



## Integral Philosophy

Steve McIntosh with Jeff Salzman and Michael Zimmerman

(2-DVD set, produced by Boulder Integral, published by Now & Zen, \$19.95)

Boulder-based integral philosopher Steve McIntosh is fond of saying that rigorous philosophical inquiry has, in many ways, become a lost art form. Gone are the days of Socrates dialoguing with his students on the streets of Athens. And you're pretty unlikely to walk into the local Starbucks and find yourself in the midst of a fiery debate over the finer points of

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Voltaire's latest treatise, as might have been the case in an eighteenth-century Parisian coffeehouse. But this kind of high-level relentless creative pursuit of the truth is exactly what McIntosh brings to the table with his new DVD set, *Integral Philosophy*, published earlier this year.

Shot against the black Charlie Rose-esque backdrop of Boulder Integral's beautiful new recording studio, the DVD set features McIntosh engaged in

two passionate dialogues with Boulder Integral founder Jeff Salzman and University of Colorado philosophy professor Michael Zimmerman. Titled, respectively, *Foundations of Integral Philosophy* and *A Conversation on Evolution*, the DVDs are intended both to convey the fundamental pillars of the integral worldview and to explore how this emerging new perspective helps solve many of our most nagging philosophical dilemmas, from the hard problem of consciousness to the question of whether evolution has direction. But even more than providing an overview of integral thought, the

DVDs offer a glimpse of philosophy-in-the-making, as these three thinkers push the margins of their own understanding in what ends up being two very creative conversations.

In the first session, Salzman interviews McIntosh about the foundational insights of integral philosophy—most notably, that consciousness evolves. McIntosh, who authored *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution* (2007), starts by laying out a historical context for the

emergence of the integral worldview. He explains how it represents the next step in human consciousness and culture beyond the traditional, modern, and post-modern worldviews that currently shape the lives of most people on the planet. He then goes on to explore the rich “internal ecosystem” of values and perspectives that peering through the integral lens reveals.

One of the most important tenets of the integral worldview is the idea that evolution is not a random process but has a direction—namely, from simpler forms of matter, life, and consciousness to more complex ones. In the second DVD, McIntosh and Zimmerman discuss how this teleological understanding of evolution will define the twenty-first century and radically change the way we think about spirituality, science, and morality. Laying out a fascinating history of evolutionary theory, McIntosh and Zimmerman explore the true essence of evolution and make the case that any future theory must, at its core, include an appreciation for consciousness.

Conveying something as subtle and ephemeral as a new worldview, which has its own assumptions, terminology, and ways of making sense out of reality, is no small task—especially in two hours. And the concept-rich, stream-of-consciousness nature of both conversations will likely make it hard for the uninitiated to keep up. But for anyone familiar with basic integral concepts, that fluidity is also part of the charm, and the DVDs transmit the dynamic co-creative nature of the process that these philosophers are engaged in. I wouldn't necessarily give this to my grandmother as an integral primer, but I would highly recommend it to anyone who wants to see for themselves what the leading edge of philosophy looks like today.

Joel Pitney