

Aspects of Integral Anthropology in Ken Wilber's Philosophy

Purpose. The study aims to examine the main methodological principles of Ken Wilber's integral philosophy in the context of integral anthropology as an emerging branch of philosophical anthropology, shaped by the challenges of globalization, providing a rich toolkit for a more comprehensive understanding of human nature, consciousness, culture, and evolution. To achieve this goal, the authors aim to address the following tasks: a) explore the main aspects of integral anthropology within the framework of Ken Wilber's philosophy; b) review potential areas of application for integral anthropology in the context of K. Wilber's methodology. **Theoretical basis.** The authors of this study based their work on philosophical anthropology in both a broad and narrow sense. For them, integral anthropology as a comprehensive field of knowledge focused on the holistic study of human beings, taking into account the biological, social, cultural, psychological and spiritual aspects of their existence, is of primary importance. **Originality.** The work is the first to investigate the specifics of integral anthropology as a direction relevant to the contemporary era dominated by global challenges. It provides a rich set of tools for a more complete understanding of human nature, consciousness, culture, and human evolution. Using the AQAL methodology, the study explores the possibilities of practical application of the theoretical principles of integral anthropology in areas such as intercultural interaction, education, personal development, ecological anthropology, organizational transformation and leadership, the impact of spiritual practices on individuals, digital anthropology, and healthcare. **Conclusions.** The holistic approach of integral anthropology, grounded in Ken Wilber's AQAL methodology, offers a comprehensive perspective on complex systems in science, society, and governance. According to Wilber, the left-hand and right-hand paths to knowledge are complementary approaches to understanding reality. The left-hand path explores the inner world and culture, while the right-hand path examines external phenomena and systems. Integral methodology in anthropology calls for considering both paths to prevent reductionism and achieve the most comprehensive understanding of the human being and their capacity to respond to contemporary global challenges.

Keywords: Ken Wilber; integral anthropology; AQAL methodology (All Quadrants, All Levels); left-hand and right-hand approaches; contemporary global challenges

Introduction

Contemporary challenges – climate change, cultural conflicts, technological transformations – require approaches that take into account both individual and collective consciousness in all spheres of life, which is why interdisciplinary directions are actively developing in many areas of science and practice. Traditional disciplines are characterised by fragmentation of knowledge, which is important to overcome in the age of the information society by creating a more complete picture of the holistic human experience. In this process, consciousness evolves to more complex levels in the direction of global and planetary thinking. Such an evolution of consciousness becomes extremely important for preventing and resolving conflicts and building dialogue between civilisations.

Integral anthropology, which is emerging as a theoretical and practical discipline, is capable of responding to these contemporary challenges. Integral anthropology offers an approach to the study of human beings that considers them as holistic beings, taking into account the biological, social, cultural, psychological and spiritual aspects of their existence, including the development of consciousness, i.e., it seeks to combine different fields of knowledge about humans in order to obtain a more complete and objective understanding of their nature and place in the world.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Unlike traditional anthropology, which often focuses on individual aspects (e.g., only biological or social ones), integral anthropology aims for a holistic approach that takes into account the interconnection of all these aspects.

The goals and objectives of integral anthropology are important for finding answers to contemporary challenges such as globalisation, cultural diversity and environmental issues. It also promotes the development of a more humane and responsible attitude towards people and the environment. In the context of globalisation, integral anthropology offers tools for understanding and integrating diverse cultural perspectives while preserving their uniqueness. Unlike reductionist approaches that reduce humans to biological or social factors, integral anthropology offers a holistic model that incorporates physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions. This is especially relevant in an era when technologies (such as AI) are raising questions about human nature.

Based on the ideas of Ken Wilber, Jean Gebser, and other thinkers, integral anthropology can offer models that include internal (subjective, psychological) and external (social, environmental) aspects, which can be useful in developing comprehensive solutions to anthropological problems. Integral anthropology seeks to synthesise elements of anthropology, psychology, philosophy, sociology, cultural studies and spiritual traditions. By studying the development of human consciousness, integral anthropology becomes relevant in the context of rapidly accelerating changes in culture and technology. It helps to understand how the transition to more complex levels of consciousness (for example, integral, according to Wilber) can contribute to overcoming egocentrism and ethnocentrism in favour of global and planetary thinking.

It should be noted that Wilber himself does not directly use the term "integral anthropology". His integral approach, in particular the AQAL (All Quadrants, All Levels) model, is a holistic methodology that includes anthropological aspects but goes beyond traditional anthropology to encompass psychology, philosophy and spirituality.

In practical terms, integral anthropology approaches can be used in education, psychotherapy, organisational development, and leadership. Integral models can help create sustainable communities, develop educational programmes that take into account different levels of development, and improve intercultural interaction. Integral anthropology outlines a framework for personal development, helping people to realise their potential and move towards higher levels of self-actualisation, which is in demand in today's society focused on personal development.

Thus, integral anthropology, as a theoretical and practical discipline, is capable of responding to the challenges of the present day, uniting disparate fields of knowledge and contributing to the sustainable development of individuals and society in areas such as solving global problems, cultural diversity in the context of globalisation, interdisciplinary synthesis, the evolution of consciousness, and support for personal growth.

S. Vilchynska (2019), a researcher in the methodology of philosophical anthropology, states that "Despite scepticism and criticism of the foundations of classical rationality, the complex-integrative approach remains as relevant as ever, the concept of integrity is fundamental, and the principle of complementarity is capable of guaranteeing the fruitfulness of practical actions" (authors' transl.) (p. 89). At the same time, she notes that there is a certain negativity on the part of philosophers and scientists regarding the main task of philosophical anthropology – the attempt to create a unified integrative theory – due to the possible emergence of non-

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

philosophical (or pseudo-philosophical) theories. Critics of integration are wary of amateurism and eclecticism as the main dangers of the process of integrating methodologies.

In our opinion, the universality and fairly widespread popularity of Ken Wilber's integral approach could form the basis for the development of a structured methodology of integral anthropology and help it avoid the threats identified by S. Vilchynska in the process of development.

Ken Wilber, like some other researchers who did not consider themselves "integral anthropologists", made a significant contribution to interdisciplinary research on humans, which is in line with the spirit of the integral approach. Ken Wilber's works echo and complement, are supported and inspired by the ideas of alternative researchers.

Swiss philosopher and cultural scientist Jean Gebser (2021), author of the work "Origin and Present" (Ursprung und Gegenwart), developed the theory of "mutations of consciousness", which describes the evolution of human consciousness through archaic, magical, mythical, mental, and integral structures. His approach is considered a precursor to K. Wilber's integral theory, especially in the context of cultural anthropology and the evolution of consciousness.

Indian philosopher, yogi, and spiritual teacher Sri Aurobindo developed the concept of "integral yoga". His ideas about the spiritual evolution of man and the union of the material and spiritual aspects of being had a great influence on integral thinking. Sri Aurobindo (1999) used the term "integral" to describe a higher level of consciousness (supermind), which echoes anthropological synthesis.

British philosopher and founder of critical realism Roy Bhaskar (2002, 2012) is known for his metatheoretical approach to the integration of different levels of reality (physical, social, subjective), which is relevant to anthropology and can be applied in integral studies.

French philosopher and sociologist Edgar Morin is known for his "complex thinking" (la pensée complexe). His works, such as "The Method" (La Méthode), offer an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human beings, combining anthropology, sociology, biology and philosophy (Morin, 2008, 2024). Morin emphasises the wholeness and complexity of human experience, which is close to integral anthropology.

Michael Murphy, co-founder of the Esalen Institute, is the author of "The Future of the Body". His research on the evolution of human potential through the integration of physical, psychological, and spiritual practices has an anthropological context and resonates with integral anthropology (Murphy, 1992).

Other holistic approaches, such as systems theory, Gestalt psychology, or ecological holism, are more specialised but share the holistic idea of the integrity and interdependence of humans and the world.

Concepts of stages of human development, in particular the theory of spiral dynamics, which are at the intersection of psychology and social philosophy, on which Ken Wilber bases his concept, are integral in nature (Beck & Cowan, 2006; Graves, 2005).

From 2003 to 2019, Odessa National Medical University (n.d.) published the journal "Integrative Anthropology", which aimed to develop a methodology for integrative anthropological research with a focus not only on medicine but also on profound philosophical and anthropological issues.

In Ukraine, the development of a holistic approach from the perspective of natural sciences is being pursued by Ivan Tsekhmistro (2001), a philosopher and employee of V. Karazin Kharkiv National University. He has created a scientific school of holistic philosophy of science based on

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

the idea of the relativity of the abstract concept of multiplicity in the exact sciences. The development of the provisions of this theory can yield promising results not only in the natural sciences, but also in the humanities, contributing to a rethinking of the problems of spirituality, the place of man in the world, and the relationship between man and the world.

In this work, we will focus on Ken Wilber's philosophy, known as the "integral theory of everything", which offers a multidimensional approach to studying man and their place in the world, combining various aspects of philosophy, psychology, science, and spirituality (see Wilber, n.d.).

Purpose

The study aims to examine the main methodological principles of Ken Wilber's integral philosophy in the context of understanding the current level of philosophical anthropology. To achieve this goal, the authors aim to address the following tasks: a) explore the main aspects of integral anthropology within the framework of Ken Wilber's philosophy; b) review potential areas of application for integral anthropology in the context of K. Wilber's methodology.

Statement of basic materials

Integral anthropology in the context of Ken Wilber's philosophy

Integral anthropology in the context of Ken Wilber's philosophy is an approach to the study of human beings based on integral theory, which uses the AQAL (All Quadrants, All Levels) model to analyse human nature, consciousness, culture and society. It seeks to integrate the various aspects of human existence – physical, psychological, cultural, social, and spiritual – into a holistic picture that takes into account the evolution of consciousness and the multi-level nature of reality (Wilber, 1996, 2000).

The quadrant system forms the foundation of Ken Wilber's philosophy. Other components of his holistic approach to the "philosophy of everything" are based on this foundation, primarily the stages of consciousness evolution (individual and collective). Ken Wilber distinguishes stages of consciousness development from archaic and magical to rational, postmodern, and integral ones. Integral anthropology analyses how these stages manifest themselves in individual and collective life, influencing people's perception of the world, values and behaviour. For example, it allows us to answer the question of how the transition from egocentric to world-centred consciousness changes the anthropological understanding of human beings.

AQAL, as the basis of K. Wilber's integral anthropology, analyses and integrates:

1. Four quadrants:

- Internal individual (I): consciousness, subjective experience, beliefs, emotions, intentions.
- External individual (It): body, behaviour, biology, neuroscience, organism.
- Internal collective (We): culture, values, norms, worldviews, languages.
- External collective (Its): social systems, economics, politics, ecology.

Integral anthropology explores the interaction of these quadrants, forming a holistic human identity. For example, how do personal beliefs (I) relate to cultural norms (We) and influence behaviour in society (Its)?

Let us consider a hypothetical Maria from the perspective of the four quadrants. Her individual external (She) shows a young woman with a certain appearance, eye colour, hair colour, etc. (objective research method). We can learn about her individual internal self (I) either

from her stories or from indirect signs – what she reads, what she talks about; thus, we can observe her state of consciousness, her experience, and her emotions to a certain extent, but we can learn more only by communicating with Maria (subjective method). Similarly, only through indirect signs can we judge Maria's internal collective (We), the culture she represents, what her worldview is filled with, what values have influenced it; this is revealed more fully only in the process of communication with Maria (intersubjective method). We can judge her external collective (Its) by knowing her profession, skills, family and social status, salary, participation in public life, etc. (interobjective method) (Ferber, 2014).

2. *Levels of development.* According to K. Wilber, a person is capable of passing through various levels of consciousness development (from egocentric to cosmocentric) in the process of growing up. At the *egocentric* level, a person focuses on personal achievements. At the *ethnocentric* level, people identify with a social group. At the *worldcentric* level, people begin to see global connections and act not only for themselves and their loved ones, but also for the common good. At the *cosmocentric* level, a person integrates all aspects of their being (internal and external, individual and collective), considers themselves a person of the universe, and takes into account their impact on the planet as part of the cosmos (Bazaluk, 2022). This is the vertical component of growing up and becoming a person.

3. *Lines of development.* At each level of vertical personality development, there are separate horizontal lines – the development of competencies, such as cognitive, emotional, moral, interpersonal, etc. Integral anthropology helps to identify a person's strengths and weaknesses in each line and develop individual plans for their development, such as developing emotional intelligence through coaching or cognitive skills through analytical tasks.

4. *Levels of consciousness.* K. Wilber's AQAL concept also takes into account that a person can be in different states of consciousness (everyday, meditative, peak). Practices such as mindfulness or stress management techniques help to achieve higher states of consciousness, which promotes better concentration and decision-making.

5. *Personality types.* K. Wilber also takes into account personality types, for example, according to the Enneagram typology (Naranjo, 1991) or MBTI (Geyer, 2014). Awareness of one's own personality type helps a person develop individual strategies for adapting to different situations and people.

This brief summary of the anthropological aspects of Ken Wilber's integral philosophy demonstrates a holistic understanding of human individuality, viewed through the prism of the synthesis of body, mind, soul, and spirit. Particular attention is paid to spiritual practices (meditation, contemplation) that contribute to the transformation of personality and the expansion of consciousness, helping to answer the question of how meditative practices influence the anthropological understanding of the meaning of life.

In a collective sense, integral anthropology has the potential to study cultural and social dimensions, offering a methodology for researching cultures through levels of development: traditional, modern, postmodern, integral; as well as analysing conflicts between different value systems and their impact on anthropological processes, thereby explaining how integral anthropology explains intercultural conflicts in a global world.

K. Wilber divides the four quadrants along the "inner-outer" axes, calling the "inner" the left-brain path of research and the "outer" the right-brain path. The left-brain path incorporates *subjective* (feelings, beliefs, introspection, meditation, personal growth) and *inter-subjective* (culture, values, worldviews, morality, collective meanings) experiences. Left-brain approaches

focus on "elusive" internal aspects that cannot be measured directly but have a significant impact on human existence. K. Wilber emphasises that these aspects require qualitative research methods such as interpretation, dialogue, hermeneutics, and phenomenology.

Right-hand quadrants cover external, objective aspects of reality that can be observed, measured, and analysed. They incorporate *objective* (body, behaviour, physiological processes and material aspects of an individual's life) and *inter-objective* (systems, structures, social institutions, economy, technology, environment) experiences. Right-brain approaches use objective, measurable aspects of reality and quantitative methods such as statistics, experiments and systems analysis.

K. Wilber emphasises that the left-brain and right-brain approaches to research must interact; neither quadrant can be reduced to the other because they are all interconnected. For example, inner experience (left quadrant) can affect physical health (right quadrant), as in the case of psychosomatics. Cultural values (lower left) shape social structures (lower right), such as legal laws and economic systems. For a holistic understanding of any phenomenon, all four quadrants must be taken into account. For example, in medicine, an integral approach offers consideration not only of physiology (upper right), but also of the patient's psychological state (upper left), cultural factors (lower left), and social conditions (lower right).

K. Wilber developed this methodology to overcome fragmentation in science, psychology, spirituality, and other fields. Left-brain pathways help to understand the subjective and cultural context, while right-brain pathways help to understand the objective and systemic aspects. Their integration allows for the creation of more holistic models that can be applied in psychotherapy, coaching, business, politics, and spirituality.

Despite some critical reviews and complaints about the abstract nature of the theory and its complexity in practical application, due to the need to take into account too many factors (Surina, 2025a), Wilber's methodology appears promising for the integration of science and spirituality, as it proposes to combine empirical sciences (e.g., neuroscience, psychology) with ancient spiritual traditions. Integral anthropology explores how scientific discoveries about the brain and consciousness correlate with mystical experience, demonstrating how neuroscience data confirm or complement spiritual insights into human nature.

Integral anthropology, based on the AQAL concept, is promising for analysing the role of humans in solving global problems (ecology, social inequality, technological progress). It offers a model of sustainable development that takes into account all quadrants and levels of consciousness, answering the question of how an integral approach can contribute to the harmonisation of humanity in an era of global crises.

Integral anthropology is also useful for studying transformations and crises. It offers research into crises as stages of transition between levels of consciousness, analysis of transformational processes that form a new anthropological paradigm, explaining how personal and collective crises contribute to the evolution of human consciousness.

Possible areas of application of integral anthropology in the context of Ken Wilber's methodology

Integral anthropology, based on Ken Wilber's philosophy and his AQAL model, provides a universal toolkit for analysing human nature and society. Below there are examples of the possible applications of integral anthropology in various fields, demonstrating its practical value. These examples show how integral anthropology can be used to: analyse cultural evolution and

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

intercultural interaction; study spiritual practices and their impact on human identity; elaborate models of sustainable development that take into account the multi-level nature of human beings; understand global anthropological processes in the context of technological and environmental change. Let us briefly consider some possible areas of research using integral anthropology based on the AQAL methodology.

1. Research on intercultural dialogue and conflicts in the context of globalisation, when conflicts arise between cultures with different levels of consciousness (traditional, modern, postmodern). Integral anthropology analyses these conflicts through the prism of quadrants and levels of development:

- I: Individual beliefs and prejudices that influence perceptions of "the other".
- It: Behavioural responses, including aggression or cooperation.
- We: Cultural values that shape attitudes towards other cultures.
- Its: Social structures (e.g., migration policy) that influence intercultural interaction.

Such research could address, for example, the conflict between traditional religious communities and postmodern liberal societies, proposing integrated strategies for dialogue (e.g., an emphasis on world-centred values). The result could be the development of models of intercultural cooperation that take into account evolutionary levels of consciousness.

2. Education and personal development, taking into account that modern education systems often focus on cognitive skills, ignoring emotional, spiritual, and social development (Makarov et al., 2025). Integral anthropology offers a holistic approach to education that encompasses all quadrants:

- I: Development of self-awareness and emotional intelligence through meditation or reflection.
- It: Physical development through sport and health care.
- We: Formation of cultural empathy and ethical values.
- Its: Creating educational systems that support sustainable development of society.

Such research can contribute to the development of educational programmes that include mindfulness practices, environmental projects, and interdisciplinary learning to foster an integrated worldview. The result will be to prepare students for life in a complex global world with an emphasis on harmony between the individual and society.

3. Environmental anthropology and sustainable development, given that the environmental crisis requires a rethinking of the relationship between humans and nature (Usykova et al., 2025). Integral anthropology analyses the influence of levels of consciousness on ecological behaviour:

- I: Personal awareness of ecological responsibility.
- It: Changes in consumer habits (e.g., transition to minimalism).
- We: Formation of ecologically oriented cultural values.
- Its: Reform of social and economic systems to support sustainable development.

Research in this area demonstrates how the transition to a world-centred consciousness promotes the adoption of environmental initiatives such as zero waste, renewable energy, and the circular economy. The result will be the creation of integral strategies for environmental policy that take into account individual and collective aspects.

4. Transformation of organisations and leadership, in the context of modern organisations facing challenges that require a new approach to management and leadership (Surina, 2025b). Integral anthropology helps to create leadership models that take into account all quadrants:

- I: Developing awareness and maturity in leaders.
- It: Optimising work processes and the physical environment.

- We: Forming a corporate culture based on integral values.
- Its: Reforming organisational structures to support sustainability and innovation.

This research focus analyses the transformations of companies that implement integral principles (e.g., Google or Patagonia), with an emphasis on the balance between profit, ethics, and ecology (Surina et al., 2025). As a result, it is possible to develop leadership models that will contribute to the creation of organisations that support the evolution of the consciousness of employees and society.

5. Research on spiritual practices and their impact on humans. As spiritual practices (meditation, yoga) are gaining popularity in popular culture, their impact on humans requires anthropological analysis. Integral anthropology explores how spiritual practices transform people through:

- I: Increased awareness and inner peace.
- It: Changes in physiology (e.g., weight loss through yoga).
- We: The formation of communities based on spiritual values.
- Its: The influence of spiritual movements on social institutions.

Research into the impact of meditation and mindfulness practices on individual consciousness and their integration into corporate or educational systems will help develop programmes that combine spiritual practices with everyday life for a more complete and fulfilling personal development.

6. Analysis of digital anthropology, taking into account that digital technologies are changing human behaviour, identity and social connections. Integral anthropology studies the impact of digitalisation on humans:

- I: How do social networks affect self-awareness and mental health?
- It: Changes in behaviour caused by gadget addiction.
- We: The formation of new digital cultures (e.g., virtual communities).
- Its: The evolution of social systems under the influence of AI and the internet.

Research into how the use of social platforms (e.g., X) shapes new forms of identity and worldview can provide recommendations for creating digital ecosystems that support integral development.

7. Health preservation and an integral approach, taking into account that modern medicine often focuses on physical health, ignoring psychological and spiritual aspects. Integral anthropology offers a model of health preservation that takes into account all aspects of the human being:

- I: Psychological well-being and stress management.
- It: Physical health and disease prevention.
- We: Cultural factors that influence attitudes towards health.
- Its: Reform of health care systems to implement a holistic approach.

For example, analysing the integration of alternative medicine (e.g., Ayurveda) with Western medicine for the treatment of chronic diseases will result in the development of health care programmes that take into account the holistic nature of human beings.

These examples clearly demonstrate the potential for applying integral anthropology, based on the philosophy of K. Wilber, in various spheres of life to address contemporary challenges, combining individual, cultural and systemic aspects.

Originality

This work attempts a systematic study of the features of integral anthropology as a complex scientific discipline that is relevant in the context of globalisation challenges. It provides a rich

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

set of tools for a more complete understanding of human nature, consciousness, culture, and human evolution. Using the AQAL methodology, the study explores the possibilities of practical application of the theoretical principles of integral anthropology in areas such as intercultural interaction, education, personal development, ecological anthropology, organizational transformation and leadership, the impact of spiritual practices on individuals, digital anthropology, and healthcare.

Conclusions

The holistic approach of integral anthropology, grounded in Ken Wilber's AQAL methodology, offers a comprehensive perspective on complex systems in science, society, and governance. According to Wilber, the left-hand and right-hand paths to knowledge are complementary approaches to understanding reality. The left-hand path explores the inner world and culture, while the right-hand path examines external phenomena and systems. Integral methodology in anthropology calls for considering both paths to prevent reductionism and achieve the most comprehensive understanding of the human being and their capacity to respond to contemporary global challenges.

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Г. Ю. СУРІНА^{1*}, Н. В. МІРОШКІНА^{2*}

^{1*}Миколаївський національний аграрний університет (Миколаїв, Україна), ел. пошта surina@mnau.edu.ua, ORCID 0000-0001-9180-1054

^{2*}Миколаївський національний аграрний університет (Миколаїв, Україна), ел. пошта minava7306@gmail.com, ORCID 0000-0002-1255-0160

Аспекти інтегральної антропології у філософії Кена Вілбера

Мета – розглянути основні методологічні положення інтегральної філософії Кена Вілбера в контексті осмислення сучасного рівня філософської антропології. Для досягнення мети автори прагнуть розв’язати такі завдання: а) розглянути основні аспекти інтегральної антропології у вченні Кена Вілбера; б) вивчити можливі форми застосування інтегральної антропології К. Вілбера в сучасній філософській антропології.

Теоретичний базис. Автори даного дослідження в своїй роботі спиралися на філософську антропологію в широкому та вузькому значенні. Для них насамперед важливою є інтегральна антропологія як така комплексна сфера знань, що орієнтується на цілісне дослідження людини, враховуючи біологічні, соціальні, культурні, психологічні й духовні аспекти її існування. **Наукова новизна.** У роботі здійснюється спроба систематичного вивчення особливостей інтегральної антропології як комплексної наукової дисципліни, актуальної в умовах глобалізаційних викликів. Вона надає багатий інструментарій для більш повного розуміння людської природи, свідомості, культури й еволюції людини. За методологією AQAL розглянуто можливості практичного застосування теоретичних положень інтегральної антропології у сferах міжкультурної взаємодії, процесі освіти, розвитку особистості, екологічної антропології, трансформації організацій і лідерства, впливу на людину духовних практик, цифрової антропології, здоров’язбереження.

Висновки. Холістичний підхід інтегральної антропології, базований на методології AQAL Кена Вілбера, пропонує цілісний погляд на комплексні системи в науці, суспільстві, управлінні. Правобічний і лівобічний шляхи пізнання за К. Вілбером постають взаємодоповнюючими підходами до розуміння реальності. Лівобічний шлях досліджує внутрішній світ і культуру, правобічний – зовнішні явища й системи. Інтегральна методологія в антропології шукає шляхи їх поєднання, щоб запобігти редукціонізму й досягти максимально цілісного розуміння людини, а також її можливостей реагування на глобальні виклики сучасності.

Ключові слова: Кен Вілбер; інтегральна антропологія; методологія AQAL (All Quadrants, All Levels); лівобічний і правобічний підходи; глобальні виклики сучасності

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