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Towards an integrated meta-theory of gender: thoughts on the potential use of Ken Wilber's AQAL model to develop an Integral Gender Theory

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This paper explores the potential development of a postdisciplinary framework that can be used to improve the efficacy of current approaches to studying gender and support the development of an integrated meta-theory of gender (or an Integral Gender Theory).

This framework is based on Ken Wilber's Integral Theory and draws on existing work to apply Wilber's AQAL model to sex, gender and gender studies. The resulting framework allows for the integration of

biological, psychological, social and cultural perspectives and promotes the use of eight distinct methodological perspectives outlined in Wilber's Integral Methodological Pluralism when studying gender and gender issues.

The paper also examines the ways in which the male and female experience of gender in the 21st Century is different, diverse, open to adaptability and shaped by choice.

Keywords: integral gender theory, Ken Wilber, Aqal model, integral theory, gender, gender theory, men and boys, masculinities, masculinity, gender equality, sex differences, gender identity, gender discourse, gender norms, gender stereotypes, gender rights, men's rights, gender roles, nature versus nurture, integral methodological pluralism, male studies

Introduction

According to the international journal New Male Studies (NMS), discussions about gender are too often characterized by a polarization of the sexes; the curtailing of reasoned dialogue; the sidelining of crucial evidence and the silencing of individuals with unpopular views (NMS 2014).

NMS aims to promote a "constructive academic dialogue guided by available evidence of a range of different academic disciplines" that pursues "enquiring and dynamic multidisciplinary scholarship" (NMS 2014).

The need for such a broad focus on the issues facing men and boys is well evidenced and documented (Poole,2013; Benatar, 2012; Farrell, 1993) and includes:

- Globally males have a higher burden of disease and lower life expectancy than females (Hawkes and Buse, 2013)
- Men and boys in 99% of countries are more likely to kill themselves than women and girls (Poole, 2013)
- Men and boys account for 4 out of 5 violent deaths in the world every year (WHO, 2008):
- Girls in most modern economies are more likely to get a better education and go to university than boys (World Economic Forum, 2013)
- Fathers all over the globe are less involved in raising their children than mothers for all sorts of personal, cultural and political reasons (Fatherhood Institute, 2010)

Despite the clear inequalities that men and boys face, there is no unifying framework to help facilitate multidisciplinary dialogue about men's issues at a significant scale.

In this paper I will explore the potential development of a postdisciplinary framework that can be used to improve the efficacy of current approaches to studying gender and support the development of an integrated meta-theory of gender (or an Integral Gender Theory).

This framework is based on Ken Wilber's Integral Theory (Wilber, 2000) and draws on existing work to apply Wilber's AQAL model to sex, gender and gender studies (Cohen, 2009). The re-

sulting framework, I will argue, allows for the integration of biological, psychological, social and cultural perspectives of gender and gender issues.

While outlining the key elements of this framework I will also examine the ways in which the male and female experience of gender in the 21st Century is different, diverse, open to adaptability and shaped by choice.

A Note on Diversity in Sex, Gender and Sexuality

While the focus of this paper is common male and female experiences of sex and gender, the framework outlined below can equally be applied to the study of divergent sexes, genders and sexualities.

What Is Integral Theory?

Integral Theory was developed by the American philosopher Ken Wilber and is said to be "one of the foremost approaches within the larger fields of integral studies and meta-theory" (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2009). It is described by the Integral Institute in the U.S.A. as "an all-inclusive framework that draws on the key insights of the world's greatest knowledge traditions" (Integral Institute, 2014). According to Wilber (Wilber, 2005) the integral approach uses "all known systems and models of human growth" and "distills their major components into 5 simple factors that are the essential elements or keys to unlocking and facilitating human evolution".

These 5 factors are captured in the AQAL model which is pronounced "ah-qwul" and is an acronym for "all quadrants, all levels," which in itself is short for "all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, and all types" (Rentschler, 2006).

In the integral community, Integral Theory and "AQAL" are often used interchangeably with other phrase such as Integral approach, the Integral map, the Integral model, and Integral Operating System (IOS) (Rentschler, 2006).

Wilber, for example, states that "the integral map makes sure you are "touching all the bases"...... ensures you are utilizing the full range of resources for any situation, with the greater likelihood of success....the integral map is just a map, but it is the most complete and accurate map we have at this time" (Wilber, 2005).

Integral theory is now being used in more than 35 academic and professional fields including healthcare, economics, psychotherapy, law and feminism (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2009). In the next section we will focus on how the integral approach is being applied to the study of gender issues.

Integral Approaches to Gender

In this paper my primary aim is to outline how Integral Theory can be used to improve current approaches to studying gender and support the development of an Integral Gender Theory.

The Integral model is sometimes described as being post-disciplinary as it can be applied effectively within the context of approaches that can be considered disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary (Esbjörn-Hargens 2006).

The integral approach is also described as a supertheory or metatheory as it has been developed to enable the integration of many different theories in a coherent fashion. (Rentschler, 2006). The model itself is "content-free" and provides a framework into which people viewing a subject from any perspective can incorporate the specific content they want to study. (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2006).

I am proposing it can be used as follows:

- Intradisciplinary (within a single discipline)
- Crossdisciplinary (studying one discipline from the perspective of another discipline)
- Multidisciplinary (several disciplines working together each using their own approach)
- Interdisciplinary (the integration of different disciplinary approaches)
- Transdiscplinary (creating a new framework that goes beyond disciplinary perspectives) (Stember, 1990)

To date there have been a small number of notable attempts to apply Integral Theory to the study of gender and gender issues.

In his book The Eye of Spirit (Wilber, 2000a), Wilber proposed the development of an Integral Feminism in which he said there are at "least a dozen major schools of feminism (liberal, socialist, spiritual, eco, womanist, radical, anarchist, lesbian, Marxist, cultural, constructivist, power)....which, ironically, have heretofore resisted being linked, integrated and connected".

One of the barriers to integrating different feminisms, according to Wilber, is that "orthodox feminists are threatened by integral feminism because it distributes power more fairly across other disciplines (including science, which is usually demonized as patriarchal)" (Wilber, 2000a).

There have subsequently been some individual attempts to explore Integral Feminism (Mc-Carl Nielsen 2000, Barnett 2013), with perhaps the most extensive contribution being made by Dr. Sarah Nicholson, author of the book The Evolutionary Journey of Woman: From the Goddess to Integral Feminism (Nicholson, 2013).

While existing feminisms are sometimes seen as being a barrier to addressing men's issues (Farrell, 1993; Benatar, 2012), Lauren Barnett argues that Integral Feminism needs to address the impact that feminism has had on men and boys and be open to tackling men's issue and incorporating men's experience (Barnett 2013).

It is important to note, however, that developing an Integral Gender Theory is not the same as integrating current feminist thinking. The framework outlined in this paper can be used by any individual studying gender irrespective of whether they are approaching the subject from a feminist, anti-feminist or non-feminist perspective.

Pelle Billing, for example, has already used the integral approach to take a critical view of feminist approaches to gender in Letting Go of Feminism: The Case for Integral Gender Studies (Billing 2010).

According to Billing "the word feminism represents a movement that simultaneously claims to be for gender equality and for the rights of women, thereby conflating gender equality with women's issues....replacing feminism with a less biased women's movement would be beneficial for girls and women.... women too would benefit from a more nuanced, balanced and less accusatory gender discourse--a discourse that is informed by Integral Gender Studies, and not a simple continuation of postmodern feminism" (Billing 2010).

Perhaps the most comprehensive application of Integral Theory to gender issues to date has come from Professor Jeffrey Cohen of the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

Cohen observed "a fundamental weakness in our current approaches to studying the complexity of Gender as a social science construct" and used Integral Theory to construct "a more complete, and therefore inclusive, approach to studying Gender in the social sciences" of criminology, psychology, and sociology with the aim of developing "a workable trans-disciplinary model that allows for a multi-methodological, multi-perspectival approach to the study of Gender" (Cohen, 2009).

The result of Cohen's work is probably the most thorough and detailed attempt to create an integral approach to the study of gender to date, though as his approach is firmly rooted in the social sciences it may be more accurate to label his model inter-disciplinary rather than trans-disciplinary.

Nonetheless, having examined how 3 of the 5 factors that make up the AQAL model can be applied to studying gender, Cohen has helped to lay the foundations for the construction of a post-disciplinary framework that will support the ultimate development of an integrated meta-theory of gender (or an Integral Gender Theory).

The AQAL Model

According to Ken Wilber the integral map is made up of 5 elements called quadrants, levels, lines, states and types and that gives us the AQAL model (all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states and all types) (Wilber, 2005).

The AQAL model not only provides an Integral Map that enables the user to gain a more comprehensive understanding of any issue---including gender---but using an Integral Approach can help to facilitate greater self awareness Wilber, 2005).

Wilber explains this secondary benefit of utilising the AQAL model as follows:

"All of these elements are, right now, available in your own awareness. These 5 elements are not merely theoretical concepts; they are aspects of your own experience....if you learn to spot these

5 elements in your own awareness---and because they are there in any event---then you can more easily appreciate them, exercise them, use them…..” (Wilber, 2005).

In order to help the reader develop a quick understanding of the AQAL model I will describe a scenario and then point to some of the quadrants, levels, lines, states and types that are at play in this scenario.

Imagine yourself going on a school outing of teenagers and teachers that involves rock climbing at an outdoor activity centre. As you imagine yourself in this scenario ask yourself the following five questions:

1. In this scenario are you male or female?

2. In this scenario are you a pre-pubescent teenager, a pubescent teenager or an adult?

3. How good are you at rock climbing? Are you a beginner, an improver or an expert?

4. Imagine that it's your turn to climb the rock. What is the weather like as you climb and what emotional state are you in? Excited? Scared? Embarrassed?

5. After climbing the rock you need to go to the toilet but discover that the facility allocated to your sex is locked while the toilets for the opposite sex are open. How do you feel about using that toilet instead? What would the rest of your group think if you did that? And would you be breaking any rules or laws if you did use the toilet belonging to the opposite sex?

What you've just experienced in that simple scenario is an awareness of the five elements of the AQAL model---quadrants, levels, lines, states and types.

The quadrants represent the "I", the "we" and "it/its" of human experience and were at play in the dilemma we considered about using a toilet facility that's designated for the opposite sex. We asked about your personal feelings ("I"); what your group would think ("we") and whether you would be breaking any laws (its).

The remaining four elements (levels, lines, states and types) are found within each of the quadrants. Levels are common stages of development such as childhood, puberty and adulthood. Types refers to items that can be found at virtually any level of development. Sex is a type, for example, so if you are a male you may pass through different levels of human development such as childhood, puberty and adulthood but your sex type (male) remains the same at each level.

Unlike types, states are generally transient. So when you imagined yourself rock climbing your emotional state (excited, fearful, embarrassed etc) was a passing emotional state and the weather conditions (sunny, windy, raining etc) were a temporary meteorological state.

Finally lines of development refer, in simple terms, to how well an individual or a group of people can do something. So when we considered how skilled you are at climbing, we were, in a

sense, asking how far along the line of development from rock-climbing novice to rock-climbing expert you have progressed.

If we wanted to study what happened on this imaginary school trip and only considered one of these five elements, we wouldn't get the whole truth about the outing, only a partial truth.

And this is a key principle of the integral approach. Rather than relying on the limited "truth" of one perspective, an integral view of the world seeks out the partial truths in all perspectives in order to come to a more complete assessment of the whole truth.

Within each of the four quadrants of the AQAL model there are many different levels, lines, states and types that make up the Integral Map of human experience. To help you remember the five basic elements of the AQAL model here's an analogy borrowed from Sean Esbjörn-Hargens of the Integral Institute (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2006).

- The quadrants are like four maps of different terrains
- The levels are found in all four quadrants and are like contour lines on a map
- The lines of development are like pathways that run across the contours on our map
- Many different types of hiker could use this map (eg male hikers)
- A hiker using the map to go for walk would experience many different states (e.g., changing weather conditions)

And the map, of course, is just a map. It isn't the territory. The five elements of the Integral Map provide us with a basic framework for understanding any issue or situation and our ability to make effective assessments of reality will depend both on the quality of information about levels, lines, states and types we include in our map and how effective we are at reading an Integral Map.

Applying the AQAL Model to Gender

Upper-Left quadrant Interior Individual Subjective Experience Psychology, etc. **Gender Identity**	**Upper-Right quadrant** Exterior Individual Objective Behavior Biology etc **Sex**
Lower-Left quadrant Interior Collective Inter-subjective Experience	**Lower-Right quadrant** Exterior Collective Inter-objective Behavior

Cultural factors etc	Social factors etc
Gender Stereotypes/Discourse	Gender Roles/Rights

Figure 1: The four quadrants/domains (figure adapted from Cohen, 2009 and Wilber, 2000)

The primary aim of this paper is to describe how Integral Theory can be used to study gender. My assertion is that anyone who is addressing gender issues will get a much deeper understanding of the specific issues they are concerned with if they view it through the integral framework.

Starting with the four quadrants that correspond to interior/exterior and individual/collective phenomenon, in terms of developing an Integral Gender Theory, these four domains have already been defined as relating to gender-identity, gender-stereotypes, sex, and gender-roles (Cohen, 2009). According to Ken Wilber, "each of the different theories of sex and gender (orthodox as well as feminist) has tended to focus on only one quadrant (and usually one level in one quadrant)" (Wilber, 2000a). By accessing the "moments of truth" found in each of these different perspectives we can use the AQAL model to begin a more complete picture of gender.

What immediately becomes available in accepting that there are partial truths to be found in each of the four quadrants is that "gender is not determined by biological sex alone. Nor is Gender determined by psychology, culture, or social interaction alone. It is the combined influence of all of these perspective" (Cohen, 2009).

If we look at each of the four quadrants in turn we can begin to get a sense of how the integral approach can provide us with a comprehensive view of gender. I'll start with the Upper-Right quadrant and Lower-Left quadrant as these domains play host to the long running nature versus nurture arguments about gender.

Upper-Right Quadrant (Sex)

According to Wilber the "upper-right quadrant is the individual viewed in an objective, empirical, "scientific" fashion" (Wilber, 2000). This is where biological views of gender---including essentialist views ---are located. Focusing only on the biological aspects of gender, to the exclusion of psychological, cultural, and social aspects provides us with a limited view (as does dismissing biological factors outright).

The beauty of the integral approach to gender is that it provides a framework that facilitates the inclusion of empirical findings from a broad range of disciplines such as biology, biochemistry, neuroscience, genetics, epigenetics and evolutionary psychology which allow us to consider the role of sex differences in our hormones, neurology, genes and physical capacities in the formation of gender roles, gender stereotype and gender identity.

In terms of providing a workable framework for studying gender issues, my intention is not

to dictate which theories should be applied when using the framework, but to simply signpost some of the thinking that could be incorporated.

The first example is the work of the Simon Baron-Cohen (Professor of Developmental Psychopathology at the University of Cambridge in England) whose studies on differences in the male and female brain seem to fit well with an integral view of gender as it is rooted in the Upper-Right quadrant while acknowledging the influence of Lower-Left cultural influences (Baron-Cohen, 2003). Baron-Cohen's own subjective experience (Upper-Left quadrant) also highlights a crucial point about how ways of thinking about gender are either facilitated or policed by the prevailing cultural discourse about gender (Lower-Left quadrant).

According to Baron-Cohen, "some people say that even looking for sex differences reveals a sexist mind" and he initially postponed finishing his book on essential differences in male and female brains as "the topic was just too politically sensitive to complete in the 1990s" (Baron-Cohen, 2003). The thrust of Baron-Cohen's Empathizing-Systemizing (E-S) Theory is that while the female brain is predominantly hard-wired for empathy, the male brain is predominantly hard-wired for understanding and building systems.

In terms of the Integral Approach, this points to different brain types (types being one of the five elements of the AQAL model). However, from an empirical Upper-Right quadrant perspective he is not making a binary, reductionist distinction between a male brain type and a female brain type.

What Baron-Cohen's research revealed is that there are three main types of brain (plus two "extreme" brain types):

- The predominantly female E>S brain type, where empathizing ability is greater than systemizing ability
- The predominantly male S>E brain type, where systemizing ability is greater than empathizing ability
- The S=E brain type found in men and women where empathizing and systemizing ability is equally balanced

In addition there is what Baron-Cohen refers to as the "extreme male brain" type, S>>E, where systemizing ability is hyper-developed and empathizing ability is hypo-developed. Baron-Cohen proposes a link here to people with autism, which is a predominantly male condition.

The fifth brain type is the "extreme female brain" type, E>>S, where empathizing ability is hyper-developed and systemizing ability is hypo-developed.

Baron-Cohen's findings highlight an important shift from the nature versus nurture debate about gender to an understanding that gender is a function of both nature and nurture. When interviewed about that nature versus nurture debate in 2010, Baron-Cohen said:

"My own position is that biology and culture interact to create this sex difference. There are some

people who would argue that its just biology or just culture but I think the moderate position is both are at work" (Baron-Cohen, 2010).

My own view (Upper-Left quadrant) of gender is that it is shaped by all four integral quadrants representing biological, cultural, psychological and social factors; that our gender is different, diverse and adaptable and that we have ever-changing choices. Baron-Cohen's findings demonstrate that male and female brains are predominantly different and at the same time diverse with there being measurable differences not just between men and women, but also between men and men, and women and women.

The second example to consider is not specifically focused on gender but highlights the adaptability of humans while re-enforcing a key point about the way different worldviews (Lower-Left quadrant) can facilitate or police how we think about gender.

In the field of genetics, Tim Spector (Professor of Genetic Epidemiology at Kings College, London) has reported how cultural (Lower-Left quadrant) beliefs in nurture over nature in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s led to an "environmentalist backlash" against genetic studies "often linked to socialist ideals in education and equal opportunities" to the point where grant bodies and academics in the social sciences believed that "genetic research on IQ was akin to racism" (Spector, 2013).

Spector has written about his own personal (Upper-Left quadrant) shift from a "gene-centric view of the universe" to an epigenetic view where the "distinction between nature and nurture disappears" with the realization that while the genes you inherit are still "star players in the body.…you can change your genes, your destiny and that of your child and grandchildren".

The emerging field of epigenetics and the understanding that we can make choices that will change our genes demonstrates that as well as being different and diverse, human beings are adaptable and have choices.

The third example I want to look at demonstrates human choice and adaptability in relation to our hormones. Most researchers agree that hormones such as testosterone, oxytocin and oestrogen influence male and female behaviour (though they don't strictly cause it) (Wilber, 2000a).

As with sex differences in the brain and genetic research, discussing the different impacts of hormones on men and women can be politically sensitive. Some radical feminists, for example, claim that "Estrogen is the Goddess, testosterone is the Devil" (Wilber 2000a).

Despite its bad press, the positive impacts of testosterone, such as its ability to boost self-confidence and assertiveness, have been tested by researchers at Harvard Business School. One study found that adopting a "power pose" for two minutes could not only increase testosterone by 20% and decrease the stress hormone cortisol by 25%, but also improve an individual's chances of performing more effectively in a job interview, for both male and female subjects (Cuddy et al, 2012).

Men's lower levels of oxytocin have also been linked to male violence (Diamon, 2013) with regular massage and exercises to increase bonds of trust proposed as an antidote as these interven-

tions have been shown to increase participants oxytocin levels by 243% (Zac, 2012).

What these so-called "life hacks" demonstrate is that at a hormonal level males and females can not only be measured as being hormonally different and diverse (ie men's hormone levels differ from other men and women's hormone levels differ from other women); but we are also adaptable and have some choice in whether we want to change the levels of different hormones either through medication or through specific "life hacks."

What the above examples demonstrate is that there is a great deal to be learnt about sex and gender from integrating findings from the Upper-Right quadrant of the AQAL model into our thinking.

Lower-Left quadrant (Gender Stereotypes/Gender Discourse)

Having considered the 'nature' of sex/gender in the Upper-Right quadrant we come to its sworn enemy in gender debates, 'nurture', which is located in the Lower-Left quadrant of the AQAL model that contains aspects of culture such as values, ethics, rituals, customs, worldviews, perceptions, subcultures etc. (Wilber 2000).

Cohen defines a culture's collective belief structures around gender that are located in this quadrant as Gender Stereotypes, irrespective of whether those stereotypes are positive, negative, neither, or both (Cohen 2009).

I have added Gender Discourse to the heading for this quadrant because, as we saw in the previous section, different ways of thinking about gender tend to be either facilitated or policed by the prevailing cultural discourse around gender (Lower-Left quadrant).

For example, Ken Wilber states that feminist perspectives of gender that are rooted in the Lower-Left quadrants (eg constructivist feminism and cultural feminism), overlook the influence of the other three quadrants and instead ascribe their influence to oppression (Wilber, 2000a). As a result, a gender discourse is developed that rejects other perspectives of gender, eg biological perspectives rooted in the Upper-Right quadrant.

In terms of developing Integral Gender Theory it will be an essential to take into account the influence of the worldview of those who develop any such theory and also those who seek to apply this theory.

Returning to Gender Stereotypes, there are some clear stages or levels of development to consider---levels being one of the five elements of the Integral Map. The stages of development that cultures go through are correlated to stages of development in the other quadrants including the Lower-Right quadrant which plays home to social aspects of human development.

Wilber identifies five key levels of techno-economic development in the Lower-Right quadrant namely foraging, horticultural, agricultural, industrial and informational. According to Wilber the "techno economic base has a profound influence in selecting those factors from the male and

female value spheres that will be evolutionarily advantageous for a given society" (Wilber 2000a).

Some integral thinkers including Ken Wilber and Warren Farrell seek to "recast patriarchal structures as an unavoidable evolutionary product of techno-economic and social development structures" (Fisher and Nicholson, 2010). We will look more closely at role that techno-economic stages of development play on gender roles when we examine the Lower-Right quadrant of the AQAL model.

In terms of understanding how Gender Stereotypes have evolved through different cultural levels of development (Lower-Left quadrant), Cohen has approached this using Jean Gebser's structures of human consciousness and notably the magic, the mythic and the rational structures of consciousness (Cohen, 2009).

While this provides a useful analysis of where we have come from, it lacks the nuance required to make sense of the many different cultural worldviews (Lower-Left quadrant) that are shaping Gender Stereotypes and Gender Discourse in the 21st Century.

Perhaps a more detailed model to consider is Edward Beck and Christopher C. Cowan's spiral dynamics (Beck and Cowan, 1996) based on Clare W. Graves' biopsychosocial model of human development, which has subsequently been influenced by Integral Theory resulting in the development of a branch of spiral dynamics by Beck called Spiral Dynamics Integral.

Graves asserted that human values typically occur in systems that are now called value memes (vMemes), which are coherent sets or clusters of values. These values are not fixed but a consequence of an individual's evolving worldview, which are informed by the prevailing life conditions.

Graves identified eight different value systems that describe how humans as well as cultures evolve. Most cultures and individuals will be predominantly characterized by just one of these eight value memes, though more than one can be at play in any individual or any community at different times.

As with Gebser's structures of consciousness, Graves' emerging vMemes can be linked to techno-economic developments (Lower-Right quadrant) which increase in their complexity and capacity as we evolve culturally from nomadic individuals to tribal groups to egoic empires to conformist absolutism to rational individualism to pluralistic communitarianism to integral autonomy to holistic globalism and beyond.

A list of the eight key colour-coded vMemes from Beck and Cowan's meme in the Spiral Dynamics model is shown in the table below:

Meme	Colour	Characterisitcs
Wholeview	Turquoise	Holistic, global concerns, collective individualism
Flexflow	Yellow	Independent, self-sufficient, functional, knowing, has personal value system
HumanBond	Green	Collaborative, community-focused, concerned for the 'have nots'
StriveDrive	Orange	Goal orientated, success driven, out to achieve
TruthForce	Blue	Absolutist, conformist, follow rules, obey higher power
PowerGods	Red	Egocentric, exploitative, dominating, seeking power, survival of the fittest
KinSpirits	Purple	Living according to tradition and ritual
SurvivalSense	Beige	Living in self survival mode

Figure 2: Stages of human development (adapted from Beck and Cowan, 1996)

To begin to get an understanding of these different vMemes it can be useful to consider how they are, or were, at play in cultures we may already be familiar with. You can probably imagine a Purple vMeme African tribe for example and understand how it differs from the Red vMeme feudal system found in Medieval Europe. You may also be able to see how a Blue vMeme absolutist state based on a single religion or political philosophy, such as an Islamic or Communist state, differs from a free market Orange vMeme Western democracy and within Western democracies you can no doubt make a distinction between Orange vMeme free market conservatives and Green vMeme liberals and social democrats.

These last three vMemes (Blue, Orange and Green) are the dominant vMemes in most Western democracies and it can be useful to consider how Gender Discourse tends to evolve through these different vMemes.

Caleb Rosado, a Professor of Urban Studies at Warner Pacific College in Portland, Oregon, has explored how attitudes towards race and racial inequality manifest differently at each memetic level and provides us with some useful pointers when considering evolving attitudes towards gender and gender equality (Rosado, 1999).

It is important to note, at this point, that both individuals and cultures can progress and regress along the "spiral" at different times depending on life circumstances. Attaining a "higher"

stage of development is not necessarily "better" as all stages can co-exist in both healthy and un-healthy states - states being one of the five elements that comprise the Integral Model (Beck and Cowan, 1996).

According to Rosado, "equality" as a construct does not exist at the early stages of human development. In Purple vMeme tribal communities, for example, Rosado says Gender Roles are rigid and important but there is no concept of gender equality (Rosado, 1999).

Red vMeme cultures are typified by violent, brutal, and bloody empires where Gender Roles remain rigid and an individual's place in the social hierarchy may be a greater predictor of equality than gender---women can be Queens and Empresses and men can peasants and slaves.

Our modern concepts of equality are often traced back to notions of democracy developed during the Greek Empire where all citizens were equal but not all humans qualified as citizens. In particular, slaves, foreigners and women were excluded and so a clear gender inequality in terms of participation in the public realm emerges at this time (Poole, 2013).

This is typical of Blue vMeme thinking, according to Rosado, who states that "racism as a so-cial construct to maintain segregation, division, and distinction enters here for the first time.....po-larized thinking....rigid categories.... and absolutisms, to maintain status distinctions and separations" (Rosado, 1999).

This Blue vMeme approach to citizenship and democracy was still prevalent a century ago with only a limited number of male citizens able to vote in Britain, for example, prior to 1918 (Poole, 2013).

Looking back to the beginning of the 20th Century we can see the influence of a dominant Blue vMeme, where loyalty to God, King and Country are paramount and rigid Gender Stereotypes still dictating that men belong in the public realm and women in the private realm.

At the same the Orange vMeme is also present and expanding. A key landmark in the shift towards greater equality was the French revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1793, which is considered to be an emerging Orange vMeme concept. This declaration marked equality for all men as citizens and laid the foundation for all men and women to be recog-nised as equal citizens. In the UK, for example, all adult men were given the vote in 1918 alongside women aged 30 and over. Ten years later in 1928, universal suffrage was extended to all adult women (Poole 2013).

This first wave of gender equality for women is generally focused on legal rights, eg voting rights, property rights, rights to divorce etc. As Orange vMeme values become more dominant, with a focus on self-expression and the pursuit of personal goals, equality of opportunity for women be-comes increasingly important.

According to Rosado, Orange vMeme "eschews any appearance of racism and sexism, while being decidedly so". Simply declaring that everyone has an equal opportunity irrespective of sex,

gender, sexuality and so on in principle, is not the same as giving everyone an equal opportunity in practice, he argues (Rosado, 1999).

However, the emergence of the Orange vMeme in Western Democracies does lead to the growing presence of women in the public sphere and a corresponding shift in terms of Gender Stereotypes about women.

One of the distinguishing features between Orange vMeme and Green vMeme, in Rosado's analysis, is that those with Orange vMeme values are often against affirmative action while those with Green vMeme values are often for affirmative action. Here we see an echo of the binary nurture versus nature argument only now the argument is equality of opportunity versus equality of outcome. As the Green vMeme rises to prominence, outcomes that are seen to define women's inequality---for example unequal pay, unequal representation in positions of power and so on---become dominant themes in the Gender Discourse and positive action and positive discrimination for women (alongside other communities of identity such as gay people and people from black and minority ethic community groups) become the norm.

Rosado describes the Green vMeme approach to equality as "a restrictive egalitarianism based on a denial of differences" caused by "social action missionaries who use discrimination to enforce equality" and try and reverse "evolutionary process through a naive cultural relativism".

The Green vMeme approach to equality also tends to be blind to inequalities experienced by individuals belonging to groups perceived to be dominant such as men and boys. A classic example is the World Economic Form Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2013) that ranks countries on their progress towards gender equality but only measures female disadvantage, while actively excluding male disadvantage (Billing 2010).

Billing argues that one of the reasons "men's voices are still largely absent in the gender discourse" is that men have been inaccurately cast as oppressors of women through history (Billing 2010).

In my more polemical writings I have previously described the Green vMeme view of gender equality as "Women HAVE problems, men ARE problems (Poole, 2013). Nonetheless, in terms of Gender Stereotypes, while men may get a bad press from the Green vMeme wave of human consciousness, it also coincides with a shift in Gender Stereotypes about men, most notably in terms of men's roles in the private realm (eg fatherhood) and lays foundation for the emergence of the Yellow vMeme where a more balanced Gender Discourse becomes possible.

It has estimated that around 1% of the world's population is at Yellow vMeme so there are currently few large scale examples of this vMeme for us to assess at this stage (Beck and Cowan, 1996).

What seems apparent is that Gender Stereotypes and Gender Discourse are shaped by our shared cultural values, which are constantly evolving and developing. This being a case, a truly integral approach to studying gender needs to take account of the role that different worldviews play in

shaping the way we understand and experience gender.

Lower-Right quadrant (Gender Roles/Gender Rights)

In the previous section we touched upon the idea that the evolving Gender Stereotypes and Gender Discourse in the Lower-Left quadrant are correlated to changing Gender Roles in the Lower-Right quadrant which contains social systems such as techno-economic modes, geopolitical institutions, social structures an so on (Wilber, 2000).

Cohen defines Gender Roles as "those institutionalized behaviors and/or activities performed by each sex, which are informed by the specific make-up of particular social systems that exist within a given society" (Cohen 2009).

I have added Gender Rights to the heading for this quadrant particularly because areas where men have unequal rights are often not accounted for when considering gender issues.

In terms of techno-economic modes of production, Wilber highlights five key stages of development: foraging, horticultural, agrarian, industrial and informational (Wilber, 2000a).

In horticultural societies where women are thought to have produced as much as 80 percent of food, women have substantial influence in the public sphere. and it is notable that around a third of all horticultural societies have female only deities (Wilber, 2000a) which suggests a collective valuing of female qualities.

The technological shift from horticultural hoes to argrarian ploughs is believed to have brought an end the long period of generally equal gender participation in the production of food (Nicholson, 2008) as a result of biological differences (Upper Right quadrant) including men's superior upper body strength and heavy labour causing women to miscarry (Howard, 2005).

According to Billing, in most pre-industrial societies "keeping women in the home and sending men away from the home have maximized the chances of providing the food and safety needed for a community to prosper" (Billing 2010). With the agricultural revolution this "sexual polarization and male domination of the public sphere" along with women's role becoming focused on the private sphere, moves towards its "historical peak" (Wilber 1995, p. 158).

According to Wilber: "wherever evolution moved beyond the hoe, the patriarchy accompanied it. The patriarchy, however, is not something that needs to be reversed but rather something that needs to be outgrown" (Wilber 2000a).

This process of outgrowing male dominance of the public sphere is generally found across human cultures that develop through the industrial, post-industrial and informational ages with gender roles and stereotypes becoming progressively less rigid.

Over time women in Western democracies and elsewhere have been given an equal right to enter the public sphere in terms of voting, education and careers. Women and girls' rights in areas

like property ownership, divorce, reproduction and bodily integrity are also addressed as gender equality issues.

At the same time, men and boys' rights and their links to gender equality are overlooked. Areas where men are treated unequally in law around the world include military conscript, corporal and capital punishment, genital integrity, bodily privacy, child custody laws and paternity laws (Benatar 2012).

Male dominance of the public sphere has been coupled with a collective dominance of the male body with many nation states asserting the right to conscript and physically punish men and boys and giving parents the right to compromise boys' genital integrity through a permissive approach to medically unnecessary male circumcision (Benatar 2012).

At the same time female dominance of the private sphere is maintained in most modern economies through laws on paternity and child custody and parental leave that favour mothers over fathers and re-enforce highly gendered parenting roles (Benatar 2012).

According to Janet Chafetz, "when gender norms gain the status of law, they take on a far more powerful role in reinforcing the gender system status quo than when they remain informal. They become part of the coercive forces that maintain the gender system" (Chafetz 1990, p69).

It is important to note that Gender Rights can apply not only to women's rights and men's rights, but also to individuals who are biologically divergent (eg the rights of intersex children to genital integrity); to individuals of different sexualities (eg gay men in countries where homosexuality is illegal but lesbian sex isn't) and individuals who wish to express a non-normative gender identity, from men who went to wear their hair long (and may be excluded from certain professions as a result) to the rights of transgender people.

With the emergence of the informational age, Gender Roles in modern economies tend to become increasingly diverse and interchangeable with more women entering the labour market and men increasing the time they spend on childcare (Pew 2013, Fatherhood Institute, 2010).

For anyone taking an integral approach to gender it is essential to understand and explore the many different systemic influences have on gender and consider how these have changed and continue to change over time.

Upper-Left quadrant (Gender Identity)

The final aspect of the AQAL model we will consider is the Upper-Left quadrant which captures "interior consciousness as it appears in individuals" and includes everything from "psychoanalysis to phenomenology to introspective chronology to meditative states of consciousness" (Wilber, 2000).

This is where Gender Identity is formed. Gender Identity is defined by Cohen as "a construct that relates to the aspects of Gender experienced within an individual's psyche". According to Cohen "the process of gender-identity formation is influenced by a host of stimuli, including biological,

cultural, and social factors" (Cohen, 2009), or put another way the Upper-Right, Lower-Left and Lower-Right quadrants.

Martin Ucik's work on personality types is interesting to consider as it maps how men's and women's gender identity changes at the different vMemetic stages of human development (Ucik 2010).

Ucik's personality matrix (see figure 3) maps the different masculine and feminine personality types that emerge at the different vMemetic levels which in terms of individual development are described in Sprial Dynamics integral as the instinctive self, the magical self, the power self, the rule/role self, the rational self, the sensitive self, the integral self and the holistic self.

According to Ucik's analysis what happens when cultures pass through the Orange vMeme, "rational self" wave of human consciousness, typified by neo-liberal capitalism, is that women develop more masculine personality types. Conversely, at the Green vMeme, "sensitive self" wave of human consciousness typified by political correctness, men develop more feminine personality types (Ucik, 2010).

As the Yellow vMeme, "integral self" wave of human consciousness emerges, both women and men appear to develop more flexible personality types that incorporate a range of masculine and feminine qualities that they can consciously draw upon in different contexts.

These apparent changes in personality type appear to coincide with social and cultural changes in the Lower Left and Lower Right quadrants with women developing more masculine traits as they enter the public sphere and men developing more feminine traits as they increase their involvement in the private sphere (eg increasing time spent caring for children).

This raises the inevitable "chicken and egg" question. Are these social and cultural changes driven by our evolving gender identities or is gender changing in response to this social and cultural evolution?

Consciousness		Feminine/Masculine Polarity	Horizontal Stages	1	2	3	4	5	Type
8 Transpersonal (Turquoise)	Second-tier Consciousness		Spiritual						Love Languages 1-5, Enneagram Types 1 to 9, Myers Briggs Type 1-16, Astrological Signs etc.
			Sexual						
			Anima/Animus						
7 Integral (Teal)			Spiritual						
			Sexual						
			Anima/Animus						
6 Pluralistic (Green)	Post-Conventional		Spiritual			♂			
			Sexual		♂				
			Anima/Animus				♂		
5 Rational (Orange)			Spiritual	♀					
			Sexual				♀		
			Anima/Animus					♀	
4 Mythic (Amber)	Conventional		Spiritual						
			Sexual						
			Anima/Animus						
3 Egocentric (Red)			Spiritual						
			Sexual						
			Anima/Animus						
2 Magic (Magenta)	Pre-Conventional		Spiritual						
			Sexual						
			Anima/Animus						
1 Archaic (Infrared)			Spiritual						
			Sexual						
			Anima/Animus						

← FEMININE   MASCULINE →

Figure 3: Personality Matrix, Masculine/Feminine Polarity (Ucik, 2012)

In terms of career choices, Catherine Hakim's work on Preference Theory suggests that men and women have divergent preferences when it comes to balancing home life and work life, with men more likely to prefer putting career first and women more likely to prioritize home and family. Hakim predicts that men will continue to dominate politics, work and other competitive activities as they are more willing than women to prioritise the public sphere (Hakim, 2010).

Hakim believes that national and international policies designed to deliver equal gender outcomes in the workplace are misguided as they don't reflect what men and women want. (Hakim, 2010).

So are uneven outcomes between men and women a function of personal choice or unequal opportunities?

Janet Chafetz claims that voluntary choices made at a micro level are the result of coercion at a macro level and are caused by "the processes by which males and females internalise gender-

normative ways of being and behaving". So for example if we don't give fathers equal rights and opportunities as parents through laws and policies at a macro level, then this will effect fathers' preferences and choices at the micro level (Chafetz, 1990).

Some commentators like Hanna Rosin, author of *The End of Men*, predict that the changing needs of modern economies could see a rise in women's domination of the workforce. According to Rosin: "The postindustrial economy is indifferent to men's size and strength. The attributes that are most valuable today—social intelligence, open communication, the ability to sit still and focus—are, at a minimum, not predominantly male. In fact, the opposite may be true" (Rosin, 2010).

From an integral perspective, as with the nature versus nurture argument, it is reasonable to assume that there is truth in both perspectives.

According to Pelle Billing, equality of opportunity is not measured by equality of outcomes but by an equality of choice at a micro level that isn't driven by external necessities at a macro level. He says:

"Knowing that the traditional male and female gender roles alike contain both advantages and disadvantages, will enable people to choose how they want to mix paid work outside the home and unpaid work in the home. Chances are that even with all cards on the table, we will still see more men than women performing dangerous activities for society, and more women than men being the primary caretakers of infants. After all, gender roles and human biology have evolved in tandem, always interacting and affecting one another" (Billing 2010).

Wilber and Farrell argue that it is essential to challenge "feminism's 'victim' status and disavowal of female power" and understand "the disempowerments inherent in men's traditional roles and the myths of male power" if we are to be effective in helping people navigate the ongoing transition from the rigid gender roles of the past to the increasingly flexible roles of the future (Fisher and Nicholson, 2010).

One aspect of helping people to navigate this transition is understanding how gender identity forms and evolves over time. Here Gilligan's theory that females and males are speaking with "a different voice" in terms of their development aligns with integral thinking that men tend to develop through agency and women tend to develop through communion (Gilligan 1982, Wilber 2000a).

It is apparent that Gender Identity is not a fixed phenomena but something which changes within individuals and cultures over time. There are some notable differences between men and women, such as the tendency to prioritize work or home and there is also diversity to be found between men and men and women and women. Gender Identities in men and women also appear to adapt at a micro level in response to available choices, whether those choices are driven by internal preference or by other necessities that are shaped at a macro level.

Taking an Integral Methodological Pluralistic Approach

In the previous sections I have introduced the four quadrants of the AQAL (all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types) model, with some reference to examples of levels, lines, states and types.

Using these four quadrants is an excellent starting point to begin to get an integral perspective of any gender issue. In addition, considering the relevant levels, lines, states and types in each of the quadrants will help deepen your understanding of the issue in question.

To get a truly integral view of gender, it also important to consider the perspective from which you are viewing a particular issue. Wilber proposes the use of Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP) which outlines eight primary perspectives that provide inside and outside perspectives of each of the quadrants (Snow, 2007).

For example, measuring the changing levels of testosterone in boys going through puberty would provide an empirical, external perspective of the Upper-Right quadrant, whereas asking the same boys to write a diary about their experiences of puberty would provide a phenomenological, interior perspective of the Upper-Left quadrant.

It isn't possible within the scope of this paper to explore IMP in any detail, my intention here is to simply highlight that these eight methodological perspectives exist and will need to be incorporated in the development of a truly Integral Gender Theory.

Upper-Left quadrant	**Upper-Right quadrant**
Individual Interior/subjective	Individual Interior/objective
Interior Perspective: **phenomenology** Exterior Perspective: **structuralism**	Interior Perspective: **autopoesis** Exterior Perspective: **empiricism**
Gender Identity	**Sex**
Lower-Left quadrant	**Lower-Right quadrant**
Collective Interior/intersubjective	Collective Interior/interobjective
Interior Perspective: **hermeneutics** Exterior Perspective: **semiotics**	Interior Perspective: **social autopoesis** Exterior Perspective: **systems theory**
Gender Stereotypes/Discourse	**Gender Roles/Rights**

Figure 4: Integral Methodological Pluralism, 8 Methodologies (figure adapted from Cohen, 2009; Snow, 2007)

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to explore the potential development of a postdisciplinary framework that can be used to improve the efficacy of current approaches to studying gender and support the development of an integrated meta-theory of gender (or an Integral Gender Theory) through the integration of biological, psychological, social and cultural perspectives of gender and gender issues. While outlining the key elements of this framework I also intended to examine the ways in which the male and female experience of gender in the 21st Century is different, diverse, open to adaptability and shaped by choice.

By focusing on the four quadrants of the AQAL model I have provided a simple framework through which anyone studying gender can gain a more integral and complete picture of the issue they are considering.

Beginning with the Upper-Right quadrant (Sex) we considered the importance of biological sex differences in shaping gender and considered Simon Baron-Cohen's work on the predominant differences in male and female brain types. Baron-Cohen's moderate view that these measurable differences between men and women are a product of biology and culture combined opens the door to an integral view of gender that takes us beyond binary debates about nature versus nurture.

Looking at the Lower-Left quadrant (Gender Stereotypes/Gender Discourse) we considered how different ways of expressing and thinking about gender are facilitated or policed by the prevailing gender discourse. This being the case, if we are to study gender from an integral perspective it will be essential to take into account the shared cultural values of both those being studied and those who are doing the studying.

A common theme of this paper is the importance of acknowledging that experiences and expressions of gender are diverse and understanding that in addition to there being differences between men and women, there are also differences between men and men and women and women. We heard from a diverse range of voices that the dominance of the post-modern, liberal, pro-feminist perspectives in the study of gender and how this can marginalize alternative views of gender issues. This emphasizes the need for a much broader diversity of views of gender to be included and incorporated into the study of gender.

In examining the Lower-Right quadrant (Gender Roles/Gender Rights) we considered how the different stages of techno-economic development help to shape Gender Roles. We also touched on the power of Gender Rights to enforce gender norms at a cultural level and highlighted how inequalities in men's rights are frequently overlooked in the study of gender. An integral approach to gender must take account of all Gender Rights and not just those rights that relate to women and those of a divergent sex, gender or sexuality.

We also considered the Upper-Right quadrant (Gender Identity) and saw how Gender Iden-

tity is continually evolving over time. We considered whether Gender Identity was a matter of preference, choice or conditioning and concluded that all of these factors are at play as we transition from rigid to flexible Gender Roles and Gender Identities. We noted the importance of understanding the different and diverse ways that men and women develop if we are to help people to navigate this transition.

By assessing the biological, psychological, social and cultural aspects of sex and gender as outlined in this paper, anyone studying gender can potentially gain a more complete and integral picture using the integral model.

The four quadrants of the AQAL also provide an excellent starting point for the development of an integrated meta-theory of gender (or an Integral Gender Theory). However, a truly Integral Gender Theory will require a much more detailed exploration than has been possible within the scope of this paper. I hope, however, that this paper will make the next step towards an Integral Gender Theory a quicker, shorter and easier step to take.

Such a theory should certainly take into account all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states and all types in examining Sex, Gender Stereotypes, Gender Discourse, Gender Roles, Gender Rights and Gender Identities from the eight perspectives outlined in Integral Methodological Pluralism and allow for the fact that gender is different, diverse, adaptable and shaped by choices that change and evolve over time.

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