verdict.
(2) A rapidly growing insight into the intense intertwinement of the societal 'software' factors of political, cultural, spiritual and religious typologies of discourse which are synchronically present in

mature modern societies.[50] This consists, more generally, in a new multi-dimensionality – or 'constituent patchwork mind-set'[51] – in the public application of their respective system logics.

The specific contemporary challenge further consists in:

(3) The growing impact of the societal 'hardware' factors of demography and technology on the (structurally differentiated) rationality of 'open'[52] Western societies on micro-, meso- and macro-levels alike. This is meant in the sense that, while the discourse of demography is unleashing increasing effects on the on-going hybridization of public discourses and identities[53] due to its capacity to 'neutralize' opposing patterns of cultural and religious confrontation, the discourse of technological progress is characterized by an increasing dichotomy, if not by a new constitutive dialectics, between 'old mechanistic technologies' and 'new liberation technologies'.[54] This dichotomy seems, at least to a certain extent, to be in process of shaping the role of technology in postindustrial societies, especially when compared with its social role and impact in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Among other aspects, unlike their predecessors, contemporary liberation technologies are trying to contribute to the development of an open-source society within and beyond the current mediatic attention economy, dedicated to more integrative and balanced development, production, distribution and application of technological knowledge for – and in the service of – the large majority of citizens, instead of privileging the elites.[55]

(4) Taken together, the specific combination of these software and hardware factors of contemporary paradigm development seems to be creating, as one result of their hitherto unprecedented intertwinement, a new structural pluri-dimensionality of what has been called the sphere of 'public reason' (according to the connotations of this term established by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas[56]). This new pluri-dimensionality is not predominantly occasional (or contextual); it is beginning to create *de facto* not only ontological but also systemic effects. Among other things, the public reason of Western societies, in contrast to the 1980s and 1990s, today privileges plurality, decentralization and diversity at all levels of social organization and action, while protecting some core principles of coherence such as justice, individual and collective rights and equal access to the features of the system as integrative features for all citizens. Simplifying a little, we could say that the public reason of the West is today concerned with the acceptance of radical pluralism in all its forms and stages of development while still, as a consequence, adhering to the principles established by the French Revolution: freedom, equality, fraternity. The alleged maturity of this public reason does not reside in one aspect or

the other, but precisely in its capacity to combine both. Doubtless this capacity is still not integral in the full sense, but its trajectory is certainly *towards* becoming integral.

It has been noted, though, that all this is the case, for the time being, above all for and in the societies of the (ambiguously) so-called first world. To date it does not seem to have affected the societies of the so-called second and third worlds significantly;[57] and this is one main concern that we will have to confront in the coming years. But within first-world or 'Western' societies, the multi-faceted development described here seems to be starting to influence not only the processual but also the normative aspects of late postmodern public reasoning. Thus it seems to be producing a rapidly increasing number of demands for new methodological tools of systemic – and systematic – balance and inclusion of societal logics and public discourse on almost all levels, and in almost all fields of theory and practice. These fields include traditional institutional, party and interest politics as well as the new civil society politics: the old, exclusive political rat race as well as the new 'open' civil society practice of defining politics as a never-ending and universally accessible process of permanently and continuously transforming social interactions into juridical relationships.

3 'Inbuilt' problems, contradictions and dialectics of the current paradigm constellation

If this overall constellation has been described appropriately (we guess that in the end only the community of readers and writers can assess this properly, and everybody is hereby not only invited but urged to do so), most attempts at neo-integrative paradigm patterns currently seem to be encountering a relatively favourable, though contradictory, but on the whole 'permeable'[58] context for their growth, discussion, differentiation, distribution and application.

Nevertheless, most of these attempts are facing a number of crucial problems. These consist mainly of 'conceptual gaps' or 'empty spaces' still not clarified and/or elaborated in specific theory–practices, thus contributing to their in principle structural, conceptual and methodological incompleteness. This incompleteness is due, to a large extent, to an on-going mutual lack of awareness between existing (neo-)integral, inclusive and holistic approaches, and thus to a lack of organized exchange and networking for a systemic evolution through active complementarity building.[59]

Other problems, contradictions and dialectics of contemporary neo-integrative approaches are related to the macro-ideological and socio-cultural battles typical of our epoch, which form their historical background and context. Some of those battles are listed below.

First, there is growing competition between different models of modernity on a Western and on a global scale alike. It seems we are beginning to

live in an epoch of 'contested modernities'.[60] This new notion describes a striking new competitiveness between differing, sometimes opposed, meso- and macro-concepts of what the good life (individually and collectively) can be in its basic blueprints and in principle, and which societal forms of organization are the most appropriate to achieve it. The competition is currently taking place mainly between Western and newly arising Eastern powers such as China. The latter have their own concepts of modernity and the good society, which are not concordant with their Western counterparts. Many of the Eastern powers are particularly keen to develop their own cultural models and modes of integrative worldviews, which are in most cases not in accordance with Western democratic values. Martin Jacques, co-founder of the British think-tank *Demos* and Research Fellow at the London School of Economics, rightly argues that China will emerge over the next half-century as the world's leading power. Its continued development will be one of the forces that shape the century. But it will not be just any old superpower. It has its own distinctive combination of attributes that differ significantly from those in modern Western societies. This means that the twenty-first century will be one of 'contested modernities'.[61] Or to put it into our perspective: China will promote its own ideals and concepts of integration, integral, inclusion and holistic. As core concepts of Chinese history, integration and inclusion are traditionally strongly related to national unity and to stability and peace; Western concepts such as human rights or the constitutional state do not play any significant role. Thus, if Jacques is right, the coming epoch will not only be one of 'competing modernities' but also of 'competing concepts of integral' – with a presumably strong impact on the overall development and self-interpretation of integral worldviews and paradigms. This is because it seems likely that no concept of integrative worldview could remain completely untouched by such an overall development, at least not in the medium- and long-term – because paradigms are an effect of changing socio-political and cultural environments at least as much as they influence or even co-'create' them.

Simultaneously, there are signs that such a competition between different concepts of modernity (including that of late postmodernity) may be increasingly taking place also *within* the 'Western'[62] cultural and political hemisphere itself, particularly between the societal macro-blueprints of the USA (weak state, strong individual) and Continental Europe (welfare state).[63] The currently growing competition between different models of *democratic* modernity *within* the West is likely to have profound effects on the future interpretation and hermeneutics of what an appropriate integrative worldview within, and beyond, modernity may look like, and how it may be best implemented, enacted and continuously enhanced through its singular (political, economic, technological, organizational, demographic) dimensions.[64]

In this constellation, the very concepts of integration and/or integrative worldview as commonly deployed in approaches deriving for the most part

from variants of the *forma mentis* of 'the West', are in growing international – and intercultural – dispute.

Second, at stake in this dispute is the concept of integration or integral as opposed to various non-liberal interpretations of inclusion as preferred by non-Western approaches. While integration tends to be seen as a 'strong' term, inclusion is regarded as a 'weaker' and thus more flexible concept, capable of being applied more easily also in non-Western settings.

Thus, the tendency towards contested modernities seems to be producing a growing dichotomy within the terminological span of integration versus inclusion – i.e. within the inner dialectics of the core term itself, thus modifying these dialectics by creating new oppositions, if not contradictions. That is also due in part to the fact that integration has all too often been used, especially in the (two) Bush era(s) 1989–93 and 2001–9, as a terminological and conceptual tool of domination, exercised by the 'only superpower' and the 'last nation state', the USA, together with its ally Europe, over the rest of the world by means of a programmatic 'civilizational unitarism' or 'one-sided universalism'.[65] Therefore, a lot of mistrust has been accumulated, which yet has to be overcome in a sustainable way if the term integrative is to assume a new, progressive meaning in the greater cultural and paradigmatic context of the post-Bush era.

Third, the multiplication of options in relation to what democratization may mean that has been taking place since 1989/91 has contributed to the rise of a new complexity of socio-political utopia that embraces the concept of integrative. For example, most of the blueprints for what integration can mean are not culturally concordant among the semi-, proto- and pre-democracies and the failed states that have arisen all over the world, especially in the East of Europe and in the global South. While most of the currently discussed concepts of integration in these countries are democratic in a very broad sense, many of them are dealing with different concepts of what exactly democracy can and should mean in the burgeoning multi-polar world at home and abroad.[66]

Fourth, at the same time, the civilizational, cultural and social patterns of the West[67] seem paradoxically to be still *de facto* presiding (consciously or unconsciously) over the internationally increasingly multi-layered ideas and paradigm developments regarding integration, and thus indirectly also over the core features of the general process of globalization itself. Again, in this constellation, many of the current attempts at integrative worldviews aspire to remain 'Western' in their historical *forma mentis*, as well as in their basic methodological and theoretical gestures in a rather explicit sense. This is producing specific contradictions within the increasingly numerous attempts at contextualization of current integrative mind-sets within worldwide settings. The discussion about how to introduce appropriate elements of cultural diversity into the concept of integral itself *beyond* the question of competing modernities is still in its very early stages, but will have to assume a much bigger pro-active role than it has been assigned so far.

Fifth, there remains a striking inverse social gradient in integrative mind-sets in relation to social status, social class and income stratification. This observation is valid for the West and the East – as well as for most other parts of the world – to a similar extent. In dealing with this problem (which remains largely unaddressed), we should not underestimate the social constructedness of the integrative mind-set itself. This is because basically all the forerunners of today's integrative worldviews from the 1970s to the 2000s have pointed out that affinity to integrative worldviews is not independent of wealth, and thus of the level reached, individually and collectively, on the 'Maslow pyramid' in a given historical and cultural setting. Again, this relation seems to be true mainly for the first world, as (to mention just one example) the research carried out by Ronald Inglehart and others on 'postmaterialistic' trends in Western civilization in the past four decades has demonstrated impressively.[68] But it is increasingly a phenomenon that characterizes the situation of integrative thought in developing countries too: integral thinking remains something for those who are better off.

Summing up, the relation between social status and concern about integrative worldviews cannot be denied, not even in relation to our own time; everybody who would like to hide it under the table is going in the wrong direction. Nevertheless, we believe that the present trend towards integrative worldviews must be attributed to more than relative status and wealth: there seems to be in addition a structural necessity arising out of objectively developing social complexity that is not necessarily tied to status and wealth as such, but rather to pluralism and decentralization, and thus is not necessarily a derivative of social stratification.[69]

In many ways these five problem factors, taken together, are currently describing more complex trajectories than those we have experienced so far. They are starting to shift the focus of integrative thinking towards a slightly different centre of gravity. At the same time, it still seems to be relevant that most contemporary integrative worldviews see themselves primarily as providers of a sound and well-founded balance of thinking, i.e. as a kind of 'meridian' or 'measured centrism' for a world threatening to get 'out of balance' or even to 'split into pieces', rather than as 'innovative' at any cost.[70]

In this context of multi-dimensional change, no full synchronicity in the pace of development between the often very different strands and fields of integrative thinking can yet be observed. Rather, we have to state that the variety of dimensions involved in the field is co-evolving in rather singular, partly isolated, discontinuous and generally poorly coordinated bursts, which makes it difficult to create a sound 'image of stratification'[71] of what is really going on, and to arrive at an accurate assessment of which tendencies may prevail, and which of the current trends may be sustainable, and which not.[72]

Surveying the present constellation as a whole, what we can say is as follows. Many of the current attempts at integrative worldviews seem to

be networked, others seem to be competing with each other, and others seem to be floating freely and independently of each other. Most of these attempts presently seem to be trying to demonstrate that they are rooted in rational *and* spiritual emancipatory frameworks of an ever-evolving (Western) trend towards enlightenment and, in general, to have their foundations in an overall *forma mentis* belonging to a sound mature modernity of international and transcultural – and sometimes even of meta-civilizational and meta-theoretical – scope. Irrespective of these efforts dedicated mainly to self-legitimation, the majority of these approaches have currently still not explicitly clarified whether they want to be regarded as progressive or conservative forms of inclusive thinking and action within the post-postmodern constellation of the coming decade – i.e. whether they want to be considered integral or neo-integral.

Lack of clarity about this crucial (if not decisive) point seems to be one main reason why only a few of the (neo-)integrative attempts of today have so far been taken seriously into account – and put into perspective – by the prevailing *explicit* concepts of rational public discourse and differentiated societal evolution advanced by contemporary mainstream science, as well as by the various publicly recognized socio-political and philosophical discourses of emancipation of our time.

4 The new alliance between theory and practice

Integral thought and civil society

Regardless of all these problem factors and their differences, most emerging (neo-)integrative worldviews seem to be at least seriously seeking to interconnect on a sustainable basis major contemporary concerns of science, of individual and collective development, of social activism and of 'substantial', in many cases spiritually founded, patterns of value. Most of these attempts aspire to intertwine the strands that compose them into an authentic and original, even if in many cases still pre-explicit, and thus not infrequently 'wild' – and sometimes even contradictory – dialectical process.

In attempting such an integration, and so claiming – and this is of paramount importance – by definition *not* to be an ideology but compatible with the 'essence' of 'open societies', some integrative worldviews are enjoying increasing support from a range of the prevailing liberal civil society institutions and networks. This is the case even though the extent, the nature and the purpose of this support often seem to be disputed within local, regional, national and international civil society networks. The reason for the trend towards an increasing intertwinement between integrative worldviews and practice-oriented international civil society networks is that most of the existing networks do not possess an explicit worldview that is able to express satisfactorily their still rather pre-theoretical and proto-explicit, in many cases even 'instinctive', moral intuitions.

Many of these networks therefore seem to be eager to acquire an explicit worldview system – and they find it in what they identify as 'the' integrative movement. In some cases this seems to be true even regardless of the costs – intellectual, political, social and economic – associated with the acquisition of such a worldview for international civil society as a whole, and/or for its – often strongly differing – branches and venues in particular.

In this situation, it seems that the principal terminological affinity between diverse notions of wholeness is an important unifying feature of the rise of an in-depth 'meta-inclusivity' of our time. In an age of an otherwise rather unconnected 'pluri-culturality', this affinity functions also as a motor of 'liberal unification' between theory and practice. In most cases, this unification is understood (especially by civil society networks) as an alleged 'deeper' meaning of the inner connection between theory and practice, or, to put it in similar, if equally ambiguous, terms, as an 'overall meaning of humankind and the world', or spirituality.

5 Is there really an integrative paradigm development today?

Two core questions and three strands of investigation

What is becoming clear today, though, is that every concept of such an overall meaning or of spirituality will have to go beyond an exclusively Western concept of integration. Integral must, by its very nature and claims, become a concept for virtually every human being, regardless of the political, cultural, economic, religious or spiritual restrictions of the respective contextual habits and laws in play. In our present constellation, we still seem to be a very long way from making this claim a reality.

In this constellation of a not infrequently 'chaotically productive' complexity or, as Habermas has put it, of a 'new confusion of worldviews'[73] (although this notion is in our view decidedly too negative, missing the point of the opening up of unprecedented new opportunities that may arise precisely out of this situation), *two core questions* are above all posed. These two questions suggest, from our point of view, *three main strands of investigation* into what a new, appropriate concept of integration and/or integrative worldview for the years ahead can, and should in principle, be.

The two core questions, as far as they can be stated at present, primarily concern the intertwinement between the multitude of emerging integrative worldviews and the globally proliferating civil society networks delineated above, as well as the – diverse and highly differentiated – potential for structural complementarity between these two poles of theory and practice.

Thus, the two questions regarding the future of the interconnection between philosophical (i.e. theoretical) and 'realistic' (i.e. practice-oriented civil society) concepts of (neo-)integrative thought are:

(1) What can be said regarding any 'perduring essence' (or practice-oriented experiential spirituality) and its relationship with the

transformative world of 'being'[74] within the overall paradigm development – if there is such a thing – manifested through this complex, and sometimes even confusing, general context in the history of ideas of the present?

(2) Can anything in general be said about the perspectives of this current development, at least with regard to the future of 'Western civilization' in the first instance?

We think that for the time being there may be three main strands of investigation to be considered in trying to answer these questions, which can be stated as follows:

(1) Independently of their different qualities, trends and methods, what seems to link most of the current attempts at integrative paradigmatic frameworks for mature modern societies is, first, that they all support multi-dimensional research endeavours; and, second, that they all aspire to an interdependent transformation of theory and practice, viewed as a – to some extent – paradoxically shaped unity. How can we investigate this interconnection further with particular regard to the role and contribution of spirituality?

(2) It cannot be ruled out as a possibility that, taken together, their not infrequently experimental blueprints may be able, in the years to come, to serve as a source of inspiration in an age of global crisis which has been brought about by the dominance of the rather one-sided, unbalanced and fragmented worldviews pertaining to the so-called first (mechanistic and unitarian) modernity, including the radically secular and nominalistic remnants of postmodernity in Central Europe and in the US academy. What approaches can lead us beyond this split within the mainstream worldview of the present?

(3) As the colourful and pluralistic integrative approaches and their respective communities have developed (in many cases independently of each other) since the 1960s, and since 1989–91 and 2001 in particular, their appearance today could be interpreted as a phenomenon of pockets of resistance made up of a few idealists in subversive contexts, as is typical for early phases of paradigmatic change. To what extent can we hope for integral approaches to have a greater influence upon the mainstream worldview of our time, at least in the West?

To find answers to these two questions and to produce results in the three strands of investigation, we have to consider integrative emancipatory frameworks originating from different cultures, contexts and disciplines. We divide these into three categories: first, those stemming from the first half of the twentieth century; second, those of the phase of transition between the 1960s and the twenty-first century; and third, twenty-first-century approaches.

(1) The first half of the twentieth century gave birth to the pioneers of modern integrative worldviews, who laid the foundations for the basic idea of integrative worldviews within (and not against) evolving modernity.
(2) The second half of the twentieth century – and especially the period from the 1960s to the 1990s – can be considered a phase of transition, which brought about symptoms of the renewal of a renovated integrative intuition, manifested inter alia in the trend towards postmaterialism in the 1980s and 1990s and in the ambiguous rise of a postmodern spirituality in the 1990s.
(3) Finally, the twenty-first century (presumably starting with the great political and cultural change of 1989/91) seems to be generating a new generation of integrative thought, which is still struggling to rise fully to the challenges of our time at the level of given problems and their comparatively increased complexity. Most representatives of this new generation of integrative thought and action seem to conceive themselves as part of a paradigm shift beyond classical modernity (including its latest stage of 'postmodernity'), and as closely related with the emerging paradigm stage of a mature modernity.

It is interesting that most contemporary integral approaches dedicated to propagating rationality and spirituality are, in our view, related to the dynamics of value change in Western populations, relying closely on the historical development of integral thought through the past century. They suggest the desirability of considering these approaches together and within the larger context of a historical unfolding of modernity towards integration, and they foster a growing awareness of their common historical roots, as well as a new mutual awareness of the relations and connections between them. With regard to their potential position in the vanguard, some of these neo-integral approaches may represent, at least to a certain extent, the wider context of the societal macro-shift that is currently occurring within Western culture.[75] Thus, the aim of most of them is to stimulate deliberate cross-stream cooperation between the progressive strands of neo-integrative worldview attempts, and to contribute to the unleashing of the potential of mutually productive (i.e. constructive) criticism and fertilization for the sake of a shared, actively pluralistic and pluri-faceted integrative future.

6 Attempts toward a contemporary integrative paradigm, and their relationship with 'value development'

Let us revisit the basics of our current paradigm situation. Contemporary integrative paradigm development, as we have tried to describe it, seems to be decisively linked to 'value development'. This is what many influential studies since the 1990s (partly building upon previous research) have impressively shown.[76] The question is what this means exactly.

Now, value development seems to encompass contemporary 'essentialisms' and 'substantialisms' of various kinds. These seem to be linked, in diverse forms and ways, to concepts of wholeness interpreted, and/or experienced, as integrative thought, holistic thinking or even as spirituality – i.e. interpreted through terms that, historically, and methodologically, have a largely similar meaning and content, while being without exception remarkably ambiguous. This is partly due to the fact that in our age of a 'global renaissance of religions' or, more precisely, of 'globalized religions',[77] the ties between value development and concepts of wholeness, on the one hand, and spirituality, on the other, tend to be strengthened, and to re-emerge in powerful re-alignments that are sometimes regressive and sometimes progressive in form.[78]

To be sure, worldviews encompassing not only 'reality', but also 'spirituality' (i.e. the visible and invisible realms of reality, its individual and collective dimensions, its infra-human, factual and/or alleged human and supra-human powers) are an age-old hallmark of human societies from the mists of their beginnings until today. But in our age, religious and/or spiritual worldviews appear to be simply out of date in the light of contemporary philosophy and scientific research, for several sound and some unsound reasons. As they are often defended as given, as tradition, as revelation of a (one and only) truth, they frequently contradict themselves on specific issues. At the same time, some of these approaches seem to share important structural features for paradigmatic progress towards a greater range of inclusion, particularly with regard to their ethical dimensions,[79] which do not disappear with criticism of their allegedly 'mythical' content. These features remain relevant for integrative frameworks of all kinds for the future too.

It is important, however, to differentiate here between pre-modern and postmodern approaches to integrating rationality and spirituality. Integrated *pre-modern* worldviews have been heavily attacked as irrational since the advent of a more autonomous, self-reflexive rationality inaugurated the Western Enlightenment project and the ensuing scientific 'revolution'. The resulting mind-set forcefully questioned spiritual paradigm blueprints as devoid of empirical content. The pre-modern among them were eventually profoundly discredited by the large-scale human disasters resulting from totalizing political ideologies rooted in ideological or even religious fundamentalism of one kind or another. In the end, these worldviews have been further deconstructed and relativized as being 'just stories' by the postmodern turn which has profoundly transformed philosophy, the humanities and the social sciences over the last three decades.[80]

Accordingly, unwilling to flirt with such pre-modern musings almost as a point of moral principle, most postmodern academics in the West tend to relegate worldviews which include 'something spiritual' to the dustbin of history, without an awareness of the possibility of an overgeneralization underlying their judgement. From a global cross-cultural

perspective, however, the quite radical Western split between philosophy, science and spirituality seems to be a cultural exception[81] – a fact concealed by the generalized dominance of Western science, technology and political ideologies, the inbuilt potential irrationalism of which has become evident in practice through such global impact phenomena as (neo-)colonialism, weapons of mass destruction and global warming.

Some researchers, at least, consider traditional spiritual worldviews as valid objects of research in such niches as the history of religions or the cultural anthropology of traditional societies. But only a few adopt a perspective on the long-term and cross-cultural evolution of paradigms and the attendant history of ideas in order to look behind the scenes of the contemporary zeitgeist, and, more importantly, behind the curtains of its historical making.

Such a historico-genealogical perspective is inescapable, however, if we want to grasp the actually quite complex continuity between the secular materialist worldviews that hegemonically inform and guide scientific research (as well as its derivative applications) and the innovative spiritual worldviews of our times, as well as their predecessors. This seems even more important when it comes to devising integrative alternatives in order to reconnect the increasingly error-prone and in some cases even life-threatening dissociations between whole and part, centre and periphery, theory and practice – as well as between facts and values, effects and intentions, and more generally, between matter, mind and spirit. These dissociations characterize the rifts, divisions and struggles of our time, and we have to address them in a more integrative way than has been done so far.

And indeed, there were – and are – some who have adopted or are adopting a more inclusive perspective, i.e. thinkers who can be considered forerunners of the dawning of integrative emancipatory worldviews, honouring, criticizing *and* reconciling recurrent insights from diverse cultures and eras, as well as from different scientific and spiritual disciplines.

We are of the opinion that such different thinkers as Vladimir Solovyov (1853–1900), Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950), Max Scheler (1874–1928), Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), Pitirim Sorokin (1889–1968), Thomé F. Fang (1899–1977), Jean Gebser (1905–73) and Herbert Witzenmann (1905–88)[82] addressed, in the context of their times, and as well as they could in their given environments, the great questions of freedom and community, value and purpose, knowledge and action in an integrative way – questions that were (and are) otherwise often diluted, concealed or forgotten by the hyper-specialized discourses that dominate the academy, as well as by the over-simplified discourses that dominate the mass media and the political arena. With the exception of Solovyov, these authors all developed the core of their work in the first half of the twentieth century. They might serve to illustrate historically the almost simultaneous development of at least partial attempts to establish worldviews crossing the divide between science, wholeness, integration and spirituality. Most of

them emerged from quite different contexts not directly related to each other: some from inside, some from outside and some from the margins of academia, and all of them in and across different countries and cultures.

In a singular way, each of these forerunners has elaborated answers to the questions first of what comes to the fore when rationalism is pushed to its limits (be it in science, self or society); and second of how widely dissociated or artificially opposed aspects of reality can be reconnected. Accordingly, each of these pioneers potentially appealed (and appeals) to: first those who were, and are, taking reason seriously while acknowledging, at the same time, the principal boundaries of legitimacy and validity of traditional science;[83] second, those who want to *enable* rather than *predict* the future (according to the famous saying of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry);[84] and, third, those who refuse dichotomously to categorize everything not rational as always, already and in principle irrational.

It seems to us that in exploring these questions in complex ways, with individually different and to a large extent incommensurable results, a potentially richer and even 'wiser' set of interconnected ways of knowing and acting was opened up by these innovative integrative thinkers, and may continue to open up in the future. These ways go beyond the often all too narrowly conceived combinations of perceptual empiricisms and rational discourses that dominated the first half of the twentieth century. Spanning embodied tacit knowledge, 'infra-rational' imagination, 'a-rational' presuppositions and metaphors, 'hyper-rational' reflexivity and 'trans-rational' intuition and experience, these thinkers tried to focus on integrative worldviews in order to adopt a broader view, as best as they could in their specific times.

7 Concordant features of the early attempts at experimental integrative paradigm building in the first half of the twentieth century

One feature that unifies the very different, in part also conflicting, efforts of the early pioneers of integral thought is that they all searched for an integrative paradigm that could re-balance nominalism with realism, the particular with the whole, the subjective with the objective, as well as rationality with the – unavoidable and irreducible – existential and metaphysical uncertainty and precariousness of life.[85]

It is of the utmost importance to see that, in pursuing that balance, all the aforementioned thinkers aspired not merely to advocacy of the renewal of a spirituality (of whatever kind), as their work is sometimes misinterpreted as demonstrating, but to a much more ambitious goal: they wanted to be proponents of an explicitly inclusive 'paradigm attitude' and worldview for and within modernity, which in their view accordingly necessarily had to include, instead of the many regressive variants, a progressive, timely form of wholeness, transcendence, or 'meta-psychological experience' – i.e.

what in today's research on spirituality is sometimes called 'the effect of generalized entanglement' that leads to 'non-local correlations between an individual and a whole',[86] or spirituality. And it is critical to understand that all of them pursued the goal of a 'rational spirituality' for the modern epoch,[87] i.e. a relationship with the unknown or the 'absent presence' paradoxically present in every human life and thus directly open to individual experience, systematic research and collective understanding in full accordance with the rules of investigation, production of knowledge and distribution of insight rightly set by modernity.[88]

In doing this, Steiner, Aurobindo, Maritain, Sorokin, Gebser and the other members of the first generation of modern integrative thinkers brought forward – in many cases independently of each other – core issues of continuing relevance for the establishment of contemporary inclusive and emancipatory frameworks. These included:

(1) The need for a more encompassing cognitive position, endowed, however, with a broadened meaning of rationality that encompasses and reconnects the objective and subjective realms, reason and intuition, across different types and levels of knowledge.
(2) The horizon of a cosmopolitan society beyond the oppositional logics of social, ethnic or national identities,[89] and the need to take into account different cultures and worldviews in order to understand the coalescing aspects of their spiritual positions, and thus to contribute to a metarational understanding of how they can peacefully co-exist.
(3) A humanism attentive to and caring for the unique trajectories of each individual human being, able to withstand the oppressive forces arising from the disconnected dominance of political, economic or religious interests at odds with the flourishing of these trajectories according to their singular potential.
(4) An approach crossing all manner of boundaries (cultural, linguistic, social, disciplinary, etc.), finding inspiration and insight everywhere, engaging in intra-human as well as subjective exploration, and capable, on this basis, of grasping and shaping connective patterns between rationality and spirituality.

In these respects, there are strong resonances between all the early integral authors mentioned. Some of these have been explicitly stated by Gebser and Sorokin, when late in their lives and only after publishing their own work they discovered Aurobindo. Maritain, on the other hand, was knowledgeable about Russian movements to connect intellectual and spiritual dimensions through his wife Raïssa and his friendship with Nicolai Berdyaev (1874–1948). The latter was as much a Russian intellectual forced by Josef Stalin to leave his country as was Sorokin, and both related to the broader movement of 'scientific spirituality' going back at least to Vladimir Solovyov.

Nevertheless, the ways in which these predecessors of contemporary attempts devised their integrative approaches to unfounded scientism and religious dogmatism alike has certainly to be situated in their times, which were marked by high levels of ethnocentric nationalism. For example, the early Aurobindo was a political activist fighting for the independence of India; Steiner made controversial political statements which however were isolated and disconnected from his otherwise non-dogmatic, open-minded and radically pluralistic, if not anarchic, integral approach; Gebser's model drew from and was meant to apply only to the Western world, as much as Maritain's philosophy of society aimed to maintain Christian domination internally; whereas Sorokin, the Harvard Professor of Sociology, remained a strange and criticized figure in the highly empiricist and individualistic context of US sociology given his sources of inspiration in speculative holism coloured by the intellectual currents of his Russian background.

Additionally, the methodological approaches on which these authors based their work would very probably not meet today's research standards. Preceding the rise of postmodern philosophies, none of them were able to address issues that were only later put on the agenda, i.e. to self-reflexively deconstruct the rationally unjustifiable and unnecessarily speculative assumptions in their own works.

With these contextualizations and limitations in mind, major parts of the work of these forerunners of contemporary integral thought merit reappraisal and remain relevant and inspiring today.

8 Decades of transition: the 1960s to the 1990s

Postmaterialist values and 'meta-egoistic' access to self-experience: keys to a transdisciplinary methodology – and mythology – for the upcoming 'post-egoistic' epoch?

The thinkers we have been discussing intuited, in highly individual ways, the rise of a qualitatively and quantitatively innovative culture and worldview. They did so at a time that was profoundly marked by the remnants of Western imperialism, two world wars and scientific materialism – at a time, hence, when such a vision was not at all widespread in society, or in academia. From this perspective, they were two generations ahead of their time. We can state this today because, interestingly, their common intuition started to acquire an evidential basis from empirical research on value change in the decades after their death – i.e. in the period between the mid-1960s and the end of the 1990s.

Many important national and international surveys on value change and value development were conducted during these 35 years, especially the Global Consciousness Change Report, the World Values Surveys, Paul Ray's and Sheryl Anderson's American Values Study, and the European Values Studies. Contrary to a conviction widely held by secular proponents of the

Western Enlightenment project, especially in its atheist (Freudian, Marxist, Nietzschean, etc.) reinterpretations, interest in paradigm integration, specifically in the balancing of realism and idealism and concordant practices, does not seem to fade away automatically on any large scale with the high degrees of rationalism required by science, education and professional life in mature modern societies. On the contrary: when some of the important results of a selection of the above-mentioned reports are considered, it becomes apparent that value-sets espoused by major sections of the populations are undergoing transformation toward integration and inclusion.

In a sample of 67 countries across a range of continents, dominant religions and economic levels of development for which data is available from the World Values Survey of 2000, the majority of the population in 59 countries were found to engage in moments of prayer, meditation or contemplation. Between 1980 and 2000 in several Western countries an increase rather than a decrease was registered in this respect.[90] Since then, the tendency towards the reintroduction of spirituality into secular lifestyles has strengthened rather than weakened – for example, just think of the effects of 9/11 which contributed to the spread of a new 'spiritual realism' among many.[91] Half of all Europeans pray or meditate at least once a week and three-quarters consider themselves spiritual or religious (European Values Study). This can be explained by the fact Western Europeans are 'unchurched' populations rather than simply secular: a significant decline in religious attendance has not resulted, as yet, in a decline of spiritual and/or religious belief. That means that they are 'integrating' their rational everyday logics with idealistic or even transcendental paradigm patterns taken to be an essential part of everyday practices. To some extent, a similar overall pattern of a rising proportion of religiously unaffiliated spiritualities holds true for the USA.[92]

Radical secularists, militant deconstructivists and avowed atheists continue to represent only a small proportion of the population in most Western countries, except in some of those under former Communist rule. Even in the specific milieu of academia with its focus on the cultivation of sophisticated and actively pluralistic forms of rationality, many of its representatives no longer consider science and spirituality completely incompatible – but rather as instantiating a different, but at least potentially complementary, rationality.[93] Many famous scientists have not hidden their personal spiritual worldview while heavily relying on rational mind-set patterns, because they have wanted to cultivate multiple 'access' knowledge and insight by the simultaneous use of diverse rationalities.[94]

However, in many Western countries there is a clear actual 'decline of the congregational domain' of institutionalized religious faith and a 'growth of the holistic – sometimes also "pseudo-holistic" – milieu of highly subjectivized, experiential forms of "spirituality" '.[95] A recent study by Ray and Anderson[96] has found more specifically that a quarter of the US population,

whom they call 'cultural creatives', can be identified as holding a new value-set different from both the traditionalist and the materialist-secularist ones. The value-set of the so-called cultural creatives comprises environmental and social sustainability, globalism, feminism (two-thirds of cultural creatives are women), holistic health care, social justice and the highly personalized combination of rationality and wholeness, or spirituality. The cultural creatives seem often to be innovators in their domain and tend to consciously combine 'outer' work (social and political activism) with 'inner' work (personal, psychological and spiritual exploration). Cultural creatives can be seen as embedded in and advancing various consciousness-raising movements (environmental, feminist, human rights, peace, humanistic and transpersonal psychology, post-religious wholeness, etc.). Their approach towards the combination of rationality and spirituality is generally non-dogmatic, and most of them are religiously non-affiliated.

Nevertheless, cultural creatives still seem to lack awareness of themselves as a distinctive and potentially powerful force for change in society in the medium- and the long-term. For Ray, their growing number and the expansion of their specific lifestyle into the mainstream of society equates to the birth of a transmodern or neo-integral culture that Steiner, Aurobindo, Gebser, Sorokin and others perhaps foreshadowed.[97] The cultural creatives operate 'as a loosely affiliated network of individuals marching to the beat of what often appears to be a disconcertingly silent drum. But the inaudibility of the drumbeat should not disqualify its study, especially when the marching is so clearly in progress.'[98]

But aside from the – latent and explicit – innovation introduced by the cultural creatives, the topic of the specific future relationship between rationality and wholeness, the subjective and the objective, or secularism and spirituality has come to occupy centre-stage in the paradigmatic struggles within Western societies since the 1990s. In trying to find appropriate standpoints towards this crucial relationship for the further development of the Western mind-set,[99] different strands of the population seem to have chosen different attitudes that can be roughly typologized as follows:

- A section of the population living a life split between traditionalist religious dogmas in private and compliance with secular requirements in professional and public life.
- A section reconciling private and public through atheist positions or through the rational reinterpretation or reduction of transcendence and wholeness to mental processes, mechanisms and needs.
- A section developing a new, non-dogmatic openness towards 'non-local correlations between the individual and the whole',[100] engaging in multiple forms of highly individualized and fluid patchwork beliefs or hybrid worldviews, which often tend to be transient.
- A section open to empirically and personally integrating both dimensions in order to effect deep, life-changing transformations and whose

worldview is based essentially on first-hand experience in rational as well as in 'meta-psychological' engagement.

Additionally, this multi-dimensional overall pattern seems to be changing: the first two sections appear to be in slow, but continuous decline, whereas the last two seem to have gained in importance over recent decades. Those acquainted or becoming acquainted with experiential wholeness or integration often consider it perfectly compatible with a rational, pluralistic and self-critical notion of knowledge and insight.[101]

Taken together, the decades from the 1960s to the 1990s can be considered decades of transition from the first generation of integrative worldviews to a second with similar intuitions. While the period from the 1960s to the 1990s did not bring to life specific integrative movements of programmatic character and with an adequate philosophical foundation and/or original theory, they gave birth to the rather diffuse distribution of integrative intuitions among large parts specifically of the wealthier (middle- to upper-class) populations, above all in developed Western societies. Postmaterialist values and meta-egoistic accesses to self-experience multiplied and spread, and some interpreted them as pre-explicit forerunners of, or even keys to, a transdisciplinary inclusive methodology – and mythology – for the post-egoistic epoch we are thought to be embarking on. But how well founded and how realistic is such a viewpoint?

9 The conundrum of a potentially emerging postmodern spirituality since the second half of the 1990s

How, what and wherefore?

The shifts in the patterns and distribution of worldviews and value-sets among the populations of (Western) societies in the period from the 1960s to the 1990s happened to coincide chronologically with the increasing impact of the postmodern turn in philosophy and its reverberations in the humanities and the social sciences.[102] Postmodern approaches have contributed important insights insufficiently stressed by positivist and objectivist paradigms. In particular, postmodern approaches stressed throughout the second half of the twentieth century the value of diversity, multiple voices and perspectives or even extreme forms of relativism, championing the role of culture, discourse and power in the social construction of worldviews. They took sides with the marginalized and the oppressed, and applied genealogical and deconstructive techniques to a huge variety of issues (including research into balancing social issues in general).

Reality beyond discursive formations was, however, negated or at least neglected by postmodern theory building; and to the extent that this was the case, increasing performative as well as logical contradictions appeared. Common ground among competing discourses, together with cross-situational judgements, was rendered impossible because everything

appeared as the mere construct of contextual and situational factors. Therefore, no particular reason could be given for preferring such a postmodern stance over pre-postmodern or mature modern stances. Integration and 'balance' became increasingly impossible, because if everything was a contextual construct, paradigmatic balance between nominalism and any alleged objective essentialism was no longer feasible (because the latter did not exist, according to the postmodern view). In an extreme position, this sometimes transformed scientific research into a rather arbitrary 'language game' alongside other arbitrary language games.[103]

A good example of this position is *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* by Jean-François Lyotard (1924–98).[104] In this, his opus magnum, and in our view probably the most important and in any case the most representative work of political philosophy in the specific paradigm constellation of the late twentieth century, Lyotard maintains explicitly that there is no 'essence' whatsoever in social relations, worldviews or in what we usually call reality. This is because all of these 'unities within the concretely existing particularity' are constructs of culturally, politically and socially shaped discourses, or language games, depending on contexts, social roles and societal constellations. What has to be done in the condition of advanced postmodern insight into the constructive nature of the social, according to Lyotard, is to abandon the search for 'truth' of any kind, because no such thing exists; the only search worth engaging in for Lyotard (and his many academic followers) is the search for 'justice' in the interplay between differing and – as is usual in pluralistic societies – in most cases conflicting language games. This involves providing a suitable language for those who do not have one, i.e. a system of expression enabling them to express their own thoughts and needs, instead of being, as at present, including in developed democratic societies, forced to use discourses and languages that do not belong to them but reflect the interests of the mighty, the influential and the wealthy classes, and are therefore inappropriate for expressing the needs and aspirations of other classes and sections of society. The goal of integration set by modernity in the first half of the twentieth century – national unification and assimilation – turns into its opposite with Lyotard at the end of the century: it becomes the goal of a universal, radical and irreducible liberation of diversity, even at the cost of losing any unity, comparability or coherence.[105]

Particularly interesting in this respect is the simultaneous, to a large extent contradictory, and even paradoxical take on wholeness – and in some cases even on 'spirituality' – in the late work of several leading postmodern philosophers, all of them fiercely secularist, including Lyotard himself.[106] After pushing deconstruction and 'universal' relativism over decades to their very limits, including undertaking the radical dismantlement, if not 'destruction' (Martin Heidegger) of any 'substantial' image of the self, the 'I', society and the world, thus reducing literally everything, including notions of human dignity and human rights, to a linguistic and cultural construct, some leading thinkers realized to their surprise that there was,

as Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) put it, 'something which obviously resists deconstruction. There seems to be something that functions as an invisible prerequisite to sustain the process of deconstruction itself, until everything deconstructable is deconstructed. It is like the eye of the storm: It is part of the process, but it cannot be touched by it.'[107]

Lyotard, Derrida and even Michel Foucault (1926–84) discovered, in the last years of their lives, that there must be something that constitutes the ontological basis of deconstruction and of language games – something that consists in an actively driving force of the *living process* of thought prior to the emergence of any *contents* of thought. What they became aware of is a kind of primordial, non-located, but already on a certain level self-conscious 'life energy' of thinking, consciousness and awareness: something that usually eludes the mind of the thinker, because the thinking mind always identifies with its contents, and misses the processes on which these contents are based, and out of which they are being born, i.e. its own life process, which is an active gesture of creation through 'inspiration'. This inspiration must be something that is the prerequisite of all contents of thought, its fountainhead, so to speak: something that has not been constructed in the first place, but instead is – and functions as – the prerequisite of all constructs. It must be a 'pre-positive constructing process, empty in itself', a 'productive void', or an 'absent presence'.[108] It must be something like a non-identifiable awareness, or even something like 'pure consciousness', however it may be designated. This concept of a 'productive void' coined by late postmodern philosophers seems astonishingly close to the concept of the 'void' in advanced Buddhist and Hindu thought and spiritual practice.[109]

However, the question that comes after total (or fulfilled) deconstruction – or in other words, after the breakthrough to the total 'nothingness' of all known 'essences' – could never be answered by the late deconstructive frameworks themselves.[110] When the 'free void' appears after deconstruction has eaten up the process of postmodern deconstructive thinking, it issues in stagnation or endless iteration (reconstructing something to deconstruct it again immediately), and eventually all too often in 'rational despair' in the face of everything becoming nothing – or at least nothing sustainable, and nothing essential.

In contrast to postmodern deconstruction, in various Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and many other spiritual lineages, 'after the dark night' of the 'annihilation of everything' realization of the essence or non-dual awareness becomes possible. The witness and the witnessed come together in sat-chit-ananda, nirvana, mystic union etc., i.e. in an awareness considered and experienced as equivalent to supreme 'nothingness' or the 'productive void', but experienced not as despair but rather as bliss and liberation, and ultimately as the end of despair through the end of the 'lower self' and the liberation of the 'higher self', in other words through a 'non-local' identification with the whole beyond the ego.[111]

Summing up, the emerging 'late postmodern spirituality' or academic 'negative spirituality' at the end of the decades of transition in the 1990s was characterized by three main features:

(1) It stemmed from and arose out of radically secular academic thought by the sheer logics of its own development towards (self-)deconstruction, and thus without being 'added' artificially to existing patterns of academic reflection, but as an immanently logical consequence of the patterns of advanced secular thought itself.
(2) It had a negative, indirect, passive, and theory-driven (speculative) character.
(3) It aspired, at the peak of its influence and in its final developmental stage at the end of the 1990s, to be transformed into a more direct, positive, active and practice-driven (empirical) spiritual experience of 'living nothingness', without succeeding in this aspiration.

With this development of a postmodern rational (because self-conscious and self-observant) spirituality, though unfulfilled and unfinished, the integrative developments in the decades of transition from the 1960s to the 1990s came to a peak, and at the same time in many respects, to an end. Something new had to be located if the latent integrative intuitions of the times were to be soundly elaborated, developed and concretized. A further step had to be taken beyond the threshold of what late postmodern thought was capable of problematizing and approaching at the intersection of secularism and transcendence, and of nominalism and realism, but was never able to integrate sufficiently. The necessity for such a next paradigm step was in the air as the new, twenty-first century dawned.

Viewed overall, for philosophical and spiritual reasons alike, the late postmodern mind, although already 'proto-spiritual' in some of its trajectories, turned out to be limited in its scope, its cognitive capacities and its boundaries of validity and legitimacy. Thus one crucial question arose: what could come after postmodernism? Or to put it in a more nuanced and specific way: how could insight from the 'late postmodern theological turn'[112] be preserved while maintaining the possibility of overcoming its inbuilt limitations through more paradigmatically balanced research, an understanding of reality both in a deconstructivist *and* an essentialist way, and the deployment of valid moral judgements without losing the (self-)critical awareness of contexts, histories, discourses and power patterns behind them? In other words, the question became: which rationally defensible worldviews can make it evident that void and bliss are hinged together, that touching the void or the ground-state of consciousness (as the late Lyotard and Derrida obviously did) does not necessarily mean despair and nihilism, but rather sharpened awareness and increased creativity? Which worldview can adequately depict and integrate both rationality and spirituality – and thus fully elaborate on the worth, as well as the contradictions – of traditional, modern *and* postmodern positions alike?

10 From the first to a second wave of integrative worldviews compatible with the Western Enlightenment and mature modernity

Contemporary integrative frameworks since 2001, and their productively ambivalent relationship with the specific cultural, political and civilizational dialectics of our time

With these questions, a new phase of development of (neo-)integrative thought was in effect opened up, providing the agenda for another generation of integrative thinkers of the twenty-first century.

The co-existence of and the fierce struggle between the defenders of frameworks of modernist and postmodernist inspiration in philosophy, science, society and spirituality exerted strong intellectual and existential constraints upon a whole generation (and still does to some extent). Their respective imperialisms and dialectics of dead ends were (and continue to be) highly unsatisfactory for growing numbers of the Western elites, and proved increasingly inadequate for the emerging age of globalization. But as there was no way back from the postmodern turn, at least not for established academic discourses, there were basically three choices for serious younger scholars at the start of the twenty-first century: first, to engage on either side in the paradigm wars, i.e. to choose either the modernist or the postmodernist viewpoint, and to then engage in a fierce battle against the other viewpoint for the rest of their lives; second, to leave philosophy of science, spirituality and religion to a few specialists, and turn towards applied research or some specialist niche while actively ignoring its foundations and embeddedness in ontology and axiology; or, third, to invent something new, a third way, or a critically integrative position.

The first two options appealed to many philosophers, researchers and activists of the post-9/11 'neoconservative turn' in academia, if not from conviction then from need. The third option attracted a number of bright newcomers coming from quite different contexts across the globe. They aimed to transcend the existing constraints and to leave behind either–or thinking regarding paradigms in theory and practice alike, as well as to engage actively with the ambiguous heritage of postmodernism and to push it one step further towards a sound, critically integrated new paradigm for a world that turned out to be more complex and contradictory than that of the decades that preceded it.

Thus in the twenty-first century a second generation of integrative theory and practice arose. For a decade now it has, on the one hand, demonstrated a positively ambivalent relationship with the pioneers of the twentieth century and, on the other, shown a sometimes negatively ambivalent relationship with some specific dialectics of our time, especially with the remnants of deconstructive postmodern thought and culture and its fight against the classical features of modernism. Nevertheless, some of the current representatives of neo-integrative thought seem to be in process of laying down

the foundations of several integrative, original emancipatory streams, much as their predecessors did in the first half of the twentieth century (many of whom these newcomers did not, and do not, necessarily know well or indeed at all). Since the end of the 1990s and the start of the twenty-first century, some of them have been scaled up step by step to fully fledged integrative frameworks, touching many domains of life and reality, and entraining worldwide networks and initiatives of renewal in research and practice.

11 Concordant features of neo-integrative paradigm building in the twenty-first century

Again, as we saw with the pioneers of integral thought of the first half of the twentieth century, the emergence of contemporary versions of balanced and connective worldviews in different places, contexts and cultures has been almost simultaneous. Among the current leading thinkers (whom we here again select arbitrarily in a necessarily eclectic and incomplete manner) are Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (1921–90), Enrique Dussel (1934–), Basarab Nicolescu (1942–), Johannes Heinrichs (1942–), Roy Bhaskar (1944–) and Ken Wilber (1949–). Other representatives of neo-integrative thought from a *de facto* (much) larger sample include Fred Dallmayr (1928–), Paul Ehrlich (1932–), Kensei Hiwaki (1945–), Michael Opielka (1956–), Harald Walach (1957–), Jaap Sijmons (1959–), Niko Kohls (1972–) and Nikolaus von Stillfried (1976–).[113]

What these thinkers and their approaches (as well as the movements some of them have inspired) actually share with each other, to what extent they complement each other and – perhaps most importantly – how they can critically point to each other's blind spots to mutually trigger the next wave of their development has not yet been sufficiently researched.

Each of these approaches originally arose from a specific trajectory, in philosophy (Bhaskar, Dussel), psychology (Wilber, Walach, Kohls, Stillfried), physics (Nicolescu), geographically bound spiritual traditions (Sarkar), secularized Western theology (Heinrichs), postmodern sociology (Opielka), or applied ecology (Ehrlich). Each of them has a specific emphasis, from methodological (Nicolescu) to historical (Dussel) to practical (Sarkar) issues, and each of them is trying to advance a specific type of a theoretical project, from underlabouring (emphasized by Bhaskar) to overarching (emphasized by Wilber) to transcending (emphasized by Nicolescu) to self-critical (Dussel, but most of the others as well). However, there are no clear-cut distinctions between most contemporary avant-garde integral thinkers. In fact, it is remarkable that each approach has something to say about more or less all of these aspects. Multi-disciplinarity and a broad range of cognitive and practical interests are their core attributes.

Taken together, despite different emphases and divergences on more specific questions, a new understanding of knowledge, development, society, rationality, being and spirituality in and for the twenty-first century is

taking shape in the work of these thinkers. Most of their approaches share as their basis inclusive, emancipatory understandings of the multi-faceted complexity of human being, of society and of nature, as well as insight into the non-separateness of the individual and social planes, and of the objective and subjective realms. All of them certainly share historical and present constraints and choices, a desire to integrate local and non-local fields, and a drive to reconcile the relative and the absolute domains of being. In their approaches, the contributions of Indigenous, Eastern and Western cultures, science and spiritualities throughout history are brought together and thought together, a history which is on-going, with many of its wounds not yet healed, and its potential for complementarity not yet much made use of. As marginal to the mainstream and as diverse and unknown to each other as these (and other) contemporary integrative frameworks still may be, they are in process of making a potentially sustainable impact on the global intellectual landscape, especially when defending their well-grounded claims both in theory and in practice.

12 Summary

What does the overall picture look like today?
And what are the perspectives?

There seem to be interesting relationships between various contemporary attempts, arising from as yet relatively independent streams, to devise a vision of reality and of human life in society encompassing subjective and objective perspectives, material and spiritual dimensions, relative realms conceived in evolutionary terms and the absolute that can only be approached by non-dual awareness. Most contemporary attempts at integrative worldviews consider 'rational spiritual' dimensions to be essential to the human being and to the nature of the universe, and hence not to be bypassed and neglected in research and practice. And all of them at the same time underscore that spirituality today is not necessarily faith-bound. It can be considered rather as an integral part of everyday life regardless of specific beliefs (atheist beliefs included), compatible with – if not essentially requiring – critical rationality at high levels of reflexivity and individuality, pointing towards integrated multi-rational modes of cognition. Most of the contemporary integrative worldviews we have noted are liberal, emancipatory and empowering, opening up doorways to constructive inner and outer transformation. They assign prime importance to the coherence of theory and practice, to the inclusion of as many known domains of life and reality as possible, and to opening up experimental pathways beyond the current state of affairs. Accordingly, these approaches necessarily engage a strong ethical commitment.

Most of the current neo-integrative attempts depart from materialistic science to move towards a more encompassing approach through an explicit inclusion of spirituality, however conceived and related to the ambivalent

existence of the person, and to the concrete dialectics of the social and material world. In these respects, many of them have some resonance with traditional worldviews, while in most cases relativizing their mythic content, and trying to introduce a comparatively heightened awareness of global history and cultural diversity.

On the other hand, with regard to the remnants of postmodern relativism on the verge of nihilism, they re-assert the validity of ontological realism and of trans-contextual values, but without falling prey to the potential 'neoconservative' return of a modernist observer-free, objectivist epistemology and its corresponding trend to re-specialization, manifest over the last few years in international academia.[114]

Third, contemporary integrative approaches also differ decisively from certain fundamentalist, 'occultist' or 'New Age' ideas of an alleged 'new spirituality'. This is because they do not aspire to be anti-intellectual, irrational, dogmatic, otherworldly or sedative (as the occultist and New Age approaches are in the main). On the contrary, in a highly reflexive and differentiated manner, they are taking up the challenges of complexity and inclusion that have become apparent in the wake of: first, the increasingly intense confluence of the cultures of East and West, North and South in global transactions, based on the break-up of the traditional structures of a global history of domination and exploitation; second, the Copernican, Freudian and Einsteinian revolutions of pre-modern and modern worldviews, and the postmodern deconstructive critiques of grand narratives; and third, the unsustainable path towards the destruction of society and nature along which humanity is heading today.

As we can see today, there are resonances between the various strands and streams of these timely neo-integrative efforts, as well as shared interests, complementary emphases and distinct potential for mutually beneficial critique. But even when considered together, neo-integral approaches still defend a minority position in the ever more fragmented landscape of hundreds of sub-disciplines, ostensible paradigm wars and intellectually supported clashes of civilizations.

Accordingly, many of these current attempts are facing common threats. These include the threats of: first, ignorance or active rejection and discreditation by the academic mainstream, secluding them at the 'margins of the system'; second, self-closure – conceptually and organizationally – arising from a number of factors, ranging from the demanding nature of the task of establishing an infrastructure and community for one's own specific stream to the risk of self-contradictory fossilization inside each approach due to the formation of rigid identifications; and third, running out of time and having insufficient impact on society because the integrative, emancipatory alternatives remain scattered, weak and unnoticed in the multimedia attention economy.

One promising prospect, however, is that of synergetically developed strength, impact and visibility through cross-connections, mutual critique

and recognition of a common vocation to make a timely intervention in the on-going global crises. Thus, the next step in the evolution of these frameworks, if they want to be true to their own foundational integrative principles, has to embrace transcendence of self-closure and the active encouragement of dialogue across approaches, movements and streams. This can be achieved through joint conferences, publications, research and intervention projects on, across and beyond the platforms already developed by some of the different neo-integrative approaches.

Other, more resonant approaches need to be elaborated and, together with already existing streams not mentioned in this discussion, invited to a 'festival of dialogues'.[115] Such a festival has to be continually tuned and facilitated to respect the uniqueness and specific profile of each of the streams, while stimulating connection in further development and application. A critical, realist, value-aware, experiential and rational invitation to integrate spirituality into practical life across and beyond beliefs, and to join philosophy, experiential psychology and scientific research, is very much called for. This will undoubtedly enlarge and enhance our understanding and practice of multi-faceted rationalities, as much as our understanding and practice of research in a culturally diverse, rapidly globalizing, technological risk society; and indeed, this is already happening.[116]

It is even more certain that attacks will continue to be made on some of the current neo-integrative paradigms, above all by those who defend dogmatic scientism, dogmatic faith and/or hegemonic paradigm power. Nevertheless, however weak, ambiguous, partially faulty or problematic in parts of their structure they may appear, their (at least potential) relevance for the timely overcoming of traditional dichotomies and dead ends in philosophy, science, spirituality and religion can hardly be denied. Accordingly, while they are not yet deliberately engaging sufficiently in overt appreciative and critical dialogues with each other, there does seem to be a strong basis for this to happen in their common interest in uncovering and strengthening their joint future-shaping potentials and capacities.

13 Conclusion

Towards new concepts of integration and inclusion

Many observers and proponents of neo-integrative paradigm building currently hope that, with the start of the Barack Obama era on January 20, 2009, we may have entered a phase, not only of political change, but also of an (at least potentially) broader and 'deeper' cultural and paradigm transition. Indeed, if only part of what Obama promised as political, cultural, ecological and societal transformation[117] becomes reality, such a paradigm transition could unleash broad effects in the West, and possibly also beyond. It could influence the cultural and social constellation not only of the USA and of its adjacent so-called first world, but of internationalized

societies around the globe. And if nothing else, it could offer a noticeably improved cultural-psychological environment for attempts at integrative innovation.

One crucial question for most current approaches committed productively – in one way or the other – to the 'deep change' of the present is: how can a new, overarching socio-cultural paradigm for the age of globalization – a paradigm that embraces multi-layered inclusivity and is capable of replacing the often repressive societal 'unitarism' of the previous era – be forged? The pre-Obama conservative concept of a 'united' society – as well as of a 'unified' West – mixed up political, economic, cultural and religious logics and discourses to the point, on the one hand, of mutual exploitation, manipulation and oppression, and on the other of the 'dissolution' of ideological and material interests in a thicket of highly non-transparent goals and actions. This wild, largely unstructured and undifferentiated mix, often – especially in the Bush era – centred around atavistic biblico-Christian belief structures of a rather undifferentiated kind, has often been misinterpreted as a timely form of 'integrative worldview' or 'new integralism'. Given that this misinterpretation has for a number of years shadowed many of the liberal and progressive aspirations of the streams of neo-integrative thought we have been discussing to a specifically differentiated integration – i.e. an integration that takes place only on the basis of, and after, fully achieved differentiation – this question seems to be of decisive importance for the coming years. It thus becomes necessary to point out publicly the liberal and progressive character of the neo-integrative paradigm attempts. The question is: how can the *regressive* concept of an integrative society that has dominated the past decade be best replaced by a *progressive* concept of it?

The answer is not easy. It clear, in the first place, that such a progressive concept must embrace a paradigm pattern capable of integrating the still academically dominant remnants of deconstructive postmodern nominalism with a 'new mature' modern realism. In order to move beyond the 'bellicose idealism' of the Bush years and achieve a more balanced cultural and civilizational self-concept of 'the West', apt for the inclusion not only of secular societal logics but also of the growing number of progressive spiritually informed discourses, which are increasingly influencing the present age of a global return of religion (and which are at the heart of Obama's own inspiration as well), it will be necessary to promote a full appreciation of the postmodernist self-critique and deconstruction of unitarian aspirations of any kind, and then integrate them with the constructive traits of a realistic approach towards an inclusive 'metaReality'.[118]

Second, the search for a systemic inclusion of nominalism and realism has actually been under way in progressive socio-political and academic circles in Europe and the USA since the last years of the neoconservative epoch, but so far with rather mixed results. It has led, in the past few years of global transition, on the one hand to the emergence of various

movements rooted in explicitly multi-dimensional philosophies that have tried (and are trying) to think of emancipation as no longer a battle for supremacy between differing worldviews (some of them conceived as wrong, and the others as right), but rather as an effort towards active complementarity between differing viewpoints. These innovative paradigm formations have tried (and continue to try) to integrate the radical postmodern nominalism and (de-)constructivism that dominated the decades between the 1960s and the 1990s with a sound, empirically based 'rational and transcendental logicism'.[119] This effort may appear, at least at first glance, difficult and in many cases contradictory, and there are indeed several core problems that are still unresolved. But it could be that, from our point of view, it is precisely this effort that will pave the way for an appropriate step forward beyond the identification of the integrative worldview with aspects of the heritage of neoconservative unitarism.

Third, in contrast, the search for explicitly inclusive innovation also led, during the Bush years, to the resurgence of an increasing number of 'neo-essentialist' movements, which have tried (and are trying) to revitalize certain paradigmatic patterns of value-centredness in the direction of a return towards unitarian worldviews that dominated the right-wing movements the USA in the 1980s and 1990s. These movements have tried (and are trying) to merge politics, religion, economics and culture into a grand unity of discourse and societal logic – and thus have contributed to the creation of regressive paradigm tendencies that are still at work today to some extent.

Last but not least, the search produced as a further dimension a mix of these two tendencies: it spawned allegedly integral movements that, at a relatively early stage of their development, turned into – in most cases unconsciously – *de facto* neoconservative, hierarchic and partially authoritarian and cultic paradigm currents.

The overall picture of the integrative movements that are in play in the early years of the Obama era, which all claim to be proponents of innovation and 'pragmatic idealism', is highly complex and split into competing parts. It is composed of very different typologies of neo-integralism, which all assert that they want to achieve goals that look superficially similar, but which in reality could not be more different in their implications and perspectives when one takes a closer look.

That said, it nevertheless also seems to be a fact that most of the integrative worldviews active in today's academy have at least one feature in common: most are trying to connect major concerns of science, individual transformation and social activism on a worldwide level.

Within this constellation, our hypothesis for the sound further development of the progressive strands of neo-integrative thought and action is: first, that we can account for the multi-local development of mature modern approaches to a more inclusive and balanced, or subjective–objective and nominalistic–realistic, paradigm as a kind of 'natural' phenomenon

of emergence in the present stage of cultural and civilizational transition; second, that aspects of this development are directly and indirectly sustained by the political transformation on both sides of the Atlantic, and by aspects of other political developments around the world; and third, that under the condition of raised mutual awareness and deliberate cooperation among its elements, the overall movement towards paradigmatic inclusion has considerable potential for cross-fertilization, productive criticism and the transformation of different strands of contemporary science, knowledge and education.

Our hope in sketching this – merely approximate and impressionistically representative – general picture of the present paradigm transition is that the different strands of progressive integral efforts, which are still in competition with each other, may evolve towards a stage of consolidation and mutual communication. Moreover, that they may do so by departing and coming together on and from both sides of the Atlantic in individual ways, which will have to be accepted and critically advanced in close dialogue with differing cultural and academic traditions. As always in academic thought, mutual constructive critique will be far better than blind admiration, and therefore we hold that an inter-critical discourse[120] has to be started as soon and as intensively as possible – one moreover that actively engages the different viewpoints that have evolved within the integrative movements in the USA and Continental Europe, but also (and increasingly) on a global level.

14 Outlook

What is the future of all this?

The first priority is the establishment of a decent continuity in facilitating integrative paradigm building on an academic and scientific level, and to build a modern foundation of historically informed erudition, memory and comparative research about the integrative movements. This is important for laying the foundations for the first joint identity of integral worldviews of our time in the broadest sense, and for enabling them to build sustainable bridges between themselves. This first joint identity may not be a common cultural identity, but might rather consist in a shareable basis of common sense that respects differences and diversity within federation building.

Second, it is important not to overlook the fact that worldviews, precisely to the extent that they are able to change existing and create new cultural patterns, seem to have become a decisive asset for the further development of humankind, and that they are increasingly called for and needed at the present stage of globalization. Culture, i.e. the 'software' factors of postindustrial civilizations, will very probably rise to an importance equal, or superior, to that of economics and politics, because most of the imminent macro-decisions of how mature modernity could and should evolve depend on insight into value structures (including concepts of meaning and truth),

social connectedness (including a sense of wholeness and spirituality) and greater civilizational behaviour (including sustainability).

In this sense, the strictly cultural dimension arising from the integrative worldviews will very probably play an increasingly important part in the destiny of developed societies, and of all those who directly or indirectly depend on them. Or as Stanford's Paul Ehrlich, author of *The Population Bomb*, recently rightly put it:

> Cultural Evolution becomes always more essential in preventing a global collapse of society. I am a Biologist, but I have shifted my own research mostly into the area of cultural evolution, because I am convinced, as are my colleagues, that we are not going to solve the gigantic problems humanity faces without a real change in culture and behaviour. We [have] got to have cultural evolution, so that we start to treat each other and the environment on which we all depend much better. So it's a matter of behavioural change. But we don't know anywhere as near as much about cultural evolution, that is evolution in our non-genetic information, as we do in Darwinism, which is evolution in our genetic information. And we don't have any international effort to say: How are we behaving? We have global problems, why don't we have a global (cultural) system to fix them? [. . .] Nowhere is it written that we have to succeed in avoiding the first global collapse of a civilization. We have a long history as a species of building civilizations and then having them collapse, for example the classic Maya, the Easter Island culture, the Greeks. They were regional, or local. For the first time in human history, today we have the threat of the collapse of a global civilization, and there is no reason at all to believe that we are changing fast enough to avoid it. But it seems to me, particularly if I look at the young kids I know, that we all have the ethical obligation to try.[121]

Integrative worldviews could – and hopefully will – be able to make a productive and fruitful contribution to this cultural evolution, given that most of them conceive of themselves as having an ethical obligation to help move globalized culture, and indeed behaviour, forward.

'We live in a time for seeking new horizons, but we must understand that those who most need new direction are preoccupied with revisiting the past.' Thus Roland Hsu.[122] If this thought-provoking statement is true, and if it is equally true that contemporary history, due to its ever accelerating pace of change and its effect of 'shrinking the present',[123] depends more than ever on the 'future of memory',[124] then the comparative historical study of attempts at integrative worldviews becomes essential for enabling us to develop new forms of such attempts. In studying the history of integrative thought and practice in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, a mind-set can be cultivated that allows us to anticipate, to outline and practically to establish a new integrative worldview.

Careful study of the overall paradigm constellation in the interplay between rationality and spirituality suggests that current attempts at progressive integrative worldviews have one decisive lesson to learn from their predecessors. They must ensure that they do not remain at the stage of being somewhat one-sided advocates of the renewal of spirituality *against* modernity but move on towards becoming fully balanced, commonsense-oriented proponents of a rational spirituality *within* modernity. Thus we think it of the utmost importance for the future of attempts at integrative worldviews that they promote, first and foremost, an *integrative paradigm discourse*, instead of focusing all too exclusively on an alleged re-integration (in itself an often misleading term) of spirituality into contemporary consciousness. This is because spirituality is and can be only one part of a greater whole – of a balanced civilizational paradigm of globalization, i.e. of the 'global mind-set'[125] as a whole that is emerging today.

Opening up a broader discourse about progressive paradigm innovation is something that the historical predecessors of integrative worldviews in the twentieth century could not fully achieve due to the restrictions of their times. The more it becomes 'an ethical obligation'[126] for the present generation to strive for it in order to develop the full richness of the enlightened rational mind of today, the more it will hopefully re-emerge, strengthened by that effort, at the centre of the trajectory of our globalized epoch.

In short, what we have seen in this chapter suggests that the emergence of a truly 'rationally spiritual' worldview for our times is decisively related to the emergence of a neo-integral paradigm of an explicitly self-critical, scientific and rational stance. The chances of seeing *such* an integrative paradigm being established, and succeeding in the current worldview debates within an acceptable time-frame, must be regarded, at least from our point of view, with cautious, realistic optimism.

Notes

1 We are grateful to Mervyn Hartwig for language-editing this essay. All translations from non-English-language sources are ours.
2 The term ideology in Encyclopedia of Marxism n.d.
3 The term ideology in Markville Secondary School n.d.
4 The term ideology in European Photography n.d.
5 The term ideology in History Central n.d.
6 Cf. Žižek 1989, 1993.
7 Cf. Derrida [1967] 1997; Lyotard [1983] 1991; also Jurainville 1984. An in many ways contradictory position, however, is held by Habermas 1998.
8 Lyotard [1979] 1984.
9 Bauman 1991.
10 Hobsbawm 1994.
11 Cf. Dietz 1988.
12 Habermas [1998] 2001. Cf. also Habermas [1985] 1998.
13 Cf. Goodwin and Tilly, eds, 2006.
14 Fukuyama 1992.

15 Beck [1986] 2004; Reinalter 2000.
16 Bauman 1991.
17 Beck [1986] 2004.
18 Jameson 1991.
19 Žižek 1989, 1993.
20 Benedikter 2000.
21 Benedikter 2010.
22 Lübbe 1997.
23 Cf. Erne *et al.* eds, 1995.
24 Gebser [1949/53] 1985.
25 Habermas 1985, [1998] 2001.
26 Bhaskar 2002b, c.
27 Bostrom 2007.
28 Cf. Goodwin and Tilly, eds, 2006.
29 Habermas [1998] 2001.
30 Clinton 2009.
31 Gidley 2007.
32 Lübbe 1997.
33 Habermas [2005] 2008.
34 Habermas [2005] 2008.
35 To mention just one recent example, the (in)famous 'Wyatt Earp affair' involving integral thinker Ken Wilber (1949–) has clearly presented features of this ambiguity, positioning the practice of 'integral thinking and action' of Wilber in the interplay between progressive and regressive enactments.
36 Habermas [1998] 2001.
37 These are concepts that are not tied to 'the West', but on the contrary affect in principle all areas of the world in very different ways, depending strongly on the respective point of departure.
38 Lyotard [1983] 1991.
39 Butler 2004.
40 Benedikter 2008.
41 In our view, 'complexity' is per se, like other terms inherited from late postmodernity, in many respects already a pre- or proto-integral concept, at least if put into perspective, i.e. projected into the future.
42 Cf. Stillfried 2007.
43 Benedikter 2008.
44 Goodwin and Tilly, eds, 2006.
45 Kuhn 1962.
46 We prefer in this context the term 'planetary civilization', as coined and subsequently developed over a decade by J. Gidley, E. Lazlo, M. Kaku, K. Hiwaki and other prominent representatives of contemporary integrative worldviews, to the term 'globalization', even though the term 'planetary' is doubtless to some extent over-confident and audacious, especially if used not as a tool of motivation (for civil society purposes etc.), but as a concept of scientific foresight. For more science-based details of the concept of planetary civilization, see Kaku 1997. Like many others, Kaku places most faith in the progress of the (natural) sciences and underestimates, if not explicitly devalues, the importance and necessity of paradigm building by the humanities and social sciences.
47 Benedikter 2006b.
48 Žižek 1993.
49 Cf. Lyotard [1991] 1994.
50 Habermas [1985] 1998. Some contemporary theorists of 'postmodern neo-integrative' thought like J. Heinrichs (1942–) or M. Opielka (1956–), to

mention just two leading figures in the Central European region, would most likely state that these four typologies are in principle present, at least *in nuce*, i.e. as a potential for differentiation and inclusion towards the 'trinitarian' ideals of 'freedom, equality and difference' (Hsu 2009), in all current societies of our time, regardless of their state of evolution, their level of public diffusion of emancipatory values or their political system. Since there continues to be a heated debated on this issue which could lead to misunderstandings, or at least to discursive ambiguities with considerable effects on the progress of the overall theoretical discussion on the topic of integrative thought as such, we prefer here to follow the commonly accepted academic notions of integrative structural features belonging merely to 'mature modern' or 'postmodern' societies. Thus, we ascribe full 'integrative' powers of paradigm development so far, and for the time being, only and exclusively to contemporary *democratic* societies, wherever they may be found, in an acceptable manner, and on a global level. Democracy seems to be the decisive key to the development of sound integrative thinking of any kind in our epoch, without exception either in the past or in the future. Cf. Gamwell 1997.

51 Gidley 2007.

52 Popper [1945] 2003.

53 Essed 2009.

54 Halprin and King 2009. Cf. The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University 2010: 'The Program on Liberation Technology seeks to understand how information technology can be used to defend human rights, improve governance, empower the poor, promote economic development, and pursue a variety of other social goods. The last few years have seen explosive growth in the use of information technology to defend human rights, improve governance, fight corruption, deter electoral fraud, expose government wrongdoing, empower the poor, promote economic development, protect the environment, educate consumers, improve public health, and pursue a variety of other social goods. Lying at the intersection of social science, computer science, and engineering, the Program on Liberation Technology seeks to understand how (and to what extent) various information technologies and their applications – including mobile phones, text messaging (SMS), the Internet, blogging, GPS, and other forms of digital technology – are enabling citizens to advance freedom, development, social justice, and the rule of law. It will examine technical, legal, political, and social obstacles to the wider and more effective use of these technologies, and how these obstacles can be overcome. And it will try to evaluate (through experiment and other empirical methods) which technologies and applications are having greatest success, how those successes can be replicated, and how less successful technologies and applications can be improved to deliver real economic, social, and political benefit … Working with the Program on Global Justice and individuals from the Department of Computer Science and a variety of other areas of the campus, the Centre on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law hosts the Liberation Technology program.'

55 Benkler 2009.

56 Habermas 1998.

57 Perlas 2004.

58 Conrad and Sachsenmaier 2007.

59 Molz 2009.

60 Jacques 2009.

61 Jacques 2009. Cf. Elliott 2009, 32ff.

62 We regard it as equally significant here that for a couple of years, and more precisely since the 'great cultural divide' on an international scale following the events of 9/11, the cultural-political 'lead term' of the second half of the twentieth century, 'the West', is strongly disputed in the international academic community – with equally heated disputes in its sociological and its political subdivisions alike. One reason for this is that the term 'the West' between 1945 and 2001 often passively bore, or even actively transmitted, ideological implications, with the intention of creating a power-related artificial unity among the dominant geo-political areas of the so-called first world, namely the USA, the Anglo-Saxon world and Continental Europe – despite all their real differences and even inter-competition. Ironically, this decades-long quest for an artificial unity of leverage and domination between the Anglo-Saxon world and Continental Europe has often been denominated as an attempt at political, cultural and social 'integration', which is a euphemism if compared to the realities in play. See also e.g. Baldwin 2009.

Thus, the term 'the West' – which is still sometimes cited as a reference point for the development of avant-gardist integrative worldviews – would necessarily require a more sophisticated discussion of its specific history (as reflected, for example, in the historical change within the standard introductory university lectures in the humanities that from the 1940s to the 1980s went by the name of 'Introduction to Western Civilization'), but also of its scope and its current stratification of meaning within the present moment of transition. Above all, the present debate about avant-gardist worldviews appropriate for 'globalization' would require an extended discussion of the relationship between the concepts of 'the West' and 'integration' in recent decades. Since we do not have the space to undertake such a discussion here, we use the term 'the West' for reasons of facilitation in this chapter within the framework of its traditional (and clearly conservative) content, i.e. as comprising primarily the 'great family of Anglo-Saxon peoples' (Margaret Thatcher), Continental Europe and some of the societies that imitate and/or are sympathetic to these geo-political areas.

63 Cf. Derrida and Habermas 2003.
64 See for example Shapiro and Whitney 2009.
65 Holton 2007.
66 Cf. Elliott 2009.
67 Adams and Carfagna 2006.
68 Halman *et al.* 2008. See also Benedikter, ed., 2001–5.
69 Cf. Fararo and Kosaka 2003.
70 Geertz 1996.
71 Fararo and Kosaka 2003.
72 Cf. Elliott 2009.
73 Habermas 1985.
74 Aquinas [*c*.1225] 1976.
75 Cf. Benedikter 2008.
76 See among others, the many outstanding contributions of R. Inglehart (see the excellent summary of his work of the past 35 years in Inglehart 2008), but also over two dozen studies in Benedikter, ed., 2001–5.
77 Juergensmeyer, ed., 2003.
78 See – as just one example among many – Fuller 2001.
79 Farmer *et al.* 2000.
80 Lyotard [1979] 1984.
81 Gidley 2006.
82 This list could obviously be extended *ad libitum*, and possibly even *ad infinitum*; it is meant just as an example, and of course it is not at all complete. Much research remains to be carried out into the history of integral mind-sets

since the early twentieth century – research which, if carried out in a comparative manner, will most probably bring to light some overloooked or forgotten treasures that we are not able to include here.

83 See the excellent overview in Payrow Shabani 2003; Barrow 1999; Dupré 2003.

84 Saint-Exupéry literally said: 'When it comes to the *future*, our task is not to foresee it, but *rather* to *enable* it to happen.' See Finest Quotes n.d.

85 Butler 2004.

86 Kohls and Walach 2008; Kohls *et al.* 2009.

87 Benedikter 2006a.

88 Kohls and Walach 2008; Kohls *et al.* 2009.

89 It seems important to note that in today's arena of the 'open societies' of 'the West', *ideas* and *identities* seem to be increasingly becoming two dialectical, colliding, if not structurally and functionally conflicting, logical patterns within the spheres of cultural psychology, public rationality and societal discourse. This is another paradigmatic motive for change and development that has often been underestimated, especially by discourses pointing towards post-postmodern integration. The reason for the increasing split between ideas and identities is that ideas are in many respects – and per se – the opposite of identities. An idea is (at least in its ontological 'core') always something new that arises within a time-centred process, with unfixed meaning and end; an identity by contrast is something, which in its ontological core always strives to remain what it is, independently of time. An idea is about time; an identity is about meta-time. An idea always wants to become something other than it is initially, i.e. a reality or a different, better idea; by contrast, an identity always wants to remain what it is, and strengthen that which is. That means: ideas are in principle agents of openness and 'fluidification' (Zygmunt Bauman); identities are in principle agents of conservation and stability. Both ideas and identities thus seem to be logically and functionally complementary to each other in many ways, and both seem even to a certain extent to need each other in order to fulfil their respective structural functions for the unfolding societal logic as a whole. But simultaneously, both seem increasingly to be opposed to each other on a systemic level, and this systemic opposition seems to be one decisive feature of the logical and discursive patterns of Western societies of the post-9/11 epoch. We could even say: in the history of modernity there has perhaps never been such a 'deep' and 'wide' dispute between ideas and identities as in the present constellation of post-postmodern Western societies. The reasons for the development of this new intrinsically 'sharp' dialectics are certainly complex, but one has to be seen in the fact that, on the one hand, the effects of globalization (de-nationalization, migration, worldwide interconnection of markets and economies and of the respective crises, and cultural hybridization) are forging a widespread, although still often unconscious fear of 'deep' change that creates as its natural consequence an increasing desire for safe identities, as a cultural haven of stability. On the other hand, the oversupply in Western societies of ideas in the public and private spheres ('scientification' and rationalization of public life and discourse, accompanied by a continued deconstruction of habits and rites, acceleration of technological innovation, increasing 'future orientation' and thus 'shrinking of the present' as Hermann Lübbe put it, symbolic overheating of the collective and individual imaginary and the increasing speed of the 'image culture' carrying with itself a 'loss of depth') is liquefying patterns of stability in individual self-awareness and collective habits alike, and thus creating crises of identity.

90 Halman *et al.* 2008, 230.

91 *Time Magazine* columnist Roger Rosenblatt's fierce attack against 'postmodernism' in the name of a 'new realism' a couple of days after the incident was

emblematic of the effect of the terror attacks on the paradigm debate of the West: 'One good thing could come from this horror: it could spell the end of the age of irony. For some 30 years – roughly as long as the Twin Towers were upright – the good folks in charge of America's intellectual life have insisted that nothing was to be believed in or taken seriously. Nothing was real. With a giggle and a smirk, our chattering classes – our columnists and pop culture makers – declared that detachment and personal whimsy were the necessary tools for an oh-so-cool life. Who but a slobbering bumpkin would think, 'I feel your pain'? The ironists, seeing through everything, made it difficult for anyone to see anything. The consequence of thinking that nothing is real – apart from prancing around in an air of vain stupidity – is that one will not know the difference between a joke and a menace. No more. The planes that plowed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were real. The flames, smoke, sirens – real. The chalky landscape, the silence of the streets – all real. I feel your pain – really. History occurs twice, crack the wise guys quoting Marx: first as tragedy, then as farce. Who would believe such a thing except someone who has never experienced tragedy? Are you looking for something to take seriously? Begin with evil. The fact before our eyes is that a group of savage zealots took the sweet and various lives of those ordinarily travelling from place to place, ordinarily starting a day of work or – extraordinarily – coming to help and rescue others. Freedom? That real enough for you? Everything we cling to in our free and sauntering country was imperiled by the terrorists. Destruction was real; no hedging about that. Hans Christian Andersen wrote that famous fairy tale about The Most Incredible Thing, a beautiful, intricate clock that was smashed to bits by an axe, which act was then judged to be the most incredible thing. No fairy tales required this week. Where the Twin Towers were, there is now only empty air. In the age of irony, even the most serious things were not to be taken seriously. Movies featuring characters who 'see dead people' or TV hosts who talk to the 'other side' suggested that death was not to be seen as real. If one doubted its reality before last week, that is unlikely to happen again. Which brings us to the more amorphous zones of reality, such as grief and common sorrow. When the white dust settles, and the bereaved are alone in their houses, there will be nothing but grief around them, and nothing is more real than that. In short, people may at last be ready to say what they wholeheartedly believe. The kindness of people toward others in distress is real. There is nothing to see through in that. Honor and fair play? Real. And the preciousness of ordinary living is real as well – all to be taken seriously, perhaps, in a new and chastened time. The greatness of the country: real. The anger: real. The pain: too real.' Rosenblatt 2001.

92 Fuller 2001.
93 Walach and Kohls 2006–8.
94 Wilber 1986.
95 Heelas and Woodhead 2005, 77.
96 Ray and Anderson 2000.
97 Ray 1996.
98 Chandler 2008, 253.
99 Cf. Gidley 2010.
100 Kohls *et al.* 2009.
101 Walach and Kohls 2006–8.
102 Lyotard [1979] 1984.
103 Wittgenstein [1953] 2009.
104 Lyotard [1983] 1991.
105 Deleuze [1968] 1994.

106 Benedikter 2006b.
107 Derrida in Derrida and Fathy 1999.
108 Benedikter 2006b.
109 Coward 1990.
110 Benedikter 2006b.
111 Benedikter 2006b.
112 See Caputo 1997, ed. 1999, ed. 2001, ed. 2007a and 2007b; Benedikter 2006b.
113 Again, we could expand this list *ad infinitum*, but the scope of this paper is only to give some representative examples of a larger tendency that is not limited to the thinkers mentioned here. For teaching purposes in high schools and universities, this list may be expanded, as long as it contributes to make clear the overarching paradigmatic centre which unifies all the thinkers mentioned in a sufficiently dialectical way to capture its – not seldom contradictory and even conflictual – vitality.
114 The most influential ideological and philosophical system of this tendency is and remains Ayn Rand's 'objectivism'. See Rand 1979. Objectivism has indeed been one of the leading ideologies of the Bush era 2001–9, inherited and practised by many of its leading figures (like the former Federal Reserve chief Alan Greenspan (1926–), a direct and personal disciple of Rand). This ideology has to be balanced and overcome (i.e. integrated and transcended) in the Obama era.
115 Giri 2009.
116 Beck [1986] 2004.
117 Stillfried 2007.
118 Bhaskar 2002b, c, d.
119 Benedikter 2006a, c.
120 Molz and Edwards 2011 forthcoming.
121 Ehrlich 2009; cf. Goldstone 2010.
122 Hsu 2009, 13.
123 Lübbe 1997.
124 Hsu 2009, 13.
125 Gidley and Kapoor, eds, 2010.
126 Ehrlich 2009.