

## Book Review

# Review of Steve McIntosh's Book: Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution

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### ABSTRACT

Steve McIntosh's "Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution" brings a new perspective to integral philosophy. McIntosh breaks new ground beyond Ken Wilber. McIntosh takes the primary values and translates them into feeling, thought and will, thereby providing an overall structure upon which Wilber's plurality of lines (the psychograph model) may find their expression. McIntosh adheres to his view of development and evolution as a dialectical spiral, driven by a cosmogenetic organizing principle. The interpenetrating forces of differentiation and integration can be seen functioning in the whole and its parts. McIntosh moves away from Darwin's evolution that is seen empty of purpose. You can find this book at Amazon [http://www.amazon.com/Integral-Consciousness-Future-Evolution-McIntosh/dp/1557788677/ref=cm\\_cr-mr-title](http://www.amazon.com/Integral-Consciousness-Future-Evolution-McIntosh/dp/1557788677/ref=cm_cr-mr-title) .

**Key Words:** integral consciousness, future, evolution, Darwin.

In describing the passage from traditional consciousness to modern, McIntosh (page 53) writes: "Science eventually came to `colonize' and dominate other spheres of knowing, often going so far as to deny their validity. In many significant areas science developed into scientism, the pathological form of modernist consciousness we noted earlier which maintains that the only `real' reality is objective, material reality."

In describing the plurality of consciousness, and their internal interactions, McIntosh (page 57) writes: "Warrior consciousness defeats tribal consciousness because of its ruthless ferocity and energetic determination. Tribal consciousness is usually able to defeat warrior consciousness because of its superior organization and group discipline. Modernist consciousness overcomes traditional consciousness as a result of its technological and industrial superiority. And postmodern consciousness finds its advantage over modernism in its unique ability to bring about change through nonviolent political action and moral strength."

McIntosh (page 60) writes on truth: "At the warrior stage of consciousness, the value of truth relates to the real distribution of power - what's true is what is powerful. Truth for traditional consciousness is usually defined by a particular tradition's holy scripture, such as the Bible. Truth for modernist consciousness is generally defined as objective scientific fact, and that which can be materially proved, whereas truth for postmodern consciousness is far more contextually dependent."

McIntosh tells us that integral consciousness is the next transcendent stage beyond postmodern consciousness. Integral consciousness recognizes evolution as a dialectical spiral, extending beyond Hegel's philosophy and beyond Teilhard de Chardin's evolution. McIntosh (page 117) writes: "While the rise of integral consciousness will definitely result in the evolution of spiritual culture, it is more likely that most of this evolution will involve the refinement, integration, and improvement of existing spiritual forms rather than the creation of entirely new kinds of spirituality."

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McIntosh (page 132) writes: "My own understanding of the idea of values has been most illuminated through the use of the concept of three 'primary values' - the beautiful, the true and the good." McIntosh (page 133) tells us that these three inclinations are reflected in Kant's three critiques: "The Critique of Pure Reason (which is about truth), The Critique of Practical Reason (which is about morality and goodness), and The Critique of Judgment (Which is about aesthetics or beauty)."

McIntosh (page 146) writes: "Understood from an evolutionary perspective, the beautiful, the true, and the good show themselves to be the directions of perfection. It's by creating and increasing beauty, truth, and goodness whenever and wherever we can that we make the world relatively more perfect. Thus the revelation of evolution, when viewed from the perspective of integral consciousness, is seen as a progressive teaching about perfection that unfolds by stages, one after the another."

McIntosh (page 215) writes: "If the universe has a purpose, then evolution, the all-encompassing activity of the universe, also has a purpose, and this leads to inescapable recognition of some kind of transcendental causation or morphogenetic pull that exerts a subtle influence on all forms of evolution. This does not necessarily mean that biological evolution is the product of 'intelligent design' or supernatural intervention, but it does mean that evolution is a purposeful phenomenon of growth that proceeds in a generally positive direction. Thus by starting with experience, and by recognizing that human experience includes the three essential categories of physical, mental, and spiritual experience - none of which can be reduced to any other - integral philosophy finds that it indeed has a metaphysics that is an inescapable part of its worldview."

McIntosh (page 217) writes: "The rise of the integral worldview thus marks the beginning of history's Second Enlightenment."

McIntosh takes the primary values and translates them into feeling, thought and will, thereby providing an overall structure upon which Wilber's plurality of lines (the psychograph model) may find their expression. McIntosh adheres to his view of development and evolution as a dialectical spiral, driven by a cosmogenetic organizing principle. The interpenetrating forces of differentiation and integration can be seen functioning in the whole and its parts. McIntosh moves away from Darwin's evolution that is seen empty of purpose.

McIntosh (page 298) writes: "The only way to transcend the opposing forces of part and whole is to move beyond them in a way that includes them both on their own terms... this two-dimensional opposition is transcended through a third-dimensional movement whose form continues to be shaped by the influences of both opposing forces... the curve of the spiral grows outward, its extension responds to the influences of increasing complexity. Yet as it expands, the spiral also continually curves in on itself, yielding its outward extension to the inward gravity of its center and thereby exhibiting the influence of the abiding unity that gives it form... evolution achieves the transcendental movement that originates in a given domain but which is not actually of that domain. Evolution as a whole thus exhibits the continuous ability to transcend the duality of conflict and the limitations of any given container by moving in the direction of an entirely new domain."

## References

Steve McIntosh, 2007, *The Biology Of Belief: Unleashing the Power Of Consciousness, Matter and Miracles*, Continuum.