Social Identity Development and Integral Theory

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Abstract: Social group identity, which refers to a person's identification with, and membership within, diverse social groups (by race, gender, class, sexuality, etc.), and social identity development, which refers to the process of stage development regarding each of these social group identities, are areas of study not currently addressed by the major proponents and practitioners of Integral Theory. This paper will relate concepts pertaining to social group identity and principles regarding social identity development that are both relevant and useful to Integral Theory. Additionally, this paper will situate social identity development relative to the levels of consciousness; it will propose that social group identity and consciousness develop simultaneously; that as a person (or a group, organization or society) moves through, incorporates and transcends the stages of social identity development in various identity categories, they also move through the levels or stages of consciousness development. Moreover, this paper will propose that social identity development, as well as consciousness development, both occur in the context of engagement within groups and across cultures and, particularly, in the process of addressing and seeking to overcome issues of differential social power—oppression—within prevailing or dominant cultural paradigms. In the process, this paper will argue for the inclusion of social group identity as a developmental line within Integral Theory, as it constitutes a distinct and critically important aspect of the social self, or self-in-society, necessary to effectively address critically important issues of our times—war, terrorism, capitalism, poverty, health care, education, democracy, the environment, among others. This work has implications for integral theorists who seek to produce knowledge in sub-fields, such as, Integral Psychology, Integral Sociology, Integral Feminism, Integral Politics, Integral Economics, Integral Ethics, Integral Community Development, Integral Ecology, Integral Leadership, and Integral Business, and more importantly, for integral practitioners in these areas.

Introduction

Social group identity refers to a person's identification with, and membership within, diverse social groups (by race, gender, class, sexuality, etc.), while social identity development theory proposes a process of stage development generally applicable to each social group identity (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997). Social group identity and social identity development are core concepts addressed in consciousness-in-action, an integral approach to liberation and transformation (Quiñones-Rosado, 2007). Developed over twenty years in response to real-life issues and concerns in communities-of-struggle, the consciousness-in-action approach

is informed by integral theory, integral studies and by critical social theories, pedagogies, psychologies, philosophies and spiritualities elaborated within social movements of liberation—East, West, North and South. Its purpose is to foster and develop conscious, deliberated, principled and disciplined responses that produce, reproduce and support the personal and collective integral well-being of all persons and sustainable human development.

As a conceptual framework, consciousness-in-action is inspired by the Lakota medicine wheel used and described by the Four Worlds Development Project (Bopp & Bopp, 2001) and, subsequently, enriched by Wilber's integral psychology (1999) and, more generally, Integral Theory (1995/2000, 1997, 2000, 2006, 2007). As a process model and integral approach to human well-being and development, consciousness-in-action presumes the dynamic, holistic, integrative nature of the various aspects of the personal dimension of life (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) and, in turn, this dimension holarchically nested within the collective dimension of human activity (economic, political, social and cultural). As an integral libratory transformative praxis, consciousness-in-action is concerned with personal and collective liberation from racism, sexism, classism, colonialism and other multiple forms of oppression, as these are forces—subjective, intersubjective, objective and systemic—that fundamentally hinder integral well-being and sustainable development. Simultaneously, this practice is aimed at transformation at all levels of society (personal, communal, organizational, institutional, cultural) and of human consciousness itself, as it seeks to develop applications that transform and transcend cultural patterns of thought and behavior that give rise to oppression within a society into life sustaining ones.

This model is visually represented using concentric circles separated into quadrants (as per the medicine wheel) and is quite compatible with, though distinct from, Integral Theory and its AQAL model. For the purposes of contributing to Integral Theory (and perhaps to social identity development theory), this paper will present core concepts and issues of consciousness-in-action that are relevant to Integral Psychology and Integral Theory, while also "translating" aspects of the consciousness-in-action framework and social identity development theory to models and concepts already familiar to readers of Wilber's work. At the same time, other elements implicit in the consciousness-in-action approach, not yet fully articulated elsewhere, will be addressed.

Integral Well-Being and Development

Integral well-being, as described by the consciousness-in-action approach, is reached and maintained to the degree to which a person (or a collective) attends all aspects of the personal dimension of being (physical, mental, spiritual, emotional) within the collective dimension, or sphere, of human activity (economic, political, cultural, social). "Well-being is a state of relative balance (equilibrium) and harmony (congruence) among all of the aspects across both dimensions within the sphere of life" (2007, p.59).

Human development emerges from a person's ability to sustain states of relative well-being throughout the range of conditions and circumstances of life, at least long enough to strengthen and acquire skills and resources (internal and external, subjective and objective, personal and collective) necessary to effectively deal with the challenges of their particular developmental stage.

Self-Identity and Social Group Identity

Along with the cognitive, moral, spiritual, affective, needs, values, and interpersonal aspects of human development, the self, or self-identity, is considered among the major developmental lines within integral psychology and theory.
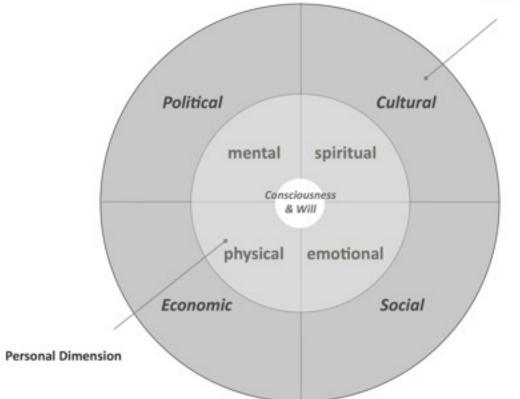
Figure 1. The Sphere of Human Activity

Wilber refers to the self as "that which attempts to integrate or balance all of the components of the psyche" (2000, p. 4) A bit more specifically, he describes the overall self as comprised by the proximate self and the distal self (1999). Wilber tells us that, "The proximate self is the intimately subjective self, the self that is experienced as an 'I.' The distal self is the objective self, which is experienced as a 'me' or 'mine.' … The proximate self is indeed a separate developmental line of transitional structures—it is the developmental line of the self-sense or self-identity" (1997, p. 344, n. 22). It is "the central source of identity, and that identity expands and deepens as the self navigates from egocentric to sociocentric to worldcentric to theocentric waves" (1999, p. 468). Meanwhile, the distal self refers to aspects, characteristics or roles of a person with which they identify, and from which they can make statements, such as, "'I am a father, mother, doctor, clerk; I weigh so many pounds, have blond hair, etc.'" (p. 465). While the proximate self develops through stages, Wilber claims the distal self does not. In fact, the proximate self is the only aspect of the overall self that develops through stages, according to integral theory.

It would seem, however, that this assessment overlooks social group identity as an aspect of self-identity and key function of the overall self-system, one that does develop sequentially through stages.

As the distal self is relative to the proximate self, a "social self," defined by our various social group identities, could be described as an "outer layer" of the overall self-system.[1] Similar to the distal self, from this social self emerges a sense of "me"—a "me" in relation to, and in dynamic relationship with, others in society.

Given our self-reflective nature and that, as children, we are raised within families, within groups, within communities, within society, this other layer of "me" emerges. This social aspect of "me" develops in, and because of, our interactions with adults with established personal identities and, who, in addition, are seen

and see themselves as members of distinct social identity groups: men, women, white, African-American, Latino, gay, lesbian, heterosexual, working class, etc.

It is from social interaction that key aspects of self-identity are able to emerge: self-image; self-concept; self-esteem; and self-love. How I see or perceive myself, then how I think or conceive of myself, then how I judge and value myself, and on the basis of these, how I feel about myself is socially constructed. This "me," or social self, is internally represented, conceptually framed, morally evaluated, and emotionally processed within—and witnessed by—the individuated consciousness of "I" is gradually, developmentally, generated within the enormously complex system of social arrangements and historical processes that we refer to as "society."

Yet the nature of social group identity is not about a person's identification with particular social roles (e.g., as a parent, as a worker, etc.), nor about their identification with traits that might describe them nor about characteristics they might possess (e.g., being a heavy person, a red-head, a smart guy, etc.). Instead, social group identity is about a person's membership within specific identity categories and groups in a society.

To be clear, social group identity refers to the amalgam of multiple social group identities that have both personal and collective meaning and relevance throughout a given cultural context. These are group identities based on "differences that make a difference," on characteristics and on circumstances that are shared by groups of people; they are based on subjective, intersubjective, objective and interobjective realities that psychologically and materially matter in people's lives.

In the United States[2], the primary social group identity categories are: race, gender, sexuality, nationality, class, religion, ethnicity (or culture), age, ability and political ideology. Within each of these categories are various social identity groups:

- **Gender** — men, women, transgendered people[3]
- **Class** — owning class, professional/middle class, lower middle/working class, low-income/poverty class
- **Race** — white, Asian, indigenous, Black, Latino[4]
- **Nationality** — US American, Canadian, British, Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc.
- **Ethnicity** — European-American (of English, Irish, Italian, German, etc., descent), Asian-American (of Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Pakistani, etc., descent), Native Amercan (Lakota, Chippewa, Navajo, Cherokee, etc.), African-American[5], Latino (of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Salvadoran, etc., descent), among many other ethnicities.
- **Sexuality** — heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual
- **Religion** — Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Wiccan, Yoruba, etc.
- **Political Ideology** — pro-status quo (Republican, Democrat), radicals (greens, communists, socialists, separatists or pro-independence nationalists)
- **Age** — adults (ages 21-60), elders (ages 60+), children (ages 0-20)
- **Physical/Mental/Developmental Ability** — abled, persons with disabilities

Again, when talking about social group identity, we are talking about how a person sees and experiences themselves (their various social selves), beyond, yet inclusive of, their own particular and uniquely personal identity (their combined proximate and distal selves), as a member of those multiple and specific social identity groups.
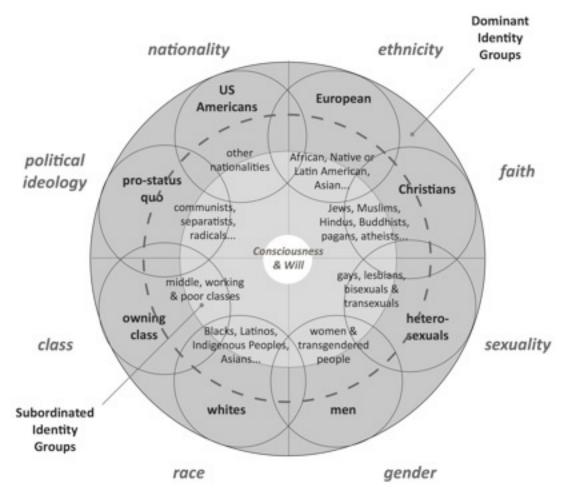
Figure 2. Social Identity Categories & Groups

More precisely, it is about recognizing oneself as a member of a specific social identity group within each of the multiple social group identity categories. Within each category, we identify with being one and not the other. For instance, I see, experience and locate myself as: being a man, and not a woman; being a Latino, and not being a European-American; as being a Puerto Rican, and not a US-American; as being a working/lower-middle class person, and not being a rich person, to give some personal examples. As a member of each of these groups, the person experiences a felt-sense of belonging.

At the same time, social group identity is about personally-held-but-collectively-shared meaning, purpose, perspective, place or location, or the ontological nature (to follow the examples above) of being male, Latino, Puerto Rican, and working class. Social group identity, therefore, includes a self-identity that blends both personally lived experiences with historical group-level experience rooted in socially relevant differences.

Like the distal self, social group identity is socially constructed, as both the roles and the social groups with which we identify arise from our interactions in society, from the process of socialization within the culture. In other words, we learn to see ourselves as men or women, white or Black or Latino, rich, working class or poor, etc., because we are seen as such by society (people previously socialized); we are taught how to see ourselves and where to locate ourselves in relationship to "others."

But, unlike the distal self, social group identities—each one of them, independently—develop through various specific sequential developmental stages.

However, before we look at social group identity development and its stages, it is important to understand, at least generally, why these social group identity categories even exist, and the historical context in which they came into existence.

Oppression, Modernity and Post-Modernity

While it is not within the scope of this work to present an overview neither of human history nor of the vast field of critical social theory, it is important to note that these social group identity categories—race, gender, class, nationality, etc.—in their current configuration, meaning and impact emerge in the context of systemic and systematic oppression throughout modernity. Modernity is both an historical era and a cultural process that began in 1492 with the so-called "discovery," conquest and colonization of the Americas by Spain and Portugal, subsequently joined by Britain, France and Holland. This process of conquest and colonization is characterized by the institutionalization of oppression, beginning with: the invasion and occupation of the American territory—its land and its people—by Europeans and its militarization by foreign government forces; the extermination of countless indigenous peoples and the Christianization of survivors; the importation of indigent European peasants and the implantation of indentured servitude; the trafficking and perpetual enslavement of kidnapped Africans; the establishment of a slave-based economy and its development into global capitalism; the creation of representative democracies that failed to represent the majority of its populations; and the territorial expansion of newly created North Atlantic nation-states across the world. It is through this process of conquest and colonization of the Americas that Europe (and later, the North Atlantic axis[6]) is able to rise and exert itself as the dominant military, economic, political and cultural power and "center" of the new world-system[7] (Blaut, 1993; Dussel, 1998/2000; Zinn, 1995).

Since the beginning of this period and process, the institutions of these modern nation-states were developed on the basis of a European cultural paradigm, albeit one characterized by coloniality[8], for addressing its economic, political, cultural and social needs. That is, it's institutional needs, given their relationship to—and over—people by social identity groups: men and women (gender), owners of capital and workers (class), Christians and pagans (religion), whites and People of Color (race), and the other social groups identified by nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, age, ability and political ideology.[9]

It might be safe to assume that, generally, in societies throughout history, people have been identified by group on the basis of how they culturally happen to sort for sameness and difference, including a wide range of distinctions in appearance and relative function within the society. In the context of social dynamics and oppression, people are also—and most significantly—identified by whether or not they belong to those groups that are dominant in that society, groups that have control over or have access to the economic, political, cultural and social resources that insure well-being and development. In other words, as social beings we have learned to identify others and ourselves on the basis of our relationship to economic, political, cultural and social power.

It is this relationship to power that post-modern critiques of modernity address when referring to oppression. Oppression is a system of differential power, as per social group identity, that involves "ideological control as well as domination and control of the social institutions and resources of the society, resulting in a condition of privilege for the agent[10] group[s] relative to the disenfranchisement and exploitation of the target group[s]" (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997, p. 17).

It is through the control of society's institutions, and the implementation of their policies and practices, that racism, sexism, classism, religious oppression, heterosexism, ageism, and other forms of oppression have been practiced—legally—throughout the culture. From their establishment in colonial America, these vari-

ous forms of institutional oppression were sanctioned and enforced by the state, endorsed by the church, espoused by philosophy, and validated by science. In other words, all major institutions in place today, created during the era and process of modernity in the Americas and Europe and extended to other colonies worldwide, were founded upon a cultural paradigm firmly grounded in oppression as ideology and imposition as a way of life.
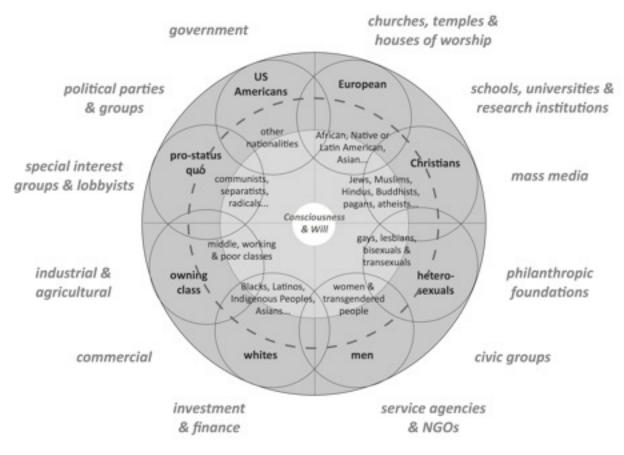

Figure 3. Major Institutions & Power Relationships

One might argue whether or not the purpose of these institutions was inherently malicious or merely self-serving as they were created to serve and benefit those in charge of controlling, maintaining and increasing economic, political, cultural and social activity in the emergent world-system. Yet their establishment and design were not unconscious nor without intent. For example, in the colonies of North America, the educational system was not intended for the population at large, but instead and very specifically, for the children of society's privileged caste, who by social identity groups were wealthy, white, Christian, heterosexual, and male. Mind you: they were not created for all wealthy people; not for all white people; not for all Christians; not for all heterosexuals; not for all men. But rather, the privileged cross-section of rich and white and Christian and heterosexual men who, not coincidentally, controlled business, banking, industry, political parties, churches, schools, social clubs and exclusive societies; those who ultimately ran county and colony, and later, state and country.

The white Christian wives and daughters of society's privileged and powerful men—and most certainly not their enslaved black sexual mates and off-spring—also benefitted, if only to the extent that their well-being and development supported and perpetuated the privileged status of the family and the collective to subsequent generations; sons, once of a certain age, of course, were automatically granted full access and privileged status. Over time and to a much lesser extent, other groups were allowed conditional access to and

limited benefit from these institutions, although the policies and practices never fundamentally altered their original intent or design, nor did they alter power relationships firmly set in place.
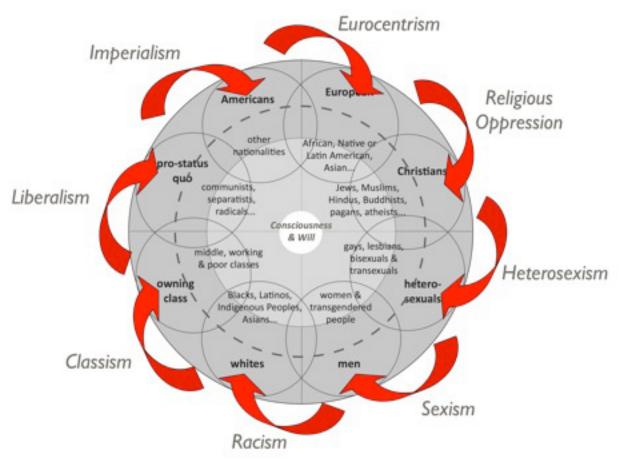

Figure 4: Forms of Institutional Oppression

Clearly, then, modern social identity groups—and, therefore, social group identities—were constructed within the historical context of economic, political, cultural and social oppression. And while some might claim that we are entering a postmodern era, the paradigm of modernity still prevails and remains fundamentally intact throughout the larger culture and permeates the collective's overall self.

Therefore, despite the gains of workers' rights, civil rights, women's rights and other social movements over the past 60-70 years, social group identity and social identity development in the context of oppression continue to have relevance today because…

- The material legacy of classism, racism, sexism and other forms of oppression continues to advantage dominant social identity groups at the expense of subordinated groups, because…
- The core dynamics of oppression (institutionally) and social power (interpersonally) to maintain or gain privileged status remain essentially intact, because…
- People generally still have not learned to tolerate, respect, understand, appreciate, empathize with, identify with, stand in solidarity with, and love "others" across lines of social identity difference and differential power, because…
- The basic ideology of the inherent superiority of dominant identities and the presumed inferiority of subordinated identities continues to be passed across generations, because…

- Among other things, our collective level of consciousness, altitude, or worldview is still fundamentally sociocentric.[11]

To examine social identity development in this context, then, becomes a topic of central importance to the development of an integral psychology and an integral theory that, among other things, aspires to move us to deeper levels of understanding and higher levels of consciousness.

Social Identity Development Theory

Developed in the context of social justice education, Social Identity Development Theory is an adaptation of black identity development theory and white identity development theory applied generically to the development of all social group identities (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997). It is functional as it describes developmental patterns and characteristics generally shared by all of social group identities.

Similar to other developmental lines, development by social group identity occurs progressively from one stage to the next, with each stage including-yet-transcending the developmental tasks and perspectives of the previous one. Additionally, development within each stage progresses from entry, intermediate and exiting sub-stages. Skills and patterns of the preceding stages are incorporated into the following ones, and even while these may have been outgrown and are no longer necessary to the current stage, they may still be accessed if needed.

The stages of social identity development are: naïve, acceptance, resistance, redefinition, and internalization.

Naïve

At birth and early childhood, members of dominant and subordinated social identity groups alike have no social consciousness. Very young children are unaware of differences between social identity groups, and of the complex social codes and dynamics of these groups. Within the first few years, however, children begin to learn about social group identity as they violate the boundaries or norms of those social groups within their cultural context: as they learn that different social rules apply depending on things like gender (that boys are supposed to be tough while girls are supposed to be sweet and nice) or on age (children can be ignored while adults must be listened to and obeyed). Children exit the naïve stage as they begin to recognize patterns of differences and internalize belief systems about their own and other's social group identities. They are socialized in the basic dynamics of social power as they learn rules from family members, the media, and institutional authority figures that allow, encourage and/or reward certain behaviors and prohibit, discourage and/or punish other behaviors, and how these apply differentially to people depending on their social identity groups.
Acceptance

Generally, the acceptance stage continues through childhood and into adulthood, with some people remaining at this stage (at least in some of their social identity lines) throughout their lives.

For members of dominant groups, entry into this stage represents an unconscious (passive) or conscious (active) internalization of, and identification with, the dominant culture's logic, values, feelings, beliefs systems and codes of behavior, all of which support their privileged status as members of those dominant groups. Through their acceptance of covertly or overtly taught stereotypes, myths, misinformation, distorted history, etc., dominant group members internalize the presumed superiority of their groups and, consequently, the

alleged inferiority of subordinated groups (generally) and their members (specifically). Whether aware or unaware of their status as dominant group members, their privileges are perceived as normative.

Those passively engaged in the acceptance stage deny the existence of oppression, while unconsciously blaming the oppressed for their condition. Some may even paternalistically agree to help oppressed persons overcome their condition (often viewed as self-inflicted) in order to allow these (e.g., poor people, women, People of Color, etc.) to adapt, adopt and assimilate into "the mainstream," the dominant group's system and worldview. However, by the time they exit the acceptance stage, dominant group members are able to acknowledge existence of some injustices in society and concede that the oppressed group's collective condition may not be their own doing.

Dominant group members in active acceptance, on the other hand, consciously accept, believe in, and assert the superiority of their group, and tend to more directly espouse or promote these beliefs. At this stage, they openly blame oppressed people for their condition, and intentionally disseminate negative stereotypes, fear and/or hostility. They reward those who support the oppressive system, and punish those who question or challenge the system. People in active acceptance would definitely include bigots and members of hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan or the militia patrolling the US-Mexican border, but might also include less blatant media personalities and policy makers who promote positions and policies that diminish, devalue and materially harm people—individuals and groups—on the basis of their subordinated social identity membership.

Like those in passive acceptance, dominant members in active acceptance exit this stage when they are genuinely able to acknowledge the existence of social injustice rooted in oppression, when they can honestly consider the possibility that the oppressed group's collective condition may not be self-inflicted.

Meanwhile, in a process that is, in some ways, parallel to dominant group members, members of subordinated groups at the acceptance stage also consciously or unconsciously internalize and accept dominant culture's logic, values, feelings, beliefs systems and behaviors that presume the inferiority of their own groups and, thus, the superiority of dominant groups. After all, they, too, learn the same covertly or overtly taught stereotypes, myths, misinformation, distorted history, etc. Moreover, by being socialized within the dominant culture, they learn to see themselves through the eyes of the dominant groups.

Those in passive acceptance also deny the existence of oppression, and unwittingly collude with the oppressive system, unconsciously acting in ways that perpetuate it. As life experiences challenge this worldview and behavior, subordinated members are able to exit this developmental stage when they begin to acknowledge the existence of oppression, when they begin to recognize their experiences, not as merely personal or individual, but as part of larger pattern within their group.

In contrast, as members of oppressed groups in the active acceptance consciously identify with and accept the dominant paradigm, they don't deny it, but rather rationalize their acquiescence to and/or active support of the oppressive system. They ignore inherent contradictions of their active participation in their own oppression as they do their best to accommodate and assimilate into the dominant social identity group's worldview and way of life. If and when they are able to begin to acknowledge these contradictions, and the cognitive dissonance between dominant ideology and the positive attributes of their own group, they can then move toward exiting this stage.

Resistance

Similarly, among members of both dominant social identity groups and subordinated social identity groups, there are those who enter the resistance stage more passively and those who enter resistance more actively. In either case, however, they enter with significantly greater awareness than those at the previous stage.

Some dominant group members enter resistance stage by passively searching for instances or examples of oppression, as they are increasingly able to recognize its existence and pervasiveness throughout society. At this stage, they also begin to question or challenge oppression, albeit in situations that pose little or no personal or professional risk. This increased awareness and engagement often results in their distancing themselves from other members of their own dominant groups; as they move toward exiting this stage, they often feel alienated and frustrated, leading them to become more actively engaged with the problem. They also begin to take ownership for their personal participation and to address questions about their own identity.

Other dominant group members in the resistance stage more actively examine, assertively question and openly challenge the social dynamics and structures that support oppression at individual, interpersonal, institutional and systemic levels. At this stage, they often feel shame at the existence of oppression, guilt for the role members of their groups historically played in its implementation, and anger at others of their own dominant groups who remain unaware. For them, exiting this stage involves intense feelings and the urge to address questions about their own identity, as they actively reject their own socially conditioned oppressive behaviors and attitudes, and the culture within which oppression is taught and perpetuated. Also, they actively reject unearned privilege granted them by an oppressive system.

Members of subordinated social identity groups enter the resistance stage with increased, if not heightened, awareness of oppression and its impacts. Some are more passive in their questioning and challenging of oppression in relatively safe situations where there is little or no personal or professional risk, particularly since, at this stage, they are no longer able to deny the potential and often probable dangers—psychological and physical—of by being identified as members of various subordinated groups. At this stage, they increasingly experience feelings of frustration, pain and anger, yet continue to take ever-greater risks through more open challenges of oppression, feeling an increased sense of personal power (or agency) with each direct challenge.

Meanwhile, members of subordinated groups in active resistance openly question individual and institutional support for oppressive practices and policies. They seek to gain increased understanding of the nature of oppression and become more skilled at identifying the many ways that it manifests. They also experience increased anger, pain, hurt and rage regarding their oppression and often become hostile toward dominant group members (at any stage), as well as with subordinated group members (at the acceptance stage) that collude with oppression. At this stage, identity is defined in opposition to the oppressors' group identity as members develop a clearer sense of "who I am not." They attempt to rid themselves of those beliefs, attitudes and behaviors learned at the acceptance stage. If they exit this stage, they experience intense feelings and urgent questions about their identity, while they also discover a sense of personal power related to an ability to influence the immediate environment, even if through overtly expressed anger or intimidation.

Redefinition

At the redefinition stage of social identity development there is no passive or unconscious engagement with oppression and with social group identity for members of either dominant groups or subordinated groups;

both enter with increased or heightened awareness of oppression and its impacts in their lives and in society at large.

Entry is characterized by conscious and deliberate efforts to create identities liberated from the oppressive paradigm. Dominant members do this by searching new ways of thinking and being, and from defining their social group and their membership in it in ways other than based on stereotypes of self and other. Together with other members of the same group, they critically examine their own socialization. They are able to recognize real and important differences between social groups, but now without attributing superiority or inferiority to any. They exit this stage as they develop positive definitions of their social identity as well as discover aspects of their group they find to be affirming; they develop a new sense of pride and personal esteem and act more spontaneously on their values.

Subordinated group members at this stage focus attention more on their own social group and tend not to associate much with dominant group members, as they do not perceive these as being affirming of the new and positive social group identity they are collectively forging. They search to rename and reframe their experience and basic referents through new and affirming paradigms. During this process, they also tend to interact more with others at the same developmental stage within their own group. They exit from this stage as they reclaim their group's culture by rediscovering positive aspects of their heritage and developing a renewed appreciation and sense of pride in their group identity.

Internalization

Entry of a dominant group member into the stage of internalization occurs as a person begins to associate into their redefined identity, and integrate the new identity into all the various aspects of their life. The new identity is eventually internalized, largely unconsciously, as they become more comfortable with the application of their new consciousness in everyday life. This new identity must be nurtured in order for it may be sustained within the dominant paradigm, an environment hostile to it, and against all attempts to re-socialize it in the ideology of oppression.

Similarly, a member of a subordinated group at this stage progressively integrates the new identity into all the various aspects of their life, as they also continue to internalize a new sense of group pride. They gradually expand their circle of social interaction beyond the supportive reference group, thus also expanding their circle of influence. At this stage, they must renegotiate important relationships based on new consciousness. They gain a better understanding of the different forms of oppression and an appreciation of other groups that are targets of oppression; they develop a better and deeper understanding of the inter-relatedness of oppressions, and become more capable of transferring growth to other identities.

While not expressly contemplated within Hardiman and Jackson's theory, I believe that the internalization of several redefined social identities leads to what might be a sixth stage of social identity development: integration. More than a final developmental stage of each separate social identity line, integration suggests a synergy of various social identities into a holistically integrated, or integral, social identity consciousness. Yet it is not a melding of social identities, as each social group identity continues to maintain its practical function and contextual meaning within the social matrix of life. Instead, this stage represents higher, broader, deeper levels of awareness of self-identity overall (proximate, distal and social), as well as advanced perceptual, critical, ethical and emotional capacity in relation to others. Moreover, such an integrated social self expresses congruence of ideas, beliefs, values, and behaviors relative to social identity and exhibits overall coherence of the self-system.
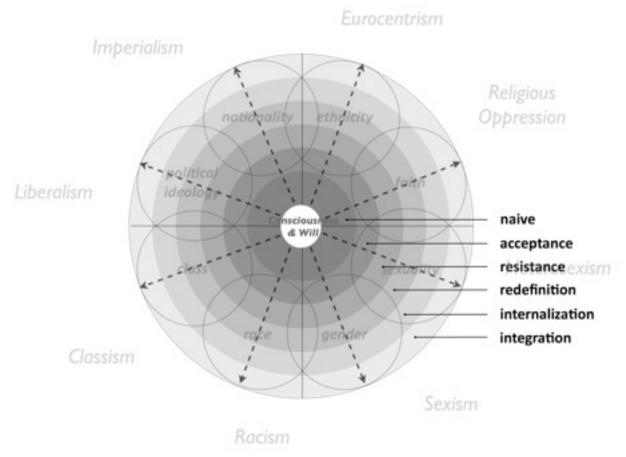
Figure 5. Stages of Social Identity Development

Increasing Levels of Complexity in Social Identity Development

The notion or concept of developmental fulcrums that Wilber describes in Integral Psychology (1997) is relevant to social identity development. In my book, I propose that stage development progresses as a person perceives, recognizes, understands and responds to the developmental challenges faced at each stage. If the person is unable to persistently and consistently respond, and instead, emotionally contracts and defensively reacts, the fulcrum is not surpassed, and they remain at the same stage. It is when emotional reactivity is released and new patterns of thought, emotion and behavior become firmly established in the self-system, a new perspective and developmental stage of social group identity emerges.

As within other developmental lines, regression can also occur in reaction to especially intense events and or extraordinary circumstances, a prolonged defensive contraction of the self manifested through a particular social identity and within certain social contexts. However, even in such emotionally contracted or defensive "states," the skills and perspectives of the most advanced stage attained remain potentially available to the person.

Movement from one stage to the next in this developmental process produces greater complexity within the self-system; as a person moves from acceptance to resistance to redefinition to internalization, they carry with them the psychosocial aspects of identity (self-image, self-concept, self-esteem, and self-love) and other patterns of behavior, thought and feeling relative to social identity that are particular of each stage to the next. So, for example, the negative stereotypes of Latinos that I internalized at the acceptance stage of racial identity development remain a part of my self-system even as I have passed through the resistance,

redefinition and internalization stages; having developed through the stages, my psychological relationship to these stereotypes—the meaning they have and the emotional response they elicit—was qualitatively different at each stage. A particular event could potentially evoke a meaning, trigger an emotion or provoke a behavior such as those typical of me at any previous stage or of all stages almost simultaneously, even though my overall cognitive, emotional and behavioral patterns will (hopefully) be characteristic of the internalization stage.

Another layer of complexity within the self-system becomes evident when considering development along eight to ten social identity "lines" that may be at different developmental stages. For example, as I was fully in the active resistance stage of racial identity development and acutely aware of my social position as a member of a subordinated or oppressed group, I was simultaneously at the passive acceptance stage of gender identity development; I had a much harder time becoming aware of how I—as a man, therefore, dominant group member—was reproducing many of the same ideas, attitudes, and behaviors I fully understood as being oppressive. Similarly, I was at resistance and then redefinition in my working class and Puerto Rican/ Latin American cultural identities well before I entered those stages relative to my heterosexuality and current levels of physical and mental ability, which place me within dominant identity groups.

The multiple layers of complexity become more obvious as we also consider that we have these various distinct, yet interrelated and overlapping, social identities that constantly and contextually shift between the foreground and background of our awareness. For instance, have you ever noticed how quickly the dynamics within a group of men can change with the sudden presence of a woman? Or how self-conscious you can become of your nationality and culture when in a setting where you don't understand the language, or how something in you shifts, again, when you meet someone from your own part of the world and then, once more, when you realize their political views are totally "wrong"? This complexity is even greater when considering that these are not mere shifts in our subjective awareness regarding social identity: these shifts also involve our thoughts, judgments, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors, some subtle and some quite strong.

Moreover, what you notice or perceive in yourself and in others within these social contexts, and how you experience and interpret these events, also changes as you develop through the stages of social identity. Clearly, social identity development is a process that produces increasing cognitive, emotional, moral, social-behavioral capacities, as these are required for effectively dealing in a world that is manifesting ever-greater levels of complexity.[12]

Furthermore, increasing complexity of individuals regarding social identity leads to greater complexity of social dynamics, institutional structures and large-scale human systems as the person's new developmental stage-perspective places new developmental demands on the individuals and groups within the community and organizational cultures of which the are a part. Given the dynamic nature of relationships within the human matrix, change at any level ripples outward in all directions and returns modified for additional cycles of activity and interaction.

Social Identity Development and Levels of Consciousness

At first glance, it would appear that social identity development is strictly about the horizontal growth of the social self as a person develops greater complexity in the movement from naïve to internalization and beyond.

However, when considering the nature of the developmental process within the larger context in which it occurs, it becomes clear that horizontal growth from one stage to the next stage also involves—and, indeed, requires—vertical growth. So, as a person moves through, incorporates, and transcends each stage of social group identity development (from naïve to acceptance to resistance to redefinition to internalization and beyond), they also, to some extent, move through, or "up", the levels of consciousness and stages of worldview development (from pre-egoic to egocentric to sociocentric to ethnocentric to worldcentric to planetcentric to cosmocentric).

For example, for a person in the acceptance stage of racial identity development to move into the resistance stage, they must move beyond seeing themselves strictly as an individual "that just happens to be" white, Black, Latino, Native-American or Asian-American. Stage development into resistance, requires a shift in consciousness and expansion of self-awareness beyond the egocentric perspective (of self solely or primarily as individual) to that of group-member (of self as both individual and of one's group) of a particular racial group that is, in turn, engaged in a social power relationship with other racial groups and group-members. This process of including and transcending each social identity stage horizontally requires the skills and capacities of vertical development, a higher altitude or level of consciousness[13] from egocentric to sociocentric, in this example, and beyond as one develops along the continuum.

Now, the assertion that social group identity and levels of consciousness develop in relationship to one another poses some interesting questions for integral psychology and integral theory. One such question might be: If a person develops through the stages of social identity development along the various "lines" of race, gender, class, etc., and, therefore, also vertically in altitude, does a person who develops vertically from egocentric to sociocentric to ethnocentric, etc., also simultaneously develop their social identities horizontally? Moreover, another question might be: Can a person develop vertically and NOT horizontally along social group identities? Undoubtedly, these are questions that require further study and, certainly, deserve to be thoroughly researched.

Preliminarily, however, I would suggest that vertical movement in consciousness does indeed require horizontal development of social group identities. I find it hard to imagine someone at worldcentric or planetcentric or cosmocentric—or otherwise truly at 2nd Tier consciousness—that is passively or actively racist, sexist, homophobic, religious fundamentalist, nationalist, imperialist and otherwise dominant at the acceptance stage of social identity development in multiple identities. Similarly, I find it difficult to imagine someone merely at the resistance stage in his or her various subordinated social group identities that could be considered at "integral" consciousness.

I believe vertical development of consciousness involves and requires horizontal development of social identities. For instance, movement from pre-egoic to egocentric involves and requires a child's exposure to and interaction with parents, family and the larger social context. Emergence of egocentric consciousness (in which the individual self is experienced as the exclusive or primary center of all interactions and events) coincides with developmental movement from naïve (with no awareness of social identities) into acceptance (socialization into cultural norms regarding social identities).

Movement of a person beyond egocentric to sociocentric and ethnocentric stages similarly involves and requires an increasingly expanding center of awareness beyond self to include ever-larger spheres of collective consciousness and shared identity. Sociocentric and ethnocentric levels of consciousness imply awareness of self as part of and centered in social and cultural groups, respectively, that is, self as included in some groups and excluded from other groups. However, this inclusion and exclusion is not merely on the basis of one's personal or individual traits, characteristics or achievements (i.e., formal clubs or informal in-groups

and out-groups), but more significantly on the basis of one's social identity group memberships. This developmental process, therefore, is indicative of a simultaneous expansion of awareness beyond self and process of differentiation and identification with groups within social contexts.

Clearly, vertical development of consciousness bears a relationship to horizontal social identity development.

Moreover, by the time a person moves from resistance to redefinition into internalization in several of their many social identities, they already exhibit highly developed competencies in a wide and sophisticated set of cognitive, perceptual, emotional and social skills. For example, they will exhibit:

- Conscious awareness and acknowledgement of social group identities and willingness to acknowledge and seek to understand these in themselves and in others.
- Ability to recognize their various "locations" as dominant and subordinated in relationship to others within the differential social power dynamics prevalent in their society and over all culture.
- Ability to recognize the multiple social group identities and social power location of other persons, and distinct patterns of thought and behavior of group members.
- Self-reflectivity regarding the contextual nature of our various social group identities: how a social group identity that is salient in our awareness in a given moment (subjective) can instantly shift from foreground to background depending on changes within the social context (intersubjective), therefore causing a change in the social dynamics (objective).
- Emotional and social intelligence to effectively communicate across social and cultural differences, particularly across lines of differential social power in ever-shifting social contexts.
- Congruence between one's own ideas, beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors expressed through different social group identities (e.g., being as concerned about social injustice when we are in the dominant group as when we are in the subordinated group being negatively affected).

Furthermore, persons at advanced stages of development in multiple social identities have attained a level of complexity of values and morals, and demonstrate considerable fluidity of perspectives, perceptual positions and worldviews.

Consequently, it would not be very difficult to imagine someone who is at redefinition and internalization along several, though not all, social identity lines who might be considered to be at integral or 2nd Tier consciousness, generally. Yet, to my understanding, if a person were actually able to ascend the mountain of human consciousness along its various paths, or developmental lines, but somehow not along the various lines of social identity development, the most that person would be capable of "seeing" would be a long, but narrow, view of the world. And, most likely, they would not be very skilled at communicating effectively what it is they do manage to see from that altitude to those not yet at the summit—not for lack of cognitive skills or even spiritual insight, but for lack of a depth of emotional connection, sense of solidarity and ancestral relatedness, and experience of Oneness that emerges from advanced stages in the social identity development process. For instance, if a white person sought to connect with a Person of Color (at the redefinition stage or beyond) strictly on the basis of their shared "Oneness in the Divine" without an understanding and appreciation of their own whiteness in the context of racism, that relationship would likely remain superficial, if not fail altogether.
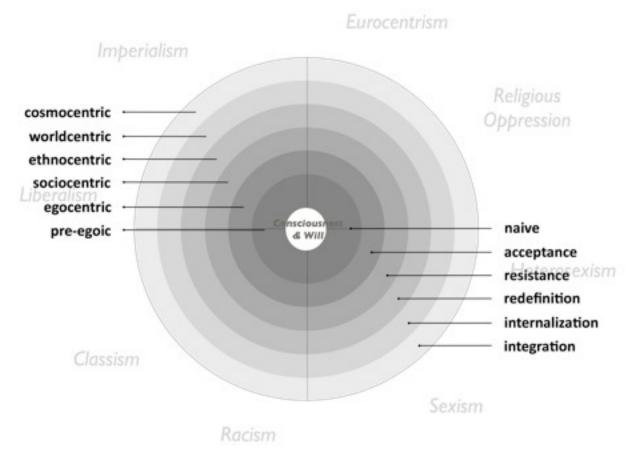
Figure 6: Stages of Social Identity & Consciousness Development

Social Identity as Line of Integral Development

Offering a more specific recommendation, I believe the inclusion of social identity as a developmental line would greatly serve integral theory. Social identity development understood, as it must be, within the context of oppression, more effectively, adequately and accurately deals with many of aspects of self and society sought to be addressed by current descriptions of the interpersonal line.

For one, the "absence of slaves, women's rights, civil liberties" (Esbjorn-Hargens, p. 10) cannot be considered descriptions of "interpersonal maturity" or "skills" at any level. At the collective exterior level (LR), these could be considered examples or milestones related to economic production, social policy, political structures and geopolitical considerations, while at the collective-interior (LL) they would point to intersubjective dynamics and cultural values of a society. Their presence or absence relates to sociological and cultural dynamics—a system of oppression—at the collective level, not merely "interpersonal" relationships between two or three or more individuals or persons in a group. Examining how these social and cultural dynamics show up at the individual-interior level (UL), one would need to consider a person's cognitive, emotional, moral, spiritual, self-identity and social identity development. If interested in examining how these together effect a person's ability to conduct themselves interpersonally, it is through understanding social identity development that one can address the degree to which an individual has transcended their socialization in the dominant paradigm in order to reject slavery, sexism and other forms of oppression and social injustice.

Additionally, at the psychological level, social group identity more fully explains the relationships of a person to the various groups (intrapersonal), between a person and others persons (interpersonal), between a person and social groups. At the sociological level, social group identity more adequately explains relationships within a social group, between different social groups, between social identity groups and institutions within a society, as well as larger dynamics with a society and between societies.

Closing Comments

The work shared here simultaneously offers a transmodern critique of, and proposal to, integral psychology and integral theory as currently presented. However, by placing racism, sexism, Eurocentrism and other manifestations of oppression at the center of a consideration of self-identity, this work may very likely have more than a few readers just about ready to label, if not outright dismiss, its analysis and framework as merely "anchored" in "green," the developmental level characterized by a pluralistic, multicultural, egalitarian and postmodern worldview.

Without question, this critique and proposal places social power at the center of our attention, as oppression remains a core issue of our time. I believe that any serious analysis—and most certainly, any "integral" analysis—of all major issues and problems of today would reveal that these are either caused by oppression or are compounded by its dynamics. Whether poverty and other social ills, or cancer and other physical diseases, or climate change and other ecological concerns, all must take oppression into account. Even when considering advances in knowledge, the potentials of technology or other possible futures, the differential impact of these developments on the various social identity groups must be taken into account because of the persistence of oppression throughout societies and human culture. And by taking oppression into account, one must examine social power, which inevitably leads us to social group identity.

A thorough understanding of social group identity, social identity development theory, and oppression in general is essential to a thorough analysis of self and society, and, therefore, to an integral psychology and integral theory. Clearly, this area of knowledge has implications for integral theorists who seek to produce knowledge in sub-fields, such as Integral Social Psychology, Integral Feminism, Integral Politics, Integral Economics, Integral Ethics, Integral Community Development, Integral Ecology, Integral Leadership and Integral Business. More importantly, this understanding becomes absolutely necessary if Integral Theory intends to effectively address issues—war, terrorism, capitalism, poverty, health care, education, democracy, the environment, among others—and, moreover, presumes to develop effective solutions to these critically important issues.

As a scholar-practitioner interested in theory and practice that is committed to the integral well-being and development of all humans, I am unable to ignore oppression or distance myself from addressing its harmful impacts on all aspects of life. Despite Integral Theory's current limitations, I believe it has much to contribute to the on-going development of an integral psychology of liberation and transformation.

Moreover, I believe Integral Theory itself could develop more fully—integrally—by adoption an ethic of integral libratory transformation: an embodied commitment to address and obligation to transform oppression in order to produce, reproduce and support the integral well-being of all humans and promote the sustainable development of life and consciousness in harmony and balance with the planet. Such a stance would unabashedly transcend the moral stance of modernity that merely proclaims the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" for the privileged few, and would actually commit to ensuring life free of oppression for all people, so that they—we, all of us—may foster, rather than endlessly pursue, "happiness" in our lives

together. In this sense, such a stance and practice would be clearly pluralistic, egalitarian, multicultural, and "green" —and beyond.

It is important to our own personal development and the development of human consciousness that we learn, with precision, how, where, and when oppression operates within us and how, where, and when oppression operates through us. Our ability to perceive, recognize, understand and respond regarding social group identity and social group identity development—in the context of oppression—will facilitate our movement through the stages of social identity development and, in the process, "up" the levels of human consciousness.

By addressing oppression in a manner which seeks to acknowledge, understand, transform and transcend it, I believe we would extend an integral libratory transformative bridge from green and 1st Tier consciousness to teal and beyond into 2nd Tier consciousness — for the benefit of all beings.

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EndNotes

1 The proximate self, in turn, is an outer layer of the "anterior self" (Wilber, 1997).

2 Many of these same identity groups are operant in other countries, while they may also have others, whether based on intra-religious sects, tribal membership, specific regional differences or geo-political

dynamics, or other relevant life-shaping factors within their cultures. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on the US experience.

3 Gender as social group identity is not to be confused with "gender type" (expressions of "maleness" and "femininity" in men and/or women), nor with how a person might experience themselves psychologically as man or woman regardless of their genitalia, nor with sexuality (or sexual-affective orientation) which is another social group identity category altogether. In this context, gender refers to membership in the collective of men, women, and more recently, transgendered people, as defined by societal or cultural norms.

4 As with ethnicity, race, as a social identity category in which Latinos find and define ourselves, raises issues that point to the complexity and controversy of the term. In this context, "Latino" is used an umbrella socio-political term for cultural identity groups in the US of Latin American origin, all of which have been racialized in the US throughout its history. For those interested, I offer a more detailed discussion in "Hispanic or Latino: The Struggle for Identity in a Race-Based Society," The Diversity Factor, Vol. 6, No. 4, Elsie Y. Cross Publications, Philadelphia, PA, 1998.

5 Though African-Americans are descendants of African peoples throughout the continent, the many different cultural (kinship, religious, linguistic and regional) groups were deliberately intermixed by slave traffickers and slave masters in order to break their psychological bonds with the Motherland and to undermine social and political alliances among slaves. A lasting result of this strategy is that so many people of African descent today are unable to precisely identify their specific cultural lineage.

6 Europe and the United States (and Canada as an extension of Britain and France).

7 …that also came to include Africa, Asia and Oceania.

8 Speaks to the colonial nature of power and knowledge. See works by sociologist, Aníbal Quijano.

8 The specific terms or labels of these groups changed as they developed over time, as did the membership that defined them.

10 "Agent" groups refer to dominant groups, while "target" groups are subordinated within the power relationship.

11 In the context of describing the levels of consciousness development as altitude and "the general movement of a widening identity," Esbjorn-Hargens refers to ethnocentric identity as "my group" and sociocentric identity as "my country" and places these in that order (2009 p. 9). Alternately, I understand sociocentric to refer to a perspective or vantage point that is primarily defined (and limited) by social group identities, with ethnocentric as referring to a perspective and vantage point primarily defined (and limited) by an overarching, prevailing, hegemonic or dominant cultural paradigm of a people, country or nation, and therefore appearing developmentally in that sequence. I would add that modernity represents the globalization—or more precisely, the expansion-by-imposition—of a Eurocentric worldview throughout the globe, thus creating for the first time in human history a world-system encompassing North, South, East and West. Therefore, modernity, as a cultural process and paradigm, is global in scope, but fundamentally ethnocentric in nature. Modernity (re)presents a view of the world that, even after 500 years of contact with cultures across the globe, remains centered in its own cultural paradigm—and continues to see itself, not merely as being the norm (with others being different or "diverse"), but more importantly, as being superior to all others. So, while advances during modernity have allowed people to travel the

whole world and interact with all cultures, the prevailing "altitude" (and attitude) of "modern" societies remains ethnocentric; individual groups within these, for the most part, remain sociocentric, functioning within the paradigms of their various social identity groups. Furthermore, I would suggest that a worldcentric perspective and worldview is only possible from a postmodern (or transmodern) paradigm and from a stage-perspective from which a person is capable of perceiving, recognizing, understanding and responding appropriately to people and cultures beyond their own multiple social identity groups and beyond the cultural paradigms of their own society (country) and, from there, utilize their cognitive, emotional, social and cultural competencies, etc., capacities integrally in their relationships with others. A fully functional or integral worldcentric worldview would emerge, it would seem, at 2nd Tier, not at green, and certainly not at orange.

12 Author and philosopher, Enrique Dussel, maintains that post-modern thought is a critique of modernity, yet one from within the very same Eurocentric paradigm that produced modernity. As such, post-modern thought, according to Dussel, is a limited and flawed self-critique, as it is unable to fully see itself, nor its true position relative to the rest of the world, particularly the South, beyond the biases of its North Atlantic-European cultural perspective; the majority of world culture, therefore, remains for the most part invisible to, and invisibilized by, even "progressive" and decidedly "western" post-modern thinkers. Dussel suggests that development of a "transmodern" view is necessary, if not urgent; a view that transcends the inherently oppressive and colonial nature of modernity, a view that fully embraces a collective ethico-political project of liberation and cultural transformation.

13 Examining social group identity as an aspect and function of the self-system also leads us to consciousness itself, and to the self-contracting nature of individuated consciousness. This is why spiritual or transformative practices that address this self-contraction are an important aspect of an integral libratory transformation process such as the consciousness-in-action approach. However, that topic is beyond the scope of this paper.

About the Author

Raúl Quiñones-Rosado, Ph.D., founder and co-director of c-Integral, has been a social justice educator and organizer for more than twenty years. He co-founded the Institute for Latino Empowerment and Ilé: Organizers for Consciousness-in-Action, working in communities-of- struggle in the United States and Puerto Rico. Active in movements against racism, colonialism, militarism and other forms of oppression, Raúl is currently involved in an emerging "integral activism" bringing a liberation psychology and spirituality perspective to the process of personal, social, economic, political and cultural transformation. Author of Consciousness-in-Action: Toward an Integral Psychology of Liberation & Transformation, and other published writings, Raúl has presented his integral approach at the 2008 Integral Theory Conference and to audiences internationally.