

Intellectual Justice: Epistemic Level of Perceiving a Book Beyond Adler

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HOW TO CITE:

Ashok Kumar Sharma, Anita Moral,
(2026) Intellectual Justice: Epistemic
Level of Perceiving a Book Beyond
Adler
International Journal of Special
Education, 41(20s), 850 - 862

ABSTRACT:

The Research Paper looks back to the famous work of Adler & Doren (How to Read a Book), a seminal work which helped readers to know style of reading. The authors proposed four ways of reading based on purpose- elementary, inspectional, analytical and syntopical. This paper goes beyond and suggests the fifth way of reading rather *perceiving* a book that is epistemic level. Reading a book is not a passive task. The four ways have shown paths and helped readers to understand purpose of reading and giving the reader freedom to choose the style accordingly. From elementary to syntopical reading, comprehending, grasping structurally, critical analysis and a compared confluence. This research paper though appreciates their work but does not stop here. It goes beyond and analogise epistemic reading as the fifth way. Since then, times have changed, interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches are now to be catered. So comparative reading should further be transformed as cross-disciplined approach. This paper further proposes a Moral-Sharma Technique of reading based on Integrative Infinite Wisdom outcome. So, this fifth way not only transformational but also pushes the boundaries of learning to moving data into information, from information to knowledge, and ultimately into Infinite Integrative Wisdom (IIW), where knowledge transcends disciplinary restraints, integrates diverse perspectives and culminates in a holistic understanding directed towards wisdom. This principle of *Seemateet Budhi Matta* is based on transcendent wisdom of *Upanishadic* approach. Epistemic reading mulls over multidimensional perceiving, thinking and experiencing as whole through the senses and mental faculties. This approach pushes the reader from spectator position to content creator of knowledge in furtherance. The paper does not discredit Adler's work it only points out how the methods of reading can be developed way wider in contemporary challenges. In this work authors also go beyond from print reading to Braille script to audio books. They also analogize that like in evidence law an oral witness is a person who even cannot speak, even an expert can interpret witness's sign to the court. So, this research differs in three dimensions from Adler's and further augments the avenues, one- crossing the border of disciplines rather only textual analysis or even trans textual reading. Secondly, mere interpretation to co-creating something on wisdom level. And thirdly it not only reading text on print or digital media but also Braille script and audio books and the

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1. Introduction

“The hours of folly are measured by the clock; but of wisdom: no clock can measure.”

(Blake, 1988)

Writing if cannot be read, it is of no use. Script is something that can be universally conveys true meaning to whom knows it. The written text with script and grammatical formation is something which can conveyance exactly what one wants to make other understandable. Sometimes a poem or an equation can make something bigger in interpretation or in layering of thoughts. Inspectional reading involves systematic and purposeful examination of a book to determine its structure, subject matter and overall argument within a limited period. Analytical reading represents a deeper engagement with a particular work, requiring the reader to identify its structure, propositions, arguments, conceptual framework and intellectual significance. The purpose for which a person reads substantially determines the manner, depth and intellectual disposition with which the text ought (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) (Bloom, 1956) (Mezirow, 1991) (Mezirow, 1978) (Piaget, 1971) (Piaget, 1950) (Siemens, 2005) (Sternberg, 1998) (Vygotsky, 1978) to be approached. (Adler & Doren, 1972) identify four progressively demanding levels of reading: elementary reading, inspectional reading, analytical reading and syntopical reading. Elementary reading concerns the acquisition of the basic ability to understand written language. Inspectional reading involves systematic and purposeful examination of a book to determine its structure, subject matter and overall argument within a limited period. Analytical reading represents a deeper engagement with a particular work, requiring the reader to identify its structure, propositions, arguments, conceptual framework and intellectual significance. At the highest level identified by Adler and Van Doren, syntopical reading moves beyond a single book and examines a particular subject through multiple books and authors, enabling the reader to compare, contrast and blend different perspectives (Adler and Van Doren, 2011). These levels demonstrate that reading is not a uniform activity.

The same book may appropriately be read in different ways depending upon the reader's purpose. A person reading for recreation may adopt a relatively simple and fluent mode of reading, whereas a reader seeking an answer to a particular question may read selectively and inquisitively. A researcher, by contrast, may engage in analytical reading to interrogate the author's assumptions, arguments and evidence. Where the objective is to understand a wider field of knowledge, the reader may undertake extensive reading across multiple sources, disciplines and authors. Thus, the purpose of reading determines, to a considerable extent, the method of reading. The fundamental question, therefore, is not simply whether one reads, but how one should read a particular text for a particular intellectual purpose. Yet, Adler and Van Doren's syntopical reading also opens the possibility of a further development. If analytical reading enables a reader to understand one author's intellectual construction and syntopical reading enables comparison and synthesis across several works concerning a common subject, an advanced form of reading may be conceived that moves beyond the boundaries of an isolated discipline. Such reading would not merely accumulate information from different sources. But it would seek ties among seemingly altogether diverse field of knowingness. Its objective would be to identify convergences, complementarities, tensions and patterns across disciplines. It is also necessary to integrate them into a far perfectionist mindset of the essence under going-over. This may be termed infinitely integrative/ wisdom-centric reading. Its distinguishing feature is that it does not terminate with the synthesis of literature within a defined subject. Instead, it proceeds from information, through understanding and synthesis, towards integration. The reader deliberately crosses disciplinary boundaries such as law, philosophy, psychology, sociology, history, science

and ethics. Seeing whether knowledge produced within the sphere of one discipline can illuminate ideas within another. In this mode, the book is not treated as an isolated container of information but as one component of a larger epistemic landscape. Reading consequently becomes an exercise in connecting knowledge rather than merely collecting it. The distinction is significant. Syntopical reading asks, in essence, how this subject has been understood by others, what their thoughts in writing. Integrative reading advances the enquiry to “What can be understood when insights from different domains are brought into a meaningful relationship?” The former seeks comparative comprehension and synthesis; the latter seeks a more holistic intellectual orientation. It may therefore be understood as a movement from comparative knowledge towards integrated wisdom. Such a mode of reading requires not only breadth of reading but also epistemic openness, critical reflection and the capacity to recognise relationships between different forms and sources of knowledge. Accordingly, reading a book is comparatively easy; determining the appropriate style and depth of reading required by the purpose for which the book is being read is the more significant intellectual skill. A recreational reader, an inquisitive reader, a researcher and a scholar seeking interdisciplinary integration may all read the same book, yet each may legitimately employ a different mode of engagement. The mature reader therefore does not merely ask, “What does this book say?” but also asks, “Why am I reading it, how should I read it, what assumptions should I interrogate, what other knowledge should I bring into conversation with it, and what deeper understanding can emerge from that engagement?” Reading, at its most advanced level, thus becomes not simply an act of receiving knowledge but a process of transforming dispersed knowledge into interconnected understanding and, potentially, into wisdom.

In an age marked by never before access to information. The paradox of our intellectual life is not avoidance of to be read, scattering feature falls back. Knowledge is what liberates. And liberation can take place while knowing the others as to ourselves. Like less knowledge, typed or water tight

compartmented knowledge cannot achieve the true goal, for what it is for. The seminal work by Mortimer J. Adler (Adler & Doren, 1972), offers four progressive levels—elementary, “This section conceptualizes reading at its most foundational level—recognition of words and basic comprehension (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Adler and Van Doren treat it as a technical skill acquired through formal schooling. Critically, this level assumes a relatively passive reader whose role is limited to receiving meaning rather than constructing it. While indispensable, its limitation lies in its confinement to linguistic decoding without interpretive agency. In contemporary interdisciplinary contexts (Adler & Doren, 1972), elementary reading appears insufficient, as it neither equips the reader to navigate conceptual ambiguity nor to connect knowledge across domains—thereby necessitating higher, epistemically engaged forms of reading.” (Adler & Doren, 1972), inspectional, “inspectional reading introduces structured skimming as a disciplined cognitive strategy, enabling the reader to grasp the architecture and argumentative direction of a text within a limited timeframe. The authors divide it into systematic skimming and superficial reading, emphasizing efficiency over depth. From a critical standpoint, this level marks the transition from mechanical reading to strategic engagement. However, it still privileges authorial structure over reader autonomy. In modern knowledge systems—particularly those shaped by information overload—inspectional reading becomes indispensable, yet its utility is maximized only when integrated with reflective and cross-disciplinary thinking, rather than remaining a merely preparatory exercise.” (Adler & Doren, 1972), analytical, “Analytical reading represents the core of Adler’s methodology, demanding rigorous engagement with a single text. It involves identifying the author’s propositions, understanding key terms, reconstructing arguments, and offering reasoned critique. The reader here becomes an active participant, engaging in a structured dialogue with the author. Critically, while this level achieves intellectual depth, it remains text-centric and bounded within the internal logic of one work. It does not fully account for the plurality of perspectives that characterize contemporary scholarship. Thus, although

analytical reading cultivates disciplined reasoning, it requires supplementation through comparative and integrative approaches to remain relevant in interdisciplinary inquiry” (Adler & Doren, 1972). And syntopical, “Syntopical reading is the most advanced level, involving the comparative study of multiple texts on a common theme. The reader constructs a neutral terminology, frames questions, and organizes diverse viewpoints into a coherent intellectual structure. Adler and Van Doren elevate the reader to the position of an independent inquirer (Adler & Doren, 1972). Critically, this approach anticipates modern interdisciplinary and comparative research methodologies. However, it still operates within a largely textual universe, with limited attention to experiential knowledge, scientific data integration, or transdisciplinary synthesis. This limitation opens conceptual space for extending syntopical reading into what may be termed epistemic reading—a move that transcends texts and situates knowledge within a broader, interconnected framework of disciplines and lived realities.” Each deepens the reader’s engagement with texts (Adler & Doren, 1972). The classic work “How to Read a Book” was published, then came its revised edition in 1972 based on reading the print media, specially printed books. (Adler & Doren, 1972) Since then, it has been vastly changed. (Anderson, 1956). Electronic reading and voice over books including Kindle eBooks, Audible App for audiobooks, interactive digital texts and cross-disciplines Digi-reservoirs have shown path of collaborative learning. Linear text bound strategy has been changed into cross cultural and dynamic diverse absorption of material. It has unleashed the door of trans wisdom. A cultivated awareness in which the insights of the book at hand are not isolated. But transect with earlier knowledge to meet beyond the boundaries. This mode of engagement enables the reader to move beyond fragmented understanding, allowing ideas to interlock like pieces of a jigsaw, ultimately revealing a more coherent and holistic wisdom that transcends the limits of any single text. This study adopts a conceptual, theoretical and interdisciplinary research methodology to examine whether Adler and Van Doren’s four levels of reading—elementary, inspectional, analytical and syntopical—adequately address the requirements of contemporary knowledge environments and, if

not, whether a further mode of reading can be theoretically justified (Adler & Doren, 1972). The study does not employ an empirical survey or experimental design; rather, it develops and operationalises a conceptual construct through comparative textual analysis, interdisciplinary synthesis, and theory construction. The methodological inquiry proceeds through five interconnected stages. First, a foundational textual analysis of Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren’s *How to Read a Book* is undertaken to identify the purposes, characteristics, reader operations, and intellectual boundaries of the four established levels of reading. Particular attention is given to the distinction between comprehension, structural orientation, analytical engagement, and syntopical comparison. This establishes the conceptual baseline against which the proposed fifth way is examined. Second, a conceptual gap analysis is undertaken. The study asks whether syntopical reading, despite its comparative treatment of multiple texts, sufficiently accommodates forms of knowledge that arise through interdisciplinary engagement, lived experience, observation, prior knowledge, and other non-textual sources. The purpose of this stage is not to diminish the importance of syntopical reading but to identify the conceptual space in which an additional mode of reading may be warranted. The proposed distinction is therefore between comparison across texts and integration across domains of knowing. Third, an interdisciplinary theoretical synthesis is employed to examine whether the proposed construct is consistent with established theories of learning, cognition, interdisciplinary inquiry, and wisdom. The study therefore draws upon selected theoretical perspectives, including Piaget’s account of assimilation and accommodation, Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory and zone of proximal development, the revised Bloom taxonomy, Mezirow’s transformative learning theory, Sternberg’s balance theory of wisdom, and Siemens’s theory of connectivism. These theories are not treated as empirical proof of epistemic reading. Rather, they are used as complementary theoretical lenses through which different operations involved in the proposed construct can be explained. Fourth, a philosophical-conceptual analysis is undertaken with reference to selected

Indian knowledge traditions. The concepts of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*, together with the doctrine of *pramāṇa* and the integrative vision expressed in the Bhagavad *Gītā* (Easwaran, 2007), are examined as philosophical antecedents or conceptual resonances for an approach to knowing that moves beyond passive reception and textual comprehension toward reflection, integration, and lived *realization* (Easwaran, 2007). The study does not claim historical equivalence between these traditions and the proposed concept of epistemic reading; rather, it identifies points of philosophical convergence that strengthen the conceptual foundations of the proposed framework. Fifth, the study undertakes theory construction and operationalisation. On the basis of the foregoing analysis, Epistemic Reading is proposed as a fifth way of reading and is defined through a recursive five-part operation: (i) decoding and comprehension; (ii) cross-disciplinary contextualisation; (iii) experiential corroboration; (iv) provisional synthesis or integration; and (v) externalisation. The purpose of operationalisation is to ensure that Epistemic Reading is not presented merely as an intellectual disposition or philosophical aspiration but as a construct capable of being recognised through observable reader operations. Accordingly, the study further identifies three preliminary markers of epistemic reading: the presence of a specific cross-disciplinary reference, demonstrable revision of an earlier interpretation in response to new information, and the production of an explicit synthesis connecting domains that were previously treated separately. The methodology therefore follows the conceptual progression: Adler's four levels → identification of their conceptual boundary → interdisciplinary and philosophical synthesis → operational definition → theoretical propositions → theory proposed by Moral & Sharma of Infinite Integrative Wisdom (IIW) (hereinafter Moral-Sharma Theory) in this paper. The proposed framework is consequently theory-generating rather than theory-testing. The present study establishes the conceptual structure and preliminary criteria of Epistemic Reading but does not claim empirical validation of the construct. Such validation constitutes a subsequent research agenda through which the proposed five operations and three observable markers may be

examined using reading tasks, assessment rubrics, learner studies, and comparative educational designs. This distinction is methodologically important because it separates what the present study conceptually establishes from what future empirical research must test. The methodological objective, therefore, is not to declare Epistemic Reading a universally superior form of reading. Rather, it is to demonstrate that contemporary interdisciplinary knowledge conditions create a legitimate conceptual basis for extending Adler's framework; to define the proposed extension in operational terms; to locate it within established theories of cognition, learning and wisdom; and to provide a framework sufficiently explicit to permit subsequent scholarly examination, criticism, refinement, and empirical validation.

2. Research Methodology

Research Question1:

What are the operative observable markers of Epistemic Perceiving (Reading)?

Research Question 2:

How can the current doctrines based on the review of literature in this paper and Indian Knowledge System jointly emerge as a theoretical foundation for epistemic perceiving and the proposed Moral-Sharma Technique of Infinite Integrative Wisdom?

The paper aims to adopt qualitative, intangible and principled research design. It relies on non-empirical and relative stylistic exploration of Adler & Van Doren's *How to Read a Book*. The study intermingles cross-discipline erudition, contemporaneous dogmata and Indian Knowledge System (IKS). Through intangible apertures, poly-disciplinal blend and thoughtful construction, the present paper suggests the Epistemic Perceiving as a propositioned the fifth level of perceiving a book and puts forth the Moral-Sharma Technique of Infinite Integrative Wisdom (IIW). This methodology is formatted to resolve the abovementioned research questions by enquiring the intangible precincts of prevailing reading simulations. The study also ascertains the equipped tenets of Epistemic Level and founds its conjectures. The study is doctrinal in its orientation and claims no empiricism.

3. The Fifth Way of Reading: Epistemic Reading

However, in the contemporary interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary era, a fifth mode of reading becomes not only desirable but necessary. I call this mode Epistemic, the term epistemic originates from the Greek *epistēmē* (ἐπιστήμη), signifying “knowledge” or “scientific understanding,” and forms the conceptual foundation of Epistemology, which has been extensively developed in Western philosophy from Plato to contemporary thinkers. See Plato’s *Theaetetus* for early discussions on the nature of knowledge and modern treatments such as *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* by John Locke and *Problems of Philosophy* by Bertrand Russell. The pedagogical framework of reading levels is classically articulated in *How to Read a Book* (Adler & Van Doren, 1940/1972), which identifies four hierarchical modes of reading but remains largely intra-textual and discipline-contained. The emergence of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary paradigms in education has been strongly emphasized in policy documents such as the National Education Policy 2020, Ministry of Education, Government of India, particularly in Sections 4, 11, and 12, which advocate for holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary learning environments. For theoretical grounding in interdisciplinarity (Klein, 1990), which argue for the integration and transcendence of disciplinary boundaries (Nicolescu, 2002). The concept of epistemic pluralism is further explored in contemporary philosophy of science; see Helen Longino, *Science as Social Knowledge* (1990). In the Indian context, the epistemic shift (Nicolescu, 2002) toward integrative learning resonates with traditional knowledge systems that did not rigidly separate disciplines, thereby reinforcing the conceptual legitimacy of “epistemic reading” as an evolved, fifth mode of reading aligned with present educational transformations. Reading Epistemic Reading transcends the comparative boundaries of syntopical reading. While syntopical reading enables the reader to examine multiple texts on a single subject, epistemic reading invites the reader to move beyond subjects themselves—to explore the nature, interrelation, and integration of knowledge across domains. It is not merely about what different authors say, but about how different fields of knowledge illuminate each other. At its

core, epistemic reading rests on three foundational attributes. First, it seeks to understand the whole rather than isolated parts. Traditional academic training often encourages specialization, which, while necessary, risks narrowing intellectual vision. Epistemic reading resists this narrowing. It encourages the reader to situate any text—be it historical, scientific, literary, or legal—within a broader web of understanding. A book on history, for instance, is not only about past events; it may reveal patterns relevant to sociology, political theory, or even geophysical transformations. The epistemic reader constantly asks: how does this piece fit into the larger mosaic of knowledge? Second, epistemic reading is driven by the pursuit of wisdom rather than the accumulation of information. In conventional reading practices, there is often an implicit attachment to the text or the discipline. We read law as law, chemistry as chemistry, literature as literature. Epistemic reading dissolves these boundaries. It treats the book not as an end in itself, but as a medium through which deeper insights may be pursued. The object of reading shifts from the mastery of a subject to the realization of wisdom—a more integrated, reflective, and purposive form of understanding. Third, epistemic reading transforms fragmented knowledge into integrated wisdom. In the modern intellectual landscape, knowledge is often encountered in pieces—articles, chapters, data points—each valuable but incomplete. The epistemic reader undertakes the task of synthesis. For example, an understanding of sociology may enrich the interpretation of legal doctrines; insights from chemistry may deepen the sensory and metaphorical appreciation of a romantic novel. In this process, knowledge ceases to be compartmentalized and becomes relational, dynamic, and alive. This approach has profound implications for education and scholarship. It challenges the rigid compartmentalization of disciplines in academic institutions and calls for a more fluid intellectual practice. For a student of law, epistemic reading suggests that true legal understanding cannot emerge in isolation from history, philosophy, economics, and even the natural sciences. For the researcher, it opens pathways to innovation by encouraging connections that are often overlooked within disciplinary confines. Moreover, epistemic reading

carries a certain emancipatory potential. It liberates the reader from what may be termed “disciplinary captivity”—the tendency to think within inherited frameworks without questioning their limits. By fostering an integrative vision, it enables the reader to engage more creatively and critically with knowledge itself. In this sense, epistemic reading is not merely a method; it is an intellectual disposition, a way of being in relation to knowledge. It would be misleading, however, to treat epistemic reading as a replacement for the earlier levels. Rather, it builds upon them. Elementary reading provides the foundation of comprehension; inspectional reading offers orientation; analytical reading ensures depth; syntopical reading enables comparison. Epistemic reading stands upon this structure and extends it toward integration. Without the discipline of the earlier levels, the integrative ambition of epistemic reading would risk becoming vague or superficial. Epistemic reading may be understood as an advanced, integrative mode of engagement that transcends the boundaries of single texts and even multiple texts, situating reading within a broader framework of knowledge construction. Unlike syntopical reading—which compares and synthesizes ideas across works—epistemic reading emphasizes interconnected understanding across disciplines, where insights from one field illuminate and transform interpretations in another. It prioritizes holistic comprehension (“understanding the whole rather than isolated parts”), reflexivity, and the active role of the reader as a co-creator of knowledge. (Anon., n.d.). Critically, this approach aligns with the vision of the National Education Policy 2020, which advocates multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary learning. Epistemic reading moves beyond textual analysis into contextual cognition, where law may be read through sociology, literature through psychology, or science through philosophy. It also accommodates non-textual sources—experience, data, and cultural context—thus expanding the very meaning of “reading.” In this sense, epistemic reading is not merely a higher level but a qualitative shift: from reading as interpretation to reading as knowledge synthesis and creation. It addresses the limitations of Adler’s framework in contemporary academia and provides a conceptual foundation for education “beyond disciplinary borders,” where

the reader engages with knowledge as an interconnected, dynamic whole.

4. Toward an Operational Definition of Epistemic Perceiving

Adler and van Dora did not merely describe their four levels of reading, they define each one operationally in terms of what the reader actually does, the reader record words, skim for structure, interrogate and compare text against shared question. Therefore, epistemic reading also requires the same operational attribution. An operational definition, specifies observable reader operations rather than a state of mind alone, so that the construct can be adept and ultimately scrutinized, empirically rather than remaining a pure philosophical claim. this concern for observable operations over introspective process the operation tradition in the physical developmental sciences, which insisted that a concept is meaningful only if it corresponds specific set of procedures applied to reading this refers that epistemic reading must also be defined not only by what it feels like to the reader, but also by what the reader is doing to text to the other text and to the experience eventually.

Therefore, this Paper tries to define epistemic reading operationally as a recursive five-part reading operation. (a) decoding and comprehension: in this stage, the reader extracts propositional content from the primary text, drawing on the elementary and analytical skills already directed by Adler’s framework. (b) cross - disciplinary context: the reader, deliberately places, the content beside a framework method or vocabulary from at least one discipline, not native to the text, and tests the two or more for structural, causal or conceptual parallels. (c) experiential Corroboration: the reader checks the resulting parallel against live experiences, observations or prior reading, non-textual knowledge as admissible evidence rather than mere illustration. (d) provisional synthesis or integration: the reader then comes to a working integration of text, discipline and experience understood explicitly, but keeps it revisable rather than final conclusion. (e) externalisation: In this final stage of epistemic, reading the reader, synthesises the concept in a firm, written reflection argument, applied judgement or a dialogue that also can be

understood, examined, challenged or extended by another reader. Therefore, each operation is necessary. Absence of any part collapses the essence of epistemic reading. This five steps process is an explicit operational continuity with Adler's work rather than discarding them. Elementary reading sets, base for decoding operation on which step a depends, Inspectional reading sets base for the orientation and selective judgement that decides which second discipline in step b is worth pursuing, analytical reading sets base for the internal rigor in identifying propositions, testing arguments without which step B would produce only loose analogy and synoptically reading sets base for the comparative method from that step (b) extends from multiple text to one subject to multiple disciplines and subjects on the problem. Epistemic reading does not perform a different kind of operation, but it performs all four operations continuously across a wide range of fields.

For the use of this definition in pedagogy or research, rather than only in argument, three observable markers, distinguish epistemic reading from the earlier levels in practice, directed by Adler's work: (1) cross-disciplinary reference: here, the reader can name a specific concept, method, or finding from a discipline, other than the texts on that bearers on its content; (2) revision under new information: in this process, the reader changes there interpretations that already existed after introduction of a new discipline or experience rather than being defended unchanged; (3) an explicit synthesis of new knowledge: hear the reader produces in their own words, a proposition that connects two or more domains and did not exist as such in either source alone.

Where all these three markers are present, the reading task in question now can reasonably be classified as epistemic; where a comparative and careful reading is present as a whole.

5. Epistemic Perceiving and Indian Knowledge System

The Upanishadic method of knowing, as reflected in "तत्त्वमसि" (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7) and "आत्मावाअरेद्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः" (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.5), offers a strikingly coherent parallel to the graded discipline of reading

articulated in How to Read a Book. While Adler and Van Doren move from elementary comprehension to syntopical comparison (Adler & Doren, 1972), the Upanishadic triad of śravaṇa (attentive reception), manana (critical reflection) and nididhyāsana (deep contemplative assimilation) advances the process further—from understanding a text to becoming the truth it discloses. In this sense, what begins in Adler as a method of reading culminates in the Upanishads as a method of realisation, where knowledge is no longer external or propositional but internal and transformative. The aphorism "Tat Tvam Asi" collapses the distance between reader and subject, suggesting that the highest form of reading is not merely analytical or comparative, but integrative and ontological—where the knower, the known, and the process of knowing converge. Thus, the Upanishadic vision both complements and transcends Adler's framework, pointing toward a more holistic paradigm akin to epistemic reading, in which texts serve as gateways to unified, lived knowledge rather than as ends in themselves. This is perhaps the closest classical equivalent to epistemic reading. The threefold process—śravaṇa (hearing), manana (reflection), and nididhyāsana (deep contemplation)—moves far beyond textual reading. It integrates text, reasoning and lived realisation. Knowledge here is not "read" but internalised and transformed. This aligns directly with the idea of epistemic reading across levels of knowing—textual, experiential,

and ontological (Jha, 1999) (Radhakrishnan, 1997). "प्रत्यक्षानुमानोपमानशब्दाः प्रमाणानि ।"

(Perception, inference, comparison, and testimony are the means of knowledge) — Nyāya Sūtra 1.1.3. Here, "reading" expands into multiple valid ways of knowing (pramāṇas). A text is only one source (śabda). Knowledge must also be "read" through perception, inference, and analogy (Jha, 1999). This is strikingly modern: epistemic reading similarly insists that understanding emerges from interplay between disciplines, methods, and experiences, not from textual authority alone (Jha, 1999). "सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते..." (Jha, 1999) (Easwaran, 2007)

(One who sees the one imperishable reality in all beings...) — Bhagavad Gītā 13.27. The Gītā pushes the reader toward integrative vision—

seeing unity in diversity (Easwaran, 2007). This is not merely philosophical insight but a mode of perception, where disciplines, beings, and experiences are not fragmented. Such “seeing” parallels epistemic reading’s aim: to transcend isolated knowledge silos and grasp the interconnected whole (Easwaran, 2007). Taken together, these traditions suggest that reading is not merely decoding (elementary) or analysing (analytical) nor even comparing texts (syntopical) but realising truth through a synthesis of sources, methods, and inner reflection. In Indian thought, one does not simply read a text—one reads reality through the text and beyond it. That is precisely where the idea of epistemic reading finds a powerful philosophical foundation:

it is less an innovation and more a re-articulation of an ancient cognitive practice in contemporary academic language.

6. Psychological Foundations of Epistemic Reading

The philosophical antecedents traced above: upnishadic realisation, the doctrine of plural pramanas, the Geeta realisation, and the Gita’s vision establish that epistemic reading re-articulate an old aspiration in new language. Psychology supplies here, the complimentary half of the case, it provides a set of empirically grounded theories of learning and cognition that describe how a mind actually performs the different operations specified in section 3rd. Locating epistemic reading within this literature, also justifies a natural objection to any pedagogical category that this framework is not a mere intuition but based on independently documented cognitive processes. First, Piaget (1950, 1971) conceptualised genetic epistemology: this theory states the clearest account of step B and D above described cognitive growth as an alteration between assimilation; in which New information is fitted into an existing knowledge, and accommodation ;in which the existing knowledge itself is reconstruction, for example, a law student who encounters, within a single reading project, both a legal doctrine and a sociological account of the community, the doctrine regulates it is pushed towards accommodation. The legal knowledge alone cannot absorb the sociological information or data without changing shape. Epistemic reading in this way is sustained

deliberately seek accommodation across disciplinary schematic boundaries, or knowledge rather than the occasional accommodation that happens, incidentally, in ordinary study.

Second, according to Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural theory of cognitive development: this theory, clarifies why a text from an unfamiliar discipline, can advance reader’s perspective who could not have reached the same insight alone. Why what skies zone of proximal development describes the gap between what a learners can do unassisted and what the same learner can do with the guidance of a more knowledgeable assisted content from the other discipline. in epistemic, reading a text from a second and other discipline functions as an aid in enhancement of the existing knowledge. For example, ill literary reader guided by a chemistry text on the sensory chemistry of taste, can reach an interpretive insight into a novel’s imagery that neither literary training alone, nor chemistry alone would have supplied. Epistemic reading in this respect is self-directed scaffolding across disciplinary boundaries rather than within a single teacher learner relationship.

Third, the revised (Bloom, 1956) and later (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001): this revised taxonomy helps to understand the epistemic reading within a wider cognitive hierarchy that runs parallel to Adler’s classification (Bloom, 1956). Elementary and inspection reading, corresponds, broadly to memorising and understanding categories; analytical reading corresponds to analyse; syntopical reading corresponds to evaluate, since it requires the reader to judge competing accounts against shared criteria. Epistemic reading in this way operates predominantly at the creating level: the taxonomy highest category; because its characteristic output is to provide provisional synthesis of step (d), the conceptual structure that did not exist as such before the act of reading. This alignment suggests that reading is not an arbitrary fifth rung invented for this Paper, but the level that a well-established cognitive taxonomy already implies to the earlier four levels, waiting to be named.

Fourth, (Mezirow, 1991) Transformative Learning Theory: this theory speaks directly to the second and third attributes identified in section 2nd, that is

the shipped from information to wisdom, and from fragmentation to integration described about how a learner, construe, validate, and formulate the meaning of their experience (Mezirow, 1991). He argued that learning is often triggered by disorienting dilemma experience that cannot be assimilated into the learner's existing perspective toward meaning and therefore it forces a critical reassessment of underlying assumptions, the same dilemma reflects on reader while encountering a second discipline in terms of their own text. For example, "a Psychology reader, if does a sociological critique of a doctrine cannot do it without reassessment of the assumptions that made the psychology reading seem complete.

Fifth, (Stenberg, 1998) Balance Theory of Wisdom: this theory gives content to the otherwise abstract claim that epistemic reading pursues wisdom, rather than Masi. Eten defines wisdom as the application of take it, experience derived knowledge to maintaining balance for once interest, the interest of others and the interest of larger institution or society at large in persuade of a common good (Stenberg, 1998). For example, Epistemic reading of a psychotherapeutic text that draws on sociology and legal studies weigh a client's interest against the community's is, on this account, not simply broader reading, but that is wisdom directed reading according to Stenberg Balance theory. It balances, intrapersonal, interpersonal and extra personal interests rather than optimising for texture mastery alone (Stenberg, 1998).

Sixth, (Siemens, 2005) Theory of Connectives: disconnects Ivvi Theory, also provides a substantial framework for epistemic reading as the theory accentuates the substance of networks through advancement in technology: rather knowledge stays with just one text, one discipline, and a one single node (Siemens, 2005).

According to (Siemens, 2005), "technology has fundamentally changed the ways we learn". There are many modes (anything that keeps information, be it a text, book, website, video or the *ejusdem generis*) and link on junctures. When a psychology student follows an expert on their website, they create a link to a new node.

Therefore, learning is substantially the capacity to appreciate and travels those connections with more

available sources. Epistemic reading can accordingly be described in connective terms, as the disciplined exercise of network navigation skill upon a landscape that earlier reading theory did not need to anticipate. All of these six theories do not compete with each other, but all together describe different facets of the same underlying process: explains the internal cognitive mechanism of schema revision; Vygotsky explains how exploring other discipline can unfold a reader's knowledge beyond unaided capacity (Vygotsky, 1978); Bloom taxonomy locate the resulting synthesis at the summit of an established cognitive hierarchy; Mezirow explains how repeated cross disciplinary encounter transforms perspective, rather than mere accumulation (Mezirow, 1978); Sternberg specifies when that transformed perspective is oriented toward common good, it deserves the name wisdom; and Siemens explains why this capacity has become newly practicable and newly necessary in a network information environment (Siemens, 2005). These all the theories present a collective fundamental base to the relevance of epistemic reading as a fifth way of reading. The foregoing psychological theories collectively establish that learning progresses from cognitive acquisition to critical reflection, interdisciplinary integration, transformative perspective, balanced wisdom and networked knowledge. Yet, none fully explains the final stage at which integrated knowledge transcends intellectual competence and becomes an enduring moral consciousness that naturally governs judgment and conduct. To address this conceptual gap, the present study proposes the Moral & Sharma Theory of Integrative Interdisciplinary Wisdom (IIW) {प्रज्ञातीत सिद्धांत (Prajyateet Doctrine)}. The theory posits that the highest purpose of epistemic reading is not merely the accumulation of interdisciplinary knowledge or even the attainment of wisdom as traditionally understood, but the emergence of Infinite Integrative Wisdom (IIW)—a state in which knowledge from diverse disciplines is so profoundly internalised that it becomes inseparable from the reader's character, ethical reasoning, and lived experience. At this stage, critical thinking is no longer confined to analytical evaluation, rather, it evolves into an integrated mode of being where legal, philosophical, scientific, psychological, sociological and moral insights converge into a

unified consciousness directed towards the common good. The distinction between knowing, understanding and acting gradually dissolves, enabling the individual to respond to complex human situations through ethically balanced judgment rather than disciplinary limitation or personal convenience. The persistent phenomenon of widespread traffic-rule violations despite public awareness illustrates this distinction, the deficiency lies not in information or knowledge, but in the absence of their incorporation into moral consciousness. In contrast, a person embodying Infinite Integrative Wisdom complies with the law not merely from fear of sanction but because the values underlying the law have become intrinsic to one's identity. Accordingly, the Moral-Sharma Theory argues that epistemic reading, as the fifth way of reading, culminates in Infinite Integrative Wisdom (IIW), representing the highest stage of learning wherein interdisciplinary knowledge is transformed into an integrated ethical consciousness that transcends disciplinary boundaries, blends critical inquiry with moral responsibility, and ultimately converts learning from an act of intellectual achievement into a lifelong way of being. This theory is for those who have traversed the journey of the four paths given in the Adler's work.

7. Conclusion

Epistemic Reading responds to a pressing requirement of contemporary knowledge: the movement from information to understanding, from understanding to integration, and from integration towards wisdom. Adler and Van Doren's four levels—elementary, inspectional, analytical, and syntopical—provide a foundational discipline for reading (Adler & Doren, 1972), but the conditions of contemporary interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge require the reader to move beyond the comparison of texts towards the integration of diverse ways of knowing. The fifth way proposed in this paper, therefore, does not replace Adler's framework (Adler & Doren, 1972); it extends its intellectual trajectory. The distinctive contribution of Epistemic Reading lies in its attempt to make this extension operational. It is conceived as a recursive process involving decoding and comprehension, cross-contextualization, heuristic substantiation, interim

blend and externalization. The proposed framework further ascertains three preliminary markers of epistemic engagement: the ability to introduce a relevant concept, method, or finding from another discipline. The disposition to rescript an existing interpretation in response to new experience. The production of an explicit blend that connects purviews in a proffer not encompassed in either cradle self-sufficiently. In this veneration, Epistemic level is propositioned not merely as a philosophical disposition but as an evident form of comprehension rendezvous capable of subsequent intellect and first-hand study. The logical confab has also hinted that the anticipated fifth way has meaningful conceptual resonances with Indian knowledge traditions. The movement

from *śravaṇa* to *manana* and *nididhyāsana*, the plural sources of knowledge recognised through the doctrine of *pramāṇa*, and the integrative vision of the Bhagavad *Gītā* demonstrate that knowing has historically been understood in traditions beyond mere textual reception. The present study does not claim that these traditions historically constituted Epistemic Reading in the contemporary sense. Rather, they provide philosophical antecedents that illuminate the possibility of moving from reception and reflection towards integrated and transformative knowing. The psychological and educational theories examined in the study further provide complementary theoretical support for the proposed construct. Piaget helps explain the revision of existing cognitive structures; Vygotsky illuminates learning through engagement with knowledge beyond the reader's unaided capacity; Bloom and the revised taxonomy locate synthesis and creation within higher-order cognition; Mezirow explains transformation through critical reassessment of assumptions; Sternberg provides a framework for understanding wisdom in relation to competing interests and the common good; and Siemens explains the networked conditions under which connections among diverse sources of knowledge have become increasingly significant. Taken together, these perspectives provide theoretical grounding for different dimensions of Epistemic Reading without being treated as empirical proof of the construct. *The Moral-Sharma Theory* of Infinite Integrative Wisdom (IIW) represents the further theoretical

development proposed by this study. It suggests that the ultimate significance of epistemic reading may lie beyond intellectual integration alone. When knowledge from different disciplines is critically assimilated, repeatedly reflected upon, connected with experience, and directed towards ethical judgment, learning may begin to influence not merely what a person knows but how that person understands and responds to the world. IIW is therefore proposed as a continuing horizon in which interdisciplinary knowledge, critical reasoning, wisdom, ethical consciousness, and lived experience progressively converge. It is not presented as a measurable endpoint already established by the present study, but as a theoretical proposition emerging from the logic of Epistemic Reading. The present study nevertheless has important limitations. It is conceptual and theory-generating rather than empirical. The five operations and three preliminary markers proposed for Epistemic Reading have not yet been subjected to experimental, longitudinal, or comparative validation. Nor can the present study establish that interdisciplinary engagement necessarily produces epistemic transformation, wisdom, or ethical conduct. In particular, the inclusion of experience and non-textual knowledge requires critical epistemic safeguards: personal experience may inform, corroborate, or challenge understanding, but it cannot automatically be treated as equivalent to systematically established evidence. Similarly, the transition from Epistemic Reading to Infinite Integrative Wisdom remains a theoretical relationship that requires independent empirical investigation. These limitations, however, also establish a productive agenda for future research. Subsequent studies may develop an Epistemic Reading Scale or assessment rubric based on the five proposed operations and three observable markers; compare analytical, syntopical, and epistemic reading through controlled reading tasks; examine whether exposure to unfamiliar disciplinary perspectives actually produces revision of prior interpretations; and investigate whether sustained epistemic engagement contributes to integrative reasoning, ethical judgment, or wisdom-oriented decision-making. Future research may also test the framework across disciplines, educational levels, cultures, and emerging digital and AI-mediated reading environments. The

significance of the present proposal therefore lies not in claiming to have completed the theory of reading, but in opening a further field of inquiry. Adler disciplined the reader to comprehend, inspect, scrutinize, and compare; Epistemic Reading invites the reader to connect, corroborate, revise, blend, and convey (Adler & Doren, 1972). The movement is consequently from the understanding of texts towards the assimilation of realization and potentially from integrated knowledge towards wisdom-faced action.

This study has exhibited that Epistemic level acquires discernable functioning tenets that adumbrates it from Adler's beforehand intensities of construing a book. It is workable through five progressions that are: decipherment and understanding, transdisciplinary contextual intellect, heuristic rationale, draught blend and outwardness. It may be documented through apparent pointers- like borderless-disciplinary scenario, referencing of erstwhile contemplations and most importantly formation of smooth surfing in the sea of disciplines to full attainment.

The research consecutively broadens that prevalent erudition environment and *Ancient Texts of Indian Wisdom* facilitates abstract inceptions for Epistemic Construe of a book. In unison, these research questions when getting resolved, support the projected Moral-Sharma Technique of Infinite Integrative Wisdom (IIW) principally and paves the path to virtuous mindfulness and wisdom faced cogitation.

The fifth way is thus not a destination but a horizon. Its ultimate purpose is not to produce a reader who merely knows more, but a reader who can connect more intelligently, question more critically, revise more honestly, blend more deeply and act more wisely. If the four levels of Adler provide the architecture of disciplined reading (Adler & Doren, 1972), Epistemic level seeks to extend that architecture into an interconnected landscape of knowledge. The *Moral-Sharma Theory of Infinite Integrative Wisdom* carries this movement further by proposing that the deepest purpose of knowing may ultimately be the transformation of knowledge into transcend wisdom. Whether that final transition can be empirically demonstrated remains an open question and precisely for that

reason it constitutes the next stage of research which should be compulsorily non-doctrinal

research over a sizable and diverse universe area.

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