



# Mapping an Ecology of Integrative Approaches to Addressing the Meta-Crisis

Brandon Nørgaard  
Nicholas Hedlund, PhD  
Claudia Meglin



INSTITUTE  
OF APPLIED  
METATHEORY

## Executive Summary

We live in a world marked by a multitude of deep and overlapping global crises. Since 2015, the notion of the metacrisis (Hedlund et al., 2016) seems to have caught on within the so-called ‘liminal web’ scene and adjacent communities of integrative thought and practice, resonating with the zeitgeist as a more adequate way of understanding our crisis-ridden world. The metacrisis refers to the deep and complexly interrelated global crises—eco-social, ethical, epistemic (sensemaking), existential (meaning-making)—and their underlying network of root causes (Hedlund, 2021). This paper explores the variety of integrative approaches to understanding and responding to the metacrisis notion across integrative/liminal circles, emphasizing the relative epistemic adequacy of these approaches vis-à-vis modern and postmodern approaches. The paper deploys a metatheoretical methodology to provisionally identify the underlying architectonic lens of each integrative approach to the metacrisis by visually mapping an ecology of such approaches. Although modern and postmodern approaches tend to inadequately conceptualize the complexity of the metacrisis due to underlying cognitive-epistemic constraints, communities across various levels of development and cultural code have formulated valid, if partial, approaches to addressing this phenomenon. While these relatively simplistic approaches are considered, in this paper we primarily focus on the mapping an ecology of various integrative approaches to the metacrisis, highlighting the ways in which these more complex approaches are uniquely positioned to help address the metacrisis and embolden the possibilities of actualizing a trajectory of hope towards a protopian society. We argue that understanding these diverse approaches as an ecology holds great potential for their cross-pollination, theoretical development, synthesis, and collaboration—in praxis—amongst the various schools of thought and (micro-)cultural scenes. We conclude by arguing that any semblance of an anything approaching an adequate integrative response to the metacrisis—which is to say, a meta-systemic paradigm shift across all sectors of the sociosphere—would only come through an enhanced mutual understanding, cross-pollination, and strategic coordination among communities of integrative thought and practice, including that of metamodernism, integral theory, and game B.

## Introduction

As our world complexifies, so do the problems and challenges that we are forced to confront, in our personal lives and as a society. Every era of human history has its unique set of threats, uncertainties, and crises, as well as social actors coming together to think about and implement appropriate responses. Within diverse walks of life, in almost any flavor of mainstream, niche, or fringe thinking, and covering a broad political spectrum that would be plotted both inside and outside of the window of acceptable discourse (the so-called Overton Window), we find social actors (people and organizations) that are concerned about the state of the world as they know it, including the potential for downfall, disaster, and collapse<sup>1</sup>.

Among such social actors, it is unusual to find anything that is universally agreed upon. One would not expect there to be any substantive matter upon which these disparate groups might come together, but within the vast sea of this intellectual diversity, there is widespread agreement that the world as we know it is in trouble—however that may be construed—and that we need to take this quite seriously. There is an ongoing culture war pitting ideological camps against each other and there are those who are engaging in this fight with some flavor of mainstream thought and others who are peddling eschatological visions and elaborate conspiracy theories, while still others are offering unconventional and sophisticated avant-garde forms of thought and practice that hold the potential to eventually become large-scale movements.

Beyond the fact that the world as we know it is dealing with serious threats and challenges that deserve our clear attention, there is a substantial disagreement regarding the severity of the problems and what actions should be taken in response. These differences in perspective can aptly be understood in terms of worldview theory. According to De Witt & Hedlund (2017), worldviews are the “overarching systems of meaning and meaning-making that to a substantial extent inform how we interpret, enact, and co-create reality; they are complex constellations of epistemic capacities, ontological presuppositions, and ethical aesthetic values that converge to dynamically organize a synthetic apprehension of the world.” Empirical research has revealed four predominant worldviews in the West: traditional, modern, postmodern, and integrative (De Witt et al., 2016). Each of these worldviews has a distinct perspective concerning the state of the world—that is, the perceived problem field and corresponding solutions vis-à-vis complex global problems (see e.g., De Witt & Hedlund, 2017). Traditional worldviews are often suspicious of modern science and tend to offer only dogmatic solutions. Modernist worldviews tend to downplay the severity of our large-scale problems and to turn toward techno-optimist innovation and engineering when confronted with global problems. Postmodern worldviews tend to be excessively critical and fail to offer constructive and implementable solutions. Integrative worldviews tend to emphasize the need to take in the big picture of the problem space and to work to develop synergistic solutions across multiple systems.

Broadening our sociological lens beyond the perspective of worldviews, we can also examine various cultural movements for their potential to offer valuable understandings and responses to our global challenges. Mainstream schools of thought—and the movements they spawn—have a tendency to oversimplify the problem space, and their proposed solutions are usually well within the status quo of the predominant political and economic institutions and their entrenched power dynamics. Such mainstream solutions are not only uninspiring, but in many cases, they have already been unsuccessfully tried multiple times in human history<sup>2</sup>. However, within various niche and avant-garde movements, there are imaginative and inspiring cutting-edge ideas that arguably hold the potential to change the world as we know it, although their work has not received significant attention from major academic and research institutions thus far<sup>3</sup>.

In a sentiment often attributed to Einstein, we cannot solve problems with the same thinking that created them, and we tend to see various inflections of that happening within many of these well-intentioned but ineffective efforts. If we look a bit more carefully and off the beaten path, we can find substantial energy brewing within the emerging communities of next-generation thought, wherein people are more likely to be challenged to take in the complexity of the problem space so as to find solutions that have the potential to change the way humans think and relate to each other and to the world.

In a trend reaching back at least several decades, we have seen the emergence of several notable visionary thinkers and public intellectuals who have recognized the existential threats and crises that we are facing as a global civilization—and who have worked to formulate more advanced forms of thought and discourse in order to help us collectively face these unprecedented challenges (see e.g., Capra, 1984, 1997; Macy, 2014; Morin & Kern, 1999; Club of Rome, 2024). This development towards big-picture thinking has greatly accelerated in recent years, as we have seen an expansion and diversification of various related fields, such as future studies, disaster studies, AI safety, effective altruism, longtermism, earth systems science, and deep ecology, to name some. Such fields seek to assess and diagnose large-scale problems and existential risks, evaluate societal trends, and advocate for fundamental socio-cultural, technoeconomic, and political reform (Bhaskar et al., 2016; Hedlund & Esbjörn-Hargens, 2023; Civilization Research Institute, n.d.; Perspectiva, 2024).

This recent trend towards big-picture thinking and serious consideration of our complex planetary crises has indeed provided much in the way of community development, mostly in the form of online social media but also through various forms of in-person meetings and events, among people who are seeking new ideas and new ways of thinking about the world and about where our global society is headed<sup>4</sup>. Many of these communities have seized the opportunity to share concerns about the degradation of the natural environment (the ecological crisis) along with other technological threats to life on Earth (e.g., unaligned AI, genetic engineering) and about where humanity might be headed in the years to come. While we can count on such individuals and groups to formulate ideas and schools of thought that are intended to somehow address or overcome the problems and challenges that they are facing, it is less common for them to engage in generative dialogue that can synthesize their distinct ideas into an overarching understanding or ecology that is then deployed in strategically coordinated action for the betterment of humanity and the planet.

To describe the growing phenomenon of big-picture concerns and next-generation thought—and provide visibility throughout an emerging subculture—Joe Lightfoot identified a constellation of partially overlapping para-academic<sup>5</sup> communities, scenes, organizations, thinkers, and schools of thought that he called the “liminal web”<sup>6</sup> (Lightfoot, 2021). This term encompasses the various thinkers, projects, and communities that operate under banners such as integral, metamodern, game B, regenerative, etc. The liminal web also

includes many other schools of thought that might not embrace any of these aforementioned terms, but for which we would like to recognize a meaningful kinship with other forms of integrative thought, since there is near consensus among them of offering a post-postmodern vision that does not offer simply reactionary anti-postmodernism, but attempts to take the postmodern critiques quite seriously and tries to go beyond them through various reconstructive moves, spanning anything from vision logic to sincere irony to post-secular spirituality and beyond<sup>7</sup>.

The term ‘metamodern’ holds special significance because it has been embraced within some of the most influential liminal web communities and is often used in a way that is synonymous with integrative thought<sup>8</sup>. However, for a variety of reasons we argue that the notion of integrative is a more strategically effective umbrella term with which to describe and cohere the emerging movement. Both the term ‘metamodern’, as well as ‘integral’ before it, have at times been deployed in this way as umbrella signifiers for the larger network or emerging worldview. Unfortunately, both terms have undergone a process of genericization (i.e., genericide or proprietary eponymy) in which a particular school or ‘brand’ creates a kind of cultural dominance to the point where it is then used to refer generically to the larger category or general phenomenon (in the corporate world, for example in the cases of tissues coming to be known as Kleenex, or doing a web search coming to be known as ‘googling’). Genericization is problematic for the diversity of expressions of a given category that are not comfortable with the dominant and proprietary label. Hence, in our given context of the sociology of big-picture movements, an umbrella term—i.e., integrative—that is both descriptive and sufficiently neutral may avoid or mitigate such liabilities.

Within the broader liminal web, intellectually diverse as it often is, there seems to be substantial agreement that there are several interdependent and interrelated crises that we are facing simultaneously that together constitute an existential threat to human civilization. As these communities and schools of thought embrace complexity and often have experience with inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, they are well-positioned to more fully and accurately conceptualize and map the greatest challenges and crises of our time and to offer solutions that honor the complexity of the reality of the metacrisis. The obstacles to generative collaboration among these niche communities often include a lack of awareness of each other’s projects and differences in terminology and culture among the various paradigmatic lenses<sup>9</sup>.

Among integrative communities such as that of metamodernism, integral theory<sup>10</sup>, critical realism, complex thought, and game B, among others, the term metacrisis has gained widespread credence to refer to the deep and complexly interrelated crises that we are simultaneously facing as a global civilization—notably including ecological, technological, political, economic, cultural, ethical, epistemic, and spiritual—and their underlying network of root causes and interdependencies (Hedlund, 2021). The notion of

the metacrisis underscores that human civilization has entered into a critical and decisive phase in which we face a variety of increasingly urgent existential threats, including an ecological crisis (e.g., climate change), a technological crisis (e.g., non-aligned artificial general intelligence), and a geopolitical crisis (e.g., nuclear war)—and that we have serious failings in other areas of the public sphere that are preventing us from adequately addressing these existential threats. Most notably, our political, socio-cultural, economic, and educational systems are all in decline or showing serious failures, and thus we can consider each of these to be a distinct crisis in its own right. Behind these crises there is a breakdown in public sensemaking and by distortions within the information ecology—a so-called epistemic (or sensemaking) crisis—as well as a sense of existential alienation and an inability to find sufficient intelligibility and purpose within our lives—the so-called existential (or meaning) crisis. All these crises, taken together, constitute the metacrisis.

While the term metacrisis is generally preferred within the aforementioned integrative communities, there are other terms that are also prevalent among some communities and that can be seen to have some referential overlap, including the polycrisis<sup>11</sup> (Morin & Kern, 1999), the crisis system (Bhaskar, 2016; Naess & Price, 2016) and wicked problems<sup>12</sup> (Albert, 2024; Lawrence et al., 2024; Helleiner, 2024), etc. As will be explained in the following section, there are important nuances that the term metacrisis is intended to capture that other terms such as polycrisis seem to leave out. Moreover, we can see that the way one conceptualizes the greatest challenges and problems of our time and the terms they use are partially dependent on the system of cultural grammar that they are embedded within, the degree of cognitive complexity that they are using to construe the world, and the core values that serve as their driving force in working toward a better future. That is, how individuals and communities understand the state of the world is dependent on their worldview (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017).

To analyze this variety of worldviews, we use Michael Commons' (1982, 1989) Model of Hierarchical Complexity<sup>13</sup> (MHC), Hanzi Freinacht's (2017, 2019) notions of cultural code and Effective Value Meme<sup>14</sup> (EVM) along with the Integrative Worldview Framework (IWF) developed by Annick De Witt and Nicholas Hedlund (see e.g., De Witt & Hedlund, 2017, De Witt et al., 2016), which focuses on worldviews and worldview families<sup>15</sup>. In this paper, we are differentiating between worldview families, which IWF articulates as Traditional, Modern, Postmodern, and Integrative, and concrete worldviews, which are more specific and more granular than worldview families, and which are constellationally contained within them. Several EVM stages have direct correlates in IWF, and we will be considering each of the four worldview families in IWF and all but one of the EVM stages in this paper.

The intellectual context of this paper is that, at the time of writing in mid 2025, there has been an insufficient mapping of the variety of approaches to understanding and responding to the metacrisis, including how the different approaches are interrelated and how a more unified or synthetic understanding might emerge. At an even more fundamental level, there

has not been sufficient mapping of the way crises and threats are perceived by people and communities and how these various worldviews relate to each other with regards to factors such as MHC, worldview family, and EVM. This paper aims to close this gap.

We begin by analyzing the concept of the metacrisis and how this differs from other perceived crises, such as the polycrisis, rationality crisis, moral crisis, etc<sup>16</sup>. We argue that there are several ways of conceptualizing the large-scale threats and risks to lives, livelihoods, nations, homelands, and the planet, and these correlate to EVM stages, or worldview families. We analyze diverse worldviews and schools of thought across various levels of development and cultural code, and we begin considering those that are premodern, modern, and postmodern. We conclude that these often represent partially valid—and also painfully inadequate—approaches to addressing the metacrisis, and we then move on to focusing on the various integrative schools of thought within the liminal web.

We deploy a broad metatheoretical methodology to identify the underlying architectonic lens of each integrative approach to the metacrisis and we visually map an ecology of such approaches in several figures. We map the various approaches to the metacrisis and we explore their unique potentials and strengths that make these more complex approaches uniquely positioned to help address the metacrisis.

We conclude by arguing that any semblance of an anything approaching an adequate integrative response to the metacrisis—which is to say, a meta-systemic paradigm shift across all sectors of the sociosphere—would only come through an enhanced mutual understanding, cross-pollination, and strategic coordination among the various schools of thought. Each integrative approach to addressing the metacrisis, we argue, ought to be keenly curious about each other, as they are, to be sure, precisely interdependent on each other for actualizing anything approximating an adequate response to the metacrisis that can steer us toward planetary flourishing. Such an eye for synthesis, collaboration, and the curation of emergent collective intelligence across integrative communities is an important antidote and corrective relative to the insidious human tendency towards epistemic hubris (that is, thinking that ‘my framework has got it all right’) that then tends to devolve into an endless regress of unproductive rivalrous dynamics, branding issues (meta-this© vs. poly-that® vs. trans-this™), and finally, performative self-contradictions vis-à-vis commitments to ‘all win’, integrative, non-rivalrous positions that seem to cut across these communities.

Of course, as integrative, post-postmodern neo-realists, it is important to acknowledge that, when it comes to concrete questions, sometimes people or approaches commit errors, make false claims, get caught up in delusions of philosophical sophistry, or just simply are less effective. The negative moment in the dialectic cannot be bypassed on the way to achieving paradigmatic commensurability and valid non-preservative synthesis. The errors, absences, and contradictions in each approach are precisely not what ought to be included in a synthesis. Based on our experience over many years of dialogue across big-picture metatheories and perspectives (see Bhaskar et al., 2016; Hedlund & Esbjörn-Hargens, 2023),

a lot of dialogue, alchemy, and transfiguration is needed, as a condition for the possibility of any adequate synthesis.

## **Seeing Through Many Eyes: The Evolution of Crisis Perception Across Developmental Worldviews**

For some people and organizations, looking closely at the greatest challenges and problems of our time has become a profession, or perhaps an area of important interest and focus outside of one's official duties. As we survey the broad intellectual landscape, we see significant thought and work going into the study of large-scale problems from people with different sets of values and different stages of cognitive complexity thinking. Many people are seeing a world in crisis, and some tend to see a primary crisis at the center of it all, while others see multiple simultaneous crises that cannot be reduced to each other, and still others take a metasystematic view of the perceived multiple distinct crises and attempt to conceptualize deep interconnections and root causal structures.

A metasystematic view would be one that sees a larger picture and also one that is coming from at least one level of abstraction above more conventional and mainstream systematic views. All views have virtues to offer and all levels of cognitive development play important roles in our world, but only when one has achieved at least a level of cognitive development needed for a systematic view of the world can they adequately conceptualize the immense environmental, socio-cultural, economic, and political problems and threats that we are collectively facing. And while taking such a view does offer a certain big-picture perspective that is needed, a metasystematic view goes further in that it affords one an ability to compare and coordinate across multiple systematic perspectives. Also, metasystematic views tendentially involve self-reflexivity, and can then incorporate (self-)critical perspectives and thereby offer self-corrective capacities. Acknowledging that the world is inherently complex, considering the interdependence of the biosphere, human culture, political regimes, and economics, among other fields, a metasystematic view is quite likely to give us a more accurate and more detailed picture of the complexity of the problem space than what would be possible from any view produced from relatively simpler forms of cognitive maturity.

In the book *The Listening Society*, Hanzi Freinacht (2017) describes nuanced and evidence-based developmental frameworks through which one can evaluate individual human development and the sets of values that motivate action for both individuals and societies. Freinacht identifies four central elements of development: existential depth, cultural code, psychological states, and complexity (MHC). These elements are brought together in the notion of EVM, which is a tiered system of sets of values that serve as the central guide for one's conceptual framing and one's motivational force to bring about change in the world.

We acknowledge that this system is not linear, nor necessarily progressive, nor necessarily teleologically driven toward higher stages—but there appears to be a tendential rational directionality (Bhaskar, 2002/2012b) towards greater epistemic complexity and adequacy vis-à-vis the ontological complexity of the world (Hedlund, 2021). People can and do often ‘float’ across multiple stages in the manner of a probability cloud and operate within different value memes in different contexts in life. While we acknowledge that Hanzi Freinacht’s EVM system is derived from Spiral Dynamics (SD), EVM is more evidence-based and more adaptable than SD<sup>17</sup>. We also do not want to insinuate that the more complex stages are necessarily better than those at relatively lower stages of cognitive complexity in the manner of simple ‘growth to goodness’ assumptions (Stein, 2010), but it is undeniable that a person with a higher level of complexity as their cognitive center of gravity is capable of conceptualizing problems and solutions with more nuance and depth than those that are not quite as advanced by this particular measure, all other factors being roughly equivalent.

Within the EVM system, when one’s center of gravity is integrative, they are then able to more reliably take a metasystematic view on problems, and hence it is within integrative groups and organizations that the metacrisis is a common topic of concern. People at other EVMs would often also acknowledge that we are facing some sort of crisis or set of crises, although they would conceptualize it differently and would likely use different language. Although not everyone is capable of conceptualizing the complexity of the metacrisis, in line with the critical realist principles of ontological realism and epistemic relativity, everyone is experiencing it in their own way. Thus, people and organizations of various levels of development and cultural codes have formulated their own ways of naming and conceptualizing this phenomenon. The principal ‘why’ of this divergence in perspective on the metacrisis can arguably be understood in terms of the evolution of worldviews or EVMs, and the related phenomenon of vertically reductive demi-realities (Hedlund, 2021)—that is, interpretations of the metacrisis that reduce its ontological complexity down to the level of one’s vertical-developmental epistemic capacity. The metasystemic reality of the metacrisis exists despite such a reduction of its complexity to a falsely simple and therefore illusory perception of it by virtue of the cognitive-epistemic limitations of one’s worldview or EVM.

Empirical survey research conducted by Nicholas Hedlund and his Dutch colleagues (De Witt et al., 2016), drawing on representative samples of the US and Dutch populations (n=1083), demonstrates a significant tendential increase in concern about big-picture problems such as climate change among those inhabiting an integrative worldview relative to their traditional and modern counterparts. Such integrative thinkers were shown to have more sustainable behaviors and regenerative lifestyles relative to traditionalists and modernists, as well as an increased willingness to make further changes towards ecological, climate-friendly lifestyles compared to traditional and modern worldviews. This research therefore suggests that certain core integrative presuppositions about reality, knowledge, ethical and aesthetic values, the nature of the human being and society tend to correlate with lifestyles that are more sustainable and climate friendly. These correlations might be

explained, in part, due to the fact that a post-formal, integrative worldview possess an actualized epistemic capability for more adequate sensemaking vis-à-vis the metasystemic complexity of the metacrisis, while those with traditional and modern worldviews lack the capability for perceiving the complex systems dynamics that are rudimentary for understanding or approximating the reality of the metacrisis. These pre-systemic interpretations are therefore erroneous—but nonetheless are real due to their causal efficaciousness in shaping social realities and lifestyle choices. If one has not developed the epistemic capacity to construe climate change—or the metacrisis at large—in accord with its intrinsic structure, one may tend to underestimate the severity of the world situation, scanning instead atomistically across various issues, while largely missing the interdependencies and complex positive feedback loops in place that may lead us to hit various socio-ecological tipping points much faster than one might assume. Such vertically reductive demi-realities may lead one to also be perplexed by the notion that ideas might, through the cascades of their second- and third-order effects, play a pivotal role in the trajectory of societies and the unfoldment of the metacrisis, since appreciating that point in its fullness generally requires a metasystematic level of development.

Most of the people who inhabit premodern, modern, or postmodern worldviews do not use the signifier ‘metacrisis’. Even when this term is used within integrative circles, the full breadth and depth of its complexity is sometimes not fully appreciated. It is important to note, however, that at any EVM, people have the ability to understand large-scale problems and they have narratives about their root causes and what needs to be done to address them. While only a coordinated metasystematic approach is going to be adequate to meaningfully addressing the metacrisis, we acknowledge that people at all levels of development are doing good work, and that the healthy expression of the other value memes are providing important pieces of this very complex puzzle.

Although people at various stages of cognitive development, having diverse sets of values, are capable of recognizing these major problems in their own way, many of them commit what Roger Walsh (2022) calls the Single Focus Fallacy. This is the tendency among many people and within most mainstream schools of thought—and their presumably pre-metasystematic cognition—to oversimplify and vertically reduce the complexity of these problems to something easily digestible and easily communicable. According to Walsh, this fallacy has 3 aspects:

- **The Single Issue Fallacy:** The idea that there is a single important issue that we need to focus on as the most important and the most grave crisis and we just need to hammer that point as much as possible (e.g., those who claim it is global warming or overpopulation).
- **The Single Cause Fallacy:** The idea that all our major problems stem from a single cause (e.g., it is all caused by capitalism or greed).

- **The Single Solution Fallacy:** The idea that all the major challenges of our time can be addressed by a single type of intervention (e.g., we just need a better balance between left-hemisphere and right-hemisphere thinking, or we just need to consume less and pollute less).

We can find reductive thinking within much premodern, modern, and even postmodern public discourse. A common sentiment among people whose center of gravity is Traditional is that the world is full of evil and suffering, and that people are deeply flawed. Their explanation might be that people have turned away from God and that we need to repent and perhaps wait for the rapture or some other divine judgment. People who have more of a Modern worldview might identify the root cause as a lack of evidence-based and scientific reasoning. And those who have some sort of Postmodern worldview are more likely to focus on inequality, discrimination against minorities, and insatiable greed as driving forces of the world's most serious problems. The good news is that these people are acknowledging these large-scale problems, and they are talking about this and thinking about causes and solutions. If we apply this pattern across the board, we can see that there is some equivalent of the metacrisis in people's consciousness through a broad range of developmental stages. Within the frame of premodern, modern, and postmodern thought, in all cases we find ways of conceptualizing and talking about large-scale problems and threats to our collective peace and prosperity and the health of our biosphere.

We can look at how the concept of crisis manifests at various EVM stages. The most fundamental EVM is Archaic, which is not advanced enough to be able to conceptualize a true crisis. People at this stage, often young children, are able to perceive threats, but they won't see a larger pattern that would deserve to be called a crisis. For this reason, we are leaving out the Archaic EVM from the rest of this paper, but we are considering concrete worldviews from each of the other EVMs / worldview families<sup>18</sup>. Those at the Animistic stage are likely to recognize the crisis to the ecosystem in which they and their people are embedded, and they might see a larger pattern of people not living in harmony with nature, and thus we might call this a 'nature crisis'. Those at the Faustian stage are likely to perceive a crisis as one of weakness and lack of power in facing threats to their kin and clan, which we can call a 'weakness crisis'. Traditional schools of thought tend to perceive a degradation of morality and threats to the stability of traditional culture, which takes the form of a 'moral crisis'. Those enculturated into the modern world and driven by motives of achievement, secularism, and independence might tend to reduce the perceived large-scale problems in the world to people not acting with enough rationality and being driven by outdated religious dogma or other irrational ways of life. They might perceive the premodern and postmodern alike as the collective root cause of the world's greatest problems, and this outlook could be called a 'rationality crisis'.

It is somewhat disputable where to place the term 'polycrisis' within this EVM framework. First used by the integrative French philosopher Edgar Morin (along with his co-author

Anne Brigitte Kern), in their 1999 book *Homeland Earth*, the polycrisis was articulated as follows: “one is at a loss to single out a number one problem to which all others would be subordinated. There is no single vital problem, but many vital problems, and it is this complex intersolidarity of problems, antagonisms, crises, uncontrolled processes, and the general crisis of the planet that constitutes the number one vital problem” (p. 74). While Morin’s notion of the polycrisis is itself part of his post-postmodern philosophical system known as ‘complex thought’, and we acknowledge that some integrative thinkers and communities tend to use this term interchangeably with metacrisis, the notion of the metacrisis builds on that of the polycrisis by articulating that which is behind and beyond the polycrisis—the crisis of worldview (meaning and sensemaking) that lies at its roots. In essence, a polycrisis is a cluster of related global risks with compounding effects, such that the overall impact exceeds the sum of each part<sup>19</sup>. This term acknowledges that there are multiple distinct crises but does not necessarily offer a viewpoint of deep interconnection of root causes. This term polycrisis has recently become common parlance within certain elite circles, such as at the 2023 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Many of those who use this term do so in the context of concern for modernist principles, such as progress, growth, science, and rationality. We find this term also used in the context of critique of modernity and in efforts to help people see that there are many things in the world that we need to simultaneously value, including our natural environment, human rights, worker’s rights, and the lifestyles of indigenous peoples. This points to what we see as the dominant use of the notion of polycrisis in the context of the postmodern EVM . We do acknowledge that many people who speak of the polycrisis do mean for this term to convey high complexity of the problem space and deep causal interrelatedness and thus to effectively have similar qualities as that of the ‘metacrisis’. While we prefer to offer this distinction between these terms, we also acknowledge that one’s preferred set of terms is often a product of their community of discourse, professional associations, and similar factors, thus notion of ‘polycrisis’ remains a valid and powerful one.

Figure 1 shows the correlation between worldview families / EVM stages and the corresponding terms that would best convey the crisis as perceived and conceptualized for people and organizations who at each EVM stage.

<b>Worldview Family / Effective Value Meme</b>	<b>Perceived Crisis</b>	<b>Tends to Focus Mostly On</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Premodern – Animistic</b>	Nature crisis	The images, symbols, and rituals that are assumed to be necessary for sustenance of life.	We are beholden to nature and people do not know how to live in harmony with it.

<b>Premodern – Faustian</b>	Weakness crisis	The superficial displays that supposedly convey power or weakness and ability or inability to address potential threats.	We have fallen weak, and this is a threat to our people’s lives.
<b>Premodern – Traditional / Postfaustian</b>	Moral crisis	The concrete events / symptoms of the perceived crisis and the conformity to social norms that are considered to be directly related.	As a society, our morality has degraded, and this threatens our stability.
<b>Modern</b>	Rationality crisis	The underlying causes and effects of problems and the formulation of a single set of processes that would be necessary to address them.	The lack of rationality among many people is holding us back from progress.
<b>Postmodern</b>	Polycrisis	The uniqueness and irreducibility of each crisis and threat and the importance of subjective considerations for individuals and communities.	There are several threats to our planet and our society and each of them needs to be taken seriously in its own right.
<b>Integrative / Metamodern</b>	Metacrisis	The complex interdependence and interconnection among causes and effects and the need to consider developmental processes and game theory dynamics.	We are experiencing several deep and complexly interrelated global crises—environment, socio-cultural, economic, etc.— and these have an underlying network of root causes and interdependencies.

**Figure 1**

For those coming from an integrative EVM, they can take a metasystemic view of the greatest challenges, threats, and risks to our biosphere and to human civilization. This has allowed some integrative thinkers to formulate more detailed definitions of the metacrisis that take this metasystemic view<sup>20</sup>:

*“We can talk about this crisis from multiple angles, but really, there’s only one world. And no matter what lens we put on, no matter what analytics we focus our attention on, we’re catching a partial view of a larger phenomenon, and it’s a single phenomenon. We may be thinking of it as an ecological crisis. We may be thinking of it as a psychological or spiritual crisis. We may be thinking of it as a cultural crisis and a breakdown of community, family, etc. We may be thinking of it as a crisis of government and economics and finance. And it is all of these things. But it’s not reducible to any one of them. That’s why it’s a meta-crisis. And in a way, crisis isn’t quite the right word – it’s really kind of a predicament.” Terry Patten (Talks at Google, 2016)*

*We have to better understand who and what we are, individually and collectively, in order to be able to fundamentally change how we act. That conundrum is what is now widely called the meta-crisis lying within, between and beyond the emergency and the crisis. That aspect of our predicament is socio-emotional, educational, epistemic and spiritual in nature; it is the most subtle in its effects but the roots of our problems, and the place we are most likely to find enduring political hope.” (Rowson, 2021, p. 29)*

We find many other luminaries speaking of the metacrisis in a way that is coming through a metasystematic cognitive lens with the aim to scaffold more people to this level of thinking. Admittedly, even within integrative circles, the term metacrisis can have a range of possible meanings, and people sometimes can be found to use this term rather loosely and in a way that lacks the depth, complexity, and multi-faceted interconnectivity that it should. It is thus worth a further description of what the metacrisis seems to signify for us and to also consider the attributes of the referent so as to hopefully not allow the term to be watered down too easily. We feel that the most significant attributes of the signifier ‘metacrisis’ would include:

- There are multiple distinct crises that we are experiencing that cannot be reduced to each other.
- Although there is no single primary cause for these crises, there are deep underlying drivers and shared root causes that underpin it all, since this is all happening within the same world.
- There are emergent qualities that manifest in our increasingly complexified world, and overarching attractors that cohere to produce phenomena that we can only partially understand.

- One can identify linkages between the systems and within the underlying dynamics that are driving the various crises, and these are ultimately underpinned by conscious self-awareness. For example, the sensemaking crisis and the meaning crisis share a sensibility that we fail to see that we are connected, and this is essential to what it means to be human.

Indeed, the metacrisis is an extremely complex tangled knot of wicked problems and it is a hyperobject that we cannot really comprehend nor talk about in full detail. Any serious effort to address the metacrisis would simultaneously require expertise in ecological science, psychology, economics, game theory, political science, communication theory, technology, and several other disciplines, as well as a metatheoretical understanding of how these various disciplines interrelate and how they are ultimately grounded in a philosophy that would feature coherent and precise depth ontology (Despain, 2023). We have argued that integrative thought gives us the best positioning to make tangible progress in addressing the metacrisis. We will first take a closer look in the following section at some of the approaches coming from premodern, modern, and postmodern EVMs, since some of these perspectives will be useful in formulating integrative approaches.

## **Premodern, Modern, and Postmodern Approaches and their Flaws**

Despite the enormous complexity of the metacrisis and the relative simplicity of premodern, modern, and postmodern approaches, it is useful to look more closely at each of these at a more granular level than can be offered by EVM or worldview family alone. In this, we shift our focus to that of more specific and concrete worldviews, which are the most fundamental beliefs that drive people's thoughts, desires, and actions. Those who are embedded within and driven by any one of these given worldviews can be seen as having a preferred approach to addressing the largest-scale crises that are conceivable for them. Figure 2 lists various distinct approaches to addressing the crisis that can be perceived and conceptualized for people whose center of gravity is one of these EVMs and who are philosophically aligned with one of these worldviews. This table includes a range of premodern, modern, and postmodern worldviews and we will save the various integrative worldviews and schools of thought for the following section. Each listed worldview includes a brief description of its potential benefits, which comes from an effort to 'steel man' the perspectives, ways of life, and approaches to addressing the perceived crisis that the worldview has to offer. This table also describes the limitations and inherent pathologies of each worldview.

<b>Worldview Family / Effective Value Meme</b>	<b>Concrete Worldview</b>	<b>Approach to Addressing the Perceived Crisis</b>	<b>Notable Proponents</b>	<b>Intellectual Lineage</b>	<b>Potential Benefits</b>	<b>Limitations and Inherent Pathologies</b>
<b>Premodern – Animistic</b>	Tribal/ Animistic Life	We need to re-discover our indigenous roots and live in harmony with nature, which will involve much less consumption and a dramatic decrease in industrialization. This also involves strong and vibrant local social organization and sustainable symbiosis with nature, often held together with an enchanted way of life that involves communal rituals (Eisenstein, 2013; Yunkaporta, 2021).	Various indigenous leaders throughout the world	Ecology, indigenous wisdom	This provides the ability for tight-knit communities to live sustainably with nature and to feel a deep sense of connection with all things.	Despite the benefits of this way of life, it only works in relatively small communities, and it is not scalable. Tribal mentality has a dark side, in that there will always be challenges with maintaining peaceful coexistence with other groups, which can threaten the stability of any such communities. Also indigenous peoples have a somewhat mixed record in sustainably managing their ecosystems and the flora and fauna in their environment, as records show that some have shortsightedly irreparably damaged their natural environments. (Diamond, 2011)

<b>Premodern – Faustian</b>	Leviathan	We are doomed to a war of all against all unless a single entity has ultimate power and authority. Only a strong absolute leader can provide the leadership to bring about peace and prosperity. This can be either a single person or a military junta or a global superpower nation state or a tightly controlled united global "new world order". Power can be delegated and distributed, but a single entity (person, council, or the like) needs to have ultimate authority on all matters (Hobbes, 1996).	Neo-conservative Pax-Americana hawks, Vladimir Putin	Neoconservatism, absolute monarchism	There is very much a tendency for unnecessary petty conflicts between people, families, and tribes. We stand the best chance of peaceful coexistence and cooperation toward a better future by submitting to a powerful overarching authority and developing and deploying our strengths within such a system.	History has shown that this worldview often leads to mass violence, wherein a powerful state or military force becomes predatory and insists on subjugating or destroying all peoples in its wake. Relative peace can take hold, but only at the unconscionable cost of mass slaughter, rape, and enslavement of untold numbers of people (Pinker, 2011).
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<b>Premodern – Traditional / Postfaustian</b>	Neo-Fascism	<p>We are unlikely to avert global civilizational disasters so the best we can do is to save ourselves and the members of the ethnic group with which we identify. We must maintain social cohesion with fairly strict adherence to cultural norms and symbols, including the practice of (though not necessarily the deeply held belief in) traditional religion and the uncritical and mythologized celebration of the people’s cultural heritage. This necessitates the development and maintenance of a strong nation-state that integrates government, culture, and ethno-nationalism (Mussolini, 2020; Doolittle, 2022).</p>	Steve Bannon <sup>16</sup> , Curt Doolittle <sup>17</sup>	<u>Leviathan</u> , fascism	<p>One’s cultural heritage is inevitably the most reliable frame through which they find coherence in the world and stability in life in relation to friends and family. Ethnic groups are difficult to disentangle from cultures. The globalized world is extremely complex, and it is unrealistic to think that people will adequately conceptualize cultures foreign to their own. Cultures tend to fight with each other for people’s hearts and minds, which is a potential threat to each of us, and it makes sense to be on the winning side in these fights.</p>	<p>This worldview leads people to tend to see minority peoples, including those of other ethnic groups and/or those who have different religious practices, as grave threats to the nation. Some of the worst atrocities in human history have happened as a result of this worldview becoming mainstream within a population and forcefully embraced within the government (Arendt, 1973; Stanley, 2018).</p>
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<b>Premodern – Traditional / Postfaustian</b>	Religious Fundamentalism	We all must repent and be saved and accept the teachings of the one true religion and sacred scriptures, as the day of judgment is coming in which the almighty will sort between the wicked and the righteous. Those who accept the dogma will be saved and will enjoy the paradise of the world to come and the nonbelievers will perish for eternity. Thus, we need to live moral and righteous lives in keeping with the scriptures (Edwards, 1992; Taymiyyah, 1999).	Jerry Fallwell Jr., Ayatollah Khamenei	Abrahamic religions, conservatism, scriptural literalism	The world is inherently very difficult to understand and confusing. The most reliable way to find meaning and purpose in life and protection from self-destructive behavior is to accept the word handed down to us from ages past and to live in accordance with these teachings. This requires a leap of faith, a sense of humility, and submission to a higher power.	This worldview tends to make people believe very strongly that their religion is the only true religion and that every religion or belief system is entirely wrong and cannot be tolerated (Dawkins, 2006; Harris, 2004).
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<b>Modern</b>	Rational Optimistic Enlightenment	<p>We need a fuller embrace and more widespread adoption throughout the world of what already has been shown to work, which are the values and psycho-technologies of the Age of Enlightenment, such as rationality, science, progress, skepticism, liberty, fraternity, equality, and getting away from ignorance, dogmatism, authority, tradition, superstition, and prejudice.</p> <p>Postmodernism and critical theory have little or nothing of value to offer and are only diversions and roadblocks (Pinker, 2018).</p>	Steven Pinker, Michael Shermer	Age of Enlightenment, modern science	<p>There is less violence and suffering in the world today largely because of the power of modern science. Indeed, there are still problems, and we should not accept the current levels of poverty, inequality, injustice, and oppression in the world. We can and should take a scientific approach to addressing these problems, since this is what was largely responsible for the progress that has been made so far toward these ends.</p>	<p>This worldview is overly optimistic and doesn't take existential threats to our natural environment seriously enough. The shadow of rational optimism is that it effectively allows those who are already powerful to game the system under the guise of a progress narrative, despite the collateral damage to ecosystems and to human rights. Wealth inequality is immense, and the gap between the rich and poor is steadily growing, and proponents of this worldview do not recognize the inherent threat to global stability that this certainly is (Hedlund et al., 2016).</p>
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Modern	Techno-Optimism	<p>Technological advancements will save humanity and will save our planet. Next-generation innovations will heroically avert any and all calamities. Humanity's best days are ahead because of the power of technology and innovation. We need only to not get in the way of the most ingenious inventors and innovators so that they can save humanity with their brilliance. This includes the development of AI technologies and the eventual development of AGI in order to bring about utopia (Andreessen, 2024).</p>	Marc Andreessen, Elon Musk	Rational Optimistic Enlightenment, AI technology	<p>Many of the problems of the past were solved by technological advancements. Our lives are such much happier than they have ever been because of the technologies available to us. Some people have brilliant ideas and plans for solving our greatest problems and threats, but sometimes governments try to get in their way. Governments tend to be very inefficient and do not understand the power of technology to improve the world.</p>	<p>Some new technologies in recent decades have had very serious harmful effects on society, and we cannot trust the techno-optimists, nor the mega-corporations that finance and market their products, to adequately consider the potentially harmful effects of their products on people's lives. We have seen the negative impact of social media on the lives of children and adolescents and we are starting to see this with new and advanced AI products as well. Often, these new tools degrade people's lives and addict people to their content (The Consilience Project, 2024).</p>
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<b>Modern</b>	Trans-humanism	The way the world is going, the humanist ideology is no longer going to work. Human rights are created myths, and it is already impossible to guarantee life, liberty, and happiness for the third world poor. In the near future, some people will use transhumanist technology to become godlike. A small percent will live far above the masses in terms of quality of life. It makes sense to embrace this for one's own benefit (Harari, 2017; Kurzweil, 2005).	Yuval Noah Harari, Ray Kurzweil	Techno-Optimism, Übermensch philosophy	It is unrealistic to try to protect human rights and work toward equality for all people. Those who advocate this do not practice what they preach anyways. Each of us has choices that could potentially offer us a significantly higher quality of life by ditching humanism and being a part of this transcendent Übermensch.	Our planet does not have the resources for all but a handful of highly-privileged people to enjoy the benefits of transhumanist technologies. It is not unrealistic to work to defend human rights by lifting people out of poverty, providing them with better educational opportunities, and strengthening democratic governmental institutions. We need to prioritize the defense of human rights and work toward a more just world rather than transhumanist fantasies (Boehning, n.d.).
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<b>Modern</b>	Revolutionary Anti-Capitalism	We need to overthrow the capitalist bourgeoisie before they destroy the world with their unquenchable greed. Members of the working class need to become conscious of their shared interests and collectively work to bring about revolution and to usher in a socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, which will then transition to a communist utopia (Marx, 2024; McLellan, 1988).	Contemporary doctrinaire Marxists via Karl Marx	Marxism	The wealthy and powerful owners of the means of production are exploiting workers, destroying people's lives, doing immense damage to our natural environment, and this has the potential to destroy our entire world. We need to take serious action against this before it is too late. Piecemeal reforms will not work. Nothing short of revolution will be enough to avoid disaster.	This worldview has the power to rally people to fight injustice, but it does not have a realistic plan for governance in the event that the revolution succeeds in overthrowing the capitalistic regime. There would inevitably be a period of instability following any sudden overthrow of the status quo, and it is highly likely that a brutal dictatorship would come to power and to offer stability, which would in many ways be worse than the previous regime and this would not offer a positive alternative to the hyper-capitalist regimes that they replace (Arendt, 1973; Becker, 2022).
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<b>Postmodern</b>	Radical Feminism	The problems of the world are caused by the continued dominance of the patriarchy. We need to bring about a matriarchy, which will be egalitarian and peaceful and sustainable. Women should lead the way and need to stop supporting the patriarchy and stop submitting to their desires and stop giving them the things that that they demand (hooks, 2014; MacKinnon, 1991).	Contemporary successors of Andrea Dworkin, Bell hooks	Feminism, indigenous matriarchy	Throughout history, men have oppressed women and have been significantly more violent, greedy, and destructive than women. Men sustain their power by enforcing their patriarchy. If women come to power, then they would be able to institute a more peaceful and just world.	In truth, both men and women are known to have serious pathologies when they try to operate in exclusion of the other sex. The contention that men alone are responsible for the world's problems is quite dubious. The idea that one can point to a single group of people and claim that they are the main source of our problems is entirely unworkable. We can only realistically make progress through a better balancing between men and women, but this is not to lay blame on men, nor to look to women as our collective saviors (Eisler, 1988).
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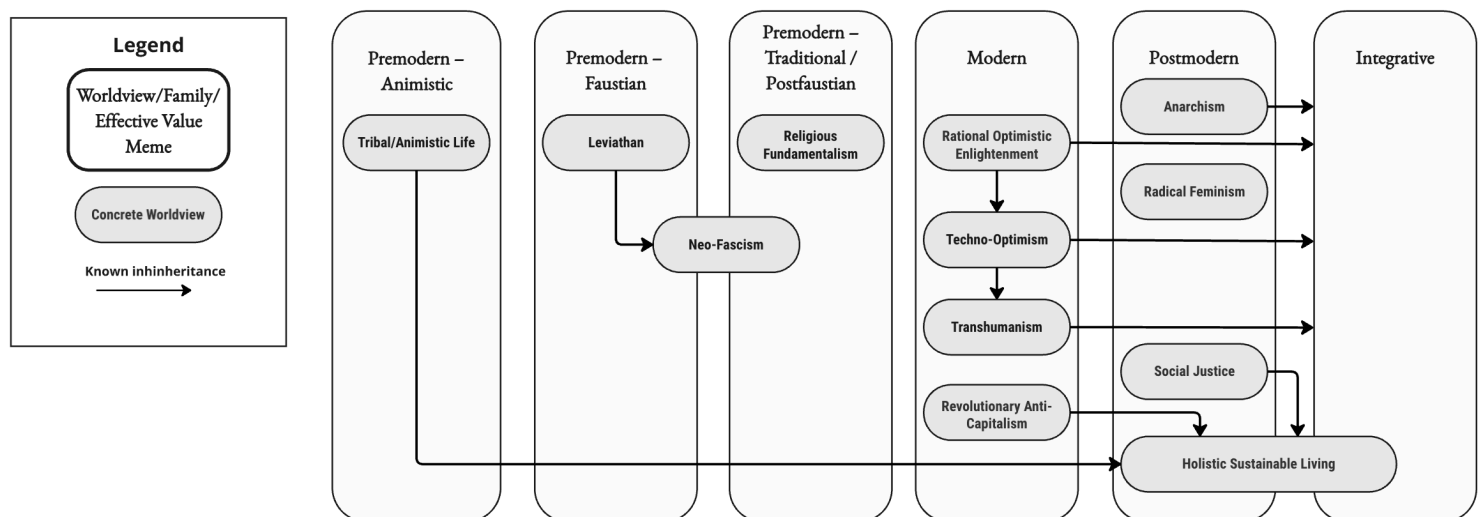
<b>Postmodern</b>	Anarchism	It makes sense to be skeptical of authority and to reject all involuntary and coercive forms of hierarchy. We should abolish the state and all forms of coercive government, since they are unnecessary, undesirable, and harmful (Chomsky, 2013).	Noam Chomsky	Anti-authoritarianism	Within all forms of government that have ever been instituted, we find coercion and we find injustice, which is ironic because the mission of government is supposedly to promote justice. People have tried to reform government to be less coercive and more just, but none of these efforts have ever been successful at eliminating coercion and true justice still cannot be found within any government.	It is impossible to hold together the fabric of society without some form of government. No government is perfect, but in every known instance where there was a complete lack of government in some geographic area, there was a significantly higher level of violence and death. Typically, people prefer even a brutal dictatorship over anarchy. The central arguments of anarchists rest upon a false conception of human nature (Dagger, 2000).
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<b>Postmodern</b>	Social Justice	<p>The most significant problems in our society are caused by privileged people, mainly hetero-normative white males, but also white people in general and also men in general, who are too fragile to recognize that their microaggressions and systemic inequalities are perpetuating systemic racism and sexism and discrimination against LGBTQ+ people (Kendi, 2019; DiAngelo, 2018; Wing, 2003).</p>	Ibram X. Kendi, Robin DiAngelo	<p>Critical race theory, critical gender theory, critical queer theory</p>	<p>The privileged classes tend to see things only through their own lens and tend to think that their way of seeing things is inherently correct and rational and they do not always see the systemic racism, sexism, and heteronormativity that permeates our society. This perpetuates the oppression of minorities. There are inherently different perspectives that one gets from actually being a minority and it is very difficult or impossible for privileged people to adequately understand this.</p>	<p>This worldview tends to divide the world into oppressor and oppressed, with no gray area in between. It also does not recognize that some people can be oppressors and oppressed for different functions in life. In addition, this is based on a broken epistemology in which it is assumed that one cannot adequately understand the experiences of people who come from different backgrounds in life, even if they carefully work to listen and to hear them and to empathize with them. It is assumed that structural factors are the main cause of social injustice and that there is not much that people from the privileged classes can do to work toward a more just future (Pluckrose &amp; Lindsay, 2020).</p>
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<b>Postmodern</b>	Holistic Sustainable Living	<p>Insatiable corporate greed is destroying our natural environment, and the ultra-rich are allowed to do this because of governmental ineptitude and a largely cynical and uninformed public. We need to mobilize people to take action through protest so as to force dramatic reductions in pollution and extraction and we need all need to learn to live more sustainably and respect ecosystems and endangered species and protect human rights (Thunberg, 2023).</p>	Greta Thunberg	<p><u>Tribal/ Animistic Life</u>, revolutionary anti-capitalism, cultural anthropology</p>	<p>Every year we have more and more evidence that the health of our biosphere is getting worse. The mega-corporations keep polluting, and this is causing climate change to get worse and worse. We see evidence that the government is colluding with the meta-corporations, and this is why no real effective actions are being taken. Thus, we need to take on both the private and public sectors in order to fundamentally reform our political and economic systems so that we can live more sustainably and save our planet for future generations.</p>	<p>This worldview is good at recognizing the interrelations between the public and private sectors and how they can collude to allow greater profits and more environmental degradation, but it does not offer an adequate process for changing the government nor for changing the economy to be more sustainable. Mass protests alone have not been effective in putting significant pressure on these powerful agents, nor has this brought a significant percent of the population to rally to this cause (Bjorkman, 2017; Robbert &amp; Mickey, 2017; De Witt &amp; Hedlund, 2017).</p>
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**Figure 2**

Figure 3 is an inheritance diagram that shows how each of these worldviews are based on EVMs. Each concrete worldview is primarily centered around one of the worldview families / EVMs and some of these worldviews can be seen to derive from other worldviews. The implication is that any approach inherits everything that precedes it. This means that, for example, Techno-Optimism inherits from Rational Optimistic Enlightenment. When specific approaches are based on one of these EVMs, such as Tribal/Animistic Life, the approaches downstream from the Premodern / Animistic EVM do not necessarily always derive from that specific worldview. The various integrative worldviews are saved for Figure 5, which appears in the following section.



**Figure 3**

Each of the concrete worldviews shown in Figures 2 and 3 do make important points and have useful things to offer, and we would be wise to consider each of them, at least to some extent, as we work to address the metacrisis. That said, each of the approaches offered by these concrete worldviews is flawed and is overly reductive or simplistic in one way or another because they each commit at least one aspect of the Single Focus Fallacy.

While these worldviews do have the potential to recognize threats and crises, they are simplistic in their outlook. Tribal/Animistic Life offers us much to learn from in our hyper-modern world, but it offers a way of life that is not possible for the vast majority of humanity, and it is unscalable and largely incapable of defending itself in the face of

external forces. Leviathan is a worldview first articulated by Thomas Hobbes (1651/1996) who argued that the alternative is a life that is 'solitary, nasty, brutish, and short'. This worldview helps us take seriously the foundational importance of power relations, but this leads to horrendous violence when it is a people's main driving force. The same can be said about Neo-Fascism, which has the potential to lead to even more systematic mass murder and ethnic cleansing. Religious Fundamentalism at least takes seriously the importance of spirituality and myths to our sense of meaning and purpose in life, but it tends to be quite dogmatic and pre-rational in its approach to life.

Rational Optimistic Enlightenment is one of the most powerful worldviews in our contemporary age, and it has led to hyper-capitalism and exploitation of the natural environment and workers under the guise of rationality and progress. Although we should see technological advancement as an important element of the solution space to the risks and threats we are facing, proponents of Techno-Optimism tend to deny the competency and legitimacy of nearly all governmental functions and seem to believe that good blessings could only come from an Übermensch class of entrepreneurs, engineers, and venture capitalists. In effect, these beliefs serve to further enrich those who are already wealthy and powerful, and thus we should be skeptical when techno-optimists claim that their work would improve the well-being of society overall. Transhumanism overlaps with Techno-Optimism, but effectively only serves as a fantasy for an elite few to attempt to transcend beyond the limitations of current biological and physical limitations in their quest to optimize their lives.

The Twentieth Century saw the disasters of Revolutionary Anti-Capitalism, so we will need much more realistic alternatives to the corporate, capitalistic hegemony. Radical Feminism does make a good case that a male-dominant and misogynistic society has deep pathologies and leads to much unnecessary suffering and injustice, but it tends to overly demonize men and fails to see that any alternative would need to involve a harmonious and mutual partnership between men and women. Anarchism is another worldview driven by frustration and resentment and whose proposed solutions would never work because of the limitations of human nature.

Social Justice does help us take seriously the systemic structures that perpetuate harm to certain classes of people, but it likewise does not offer any workable alternative because it is based on a broken epistemology and tries to insist on a world that is neatly divided into oppressors and oppressed. Holistic Sustainable Living has a more systemic focus and understanding of the relation between power dynamics, governmental corruption, and environmental degradation, and the inner feelings of people and other conscious beings, but it doesn't make use of metatheories nor advanced psychotechnologies that can integrate across these many concerns and it tends to only be able to offer a single solution in the form of mass mobilization and protest, which is not by itself an effective way of working toward systemic change nor in working toward the admirable goals of this worldview.

All of these worldviews have a strong tendency to commit at least one aspect of the Single Focus Fallacy. Any of the various forms of premodern worldviews tend to lead people to think in terms of single issues, wherein concerns can be shared among likeminded people and conformity to group norms is about the best one can be expected to do. Those who hold some form of modern worldview, being driven by rationality, tend to look deeper into causes but tend to reduce all problems to a single most significant root cause. Those who are more postmodern in outlook are capable of considering multiple issues and multiple causes because of their consideration for plurality and contextuality, but they tend to fall back onto only offering single solutions to complex problems. Since each of these worldviews is limited in significant ways in its approach to addressing the metacrisis, we now look to the diverse integrative schools of thought that have more recently been emerging within the broader intellectual landscape.

## **Integrative Thought and the Metacrisis**

Once one acknowledges that we cannot be reductive in our thinking about issues, causes, or solutions, the complex and interwoven threats and challenges of our contemporary world become more exposed to us, but things also start to become murkier and more confusing. In his essay *Tasting the Pickle: The Ten Flavors of the Meta-Crisis*, Jonathan Rowson (2021) asks us to take in all of this and to stew in the uncertainty so that we can develop a more embodied understanding of the deep binds and constraints that are surrounding us, which are preventing us from developing adequate solutions. A more natural human tendency would be to rely on simpler and more reductive thinking, but Rowson encourages us to feel into the problem space and to become more comfortable with complexity and uncertainty, which can eventually help us identify viable pathways toward building a better world.

As complex as these challenges certainly are, some visionaries have formulated plans of action that might help us avert catastrophe and help bring about a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. The metasystematic thinking that is characteristic of integrative thought has fueled an amazing array of people and organizations to embrace the complexity of the metacrisis and to formulate viable pathways to navigate through our most serious civilizational obstacles and to co-create new beginnings.

The nascent integrative intellectual and cultural scene is diverse, but big-picture thinking shows some common threads. We are finding that there is remarkable agreement within the various interrelated intellectual movements, organizations, and people that make up the liminal web that there is this metacrisis, and there is deep appreciation of its daunting complexity, but there are differences of opinion about what we should do about it. There is substantial interest and energy within integrative communities, including related movements such as integral theory and metamodernism, for big and fundamental change. Among such communities, there is also near consensus that our legacy socio-cultural, political, and economic institutions are unstable and not viable in the long term. Those who

would agree with this general sentiment would often have different reasons for why that would be the case, but they all generally agree that we need to transition to a new systems state. We see futurists, historians, philosophers, wisdom researchers, theists, and mystics debate the benefits, problems, deficiencies, and values of the present state of the world. We also observe these diverse people and organizations work to envision various possibilities for our future world order, and we see them developing action plans for somehow working to address this metacrisis.

However, if integrative communities are to impact the mainstream post/modern culture and world system on at the level that the metacrisis seems to demand, much more cooperation and coherence must be forged across this diversity and pluralism of approaches: we need to transcend the fragmented and rivalrous dynamics amongst us in order to together become an integrative pluralism that can compete on the world stage for cultural authority and systemic transformation. The great sociologist of philosophical movements, Randall Collins (1998), draws a distinction between the “creativity of fractionation” wherein as thinkers accentuate their uniqueness and differences, and the “creativity of synthesis” as thinkers forge pathways of cooperation and alliance (p. 131). While the former is valuable and perhaps is a necessary prerequisite for the latter, without a robust flourishing of the creativity of synthesis, the integrative community will very likely fail to achieve the kind of coherence needed to impact the world system at the level that is needed. As Robb Smith’s (2025) powerful sociology of big-pictures suggests, “we should situate ourselves historically by remembering that [integrative] ‘grand systems like ours benefit from combining efforts to overcome the traditionally-weak organizational base and fragmented backgrounds out of which they tend to grow’ (p. 14). Therefore, Smith goes on, “we should center the network, not individual scholars or organizations, per se, in our strategic logic in a parsimonious but socio-politically collaborative way” (ibid).

In this effort towards coherence and macro-level impact, we want to embrace the term integrative as arguably the best strategic umbrella label for the network, and we also would like to help give it some explanatory depth, which might help hold the diverse and emergent field together. We can look at the larger integrative field that includes metamodernism as a cultural sensibility that transcends and includes postmodernism and that includes a variety of voices such as Ken Wilber, Hanzi Freinacht, Roy Bhaskar, Daniel Schmachtenberger, Zak Stein, and Lene Rachel Andersen<sup>21</sup>. These can all be seen as different ‘species’ within the same cultural genus space of integrative thought and practice<sup>22</sup>. Each of the various integrative schools of thought (including integral theory, critical realism, etc.) share common attributes, whether they use these terms or not. For instance, integrative schools of thought have a strong self-reflective aspect, they share a broad cultural sensibility, and they have similar ways of responding to postmodernism.

In response to the rise of postmodernism in some prominent intellectual circles and also in certain culturally influential social spheres, we have seen people react in different ways to

this phenomenon. Postmodernism brings up important considerations, including the ambiguity of communication, the uncertainty of life, the role of power dynamics in framing what is considered right and wrong among the populace, and the general limitations of rationality. While this has been in some ways quite useful and helpful to the development of philosophy and culture over the past fifty years, it can certainly be taken too far and lead people into utter confusion and nihilism, and there are powerful forces at play reacting against it. For example, some notable public intellectuals have tried to fight postmodernism relentlessly as if the future of human civilization hangs in the balance (Raatikainen, 2022) and others have attempted to ridicule it into irrelevance (Seymour, 2021). Still others have simply adopted it as their preferred worldview, though with a less intellectual and markedly angrier tone (Lukianoff & Schlott, 2023).

The broad family of schools of thought that we are calling integrative includes approaches that instead work to transcend postmodernism, while including significant aspects of this philosophy and sensibility. Integrative schools of thought take seriously the critiques put forth by postmodern discourse, but work to overcome them through a variety of tactics where the common thread is a reconnection to meaning and purpose. This is driven from a sense of discontentment with postmodernism and the search for something that gives more meaning to life, which might also help us come together and work toward some sort of solutions or mitigations of these immense problems that we are experiencing.

For those who are in some sort of integrative school of thought, the term ‘metacrisis’ is broadly understood and that such people seem to have enough of a shared conceptualization of this term that it is worth using this term as an anchor point for all such approaches. There is a shared realization that everyone is experiencing the metacrisis and there is something about this integrative cultural sensibility that is undergirded by cognitive complexity that has the capability to see the metacrisis with some semblance of fullness, depth, and sophistication. There are many approaches to addressing perceived problems in the world, but this greater integrative space allows for the complexity of the world situation to be apprehended with some semblance of adequacy. These integrative schools are capable of understanding what the metacrisis is and how to respond to it.

## **The Variety of Integrative Approaches**

Now that many different proposals have been put forth by the various integrative organizations, projects, and schools of thought, we have the opportunity to compare and contrast them and to understand the similarities and differences and also to trace their historical lineage and consider the roadmaps they each offer toward addressing the metacrisis<sup>23</sup>.

It is customary in liminal web circles to bring together embodied reflection, deep theorizing, and practical action. This combination is intended to avoid the pathologies of emotional

suppression, entrenched dogmatism, and idle ‘ivory tower’ theorizing. Paths that iteratively combine reflection, theory, and practice also help to overcome the reductionism and intellectual fragmentation that are common in modern and postmodern circles. In relation to the aforementioned triad, we have categorized approaches into paradigmatic lenses, integrative metatheories, and projects/movements, and we are also including a fourth category for archtheories, which come from the recently formulated philosophical concept of archdisciplinarity (Barker et al., 2024). These categories are complementary, and each is necessary because integrative thinkers typically begin their approach to problem solving and engage with the world through one or more paradigmatic lenses. They also tend to make use of levels of abstraction and conceptualize with the aid of metatheories and archtheories as they work to apply this knowledge to concrete situations in their projects and movements. The distinction between paradigmatic lenses, integrative metatheories<sup>24</sup>, archtheories, and projects/movements is not always mutually exclusive and there is some conceptual overlap among these categories<sup>25</sup>.

Figure 4 lists the various integrative-related paradigmatic lenses, including their assessment of the large-scale problem space and their proposed solutions<sup>26</sup>. Paradigmatic lenses represent the basic concepts and processes and the paradigms for combining them. These have a perspectival quality to them and allow for attunement of teleology and provide rallying points for collective action. Paradigmatic lenses have background metatheoretical underpinnings, but their power and utility are less based on the conceptualization of any metatheoretical concepts and more based on how the sensibility guides participating parties in perception, communication, and action. Note that some of these lenses conceptually overlap and each of them has an appreciation for complexity and each is based on systems theory and non-reductive hermeneutics. We are offering exemplary organizations for each lens, but we are not trying to pigeonhole anyone. It is almost impossible to really do anything meaningful in this world without drawing from more than one of these lenses, but each of these that are listed have distinct teleologies and each tend to emphasize certain background assumptions, certain approaches to data collection, and certain processes for analysis more than others.

At a deeper and more abstract level, integrative metatheories are foundational schools of thought that provide ways of reflecting on and understanding the relationship between parts, processes, and patterns intrinsic to reality, as well as how to properly respond to them (Barker et al., 2024, p. 19). Metatheories are based on interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, which integrate concepts, processes, and theories across disciplines. Integrative metatheories, also known as unification metatheories in some literature, involve the widest sense of inclusivity and attempt to unify everything that is known across disciplines. There has been a more recent innovation known as archdisciplinarity, which the Archdisciplinary Research Center (ARC) describes as “the academic inquiry that treats transdisciplinary, big-picture, theory of everything, all-encompassing, unification metatheories as units of analysis for comparison and contrast” (Barker et al., 2024, p. 14). An

archtheory is a synthesis across integrative metatheories wherein common themes called “arches” are identified and which consolidates and builds upon the identified properties that hold across metatheories (Barker et al., 2024, p. 20). Figure 5 includes several notable integrative metatheories, along with their respective assessment of the intellectual problem space and the proposed solutions offered by each<sup>27</sup>. Figure 6 likewise includes recently formulated and emerging archtheories. Each of these integrative metatheories and archtheories can be seen through and refined by the means of paradigmatic lenses. In addition, those listed here are not just abstract models, but each of them thematizes the metacrisis and can offer important tools for addressing it.

At a more concrete level, we have projects and movements, which are connected to one or more organizations that are actively engaged in doing work to address the metacrisis in meaningful ways, and these are shown in Figure 7<sup>28</sup>. Each of these projects and movements can be seen through one or more paradigmatic lens and each is guided by one or more integrative metatheories (and perhaps also archtheories), in its approach to addressing the metacrisis. A description of the implementation is provided for each project/movement. The projects and movements listed here only represent a sample of those active within the liminal web, and we listed those that seem to have momentum in their work and breadth of reach. There are many more notable projects and movements, and we could not possibly fit all of them into this paper. Note that some of these projects and movements are brand names and are associated with specific organizations, whereas some of them are simply buzzwords used within certain subcultures and communities.

Our methodology recognizes the intellectual lineage for each approach. The pattern for intellectual lineage has integrative metatheories inheriting from paradigmatic lenses and also has projects and movements inheriting from both paradigmatic lenses and integrative metatheories. Archtheories inherit from two or more integrative metatheories. In reality, inheritance between various ways of conceptualizing, thinking, and doing is often bidirectional and can be cyclical in nature. For example, paradigmatic lenses can be reimagined in light of integrative metatheories and clarified in light of projects or movements. Archtheories have the potential to realign any of these approaches as well. Thus, while we are acknowledging a more complex intellectual lineage that is significantly more complex than what is represented in this map, we have chosen to only include unidirectional inheritance in this map in order to focus on the most relevant information and to maintain readability. We have mapped two types of intellectual lineage relationships: known inheritance and possible resonances. Known inheritance is where the authors, visionaries, or project managers have acknowledged influence from other approaches included in this map. Potential resonances means that there seems to be significant influence from one approach to another, even though the creators haven’t publicly acknowledged this, or might not even be consciously aware of this connection. In the tables below, known inheritances are underlined, and potential resonances are italicized (these types of relationships between approaches are represented in the diagram in Figure 8 with

solid and dashed lines, respectively). The intellectual lineage column includes items that can be found in other tables within paper and, in some cases, additional items that deserve mention but that we did not have room to fit into any of the other tables in their own right. In the latter case, the items are in plain text (neither underlined nor italics)<sup>29</sup>.

Paradigmatic Lens	Assessment of the Large-Scale Problem Space	Proposed Solutions	Emphasis	Intellectual Lineage	Proponents	Exemplary Organizations
<b>Enlightenment 2.0</b>	Our dominant mainstream paradigm is still based on the Western rational enlightenment, which gave us remarkable psychotechnologies, but has serious limitations (Björkman, 2019). We are facing a lack of enlightenment in our world, and we need to create a new enlightenment that would allow us to rise to address these serious challenges that we now face (Stewart, 2008).	This involves embracing Western enlightenment rationalism and postmodern critique along with Eastern approaches and practices and weaving these together into new paradigms and methodologies that embrace inner development in a way that is integrated with science.	Wisdom	<u>Rational</u> <u>Optimistic</u> <u>Enlightenment</u> , <u>Holistic</u> <u>Sustainable</u> <u>Living</u> , Eastern spiritual enlightenment	John Stewart, Tomas Bjorkman	Perspectiva

<b>Dark Renaissance</b>	<p>The continued dominance of disembodied rationality and science way will not make life better for us and will only further denigrate our culture. We should not always think in terms of problems/solutions, as this will likely only further tie us in knots and create even more shadows. There are dark things that we are going to be able to face within our collective subconscious through art. The way society is headed, things will go dark almost inevitably, meaning that society will break down and a new dark age will result in the coming years and decades (Emerge, n.d; Parallax, 2020).</p>	<p>Some of us will be able to create new aesthetic movements to get things through in order to plant the seeds for an eventual rebirth, and some people are already working on this. It is important to recognize the dark sides of our nature rather than pretending they don't exist or that we have them fully under control. This is set of skills that we can hone for creativity and authenticity and for unique and fulfilling engagement with people and groups.</p>	Aesthetics	<p><u>Anarchism</u>, <u>Trans-Humanism</u>, romanticism, existentialism, psychoanalysis, postmodernism , critical theory</p>	Alexander Bard, Raven Connelly, Tom Amarque	<u>Parallax</u>
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<b>Game B</b>	<p>We are headed for civilizational decline and possible collapse because of rivalrous dynamics, embedded growth obligations, and multi-polar traps. We can call the current socio-political-economic order "Game A", which is a civilization that is replete with destructive externalities and power asymmetries that produce existential risk to our biosphere and to humankind (Rebel Wisdom, 2020).</p>	<p><u>We need to focus on game theory dynamics to better understand the processes of complex, self-organizing systems and also concepts such as nonlinearity, second-order effects, probability, networks, holism, symbiosis and evolution, and self-knowledge. We urgently need to evolve new solutions while keeping the best of the old. The flag on the hill for Game B is an anti-fragile, scalable, increasingly omni-win-win civilization.</u></p>	Game Theory	<p><u>Techno-Optimism, Holistic Sustainable Living</u>, game theory, transhuman technology, information theory, complexity science</p>	Jim Rutt, Jordan Hall	<u>Future Thinkers</u>
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<b>Warm Data</b>	We tend to think of everything in nature as objects and we lose sight of the context and we do not understand the interdependency of things because we utilize maps and mistake them for the territory (Bateson, 2020).	We can use our understanding of ecology in conjunction with warm data and the nuances and complexities of various aspects of life to help us intuitively make better choices. It is important to sense the context and the complex interdependencies in all situations in life. It is best not to assume any sort of a map of the context since all maps are inherently incomplete and can easily lead to misunderstandings and can be used to perpetuate oppression.	Contextual awareness	<u>Holistic Sustainable Living</u> , ecology, genetics, evolutionary biology, meta-rationality, complexity science	Nora Bateson	<u>The International Bateson Institute</u>
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<b>Conscious Evolution</b>	Cognitively and socio-culturally, we are out of our depth in this world, and we keep making the same mistakes because our individual and collective consciousness has not yet evolved to provide us with the capabilities that we need in our time (Cohen, 2011).	We can develop higher levels and states of consciousness and become mindful of the dynamics of the fundamental force of evolution and the relation to consciousness and this will awaken our collective spiritual capacity to overcome our challenges and create a better future. Once we become mindful of these dynamics, we then have the ability to consciously steer the direction of evolution toward a more just, sustainable, and happy global ecosystem and civilization.	Consciousness	<u>Transhumanism</u> , big history, Eastern spirituality, Western esotericism, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, evolutionary theory	Barbara Marx Hubbard, Andrew Cohen, Steve McIntosh	Institute for Cultural Evolution
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<b>Meta-Sensemaking</b>	Our collective sensemaking is broken amid the constant bombardment of information and ever-shifting technology and the related psychological and sociological impacts. The limitations of our rationality and our inherent cognitive biases combine with the emergent effects of the information ecology to cause serious harm and existential threats to our individual minds and to society as a whole (Rebel Wisdom, 2019).	We need to analyze the effects that different forms of media and different communication styles and propagation methods have on our psychology and sociology, and we can recommend ways that people and organizations can do better sensemaking and also how the human relation to technology can be improved.	Evaluation of information	<u>Rational</u> <u>Optimistic</u> <u>Enlightenment</u> , information theory, communication s theory, sociology, cognitive science, evolutionary psychology	Karl Weick, Daniel Schmachtenberger, Dave Snowden	Civilization Research Institute
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<b>Systems Theory</b>	<p>The central problem is that we tend to think of ourselves as separate from nature rather than an integral part of it. We are out of harmony and out of balance with the web of life because we rely too much on rationality (Lent, 2021).</p>	<p>We need to be mindful of the systematic interconnectedness of global problems: energy shortages, environmental degradation, climate change, economic inequality, violence, war etc. Aggravating one of them will have an influence on the others. Chinese philosophical thought is central to these efforts. This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally, and globally.</p>	Interdependence	<p><u>Holistic Sustainable Living</u>, systems theory, deep ecology, Taoism, Confucianism</p>	Fritjof Capra, Jeremy Lent	Deep Transformation Network
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**Figure 4**

Integrative Metatheory	Assessment of the Intellectual Problem Space	Proposed Solutions	Emphasis	Intellectual Lineage	Creator	Exemplary Organizations
<b>Integral Theory (IT)</b>	We are insufficiently developed both psychologically and socio-culturally. We are not aware of our interiors and exteriors, both individually and collectively. Within our intellectual landscape, there are many different disciplines, worldviews, and approaches that often operate in isolation, leading to fragmented understanding and incomplete solutions to complex issues (Wilber, 1995, 2000, 2006).	We need Integral Life Practice to develop on multiple lines of maturation (Grow Up, Wake Up, Clean Up, Show Up). We can bridge these gaps by with a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of reality that incorporates all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, and all types (AQAL).	Spiritual growth	<u>Conscious Evolution</u> , Enlightenment 2.0, transpersonal psychology, Eastern spirituality, Neoplatonism, phenomenology	Ken Wilber	Integral Life

<b>Critical Realism (CR)</b>	<p>We're experiencing crises on all planes of social being—ecological, economic, ethical, and existential—these interrelated crises function together as a crisis system. Dominant philosophies and worldviews are ridden with errors and delusions (demi-realities). We have misunderstood the relationship between ontology (being) and epistemology (knowing) (Bhaskar, 2016).</p>	<p>Demi-realities and oppressive and alienating forces need to be shed or transformed to come into alignment with alethic truth on all four planes of social being, leading to collective actualization and realization in a flourishing, eudemonistic society.</p>	Meta-critique	<p><u>Meta-Sensemaking</u>, Enlightenment 2.0, critical theory, social science, post-Marxism</p>	Roy Bhaskar	Eudaimonia Institute
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<b>Complex Thought (CT)</b>	Our academic and professional fields of study are siloed and disconnected from each other. Because of hyperspecialization in an interconnected world, we have a difficulty understanding ecology and the nuance of complexity and this thinking has us degrading the natural environment (Morin, 2008).	We need much more transdisciplinary thinking and institutions that support this, and we need recursive and self-reflexive methods to support this interweaving of disciplines of study. From this, we might be able to learn to live more sustainably if we understand complex adaptive biological and social systems and our evolving relation to them.	Complexity	<u>Systems Theory</u> , Warm Data, anthropology, complexity science	Edgar Morin	UNESCO
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<b>Unified Theory of Knowledge (UTOK)</b>	Our mainstream scientific knowledge is confused, and we need to sort this out in order to properly ground our innovations that are intended to improve well-being within our minds and within our culture. We have two major problems and the first is the "Enlightenment Gap", which refers to the gap in our knowledge left in the wake of the Age of Enlightenment, which is that our best mainstream science does not know the relation between mind and does not provide a reliable paradigm for the social science. The second is the "Problem of Psychology", which refers to the fundamental confusion about what, exactly, is psychology. (Henriques, 2011, 2022)	UTOK solves the Problem of Psychology and the Enlightenment Gap through several key ideas including the TOK system, the Map of Mind, BIT, and JUST, among others. This provides for more effective approaches to psychotherapy, and this also provides a better framework to improve people's mental health and work toward greater wisdom in society.	Psychotherapy	<u>Critical Realism, Enlightenment 2.0</u> , humanistic psychology, cognitive science, big history	Gregg Henriques	UTOK Society
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<b>Cosmo-Erotic Humanism</b>	<p>“...existential and catastrophic risks are not just rooted in flawed infrastructure (technological and other systems), social structure (law, education, politics), but primarily in failed superstructure—specifically the collapse of an implicit, shared worldview, what we call a shared Story of Value rooted in evolving First Principles and First Values as a context for our diversity.” (Center for World Philosophy &amp; Religion, 2024)</p>	<p>We need a “new Story of Value rooted in First Principles and First Values that integrates the validated insights of the interior and exterior sciences—across premodern, modern, and postmodern thought—ultimately recasting cosmic evolution as a Story of Value, in which our stories are understood to be chapter and verse in the larger narrative arc of Reality—the CosmoErotic Evolutionary Love Story of the Intimate Universe.” (Center for World Philosophy &amp; Religion, 2024)</p>	First values	<p><u>Integral Theory</u>, Critical Realism, Immanent Metaphysics<sup>28</sup></p>	Zachary Stein, Marc Gafni	The Center for World Philosophy and Religion
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Figure 5

Archtheory	Assessment of the Intellectual Problem Space	Proposed Solutions	Emphasis	Intellectual Lineage	Creator	Exemplary Organizations
<b>Complex Integral Realism</b>	<p>Our wicked problems are global and deep and cut across national, cultural, and organizational. Disciplinary differentiation and fragmentation makes it impossible to adequately respond to the challenges that we face as a planetary civilization. The pioneering frameworks of meta-integration (integral theory, critical realism, and complex thought) might not be as integral, nor as critical, nor as complex as they aspire to be. There will not be an integral omega point of perfect comprehensive integration (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2016; Marshall, 2016).</p>	<p>We can look closely at the core constructs of each integrative metatheory and cross-compare them and find correlations with the others. We can develop forms of integration for navigation the fragmentation because each framework supports integration and coordinated action. We can recognize universal patterns among them, such as the fundamental questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how. In addition, we can identify commonalities such as first, second, and third person epistemics and also ontological and methodological similarities and correlations. If we do theoretical shadow work, we can identify the shortcomings of certain frameworks and fill in the gaps by bringing in aspects of other frameworks (Bhaskar et al., 2016, pp. 123-127).</p>	Comprehensive navigation	<u>Integral Theory</u> , <u>Critical Realism</u> , <u>Complex Thought</u>	Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, Paul Marshall	MetaIntegral, Institute of Applied Metatheory

<b>Visionary Realism</b>	<p>“Metatheories can be understood as deep causal codes or architectonic generator functions of our worldviews and thus our socio-political order” (Hedlund, 2021, p. 42). “Metatheory in its appropriate form provides indispensable intellectual scaffolding for the crucial psycho-spiritual, cultural, and social transformations demanded by a global metacrisis that threatens to render our planet inhospitable to human civilization, undermining the possibility of flourishing in all facets of our shared life” (Hedlund, 2021, p. 56). To address the root causes of the metacrisis, more adequate big picture frameworks that can disclose more of its holistic complexity and depth are needed. Visionary realism, non-preservative synthesis of critical realism and integral theory that redresses the contradictions and absences within each of them, offers a more comprehensive, internally coherent, and sophisticated big picture understanding than either of them alone.</p>	<p>To curate generative conditions in which human culture, social systems, and technologies can come into greater alethic resonance (or alignment with reality, nature, the sacred). The meta-principle of alethic resonance (i.e., the alignment between the reality or intrinsic structure of an object or system and human knowledge of that object or system) “can help bring our worldview into greater alignment with the truth of our world, thus reweaving the ‘second nature’ of the human within the fabric of ‘first nature’ and its boundary conditions in a process of dynamic equilibration. Thus, this meta-principle is an overall design principle for flourishing on all levels that can catalyze a transition to new sustainable, regenerative, and flourishing forms of life—that is, towards a concrete or relative eutopia and the emergence of a eudaimonistic society. It can help empower us to make it through the collective rite of passage or initiation that the metacrisis demands.” (Hedlund, 2021, p. 298).</p>	Alethic resonance	Critical Realism, Integral Theory, Piagetian onto-epistemology <sup>29</sup>	Nicholas Hedlund	Eudaimonia Institute
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**Figure 6**

Project / Movement	Implementation	Emphasis	Intellectual Lineage	Proponents	Exemplary Organizations
<b>Folk-Bildung 3.0</b>	This involves self-cultivation, community development, and lifelong learning working in conjunction. We need to upgrade our understanding of the world and promote bildung and educate ourselves to grasp the challenges from exponential technologies, new ownership and power structures, globalization, climate change, and the overall human impact on the only habitable planet we have. Lifelong learning not only empowers us, but also makes life more interesting (Andersen, 2020).	Education at all stages of life	<u>Enlightenment 2.0</u> , <u>UTOK</u> , Complex Thought, developmental psychology, developmental sociology, pedagogy, big history, earlier versions of folk bildung	<u>Lene Rachel Andersen</u>	<u>Nordic Bildung</u>

<b>Political Metamodernism</b>	Emphasizes developmental psychology and sociology also getting the socio-cultural attractors right and getting people and society up to a higher effective value meme. This also emphasizes developing new political institutions that optimize different aspects of public and private life and that are interdependent. We can create a deliberately developmental society in which institutions are created to help people develop and to reach their full potential. Multiple dimensions of development are important, including code, depth, state, and complexity (Freinacht, 2017). New forms of politics are created, including Gemeinschaft (community building), Existential (personal inner work), Democratization (people have a voice), Emancipation (people are free), Empirical (what is the truth?) and Theory (giving people meaning) (Freinacht, 2019)	Political institution building	<u>Enlightenment 2.0</u> , <u>Game B</u> , <u>Integral Theory</u> , political theory, developmental psychology, developmental sociology	<u>Hanzi Freinacht</u>	<u>Metamoderna</u>
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<b>Metamodern Spirituality</b>	<p>This involves transformative integration of psyches and societies through the creation of ecologies of practice and the development of the so-called "religion that is not a religion". This also involves drawing upon traditional religious and spiritual systems and esoterica with sincere irony in order to give people a newfound sense of meaning and purpose in life. This can then facilitate the functional harmonization of the meta-state based on the collective capacity for large-scale strength, robustness, anti-fragility, health, and coordination (Severan, 2021; Pascal, 2021).</p>	<p>Meaning in life</p>	<p><u>Integral Theory</u>, <u>UTOK</u>, <u>Enlightenment 2.0</u>, <u>Dark Renaissance</u>, <u>Conscious Evolution</u>, <u>Abrahamic religions</u>, <u>new atheism</u>, <u>existentialism</u>, <u>Eastern spirituality</u></p>	<p><u>Brendan Graham Dempsey</u>, <u>Layman Pascal</u></p>	<p>Sky Meadow Institute</p>
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<b>Peer to Peer</b>	This involves people cooperatively pooling their resources through commons in a way that is complementary to business and government with the idea that this can create prosperity for all. One of the main guiding principles is cosmolocalism. This can also be implemented through new decentralized technologies such as web3, blockchain, DAOs, etc. (Bauwens et al., 2019)	Pro-social technology	Game B, Critical Realism, interpersonal relating, decentralized technology	<u>Michel Bauwens</u>	<u>P2P Foundation</u>
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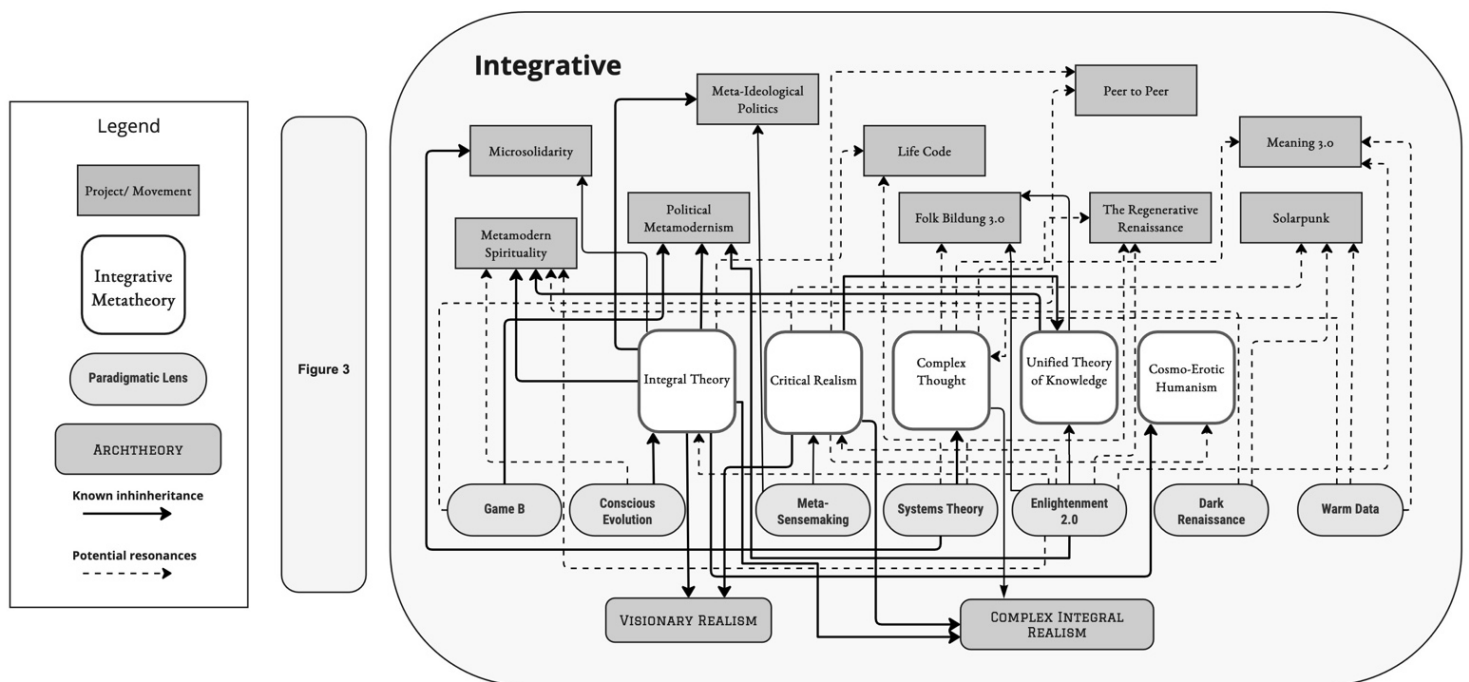
<b>The Regenerative Renaissance</b>	This involves harnessing nature-based and biological insights and explicitly more feminine embodied intuitions and felt senses to paradigm-shift modernity, and its discontents, into regenerative business models and systems that temper and transform abstraction, extraction, accumulation, exploitation, and mechanistic thinking with lived experiences, expressions, and practices of interdependence, reciprocity, reverence, caring wholeness/healing. It means engaging in purpose-led systemic transformation and institutional innovation and entrepreneurial processes, where purpose is explicitly a felt experience of love/caring and moving into action through constellations of people, data, and things (Wahl, 2016; Jankel, 2015).	Land-based projects	Systems Theory, Enlightenment 2.0, Complex Thought, neuroscience, indigenous knowledge, sustainability science, developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology, complexity science	<u><a href="#">Daniel Christian Wahl, Nick Jankel</a></u>	Bloom Network
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<b>Solarpunk</b>	This is a genre and art movement that envisions how the future might look if humanity succeeded in solving major contemporary challenges with an emphasis on sustainability, climate change and pollution. It imagines a world where energy, usually from the sun or wind, can be used without harming our environment. This begins with artistic imaginations of eutopian or protopian futures and also of less desirable dystopian possibilities. People in the present are encouraged to enter into a dialog with future possibilities and this helps them realize the paths available to work toward better futures and avoid calamities (Springett, 2017).	Imagination of a better world	Dark Renaissance, Warm Data, Critical Realism, eco-futurism, imaginative literature	<u>Saint Andrew, Phoebe Tickell</u>	<u>Moral Imaginations</u>
<b>Microsolidarity</b>	This involves the idea of pods, squads, crews, and gangs, which are four versions of microsolidarity that are emerging in the so-called Liminal Web. These are small mutual aid communities for people to do a kind of personal development, in good company, for social benefit (Bartlett, n.d.; Lightfoot, 2022).	Deepening interpersonal connections	<u>Systems Theory, Integral Theory</u> , democratization, network theory	<u>Joe Lightfoot, Richard Bartlett</u>	<u>Enspiral</u>

<b>Meta-Ideological Politics</b>	This involves educating people in the possibilities that emerge when you don't firmly hold onto your own ideological position. We can transcend identity politics and populism and group identity if we acknowledge that they all have their own version of truth and they all cling to that version, which causes a breakdown of communication. People can explore the notion that we are immersed in the stories that we inhabit, and those stories inform our field of experience. Not only being present yourself, but also if you start to explore what full presence means, it means letting others be present also. We need a politics of presence (Nakade, 2023).	Overcoming ideological divides	Meta-Sensemaking, Integral Theory, Buddhism	<a href="#"><u>Ryan Nakade</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Jack Petrunker</u></a>	Braver Angels
<b>Meaning 3.0</b>	This involves using scientific research to create "ethical cults" that can carefully incorporate rituals, drugs, sex, and altered states of consciousness with the aim of realizing Meaning 3.0 and strengthening communities and improving and optimizing human performance (Wheal, 2021).	Culture-hacking through bio-hacking	Enlightenment 2.0, Warm Data, Complex Thought, neuro-anthropology, cognitive science	<a href="#"><u>Jamie Wheal</u></a>	Flow Genome Project

**Figure 7**

Figure 8 is an inheritance diagram that is a continuation of Figure 3, and it shows how the integrative-related paradigmatic lenses, integrative metatheories, archtheories, and projects/movements are related to each other. Each integrative metatheory inherits from at least one paradigmatic lens, each archtheory is a synthesis of at least two integrative metatheories, and each project/movement is based on one or more integrative metatheories and is seen through one or more paradigmatic lenses.



**Figure 8**

The tables and the accompanying inheritance diagrams shown above are intended to serve several purposes: a) to visualize how integrative worldviews stand in relation to other worldview families; b) to clarify and highlight that integrative worldviews can help individuals and organizations become better equipped to address the complexity of the metacrisis; c) to provide a classification taxonomy for integrative theory and praxis, which notably includes various forms of metamodernism and other forms of theory and practice that operate under different labels; d) to show the diversity of paradigmatic lenses, integrative metatheories, archtheories, and projects/movements within the liminal web; e) to offer pathways for further integration, coordination, and harmonization among the various communities, thinkers, and projects so as to offer new cooperative possibilities in our shared efforts to address the greatest threats, risks, and challenges of our time.

## **Conclusion: Collaboratively Constructing an Integrative Synthesis in Response to the Metacrisis**

This paper articulated a critical appraisal of the relatively simplistic approaches to addressing perceived crises within premodern (Animistic, Faustian, and Postfaustian), modern, and postmodern worldviews. Despite their shortcomings, many of these worldviews do have important insights to offer and are partially incorporated into the integrative approaches that are described herein. One important aspect of integrative thought is to incorporate perspectives, worldviews, and values of the premodern, modern, and postmodern, but to do so in a balanced way. In other words, the integrative approaches try to integrate the transfigured enduring essence of the relatively more simplistic worldviews in a way that transcends and includes their healthy values and virtues while avoiding their problematics and pathologies.

With regard to the relatively more complex and adequate integrative approaches, a more appreciative stance is warranted. The various approaches within the integrative worldview family and the integrative EVM are likely all capable of relatively adequately conceptualizing the metacrisis and avoiding the Single Focus Fallacy, which each of the premodern, modern, and postmodern worldviews fall victim to in some way. Our intent is that by offering a certain kind of map of the liminal web as it relates to the metacrisis, those within this nascent movement can better recognize their shared visions and common values, can develop deeper strategic coordination and integration among the various projects, and forge a higher degree of alignment toward an essentially common purpose.

While we can and ought to recognize a shared purpose of working to address various interrelated facets of the global metacrisis, doing so under the banner of an integrative worldview, and also using other big-tent terms such as the liminal web and metamodernism where appropriate, would certainly not imply anything like a monolithic organization nor any hierarchical organizational structure to lead this movement. Our goals may be broadly shared, but our process is diverse, emergent, and decentralized. Integrative thought is a broader movement, and while there are many integrative thinkers and several notable integrative organizations, integrative thought per se is obviously not an organization. It is not any single project, and there is no preferred paradigmatic lens. There is certainly no single integrative metatheory at the center of an integrative worldview and there is no privileged archtheory either. Perhaps integrative thought could be seen as a polycentric and recursively evolving movement rooted in a complex network of ideas, principles, values, and practices, whose membrane is fuzzy and whose social holonic vibe and sensibility is ongoingly in process of becoming. Nobody owns the ‘brand’ of integrative thought, and our hope is that nobody tries to capture this flag, since integrative thought and practice—as a cultural movement—will be much more powerful and socially transformative if understood as both a plurality of diverse efforts and a coherent whole: a unity-in-diversity, a singular

umbrella identity that understands and appreciates the synergy effect of its unique and different inflections.

With this mapping effort, we are aiming to name some of the most significant and influential streams and to valorize their autonomy and validity. We envision moving toward a protopian—and eventually genuinely flourishing, eudaimonistic—society by engaging with these various thinkers and organizations and encouraging this diverse yet integrated ecosystem<sup>30</sup>. Diversity is not just a feature of thriving ecosystems—it is their foundation. It ensures stability, productivity, as well as resilience and even anti-fragility. We acknowledge that there are different and even divergent sensibilities within integrative thought, but there is, nonetheless, coherence within this broad and diverse movement. As such, we are arguing for a notion of integrative thought as a broad ecology of approaches that can thrive by engaging their interrelationships—their relationality and flows of communications—which can facilitate the evolution of the integrative ecosystem, as new evolutionary mutations and hybrid forms emerge.

Imagine various forms of deep engagement between multiple integrative approaches, roughly modelled on the 5-year critical realism-integral theory symposia series, as articulated in the introduction to the prior volume (Hedlund & Esbjörn-Hargens, 2023). Through such a ‘collaborative metapraxis of big-picture thinking’, including such practices as 1) dialogue and dialectical engagement; 2) learning to speak each other’s metatheoretical languages; 3) hermeneutic and ontological generosity; 4) epistemic reflexivity at individual and ‘team’ levels; 5) the cultivation of *philia*; and, 6) working together on real projects in mixed teams, new perspectives, principles, and practices can emerge (as was the case with the emergence of the variety of emergent synthesis that we can broadly call ‘integral realisms’, including complex integral realism (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2016; Marshall, 2016) and visionary realism (Hedlund, 2016; Hedlund, 2021). We invite you to take a moment to imagine the radical creativity, innovation, and transformation of the entire integrative/liminal/metamodern movement, were such processes to be engaged with sufficient depth and breadth. That possible emergent future—that concrete protopian vision for our movement—is exactly the direction that we sense is needed if we are to arrive at anything close to an adequate integrative response to the global metacrisis. There is so much beauty, complex intellectual brilliance, practical potency, and visionary swagger in our collective potential; and yet so much of it remains untapped, ironically somewhat siloed, to the extent that we have yet to really weave the threads of deep relationality that can eventually crisscross and link all the nodes in our ecosystem.

Our hope is also that construing integrative thought in these ecological terms can seed more opportunities for deeper integration, collaboration, cross-fertilization, and emergent collective intelligence for purposes of realizing our shared goals and visions and in working toward innovative and synergistic solutions. Our hope is also that this can lead to a much needed meta-systemic paradigm shift across all sectors of the sociosphere. The integrative

approaches explored in this paper can be further integrated and interwoven, which becomes possible when different schools appreciate each other and start to cooperate.

Certainly, there is significant diversity presented herein, but for the most part, these are complementary perspectives and approaches. To be sure, this is not to commit the error and fallacy of ontological monovalence common within integral theory that involves simply asserting that everyone is (partially) right and offering sweeping integrations without sufficient care for the details. While we do want to acknowledge that everyone likely has some piece of the truth, we argue that integral theory sometimes tends to oversimplify in its approach to universal syncretism, often glossing over the incommensurabilities, extant contradictions, and absences among various paradigms, metatheories, and worldviews. Such an approach is tantamount to glossing over the transformative power of the differences that drive dialectical transformation towards more adequate understandings and integrative responses to the global metacrisis. Thus, we are arguing that a dialectical critical realist approach that underscores difference and diversity alongside identity and unity is—ultimately—what is maximally generative for the field or movement as a whole. The potential for crucial negative transfiguration of theory and praxis is drawn out by leaning into differences of perspective held under the unifying identity and sphere of purpose that we call integrative thought. In this way, we can nurture the ecosystem of integrative thought so that its various approaches or strands can optimally be cross pollinated and interwoven to offer a fresh and vibrant suite of integrative interventions to our complex global problems.

This does bring up a central question of how this greater integrative ecosystem can remain mindful of potential contradictions while also optimistically seeking out potential linkages. This is a complex question, and the best answer probably lies in the power of metatheory as a force for integration and unification that is grounded in refined and comprehensive philosophy and that offers bridges into the sciences, arts, and other families of disciplines and practices. Different metatheories might have their own unique approach, their own set of jargon, and their own set of mental maps that inevitably privilege certain perspectives over others, but we can then leverage the unique potential of archdisciplinarity as a means of translating across metatheories without insisting that absolutely everything be subsumed into some specific metatheory.

There is much work that needs to be done in order to bring about a larger collaboration across these various schools of thought, projects, and organizations within the liminal web and within the broader integrative and metamodern ecosystem, but this is well worth the effort because anything like a semblance of an actual ‘solution’ to the metacrisis is going to be born out of this mutual understanding, mutual enrichment, and cross-pollination<sup>31</sup>. Until our greater integrative community participates in weaving together several of these different approaches, we are unlikely to find a response that has the kind of causal potency we are looking for. We need a specifically curated field of collective intelligence and wisdom

to emerge out of these schools, and this paper is intended to gesture toward an outline of where we think that should be moving<sup>32</sup>. This larger collaborative and synergist effort should be an important priority for integrative theory and praxis at this critical moment on planet Earth<sup>33</sup>.

## End Notes

1. Some notable examples of individuals and organizations concerned with the state of the world include podcasts and video series such as 1) mainstream: The Joe Rogan Experience, Huberman Lab, Stuff You Should Know, and The Tim Ferriss Show; 2) niche: the Norrsken Foundation, The New Enlightenment with Ashley, Dr. Iain McGilchrist, and Entangled World; 3) fringe: Infowars (prior to 2024), Faithwire, RevLeft.
2. Some mainstream approaches (e.g., techno-optimism and technocratic approaches to policy making) have been successful on a certain level, which offers one explanation for why such approaches live on, but we are entering into a new geo-historical context wherein such strategies may have reached their limits and have begun to deliver diminishing returns. For example, the widespread usage of antibiotics on people and animals was successful for several decades following the discovery and mass production of penicillin in the 1940s, until antibiotic resistance reached a crisis phase in the early 2000s with the widespread emergence of so-called 'superbugs' and that evolved to become resistant to all known antibiotic interventions (e.g., bacteria resistant to multiple classes of antibiotics, like extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL) producing organisms). Another example would be a 'tragedy of the commons' (Hardin, 1968) in which rivalrous dynamics related to the extraction and consumption of natural capital are advantageous to a select group on the micro level on a short-term time horizon, but eventually this dynamic leads to a tragedy on the macro-level, due to ecological limits. In such scenarios, continuing with this strategy will only ensure the termination of all parties.
3. There are several organizations and projects founded in recent years that are focused on big-picture complexity and addressing large-scale threats and challenges, including, for example, Perspectiva, the Archdisciplinary Research Center (ARC), the Institute of Applied Metatheory (IAM), the Inner Development Goals (IDG), Life Itself, Metacrisis.xyz, and Sloww.co.
4. This would include podcast series such as The Jim Rutt Show, Deep Adaptation, The Great Simplification, among many others, as well as online philosophical webcasts and discussion forums such as The Stoa and Rebel Wisdom.
5. By para-academic, we mean to say, scholarly or intellectual praxis that operates partially outside of, or orthogonal to, traditional universities and academic institutions. Many thought leaders in the liminal space have advanced academic degrees, and clearly have sufficient intellectual acumen to have pursued professorships in the mainstream academy, yet chose to pursue other avenues for their research, writing, and teaching. The liminal web is also liminal in the sense of being between two worlds, with one foot in academia and one foot out, where there is

much more freedom of thought and thus a nimble, innovative, adaptive energy that can truly contemplate the most important issues facing our planet today (i.e., the metacrisis) in a way that is relatively unencumbered by the stagnancies, deep-seated paradigmatic biases, and corruptions associated with the game of contemporary academic politics. Para-academics are thus arguably better positioned, in general, to be the harbingers of innovation and insight on the most complex, transdisciplinary, real-world challenges, such as the metacrisis.

6. Joe Lightfoot's blog post on the Liminal Web <https://joelightfoot.substack.com/p/a-little-liminal-update-18-months>
7. In our experience, there are many people who have an integrative worldview but who have never heard of the liminal web or metamodernism and we wish to include them within this emerging field.
8. According to Björkman (2019) and Andersen (2022), metamodern theory and praxis utilizes integrative, big-picture thinking and is driven by planet-centric values. In his book *Metamodernism: Or, The Cultural Logic of Cultural Logics*, Brendan Graham Dempsey (2023) defines metamodernism as a cultural paradigm that emerges through recursive reflection and synthesis of previous cultural logics. He posits that metamodernism arises when society collectively reflects upon and transcends (and synthesizes elements of) postmodernism, much like postmodernism did with modernism. Dempsey characterizes metamodernism by its oscillation between seemingly contradictory sensibilities—such as sincerity and irony, hope and doubt, or idealism and skepticism. This dynamic interplay leads to emergent dialectical syntheses, which such as sincere irony, pragmatic idealism, and informed naivete. Furthermore, Dempsey views metamodernism as a synthesis that integrates key elements from various prior cultural epochs, including traditional, modern, and postmodern paradigms. This integration aims to address contemporary challenges by fostering a multi-perspectival approach that acknowledges the complexities of the current cultural landscape. In essence, Dempsey articulates metamodernism as a framework that seeks to move beyond the limitations of prior cultural logics by embracing a recursive, integrative process that values both critique and reconstruction.
9. There might be even more significant obstacles to generative collaboration than the lack of awareness and terminological differences among communities. We have reason to believe that the core challenges include a lack of leadership in the liminal web space that capable of the integration and also that there is not enough task cohesion to bring the various groups within this emergent field into alignment. We believe that adequately mapping the ecosystem and working to develop shared vocabulary and cultural forms would be helpful toward addressing these challenges as well.

10. Herein, integral theory refers not only to Ken Wilber's work, but also to the field of scholarship that is based in large part on the AQAL model, or certain variations or enhancements of critiques of it, many of which were formulated by other integral theorists besides Wilber, such as Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, Steve McIntosh, Zachary Stein, and many others. One could also argue that much of the work of some metamodernists such as Hanzi Freinacht and Brendan Graham Dempsey is also based in large part on integral theory. Thus our use of this term is intended to broadly encompass this family of ideas.
11. Polycrisis is invoked here in a broad sense, not necessarily as articulated by the French metatheorist Edgar Morin, who coined the term (see e.g., Morin & Kern, 1999).
12. See Hedlund (2021) for a discussion of the variety of these related notions, including "wicked problems", "hypercomplexity", the "global problematique", "crisis system" (pp. 278-280).
13. The model of hierarchical complexity (MHC) is a framework for scoring the complexity of tasks, skills, and other cognitive processes based on observed behavior. It is based on the idea that complexity can be organized into a hierarchy, with simpler processes forming the foundation for more complex ones. It quantifies the order of hierarchical complexity of a task based on mathematical principles of how the information is organized, in terms of information science (Commons et al, 1998).
14. Effective value meme (EVM) "is an overall pattern of the mind; it is an equilibrium upon which one's values and worldview tend to stabilize, setting the framework for the political behavior of a citizen" (Freinacht, 2017, p. 309). EVM seeks to be a holistic model of developmental psychology that incorporates four factors: complexity as measured by MHC, cultural code, psychological state, and existential depth.
15. The Integrative Worldview Framework (IWF) developed by the Dutch social scientist Annick De Witt, as well as Nicholas Hedlund, is a metatheoretical model for understanding and comparing different worldviews based on their underlying ontological, epistemological, axiological, anthropological, societal visionary assumptions. That is, it identifies key dimensions along which worldviews vary—such as conceptions of reality, knowledge, values, the human, and an ideal society—and provides a structured survey methodology for both analyzing existing worldviews, namely traditional, modern, postmodern and integrative. This framework has been applied in cross-cultural research (e.g., the Netherlands and the US) and global transformation studies to foster dialogue and mutual understanding across diverse belief systems vis-a-vis key societal issues such as climate change, biotechnology, and agricultural systems.

16. These notions, such as ‘rationality crisis’ and ‘moral crisis’ are our way of referring to the central interpretation of the world crisis vis-à-vis a worldview or EVM. To be clear, these terms are not necessarily used by these communities themselves.
17. Spiral Dynamics (SD), which was based on the work of Beck and Cowen (1996) and inspired by the earlier work of Clare Graves (2005), offers a developmental theory of human consciousness and culture through a variety of value systems (vMEMEs). While it has been applied widely in areas such as leadership, organization development, and social change, with numerous cases of apparent success, we do not see SD as a valid model from the perspective of academic and scientific rigor. Specifically, SD stands on shaky and questionable empirical foundations (Freinacht, 2017, pp. 305-308). Graves' original research was largely unpublished and relied on relatively small and idiosyncratic samples (e.g. asking college students at a single American college a single question). See Stein (2019).
18. The developmental scheme we are using is a hybrid of the EVM framework given by Freinacht (2017) and the Integrative Worldview Framework given by De Witt and Hedlund (2017).
19. The term polycrisis was originally coined by Morin & Kern (1999), referring to a “complex intersolidarity of problems, antagonisms, crises, uncontrollable processes, and the general crisis of the planet” (p. 74). Others have defined the notion of the polycrisis in more specific ways. For example, from the Cascade Institute defines it as “any combination of three or more interacting systemic risks with the potential to cause a cascading, runaway failure of Earth’s natural and social systems that irreversibly and catastrophically degrades humanity’s prospects” (see <https://cascadeinstitute.org/technical-paper/what-is-a-global-polycrisis/>).
20. We had also wanted to include an official metacrisis definition given by the Civilization Research Institute (CRI), but it was not available at the time of publication. Previously, CRI had offered the following on their website [civilizationresearchinstitute.org](http://civilizationresearchinstitute.org): “Critically, metacrisis points to a deeper pattern that connects all risks and crises into a single coherent field: an ecosystem of crisis dynamics, with its own emergent properties. It points too towards the human experience, to the complexity and increasing confusion at the heart of how we all perceive, understand and operate across the field of converging risks. The metacrisis is a higher-order whole, with unique dynamics and unforeseen consequences. The metacrisis is both seen and unseen, taking place above and below the surface of what is visible and obvious.” In a private correspondence with CRI staff, they said that they are working on an updated definition.

21. Lene Rachel Andersen recently re-branded her book previously published as “Metamodernity” to “Polymodernity”. Despite this, we still consider her work to be within the general genre of metamodernism.
22. There is also this dynamic playing out where there is some contention between integral and metamodern, but we want to try to diffuse this controversy, since it seems like more of a distraction and isn’t contributing much that is productive.
23. We want to emphasize that this map is not necessarily comprehensive nor authoritative, but our hope is that it would be helpful to people and organizations seeking to gain multiple perspectives on how to address the metacrisis and to develop a broader view of the ecology of the diverse ways that people have been sensing, thinking, and doing meaningful work in this emerging field. What is given here is only a sample of some of the most relevant approaches and we know that some items are missing and there might also be some misclassification or other inaccuracies within some of the items that are included. Our work is fallible, and it is subject to correction and revision. One reason that we are offering this map is to enliven the multi-lateral dialogue and to welcome constructive critique while working toward greater mutual understanding of the multi-dimensional landscape of which this map represents only a subset.
24. Integrative metatheories are essentially equivalent to what is referred to as unification metatheories in the book Foundations of Archdisciplinarity (Barker et al., 2024).
25. There is significant overlap between the paradigmatic lenses and the projects / movements listed here. In general, a paradigmatic lens is a sensory orientation that prioritizes certain forms of information and offers pathways for action. Projects are organized activities to enact change, and movements are more decentralized but still effective at cultural transformation and have the potential for lasting impact. Several of the items in this map could have been categorized in multiple ways, but the rubric we used was to look at how the term was used by practitioners and theorists. Terms that tend to be used more loosely in the context of sensing into the problem space were categorized as paradigmatic lenses and terms that were used more pointedly in the context of enacted collective problem solving were classified as projects / movements.
26. There are additional integrative paradigmatic lenses that were not included due to space constraints. A non-exhaustive list of such paradigmatic lenses and notable people associated with them would include: the Gebserian approach to time experience (Jeremy Johnson), TSK (Tarthang Tulku), psychedelic medicine and therapy (Stanislav Grof).

27. There is a long list of integrative thinkers that were not included in this map due to space constraints. A non-exhaustive list of such thinkers and their respective works would include: Richard Tarnas (participatory epistemology, archetypal cosmology), Brian Swimme (cosmogogenesis), David Christian (big history), Sören Brier (Unified science of information, matter and qualia), Sean Kelly (Complex Holism, Complex-Integral), Alfred North Whitehead (Universal algebra, process theory), Forrest Landry (Immanent Metaphysics), Jean Piaget (Genetic epistemology, developmental psychology, cognitive structures), Bonnitta Roy (embodied process philosophy), Charles Sanders Peirce (semiotics), Jason Storm (philosophical metamodernism), Integral Grammatology (Bruce Alderman), and Universification (Fionn Wright). In addition, there are several archtheories that have been published in some form that were not included in this map due to space constraints, including Spectrum of Human Imagination by Cory David Barker, Emergentism by Brendan Graham Dempsey, and Unifying Theory of Reality by Bobby Azarian. See the Archdisciplinary Research Center's table of unification metatheory literature at <https://www.arc.voyage/um-library> for a more detailed list.
28. These are additional integrative projects that were not included due to space constraints. A non-exhaustive list of such projects and notable people associated with them missing projects: Moral Imaginations (Phoebe Tickell), Doomer Optimism (Jason Snyder), cosmopolitan socialism and the integral left (David Graeber), integral conservatism (Robb Smith), the East/West spirituality movement (Michael Murphy), the integrative version of the environmental movement (Rowan Williams), the human potential movement (Alan Watts).
29. The intellectual lineage of the items given here is difficult to trace and we made some educated guesses in this regard.
30. The period of transition to a protopian society is what Smith (2020) calls the "transformation age".
31. There are mutual resonances between this paper and Robb Smith's (2025) white paper The Sociology of Big Pictures, which argues that in order for a philosophy to compete as an organizing principle in a geohistorical context, it must form a coherent network. This is also what we are arguing for in this paper. Without such coordination and coherence across integrative approaches, we wager that we would fail to form the necessary sociological infrastructure to compete in the world economy as a hegemonic attractor.
32. This paper is related to the Strategic Metacrisis Mapping Initiative that is being conducted as a partnership between the Institute of Applied Metatheory and the Eudaimonia Institute. A forthcoming white paper will introduce this initiative. The present paper operates primarily at the empirical/perspectival and in this forthcoming

paper we will broaden the scope to look at the root causes and generative mechanisms.

33. This points to the limitations of the paper, which is that it does not venture to construct a more integrative worldview that would weave together threads from the paradigmatic lenses, metatheories, and projects that are included in this map. The Institute of Applied Metatheory has begun a complementary line of research along these lines, in an effort to work toward the formulation of a minimum viable integrative worldview that would provide coherence and resonance around shared deep structures.

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## About the Authors

**Brandon Nørgaard** is a co-founder of the Enlightened Worldview Project, an initiative aiming to promote improved sensemaking, civic engagement, and inner development through networks of local civil society hubs and meta-hubs. He is also a graduate student studying wisdom design at the California Institute for Human Science (CIHS). He started his career as a software engineer and has recently been involved in the convergence of metatheory, technology, and community development. He has been involved with metacrisis studies and is working to bring integral concepts and practices to the community level and to metamodernize legacy institutions.

**Nick Hedlund**, Ph.D., is founding director of the Eudaimonia Institute. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy & Social Science from University College London and was an Exchange Scholar at Yale University. Nick's work explores the intersection of metatheory and the cultural and psychological dimensions of global transformation. As a Ph.D. researcher, Nick studied under Arthur Petersen (formerly under Roy Bhaskar) to develop a new metatheoretical framework for emancipatory social research known as visionary realism, applying it to address global climate change. He served as Executive Director of the Integral Research Center at the MetaIntegral Foundation and has served as adjunct professor at John F. Kennedy University, associate director of the Integral Ecology Center, associate organizer of the biennial Integral Theory Conference, and organizer of four International Critical Realism & Integral Theory Symposia. His articles have appeared in journals such as the *Environment and Public Policy* and the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*. He edited a book with Roy Bhaskar, Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, and Mervyn Hartwig entitled "Metatheory for the 21st-Century: Critical Realism and Integral Theory in Dialogue" (Routledge, 2016). Its companion volumes, "Big-Picture Perspectives on Planetary Flourishing: Metatheory for the Anthropocene, Volume I" and "Integrative Responses to the Global Metacrisis: Metatheory for the Anthropocene, Volume II" (Routledge), are due out in 2022. Nick holds a Bachelor's degree (Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa) in Culture, Ecology, and Consciousness from the University of Colorado at Boulder, a Master's in Integral Psychology from John F. Kennedy University, and a (second) Master's in Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness from the California Institute of Integral Studies. Through the course of his studies, he has received several academic awards and honors including the Jacob Van Ek Scholar Award, the Honors Graduating Senior Scholarship Award for his undergraduate thesis, and the Yale UCL Collaborative Bursary.

**Claudia Meglin** is an Integral Systems Designer for Creative Enterprises. Her calling in life is to bring together creativity and business to consciously design sustainable and regenerative systems. She has been working for decades to guide organizations through organizational and cultural change and has been a core member of MetaIntegral since 2017. As a core member of MetaIntegral Claudia works with non-profit and for-profit organizations to implement whole-person/whole-system processes. Claudia holds an

Integral MBA in Creative Enterprises for Regenerative Enterprises and is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Integral Noetic Science at the California Institute of Human Science.

## **About the Institute of Applied Metatheory**

The Institute of Applied Metatheory is an international applied philosophy network dedicated to the education and application of “big picture” philosophical systems known as integrative metatheories. In conjunction with our nonprofit IAM Foundation, we provide scholars, practitioners and organizations with the resources and support they need to advance integrative metatheory and apply it to promising evolutionary leverage points to promote human flourishing in the 21st century.