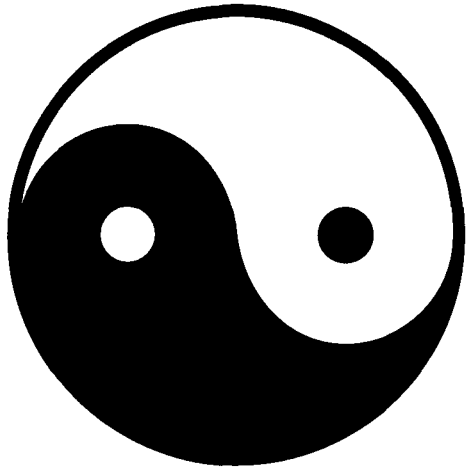
INTEGRATION

Integration as Transformation



John Rowan

First of all, what is integration? Let us just take the simplest case. It is when two things are unified. And what I want to say is that when two things are genuinely unified, transformation happens. A re-evaluation of each of them takes place. They both change. They become a third thing, which does justice to both.

I want to follow out this process in three areas: self, society and spirituality. By self I mean people relating to themselves — their internal relationships. By society I mean the relations between people, between the person and the group, between groups, and between people and groups and the wider community. By spirituality I mean that which goes beyond the personal and the social and touches somehow the divine.

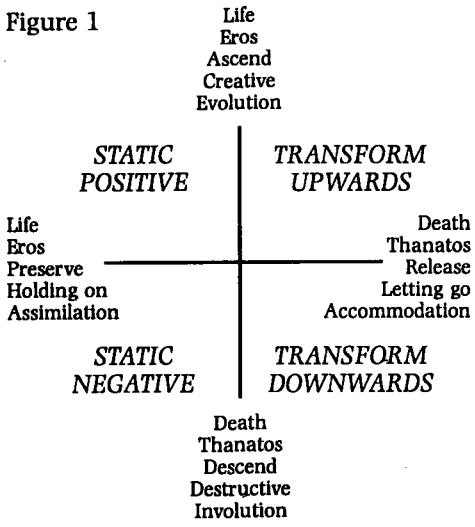
The Self

Within the person there are often conflicts and polarisations. Now the first rule for achieving integration is to put your cards on the table, face the real issue, uncover the conflict and bring the whole thing into the open. In therapy we do this by naming the parties to the conflict. We may talk about the superego and the ego, or the persona and the shadow, or the top dog and the underdog, or the critical parent and the adapted child, or the protector-controller and the victim, or the anima and the ego, or the operating potential and the deeper potential, or the adult self and the child self, or (going back into the last century) the over-consciousness and the under-consciousness. Whatever names we use, this will help us to bring out the essence of the conflict and work with it more easily.

For success, two things are necessary: being creative, and letting go. By being creative, we make it possible for something new to emerge; by letting go, we avoid being held back to our previous position. Ken Wilber has a good diagram of this (see Figure 1).

John Rowan practises and teaches psychotherapy in London. He is also a writer and frequent contributor to Self & Society.

Figure 1



As you can see, to understand the process we need two versions of Eros and two versions of Thanatos. Once this is set up it becomes obvious that in the upper left quadrant we have static love, the kind of love that is so good it wants to go on for ever. The desire is for permanence and stability. If I love and am loved, then I know who I am. Nothing should change: why should I want any change, when things are already so perfect?

It is perhaps less easy to see how, in the lower left quadrant, we could have static hate. But hate can also help us to define our boundaries. If I know who I am not, whom I reject, whom I dissociate myself from, then I know who I am. I can define myself by my enemies.

Now in the lower right quadrant, if I am destructive and also let go of my previous position, I may descend back to a lower level, a level I thought I had left behind. I may regress to an earlier and simpler form of adjustment. This can often happen if we are faced with problems too great for us to handle. We go back down the ladder we have just climbed up with so much time and effort. If we think in terms of the Maslow levels, for example, we may have risen to the level of self-esteem. But if our esteem is knocked enough, if enough things happen to shatter it and destroy it, we may regress to the level of love and belongingness, where we seek desperately for any kind of approval at any cost; or we may regress even further, to the level where we trust nobody and look only for some handhold of power; or further still, to the stage where all we want is security, security at any price.

But in the upper right quadrant, if I am creative and also prepared to let go of my previous position, I may ascend up to the next level in my psychospiritual development. This is the way of transformation, according to Wilber. And what I am suggesting here is that integration is the natural and best way towards this kind of transformation.

For example, let us take a case history provided by Alvin Mahrer. This was of a woman suffering from neck pains, which had been diagnosed as a 'myofascial condition' by her doctor. She was dissatisfied with her job, which she would be able to leave with compensation if her neck pains became sufficiently bad. However, they only struck at night, and never in the daytime. Mahrer invited her to treat them as a person, and to talk to them. It turned out that she had already done so, and had tried to persuade them to come in the daytime, when they could be observed and when they could seriously interfere with her work. But they were tricky, and would not respond.

Mahrer detected within her a conspira-

torial character, who wanted to cheat the company and exploit her neck pains for gain. It had occurred to her to pretend to have the pains at work, in the daytime, and achieve her aim that way. This was a forbidden person lurking inside her. Mahrer encouraged her to get more in touch with this character, who turned out to be quite mischievous and cheeky. And as she got into the character more, and accepted it and really explored it, she started to laugh.

Mahrer laughed with her, and suggested that she go back into her childhood experience and identify there some occasions when this naughty little girl had come on the scene. She identified several such scenes, with evident enjoyment. He then brought her back into the present and invited her to imagine scenes where this character had free rein and could go all the way. This led to some outrageous suggestions and some strong laughter.

Mahrer then laid out the possibility of bringing all this back into reality, and in effect unifying her sober reliable self and her naughty, mischievous self, who by now was a familiar friend. This led to a reconciliation where she decided to leave her job in any case, and to take a holiday with her husband — something they had both wanted for some time. A little later the neck pains disappeared.

A complete episode like this makes it easy to see how in therapy bringing out the opposites makes integration possible. By increasing the polarisation and exaggerating it, it becomes better identified and easier to work with. Reconciliation then takes place very naturally. It is easy to see how this case fits in with the Wilber diagram we have been using.

Integrative Psychotherapy and Counselling

I would like to set out two ideas which interest me at the moment, related to the integration of psychotherapies.

The first of these has to do with the progress of therapy. Some people hold a simple view of psychotherapy, saying that there is no difference between it and counselling or personal growth work, because the actual techniques used are the same. My own view, however, is that psychotherapy is a rather long and tortuous process, well described by people like Jocelyn Chaplin with her seven stages; to me, as also suggested by Jung and some of his followers, it is more like the process followed in European alchemy, which has no less than eleven stages. As Sheldon Kopp has proposed, there seem to be three major phases: in phase one the symptoms are dealt with; in phase two the deeper issues are tackled; and in phase three the results are taken back into the environment and the consequences worked through.

Now of course it is true that sometimes, for all sorts of reasons, the three phases are not fully traversed: and in particular, short-term therapy will often cover only the first, the easiest phase to deal with. In some cases this is perfectly justified and right, but in others to end with phase one may be to cheat clients of their full entitlement. And what I want to say very strongly is that if psychotherapy is to be a life-changing operation, as Jim Bugental makes clear it can be, it has to go through all the phases. Equally, if therapy is to be an initiation, as I have argued that it can be for men, in particular, then it has to

run the full course, and not be truncated in any way. So that is my first idea.

My second idea is about some requirements for a training course in integrative psychotherapy, as I see it. An integrative training will make sure that trainees are at least acquainted with the five great areas of work which they might encounter in their careers as therapists.

The first of these, and the most generally accepted, is adult life. This includes the problems of work, relationships, identity, self-oppression, anxiety, depression and so on: all the problems which are most usually brought to the therapist. In this area we are often just as interested in how the client is keeping the problem in being in the present as we are in how it came into being in the first place. We may be particularly concerned with existential questions of fundamental issues, particularly when the client is no longer young. Any therapist who could not handle this area would hardly be a therapist at all.

The second area is childhood. Now there are some forms of therapy which downplay this, and avoid it if possible. But I would argue that this is not really possible. No matter what the orientation, childhood material is going to appear sooner or later. This will include various forms of abuse, Oedipal conflicts, conditions of worth being applied, unfinished business of all kinds. Therapists must be trained to deal with family-of-origin material, even if they are not going to specialise in it.

The third area for an integrative training is what we might call object-relations material — that is, material from the first year or two of life, before language comes into the picture. There was a time when this pre-Oedipal material was hardly mentioned by anyone; then the Kleinians took it up, and the Lacanians, and I even find it now in personal construct theory and other unlikely places. Yet it is clear to me at least that clients do come up with this kind of early material from time to time, and that it needs to be dealt with, because when it does come up, it is very important. A therapist who could not deal with projective identification would not be much of a therapist, in my opinion. This kind of thing has to be dealt with adequately if the therapy is not to do more harm than good.

The fourth area which needs to be dealt with is birth and prenatal life events and traumas. There is now a considerable body of literature in this area, not to mention at least two good journals, and it needs to be considered. Again, clients do come up with such material from time to time: how are they going to be treated? Is the therapist going to reinterpret such traumas as oral material, as Malan does, or do justice to it in its own terms, with the help of writers like Grof, Lake and Verny?

And the fifth area which seems to me basic is the transpersonal. This is material having to do with the person's direction in life, big dreams, encounters with high archetypes, spiritual emergencies, intuition, creativity and so forth. An integrative training which ignores all this is incomplete and culpably ignorant. People do come up with such problems and such material, and they have to be treated properly. Too often in the past has a spiritual emergency been treated as a psychiatric emergency, and we have to become more knowledgeable about this whole area of work if we are to prevent

people being given treatment which not only does them no good, but may actually do them harm.

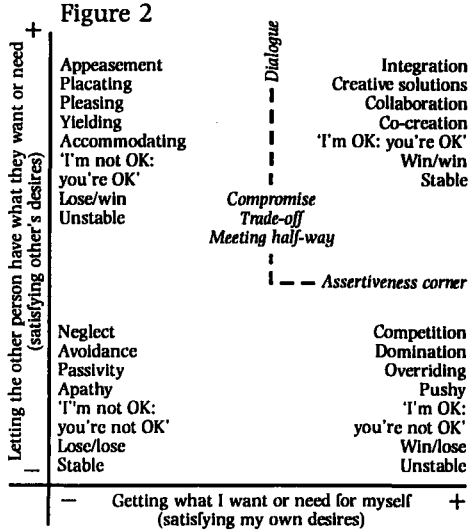
In my opinion a framework like this does not favour any one form of psychotherapy, but demands that we make use of many traditions — humanistic, existential, cognitive-behavioural, psychoanalytic, transpersonal and so forth.

So having looked at the individual and at the therapy which attempts to work with the individual, let us move on to the social.

Society

There can be conflicts between people. Let us take the simplest case, where just two people are involved. Here we can use some work carried out based on an idea originating from Mary Parker Follett, a great pioneer of humanistic management theory. Usually when two people have different views, either one dominates the other, or they compromise: a third possibility, however, is that they reach out for integration. Let us look at each of these options with the help of Figure 2.

Figure 2



In the top left corner we have appeasement. You can see that this is the situation where the other person gets what they want to a high degree, but your own satisfaction is very low. So you lose and they win. This is an unstable situation, because you may feel resentment which will come out in subtle forms at a later time.

In the lower right corner we have just the opposite, domination. This is where what I want or need is satisfied to a high degree, but the other person is only satisfied to a low degree. One side wins and the other loses. This often leads to the losing side trying to build up its forces so that next time round it can win. It perpetuates or even sets in motion a win-lose relationship of low synergy.

In the lower left-hand corner nobody gets what they want, and all we get is apathy. Both sides lose. In the centre we get compromise: each side gives up a part of what it wants for the sake of peace. This is always unsatisfying to some degree, and each side may try to get its missing bit in some overt or covert way. This approach always tends to diminish our integrity. In the top right-hand corner, however, we get real integration, where both sides get all that they really wanted. This may need quite a bit of work before we can see what it was that each side did really want. We only arrive at the upper right corner through dialogue and negotiation. We have to be assertive enough to hold on to our own needs and our own point of view.

The great pioneer in this area is Mary Parker Follett (a humanistic psychologist before humanistic psychology was ever

noticed or named), who takes it for granted that the thing to aim at is the interweaving of differences, because that is what one actually has to work with. Conflicts are then carefully brought out and explored, rather than being overridden, smoothed over or ignored. And the outcome of this is that creative solutions may emerge which nobody envisaged at the beginning of the process. All growth is a process of differentiation and integration, and the differentiation is just as important as the integration. The first rule of integration is to put your cards on the table, uncover the conflict, bring the whole thing out into the open.

Follett gives the example of a mother and teenage son who had arranged to go on holiday together. But when they sat down to plan the details, they found that he wanted to spend the time mountain climbing, while she wanted to spend it sunning herself on a beach. He was thinking of places like the Cairngorms or the Alps, while she was thinking of places like Greece or the Canary Islands. Domination would have meant one of them getting their way and the other tagging along dissatisfied. Compromise would have meant something like spending one week in one place and one week in another. But they went on discussing and looking at alternatives until they came up with the idea of a lake in the mountains, where there was a beach for her and places to climb for him. So both of them got what they really wanted, though not what their first idea had been. Mary Parker Follett said: 'Never let yourself be bullied by an either/or.'

If we can do this, and attempt to bring out the differences so that they can be worked on, it is possible to meet other people who we know to be opposed in interest and to confront them as a whole person, unafraid and ready to use whatever power we have. It is possible to be flexible and human and at the same time to stand no shit. It also seems that if we want creative solutions, if we want genuine transformation, this is the only way to get it. And it seems that this is possible for groups as well as for individuals. Follett gives the example of a farming co-operative. It owned a loading platform where farm carts could unload their produce. This was on a hill. Now it sometimes happened that a cart coming up the hill and a cart coming down the hill might arrive at the same time. The farm coming down the hill claimed priority, because it was difficult to stop the horses carrying on down. But the farm coming up the hill claimed priority, on the grounds that it was difficult to hold the cart on the steep slope. The arguments were so forceful and angry that the whole co-operative almost broke up over the issue. But the two farms were encouraged to enter into dialogue about the matter, in conjunction with the manager of the loading bay. And in the end they came up with the solution: let carts unload on both sides of the loading bay. Then no one had to have priority, because they could both unload at the same time.

If you are familiar with the work of Fisher and Ury, whose book *Getting to Yes* has become a classic, you will observe that these examples follow the four rules which they put forward as the most important: separate the people from the problem; focus on interests, not positions; generate a variety of possibilities before

deciding what to do; and insist that the result be based on some objective standard. But what Fisher and Ury do not emphasise is that what is wanted is total integration — where both sides get all that they really want — and that the final outcome is transformation. By transformation I mean that the final result could not have been predicted from the initial positions. It represents something creative, something genuinely new.

Looking at a broader canvas, there are much wider issues which can be tackled in the same way. How often are we told that we have to choose between unity and fragmentation? Those who favour unity point to the importance of the family, Parliament, moral principles and so forth. If we believe in such things we must believe in a principle of unity which brings them all together. This is sometimes put as Britishness, sometimes as the culture of Western civilisation, sometimes as belief in God. But in any case what we want and must have is unity, is coherence, is consistency. Those who favour fragmentation, on the other hand, point to the oppressive nature of all orthodoxies, the intolerance shown by all fixed beliefs, the dogmatism of those who want to legislate morals for everyone else. This is sometimes phrased as postmodernism, sometimes as deconstruction, sometimes as relativism. But in any case we have to hold on to the preciousness of diversity, and respect for all genuinely held opinions.

In reality both unity and fragmentation are too one-sided. We cannot hold to the one without supporting some ideology of domination. We cannot hold to the other without losing all sense of direction. But if we can hold the warring parties together, if we can get them to listen to each other, we can suddenly see that there is a third way, a way beyond the either/or, one which does justice to all that was important in both of the partial positions. This is pluralism, as John Kekes has been arguing very effectively in recent years. If we adhere to pluralism, we do believe that some things are more important than others, that there are priorities and graduations, not a mere side-by-side diversity where both shove ha'penny and poetry are equally valuable and equally worthy of attention. We also believe that everything and every person and every opinion is worth examining, is worth taking seriously and pursuing. Diversity is valuable because only through diversity can we reach any kind of unity that is worth having, temporary and tentative as this will undoubtedly be. Integration gives us the kind of unity that will do for the moment: we do not have to hold on to it for all eternity. As we saw in Figure 1, if we try to hold on to it too long, all further growth is made impossible.

Spirituality

If we want integration in the spiritual sphere, we have to understand that this means going beyond the everyday language, beyond consensus reality and beyond formal logic. In formal logic, as laid down by Aristotle and perpetuated to this day in the mathematical logic that underlies the construction of computers, A is A. It sounds so obvious, doesn't it? But that is its seductive quality. It seems that to deny this would be to make all rational thought impossible. It is only if A is A that we know where we are, that we have any-

thing definite to start from. If we can't assume that A is A, what can we assume?

But there are other logics beyond formal logic. There is a good deal of talk in computer circles now about fuzzy logic, about many-valued logic, about conditional logic, and so on. But Ken Wilber says that entry to the transpersonal realm, the realm of spirituality, is through the Centaur level, the level of development where for the first time we are truly thinking for ourselves. And he says that at this level we move on to vision-logic. He says of vision-logic that it 'can hold in mind contradictions, it can unify opposites, it is dialectical and nonlinear, and it weaves together what otherwise appear to be incompatible notions.'

Let us just take one of these descriptive words, and expand on it a bit. What is dialectical logic? Well, its equivalent statement to 'A is A' is 'A is not simply A'. This seems a very small adjustment, but it makes all the difference. Charles is a schizophrenic, but he is not simply a schizophrenic. Juliet is an actress, but she is not simply an actress. Justin is a Conservative, but he is not just a Conservative. Let's not look only at what something is, let's look at how it changes.

Dialectical logic says that the way things change is through conflict and opposition. And so dialectical thinkers are always looking for the contradictions within people or situations as the main guide to what is going on and what is likely to happen. There are three things which dialectical logic is about: the interdependence of opposites; the interpenetration of opposites; and the unity of opposites. Let's just look at each of these in turn.

The interdependence of opposites is the easiest to see: opposites depend on one another. It wouldn't make sense to talk about darkness if there were no such thing as light. I really start to understand my love at the moment when I permit myself to understand my hate. In practice, each seems to need the other to make it what it is. With the interpenetration of opposites we come to see that opposites can be found within each other. Just because light is relative to darkness, there is some light in every darkness, and some darkness in every light. There is some hate in every love, and some love in every hate. If we look into one thing hard enough, we can always find its opposite right there.

So far we have been talking about relative opposites. But dialectic goes on to say that if we take an opposite to its ultimate extreme and make it absolute, it actually turns into its opposite. Hence we have the unity of opposites. If we make darkness absolute, we are blind — we can't see anything. And if we make light absolute, we are equally blind, we can't see anything. In psychology, the equivalent of this is to idealise something. So if we take love to its extreme, and idealise it, we get morbid dependency, where our whole existence depends completely on the other person. And if we take hate to its extreme, and idealise that, we get morbid counter-dependency, where again our whole existence depends completely on the other person.

A good spiritual symbol for these three processes is the yin-yang symbol of Taoism. The interdependence of opposites is shown in the way each half is defined by the contours of the other. The interpenetration of opposites is expressed by putting

a black spot in the innermost centre of the white area, and a white spot in the innermost centre of the black area. And the unity of opposites is shown by the circle surrounding the symbol, which expresses total unity and unbroken serenity in and through all the seeming opposition.

Dialectic is not spirituality, but it is one way into spirituality, just as the Centaur stage of development is a way into spirituality. It has the virtue of disengaging us from a very narrow version of rationality. According to this narrow version, objectivity is rational and subjectivity is irrational. But from a more inclusive and more adequate point of view, rationality includes both what is objective and what is subjective. It does not exclude anything — how can rational understanding exclude things like emotion, intuition and creativity? It has to include everything, if it is to be any good at all. And this is one of the things which Ken Wilber has done for us — he has shown exactly how spirituality can be understood. It cannot be reduced to the level of formal logic — of course that is true, but does not mean that it cannot be understood at all. By saying that there is a logic of transformation, and that it can be understood in terms of Figure 1, Wilber has given us the means to track the process of psychospiritual development even into what Maslow has called the farther reaches of human nature.

What this means is that the process by which psychospiritual development takes place is a dialectical process. It does not take place by a smooth progression from one level to another. It proceeds by contradictions. We have to let go of the previous level of adjustment, and move into a new level with which we are quite unfamiliar. Wilber says in one place that this involves incest and castration: incest because we want to hold on to just the one thing we should not hold on to; and castration because we are going to be cut off from it anyway. This is dramatic language, but the language of dialectics is always dramatic — we do not just leave our previous level, very often we repudiate it. As a child, we repudiate the baby stage we have left behind. As an adolescent, we repudiate the child, we have left behind. As an adult, we repudiate the adolescent we once were. This is true at the moment we leave the previous level. Later on we may develop more tolerance, more acceptance. As an adult, we may go back and get to know and love our inner child. But we had to say No to it in the first place, in order to move on.

One of the reasons why spirituality is so difficult for us is that there is so little support in our culture for repudiating the mental ego, and even less for repudiating the real self, which is after all the great achievement of the Centaur level. A second reason is that the real self is so hard-won, so much our own achievement through our own efforts, that to think of moving on from it seems almost self-defeating, self-harming. It seems dangerous, too. Will we fall into the hands of some self-serving guru? Will we have to abandon our democratic character structure? Will we fall into new and more seductive superstitions, no less inadequate than the ones we left behind during our adolescence? We spent so much time finding the right therapist, the right workshop, the right self-help group — have we now got to spend even more time, with even less social support, finding the right ritual, the

right initiation, the right meditation? So many dangers, and so few positive answers! But if we do continue, in spite of everything, we find that there is new transformation and a new integration. The new integration actually does make sense of the previous contradictions and uncertainties and general mess. Often it comes for a while and then goes away again, but this was true at every earlier stage as well. It is only through perseverance and continual renewal that the new integration starts to become something accessible at will.

And here there is a common misunderstanding. We often feel that in order to move into the spiritual realm we have to lose our ego. This is what we are told by many teachers, and it lurks about in the air even if we do not meet a person who tells us this. Now losing the ego is a strange idea. Anyone who looks around the serried ranks of available gurus and examines them in some detail must come to the conclusion that they show very few signs of having lost their egos. Sure, there are magical moments when it seems to the ardent follower that they have, but this is true for group leaders, therapists, clowns, racing drivers, swimmers, golfers — all manner of people in all manner of walks of life. To all of them there can come the moment when they are only able to stammer: 'It was as if it was not me doing it, but more like it doing it by itself.' This is the phenomenon described by Czikszentmihalyi as 'flow', and it is quite common. It does feel like having no ego, and being completely empty. But it comes and goes. It is not a permanent state, nor is it even a state accessible at will. It can be prepared for, but it cannot be commanded. So when we look for someone who has permanently lost their ego, we look in vain.

It would be possible to go on further into the spiritual realm, but I don't think this is the time to do that. All I would like to say is that the humanistic approach and the transpersonal approach have an overlap. What Wilber calls the Centaur stage of psychospiritual development is for Rogers the fully functioning person, for Maslow the self-actualising person, for Mahrer the integrating and actualising person, for Sartre the existential authentic person, for Perls the self as opposed to the self-image, for Winnicott the true self as opposed to the false self. All these are, at the moment of realisation, mystical states — moments of genuine transpersonal ecstasy. They are not the final enlightenment, if indeed there is any final enlightenment. They are in the foothills of the mystical mountain range. But they are perfectly genuine and extremely important. They represent the end of the psychological and the beginning of the spiritual, both at the same time. And I believe that they are always reached by some process of integration. Here, too, integration leads to transformation.

Further Reading

James F.T. Bugental, *The Art of the Psychotherapist*, W.W. Norton, 1987

Jocelyn Chaplin, *Feminist Counselling in Action*, Sage, 1988

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Isabella Selega Csikszentmihalyi (eds), *Optimal Experience: Psychological Studies of Flow in Consciousness*, Cambridge University Press, 1988

Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes*, Hutchinson Business, 1986

Pauline Graham (ed.), *Mary Parker Follett: Prophet of Management*, Harvard Business School Press, 1995

Stanislav Grof, *The Holotropic Mind*, Harper, 1992

John Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, Princeton University Press, 1993

Sheldon Kopp, *Back to One*, Science and Behaviour Press, 1977

Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*, (abridged by Martin Yeomans), Darton, Longman & Todd, 1986

Alvin R. Mahrer, *How to Do Experiential Psychotherapy*, University of Ottawa Press, 1989

David H. Malan, *Individual Psychotherapy and the Science of Psychodynamics*, Butterworths, 1979

Tom Verny, 'Working with Pre- and Perinatal Material in Psychotherapy' *Pre- and Perinatal Psychology Journal* 8/3 161–186, 1994

Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: the Spirit of Evolution*, Shambhala, 1995

Integration, Intention, Dialogue and Difference

Hilde Rapp

1

The art of integration rests on two preconditions. The first is that we find a way of stating what each wants from the other and how this may be similar or different. The second is that we find a way of stating as clearly as possible what each of us believes is necessary if we are to achieve what we want, and how this too may be similar or different. Integration requires the stating of difference, and the will to transcend this difference.

2

If there were no difference, there could be no life. In order for two people to make a new integration, there has to be difference. And for this difference to become productive, there has to be dialogue. It is through dialogue that we find the courage to dare to disturb the universe.

3

Each approach to psychotherapy rests on similar or different aesthetic and ethical

Hilde Rapp works as an independent organisational consultant, therapist, supervisor, verifier, lecturer and writer. She is the current Chair of the British Institute for Integrative Psychotherapy.