The Integral Perspective

What a new evolution-based philosophy reveals about the essence of our world

Chris Charuhas

Table of Contents

Introduction

This book describes Integral Thought, a new school of philosophy based upon the idea that everything evolves. It can spark a leap forward in human affairs, similar to how Rationalism inspired the Age of Reason.

Integral thought integrates former opposites.

What does Integral Thought integrate? Things we've come to think of as separate and opposed: mind and body, spirituality and science, feminine and masculine. It shows how these dualities are aspects of a universal whole.

It provides a new map of reality.

Integral Thought serves as a kind of conceptual compass that helps us orient ourselves in the universe. It provides us with a new "map" of reality that shows how the universe is structured at the most fundamental level.

This has important social implications.

Basically, Integral Thought is a new way of thinking about the world that helps us understand how things are connected, how they change and evolve.

This has important implications, because our society's biggest problems are rooted in its prevailing philosophy of scientific materialism. By moving us past that way of thinking, Integral Thought enables us to start solving them.

The Basics of Integral Thought

Integral Thought is based upon a simple yet profound idea: everything evolves.

Evolution is a process of change over time that generates increasing complexity, diversity, and connection. In Integral Thought, it's recognized as the universe's organizing principle, its "main event."

One of the first Integral thinkers, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, described the centrality of evolution this way:

> Is evolution a theory, a system or a hypothesis? It is much more: it is a general condition to which all theories, all systems, all hypotheses must bow... Evolution is a light illuminating all facts, a curve that all lines must follow.

Both matter and consciousness evolve.

Integral thinkers note that evolution isn't just a biological phenomenon. It happens with inanimate matter, and with consciousness as well:

Matter evolved to form the Earth.

Over billions of years, gravity fused atoms to make stars, stars exploded to create a variety of elements, and then these elements coalesced to form planets like the Earth.

The Earth evolved to spawn life.

On Earth, living organisms emerged, then they evolved what we think of as consciousness: an awareness of themselves and their surroundings.

Life evolved complex consciousness.

Among the animals, consciousness evolved to be rich and complex. Now billions of humans share their thoughts and feelings with each other.

The Subjective and Objective are equally important.

If evolution involves both matter and consciousness, are they equally important? In Integral Thought, the answer is Yes.

It's called *Integral* Thought because it integrates both the subjective realm of consciousness and the objective realm of matter. In Integral Thought, both realms are equally significant.

The Subjective	The Objective
The "interior" of things, such as your internal, mental self.	The "exterior" of things, such as your external, material body.
The Subjective doesn't have a location. For example, you can't point to a subject of discussion.	The Objective has a location. For example, you can physically point to an object like a rock.
To understand the subjective aspects of something, you interact with it. Then you interpret its responses.	To understand the objective aspects of something, you observe it. Then you analyze its behavior.
For example, to determine how someone subjectively feels about baseball, you talk with them, then interpret what they mean.	For example, to determine how someone objectively hits a baseball, you watch them, then analyze what you've seen.

Everything has both Individual and Collective aspects.

Integral Thought does more than integrate the Subjective and Objective. It also shows that everything is both Individual and Collective.

The Individual

An atom is an *individual* thing in itself…and one of many such things that collectively make up a molecule.

A molecule is an *individual* thing in itself…and one of many such things that collectively comprise a cell.

The Collective

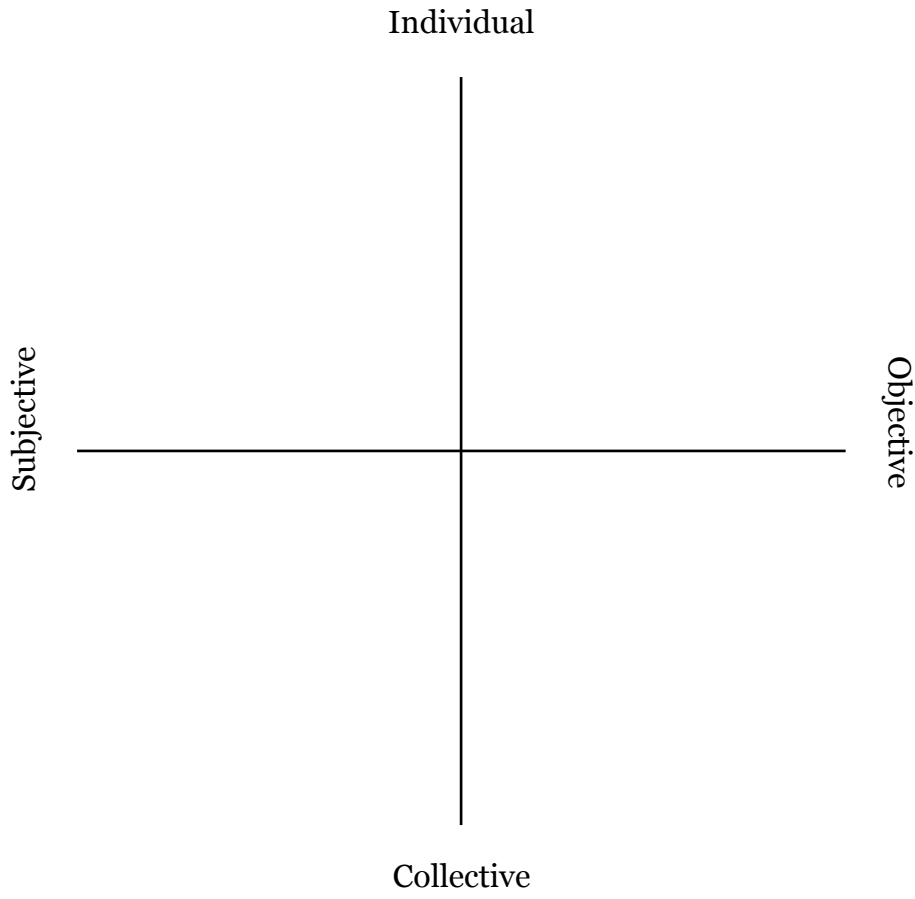
A cell is an individual thing in itself…and one of many such things that *collectively* make up an organ.

An organ is an individual thing in itself…and one of many such things that *collectively* comprise a human body.

When we look at the universe this way, we see that it's composed of things that are both individual wholes in themselves and parts of larger collective systems. At every level and scale, it exhibits this nested whole/part structure.

There are four poles of existence.

Integral Thought integrates the Subjective, Objective, Individual and Collective. Thus, when you think about the universe in an Integral way, you note its four poles of existence:



In the words of Ken Wilber, the founder of Integral Thought, these four poles of existence signify "inside and outside, singular and plural—some of the simplest distinctions we can make."

These distinctions are indeed simple. They're also useful in that they represent points on a conceptual "compass" that we can use to orient ourselves in the universe.

There are four existential quadrants.

In Integral Thought, the four poles of existence define four quadrants. To make them easier to understand, they've been given the humanistic designations of I, It, We, and Its:

Individual

I Individual/Subjective The interior, intangible aspects of something. *Example:* the "I" that you feel as your inner self.	**It** Individual/Objective The exterior, tangible aspects of something. *Example:* the "It" that is your physical body.
We Subjective/Collective The interior, group aspects of something. *Example:* the "We" of your personal relationships.	**Its** Objective/Collective The exterior, group aspects of something. *Example:* the "Its" rules of a game you play with others.

Subjective

Objective

Collective

These quadrants are the universal domains in which evolution takes place. With regard to an individual human being, evolution works this way:

I A person's inner self, their "I," evolves throughout their life as they get older. *Example:* They develop from a self-centered child into a community-oriented adult.	It A person's body, their "It," has a form that evolved over many generations. *Example:* Their species develops a brain that enables higher-level symbolic thought.
We A person's shared culture, their "We," can evolve new values and worldviews. *Example:* Their people forgo traditional religion and adopt a scientific mindset.	Its The social system in which a person lives, their "Its," also evolves. *Example:* Their society moves from a capitalist economy to a syndicalist economic system.

Everything has a four-quadrant structure.

This conceptual “map” illustrates the fact that the universe is fractal. That is, every single thing in the universe, no matter how big or small, has the same four-quadrant conceptual structure.

Because the universe is fractal, this map can be applied to the human sphere. When we name each quadrant for its domain of our experience...

Self Our inner thoughts and feelings	Object Our material, physical world
Culture Our personal relationships	System Our social environments

...it helps us understand our world.

All the quadrants are connected.

This Integral map of the universe shows that all of the quadrants are connected. What happens in one quadrant affects the others, and they all feed back on each other in complex ways.

This is evident when we use the Integral map to examine human evolution. To see how each quadrant affects the others, follow the numbers from quadrant to quadrant:

Self	Object
1. Long ago, an individual human learned how to make fire, and passed this inner knowledge on. 5. Different types of people perceived the world differently. Some felt artistically inclined.	2. The knowledge of fire-making was used to cook food, which enabled us to evolve larger brains. 4. Living in larger social groups made it adaptive for our species to evolve different types of people.
Culture	**System**
6. Artistically-inclined people created the cave paintings that distinguished prehistoric culture.	3. Our larger brains enabled us to create the technology we needed to live in larger social groups. 7. Cave paintings became part of social rites that initiated young men into hunter-gatherer bands.

Exploring the Integral Model

The Integral model of the universe represents its conceptual structure at any scale. The most relevant to us is human-scale, so let's explore the model there.

First we'll review the arenas in which evolution takes place: the four existential quadrants of Self, Object, Culture, and System.

Then we'll examine the duality that enables evolution to occur: the two fundamental qualities of Yin and Yang.

We'll do this by focusing on the ways in which humans evolve.

The Self Quadrant

In the Integral model, the Self has three essential elements: Thought, Feeling, and Will.

They're what comprise a person's inner life.

Thought involves one's intellect, and the psychologist Jean Piaget identified four stages of intellectual development. The Integral philosopher Ken Wilber added a fifth (vision-logic).

Feeling involves emotions, and the psychologist Erik Erikson described eight stages of emotional development through which we evolve. Will is also called volition, and the psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg outlined six stages of volitional (socially-applied, it's known as moral) development.

Generally speaking, our personal development—the evolution of the Self—proceeds through these stages at these ages:

Intellectual (Thought)	Emotional (Feeling)	Volitional (Will)	
	Integrity vs. Despair		
Vision-logic	Generation vs. Stagnation	Ethical Principles	*Maturity*
	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Social Contract	*Adulthood*
Abstract concepts	Identity vs. Confusion		*Teen Years*
	Industry vs. Inferiority	Social Order	
Concrete concepts	Initiative vs. Guilt	Social Norms	*Age 8-12*
Symbols and imagination	Autonomy vs. Doubt	Self Interest	*Age 3-7*
Perception and motion	Trust vs. Mistrust	Obedience/ Discipline	*Toddler*

Free will increases as consciousness evolves.

Many modern scientists and philosophers assert that free will is an illusion. They think that we could, given enough information, predict a person's every action.

Integralists think otherwise. They maintain that as your inner self evolves through higher stages of development, it becomes increasingly difficult to predict the decisions you'll make and the actions you'll take.

You not only see more options for action, you're less constrained by others' expectations. You're less culture-bound and more self-directed. Basically, the more expansive your consciousness, the more free will you have.

The Object Quadrant

Any Object is composed of three things: Matter, Energy, and Information.

They're what comprise the totality of any objective thing.

	Object Matter Energy Information

Living things are objects in the sense that they're comprised of Matter, Energy, and Information. They're composed of Matter, which functions using the electromagnetic Energy of molecular bonds, and are structured according to genetically-encoded Information.

Their physical evolution can also be understood in these terms. Organisms metabolize Matter to get the Energy they need to live, and adapt themselves to their environments by changing their genetic Information over time.

This process is a lot more complicated than Darwin knew. A new, broader view of evolution known as Extended Evolutionary Synthesis (EES) goes beyond standard evolutionary theory to identify the full range of processes that direct a species' physical evolution.

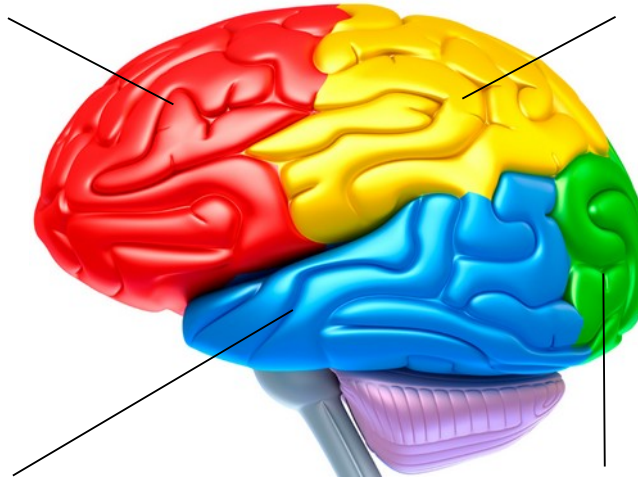
EES identifies six factors that affect the evolution of living things, and that are still affecting the evolution of humans:

Natural Selection The organism that's best-adapted to its environment survives. Example: Healthy people tend to have more children, who are in turn healthier themselves.	**Trait Plasticity** The expression of our genes is changeable. Example: If a mother is extremely stressed during pregnancy, this can alter a baby's inherited traits.
Genetic Mutation Mutations that increase fitness are passed on. Example: The sickle-cell gene evolved in the tropics to provide people with protection against malaria.	**Niche Construction** Humans change our environments in ways that change us. Example: The ancestors of people who herded cattle have genes that help them digest milk.
Developmental Bias The body plans of precursor species affect how we develop. Example: Our five fingers and toes evolved from the five fin bones of lobe-finned fish.	**Extra-Genetic Inheritance** External factors change the ways genes are passed on. Example: When we ingest some plastics, they change our hormones in ways that reduce fertility.

The object that is the human body was shaped by millions of years of physical evolution, a process that can be traced when we examine the different parts of the brain:

4. The prefrontal cortex is the most recent part of the brain. It evolved two million years ago, enabling planning and personal development.

3. The neocortex, the seat of interpretive thought (understanding, self-reflection), evolved 50 million years ago with the primates.



2. The limbic system that provides our social instincts (kinship, status) began evolving around 200 million years ago with the mammals.

1. The cerebellum that controls our physical instincts (safety, sustenance, and sex) is reptilian, and evolved over 300 million years ago.

The brain's structure embodies two general principles of evolution that are recognized in Integral Thought:

- New things evolve by building upon what came before. Newer, more complex things evolve out of older, more basic things.

- Subjective consciousness and objective matter evolve together. As the brain becomes more complex, the self can do the same.

The Culture Quadrant

A Culture has three fundamental facets: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Inquiry.

They're what distinguish any human culture at any scale.

Ethics, Aesthetics, and Inquiry involve three primary values: Goodness, Beauty, and Truth. The social psychologist Don Beck built upon the work of his mentor Clare Graves to describe eight worldviews that exemplify different expressions of these primary values.

In his 1995 book *Spiral Dynamics*, Beck described the eight worldviews in detail, each one of which represents a new level of cultural evolution. Each worldview first emerged at a different time in history, and has a different ethical orientation, aesthetic sense, and approach to inquiry:

	Ethics: the Good	*Aesthetics: the Beautiful*	*Inquiry: the True*
Holistic (emerging)	Fostering love and harmony	Works of gifted, inspired people	Reveals the transcendent
Integrative (25 y.a.)	Positive parts of all stages	The best art from every era	Conveyed by every stage
Postmodern (75 y.a.)	Compassion and inclusion	Multicultural arts and crafts	Depends on perspective
Modernist (500 y.a.)	Excellence and curiosity	Secular art, by great artists	Revealed by science, logic
Traditional (2500 y.a)	Law, order, the holy Book	Religious art glorifying God	Spoken by holy men, prophets
Warrior (5000 y.a)	Power and strength	Monumental stone buildings	Whatever the god-king thinks
Tribal (50,000 y.a.)	Honoring our ancestors	Legends sung by my people	Seen and felt in the spirit world
Instinctive (1M yrs. ago)	What helps us survive	A lush landscape	Brings food and fertility

Beck also described how cultures and individuals evolve from one worldview stage to the next: each new stage arises to solve problems presented by the previous stage.

A Tribal society, with its webs of social connection, is very cohesive. However, its cohesion limits the initiative of its individual members. This becomes a problem when it's confronted by a Warrior society.

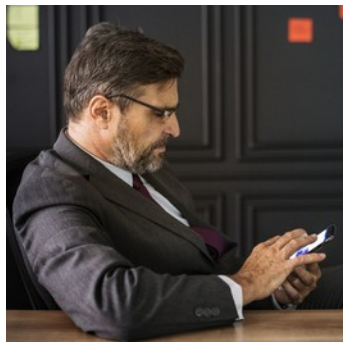
Because its "chain of command" is a simple hierarchy of power, a Warrior society can be larger than a Tribe. Because it's led by the person with the most guts and drive, the Warrior society is more aggressive as well.

A Warrior society has its own inherent problems, however. Power is concentrated in one person, and if they make a mistake it can doom a whole band. Traditional societies don't have this problem.

With individuals, cultural evolution works the same way. Success at one stage creates the conditions that spur a person's evolution to the next. For example:

A member of a Warrior street gang, who feels like he's going nowhere, becomes "born again" in prison. His new Traditional worldview provides him with the structure he needs to build a comfortable life.

A young Traditional church parishioner, who finds her life comfortable but dull, takes a self-help course. Her new Modernist worldview equips her with the mindset to achieve success in her career.



A middle-aged Modernist businessman, whose career success rings hollow, joins a local conservation group. His new Postmodern worldview offers him a sense of peace and belonging he didn't have before.

Integralists note that evolution builds upon what came before, and this is as true for culture as it is for biology. Each new worldview builds upon the foundation laid by the previous worldview. For example:

Traditional law and order provide the social stability…

…for Modernist learning and achievement to emerge, while Modernist achievements provide the material resources…

…for Postmodern compassion and sensitivity to emerge.

Unfortunately, each of these worldviews has a similar view of the others: they're wrong. They tend to focus on the negative aspects of other worldviews, without acknowledging what's positive about them.

Modernist…

…sees Traditional as boring and stolid, and Postmodern as irrelevant.

Traditional…

…sees Modernist as selfish, and Postmodern as immoral.

Postmodern…

…sees Traditional as oppressive, and Modernist as exploitative.

Integral worldviews are different from previous ones in that they recognize the positive aspects of every worldview. This enables the people who hold them to foster social harmony in ways that were previously impossible.

An Integrative-minded person can bring out the best in people of every previous worldview, helping them express their values in positive ways:

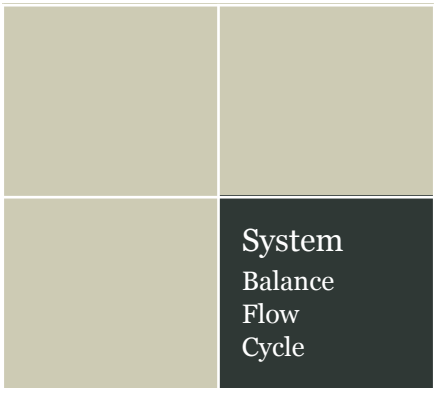
	Positive values	Negative values
Postmodern	Concern for others, respect for diversity, genuine kindness.	Moral relativism, rejection of hierarchies, sense of superiority.
Modernist	Individuals are empowered to think independently.	Individuals can now become selfish and materialistic.
Traditional	Strong sense of loyalty and duty, generosity toward group members.	Intolerance, punishment of nonconformity, dogmatic belief.
Warrior	Individuals are empowered to act independently.	Individuals can now become ruthless and egocentric.
Tribal	Strong bonds with tribe members, closeness to nature.	Cruelty to non-members, superstition about the world.
Instinctive	Being highly attuned to the environment helps one survive.	Survival orientation limits personal and cultural development.

With a Holistic worldview, a person can do even more: they can help others move from one worldview to the next. They help people see and feel how they're connected to each other, and to the universe as a whole.

The System Quadrant

A System has three intrinsic attributes: Balance, Flow, and Cycle.

They're what interconnected things do when they function as a whole.



Systems exhibit Balance, Flow, and Cycle, and can be understood in terms of these attributes. If a system doesn't exhibit them, it will work poorly or not at all.

An ecosystem, such as a coral reef, has these attributes:

- The pH of the water is *balanced*, not too acidic nor too basic.
- Nutrients *flow* to the microorganisms at the bottom of its food chain.
- The animals in it have life *cycles*, which enable their species to evolve.

The human body is another good example of a system. For a person to be healthy:

- Their hormones must be in *balance*.
- Blood must *flow* freely throughout the circulatory subsystem.
- Air must *cycle* in and out of the lungs.

It's not only natural systems that have these attributes—artificial systems do, too. In a gasoline engine, for example:

- The pistons are *balanced* with counterweights.
- Air and fuel *flow* in and out of the cylinders.
- It generates power through a combustion *cycle*.

In the human sphere, systems are related to culture. Whereas culture involves private/personal relationships, systems are the public/social forms that these relationships take.

Social systems are things like institutions, codes of communication, ways of life, artistic styles. For example:

The cultural sensibilities of Modernist architects…

- "Let us together create the new building of the future." -Walter Gropius
- "A house is a machine for living in." -Charles-Édouard Jeanneret
- "Less is more." -Mies van der Rohe

…were expressed in the system of modern architecture they created.

- Building designs are futuristic. They borrow few architectural elements from the past.
- Only machine-made building materials are used.
- Ornamentation is absent. Surfaces are simple and stark.

What balances and flows in human systems? The Feminine and Masculine. For example, many people find modern architecture unbalanced in that it features a lot of masculine structure, but doesn't include much feminine flow.

Human systems also have a life cycle, in that they arise, exist, and eventually get replaced by new systems.

In Integral Thought, the universe is a system.

In the 1950s, the field of systems science emerged. People in the West began to study the dynamic patterns, connections and interactions of things in the natural world.

At the same time, Alan Watts began popularizing Eastern thought, in which primal forces seek balance, life energy flows, and renewal comes in a birth/death cycle.

Informed by both Western systems science and Eastern philosophy, Integralists see the universe as a system in which all individual things are interconnected, and function as a collective whole.

Evolution takes place in the System quadrant, just as it does in the others. Because we humans are social creatures, our evolution took place within a social system: the hunter-gatherer band.

How did this way of life shape us? According to the Ardana Type Framework, a new personality typing system based on evolutionary science, we evolved two "hard-wired" temperaments to help us live in different ecosystems:

Sociable temperament	Reserved temperament
Female "Nymphs" and male "Satyrs" evolved to mate promiscuously with various people from other bands. This sociability gave their children more resistance to disease in the forest, and it's reflected in their naturally sociable temperament.	Female "Muses" and male "Centaurs" evolved to mate exclusively with a single person from another band. This reserve helped them avoid inbreeding on the savannah, and it's reflected in their naturally reserved temperament.

We also evolved four "hard-wired" talents that reflected the division of labor in small hunter-gatherer bands. As we began living in larger bands, we evolved four more natural talents that helped these bands maintain their cohesion. Humans today still have these eight natural talents in the abstract:

Fighting Confronting other predators	Gathering Obtaining edible plants
Hunting Killing prey animals	Tending Taking care of children
Dancing Celebrating/invoking fertility	Painting Representing life/meaning
Singing Making music/storytelling	Crafting Creating useful items

First we evolved two natural temperaments to help us live in different ecosystems. Then we evolved eight natural talents to help us live in larger social systems. The end result was that our two natural temperaments combined with our eight natural talents to form 16 basic personality types:

Dancing Nymph Ardent and intuitive	Gathering Nymph Generous and friendly	Fighting Satyr Energetic and decisive	Painting Satyr Imaginative and perceptive
Hunting Nymph Lively and adventurous	Tending Nymph Nurturing and nice	Hunting Satyr Steady and strong	Crafting Satyr Industrious and amiable
Singing Nymph Sensual and expressive	Gathering Muse Gentle and refined	Dancing Satyr Charming and creative	Fighting Centaur Poised and protective
Painting Nymph Sensitive and subtle	Tending Muse Kind and serene	Singing Satyr Smooth and balanced	Hunting Centaur Focused and goal-oriented

Yin and Yang

The universe's life force has two basic qualities: Yin and Yang.

Yin is about Integration, Stillness, Fluidity; Yang is about Differentiation, Movement, Solidity.

These qualities are what enable evolution to occur.

	Yang Differentiation Movement Solidity
Yin Integration Stillness Fluidity	

For evolution to occur, information must be conveyed, and for information to be conveyed, a binary pair is required. At a minimum, there must be a Yes/No, an Off/On. That's why, very early in the history of the universe, energy split into a binary pair: the positive and negative electromagnetic charges.

When energy split into this binary pair, it enabled positively-charged protons and negatively-charged electrons to combine and form simple atoms. Then atoms came together to form stars. Stars exploded to form a multiplicity of elements, and these elements came together to form planets.

On Earth, life evolved sexual reproduction, which involved another binary pair: the female and male. This new binary pair accelerated evolution, combining creatures' DNA to generate myriad species.

The ancient Chinese noted this duality in the universe's life force. They called its two qualities Yin and Yang, and described their relationship: Yin needs Yang to animate it, while Yang needs Yin to stabilize it. Neither exists in isolation, and both have something of the other within them.

Yin and Yang, while perceived by some as esoteric constructs, actually mesh well with scientific views of the universe:

	The Big Bang that spawned our universe can be thought of as unstabilized Yang.
The singularity that preceded the Big Bang can be thought of as unanimated Yin.	

	The electrons orbiting an atom's nucleus are Yang.
Protons in the stationary nucleus of an atom are Yin.	

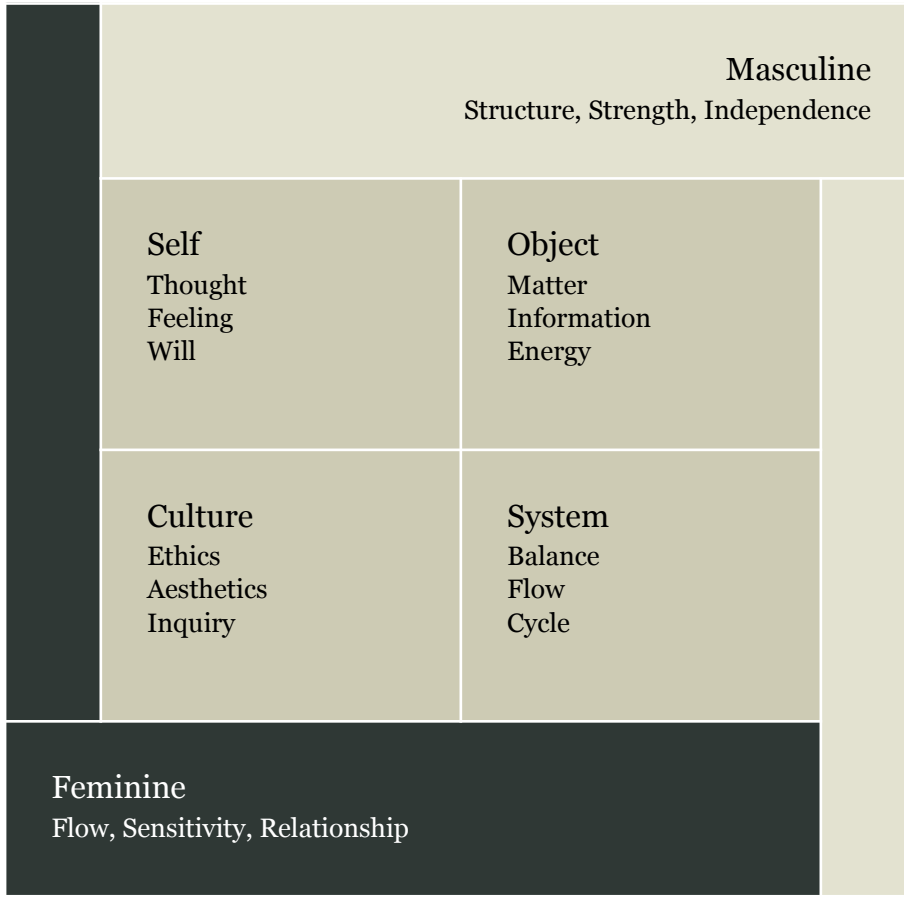
In the West, we conceive of Yin and Yang in a human-specific way, and refer to them as the Feminine and Masculine, respectively. Each can be described in terms of its corresponding features:

Feminine (Yin)	Masculine (Yang)
Flow	Structure
Sensitivity	Strength
Relationship	Independence

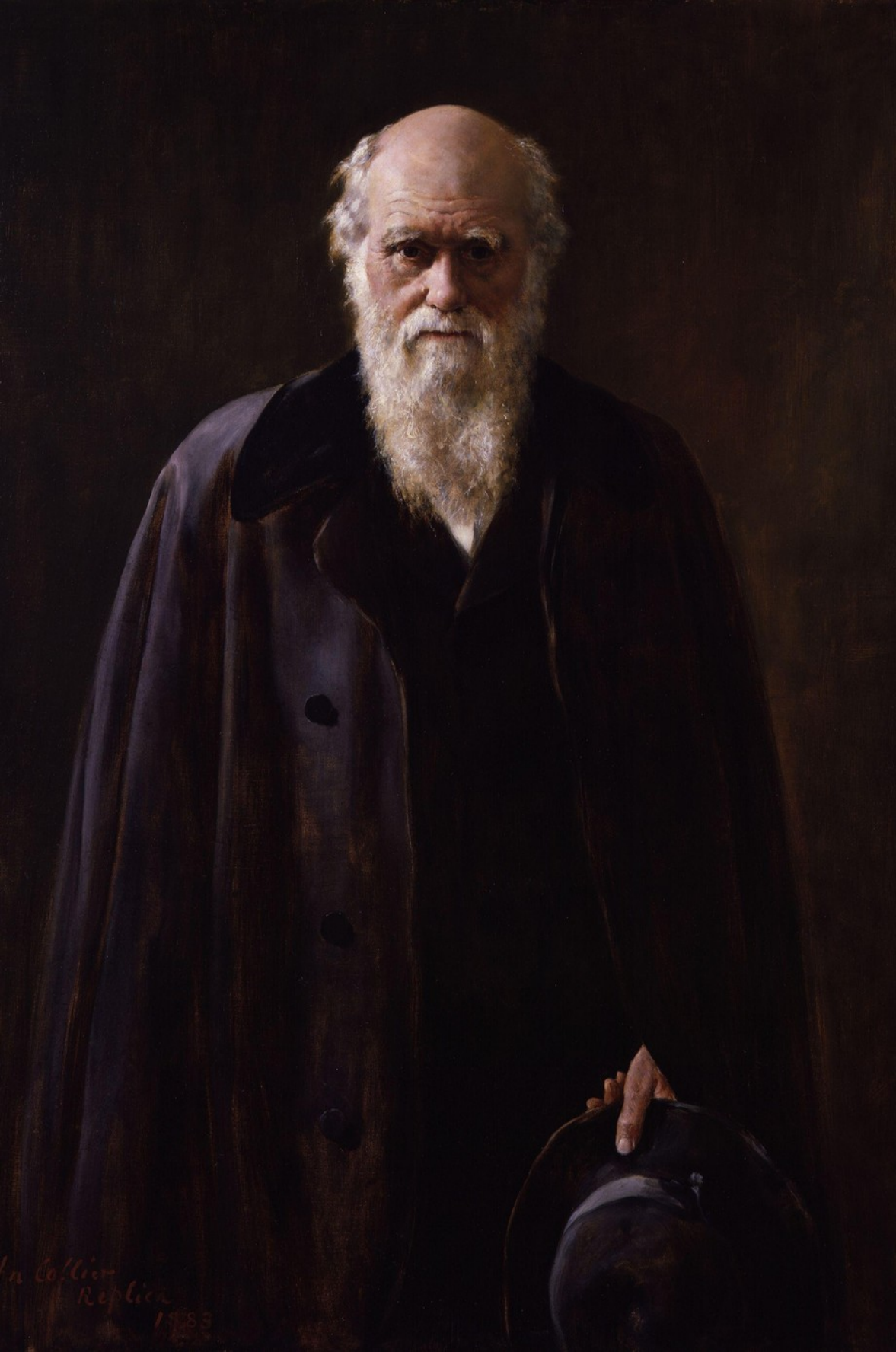
In each quadrant of human experience, evolution involves the Feminine and Masculine. For example:

In the Self quadrant...	In the Object quadrant...
Volitional development is a mostly Masculine endeavor, involving strength of character. Emotional development, on the other hand, is about Feminine sensitivity.	Matter, the physical substance of things, exhibits Masculine structure. Energy, which animates physical things and drives their evolution, is essentially Feminine in its flow.
In the Culture quadrant...	**In the System quadrant...**
Cultural evolution involves oscillation between the Feminine and Masculine. For example: The basis of the Tribal is feminine relationship. The Warrior is about masculine independence.	Living in hunter-gatherer societies, humans evolved different levels of Feminine and Masculine hormones. For example, people with more Masculine are natural leaders.

When we add the Feminine and the Masculine to the quadratic map, we get the Integral model—an even richer representation of our world's conceptual structure:



Diagrammed this way, the Integral model becomes a useful tool for understanding the world we experience. It helps us see the underlying conditions that shape processes, people, and events.


John Collier
Replica
1883

How Integral Thought Evolved

In the mid-19th Century, Charles Darwin took a five-year voyage during which he examined hundreds of animals, collected fossils, and visited tropical ecosystems. His research showed him that the body plans of animals changed over time in response to their environments. In short, they evolved.

The idea of evolution had been percolating in Europe for some time, but it took the 1859 publication of Darwin's book *On The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* for the idea to gain credence.

By the 1900s, it had become apparent to many people, not just scientists, that evolution was a powerful explanation of how the world worked. Some of them thought it might be relevant to disciplines other than biology.

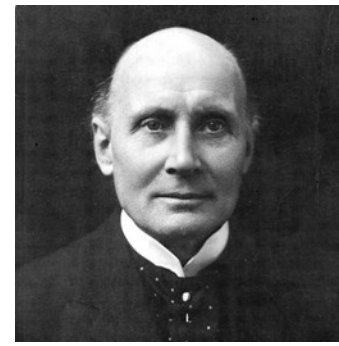
Our Evolving Universe

Two men were primarily responsible for pioneering the central idea of Integral Thought, the idea that everything evolves. They noted that the universe as a whole evolved, and that the evolution of consciousness was an important part of that. These men were:

- Alfred North Whitehead, an English mathematician. He thought of the universe differently than previous thinkers had. His “process philosophy” laid the groundwork for the idea of an evolving universe.

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a French Jesuit priest who worked as a paleontologist. He considered the universe to be a single evolving entity, and saw humanity as an important force driving its evolution.

In his 1929 book *Process and Reality*, Alfred North Whitehead noted that everything is in the process of becoming something else. For example, a river valley is a river valley...for the time being. It becomes a canyon as the water cuts through rock.



The world is composed of events and processes.

"Some things change very slowly, but all things change. Or, to put it better, the world is not finally made of 'things' at all...The world is composed of events and processes."

–Alfred North Whitehead

Whitehead thought of consciousness as something that could affect evolution. Reality, he maintained, is created in part by what we decide to do. For example, a man could decide to say hello to a woman at a coffee shop, setting in motion a chain of events that results in them having children. If he hadn't said hello to her, those kids would never have existed.

This meant that consciousness was a vital part of the universe, and for Whitehead it was pervasive. For example, he thought of atoms as having a very rudimentary form of consciousness, called prehension. It described their ability to trade electrons with other atoms, depending on whether their orbital shells were complete or not.

Whitehead departed from the mainstream of Western thought in other ways as well. He believed that European thinkers' focus on scientific inquiry was holding the West back, and that a new post-scientific philosophy was needed to inform a more dynamic civilization.

What would this new philosophy include that science lacked? Internal experience. Whitehead reasoned that internal experience was just as valid as external observation. That is, he thought that what goes on inside our minds is just as important as what we sense outside it.

In the 1920s, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote a book called *The Phenomenon of Man*. (The Catholic Church prohibited its publication during his lifetime, so it wasn't published until 1955.) In it, he asserted that evolution is not only the central fact of life on Earth, but that humankind has a special role to play in it.

Thinking is humankind's greatest ability.

"By the sole fact of his entering into 'Thought,' man represents something entirely singular and absolutely unique in the field of our experience."

-Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

In his view, the Earth had evolved from what he called the geosphere—rocks, soil, water—to include a living layer he called the biosphere. Then the biosphere—living organisms—evolved to include a thinking layer he called the noosphere.

Teilhard's noosphere, or sphere of human thought, was composed of the interaction of different minds. As human social organization grew in size and complexity, the noosphere grew along with them:

1. In the Middle Ages, thousands of European clergymen exchanged ideas through writing.

2. With the Renaissance, ideas spread quickly among the hundreds of thousands who read printed documents.

3. During the Industrial Revolution, information spread widely as millions of people read books and periodicals.

Teilhard regarded the emergence of the noosphere as an important event in Earth's history, as "great an event as the first condensation of matter or the first appearance of life."

He saw our collective consciousness as the leading edge of evolution, a force pushing life forward into greater harmony, order, and integration. Noting this, he described humankind as evolution becoming conscious of itself.

How Consciousness Evolves

Two men were primarily responsible for describing the most important phenomenon in Integral Thought: the evolution of consciousness. They noted that human consciousness evolves both individually and collectively, and that it does so in stages. These men were:

- James Mark Baldwin, an American psychologist. He introduced the idea that human minds evolve. If the human body developed and changed over time, he reasoned, then the mind should, too.

- Clare Graves, an American psychology professor and researcher. He identified eight levels of cultural evolution that were evident in civilizations, and could also be discerned in the minds of individuals.

In his 1906 book *Thought and Things*, James Mark Baldwin presented the idea that our minds evolve through a series of steps. As we grow up, he wrote, our consciousness becomes increasingly sophisticated, in a process marked by specific stages of development.

Baldwin identified Integral consciousness.

James Mark Baldwin, pictured above, was the first thinker to identify what could be called an Integral stage of consciousness, his Hyper-logical.

Baldwin traced the evolution of a person's mind throughout their life, identifying five general steps of higher thought, deeper feeling, and closer integration of the two:

1. Pre-logical. Remembering things, imagining things, doing things. Perceives what's real and what's not.

2. Quasi-logical. Becoming aware of others' feelings. Bridges the gap between pre-logical and logical.

3. Logical. Understanding concepts, reasoning from facts. Determines what is true or false.

4. Extra-logical. Exercising judgment, combining reason and emotion to decide what's good or bad.

5. Hyper-logical. Uses intuition and contemplation to understand things. Moves beyond good/bad duality.

The frameworks that came later—Piaget's stages of intellectual development, Erikson's stages of emotional development, Kohlberg's stages of moral development—were presaged by Baldwin's five-step outline.

In the 1950s, Clare Graves conducted research through which he found that human consciousness changes in ways that go beyond the natural development that occurs as we age. These changes in consciousness, he discovered, involved cultural values.

He found that cultures—and individuals—developed new values and perspectives, or worldviews, to cope with changes in their social environments. He identified eight basic worldviews, now identiified as:

1. Instinctive. I'm meeting my survival needs. Example: hunter-gatherer bands.

2. Tribal. My life belongs to the tribe. It supports and defines me. Examples: the Wodaabe, the Tapirapé.

Cultural evolution is the greatest social good.

"The prime good of any society's governing figures should be to promote human movement up the levels of human existence."

-Clare Graves

3. Warrior. I defeat my enemies, demand respect, and feel no guilt. Examples: U.S. prisons, biker gangs.

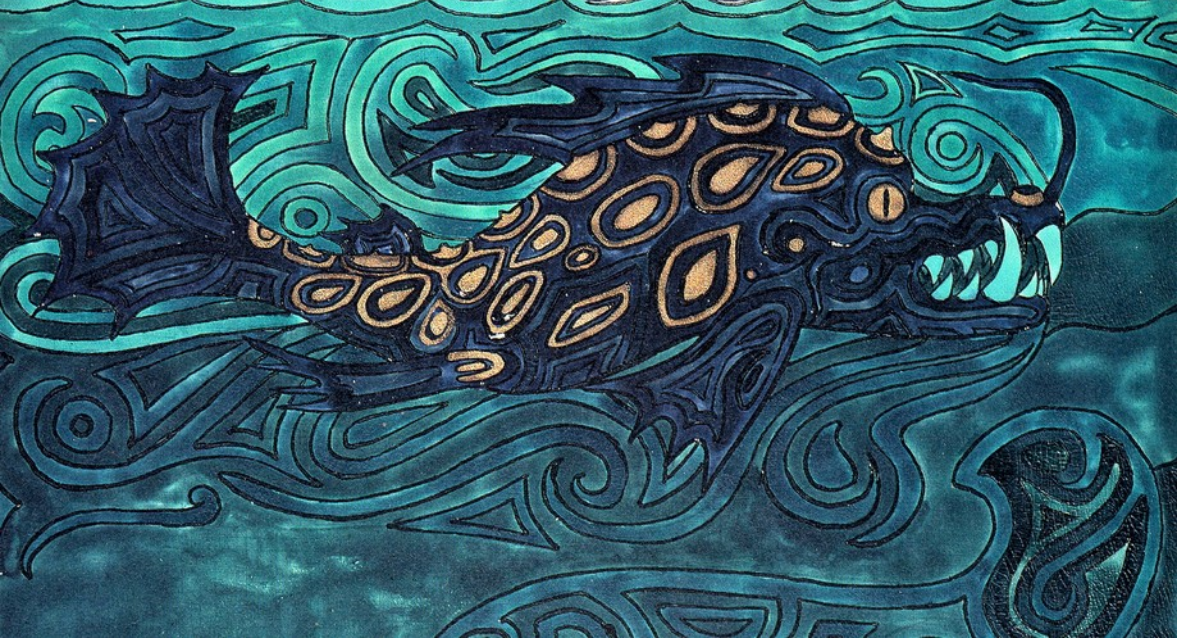
4. Traditional. I identify with my group/faith/unit/team/nation. Examples: military units, church parishes.

5. Modernist. If I've got the "right stuff," and work hard, I can succeed. Examples: universities, Wall Street.

6. Postmodern. My relationships get me through and enrich my life. Examples: co-ops, yoga studios.

7. Integrative. I see the "big picture," and bring out the best in others. Example: the Institute for Cultural Evolution.

8. Holistic. I feel at one with the cosmos, and cultivate love among others. Examples: still emerging.



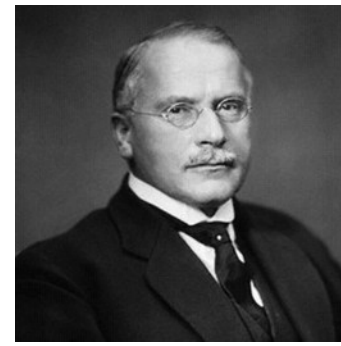
Exploring the Subjective

Two men were primarily responsible for exploring the essence of Integral Thought: the inner world of subjective experience. They delved into the most primal part of it—the unconscious—and described its basic workings. These men were:

- Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. He combined spiritual experience and scientific inquiry to acquire a deeper understanding of consciousness. His work has influenced many Integral thinkers.

- Joseph Campbell, an American professor and mythologist. Through his studies of world mythology, he identified the deep-rooted patterns of meaning that inform our consciousness.

In the early 20th century, Carl Jung maintained that a person's unconscious mind is a source of creativity and strength. This put him at odds with his mentor Sigmund Freud, and also with the psychological community of his day. The stress of this break with his professional peers initiated what he called a "confrontation with the unconscious."



Spiritual experience inspired Jung's work.

"I hit upon this stream of lava, and the heat of its fires reshaped my life... My works are a more or less successful endeavor to incorporate this incandescent matter into the contemporary picture of the world."

-Carl Jung

This "confrontation" was a spiritual experience that took him deep inside his own psyche. He saw visions, battled primal forces within himself, and worried that he was going insane. Nonetheless, he felt the experience would be valuable, so he let it take its course. Through it, he perceived the transcendent symbols and motifs that inspired his subsequent work.

Jung's work emphasized the importance of our unconscious minds, explaining how they influence—and sometimes dictate—what we consciously do. He detailed the ways in which dreams relay messages from the unconscious, and identified what he called the shadow—the unconscious aspects of our personalities.

He also introduced concepts that have since become part of Integral Thought:

- The anima and the animus, or the feminine within a man and the masculine within a woman.

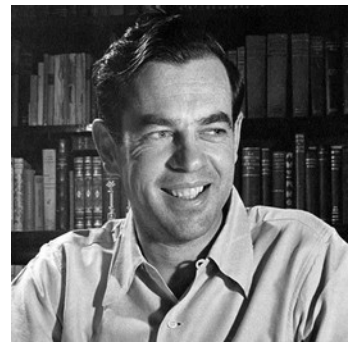
- Psychological types, or distinct kinds of people who naturally think, feel, and behave in similar ways.

By incorporating his free-flowing mystical insights into his work within the discipline of psychology, Jung began a project that has since engaged many Integral thinkers: the integration of science and spirituality.

In the mid-20th century, Joseph Campbell described the structure of what Jung called the "collective unconscious," or the patterns of meaning that all humans share. He saw that these patterns were expressed in myth, noting that the myths of different cultures echoed the same basic themes.

One of these myths was what he called the "hero's journey." It describes the quest that some exceptional people undertake to gain socially valuable insights. While expressed as a physical struggle to slay dragons, face monsters, etc., the conflict is actually mental. The "monsters" reside within one's own consciousness.

Campbell noted that the hero's journey is present in cultures worldwide, and that it generally adheres to an eight-step structure:



Myths reflect the collective unconscious.

"We find that such themes… have a worldwide distribution, appearing everywhere in new combinations…"

-Joseph Campbell

1. Hear the call. The hero feels the pull of adventure.
2. Begin the quest. He leaves his familiar world behind.
3. Gain a mentor. An older, wiser person guides him.
4. Enter the abyss. He visits the unconscious "underworld."
5. Undergo trials. He battles the "demons" in his psyche.
6. Meet the Goddess. He receives important insights.
7. Return home. He returns transformed to his world.
8. Bestow the boon. He renews his world with new insight.

The hero's journey that Campbell described represents a powerful expression of the Integral truth that the Subjective and Objective are connected. In taking this journey, a person transforms their subjective consciousness in ways that enable them to change their objective world.

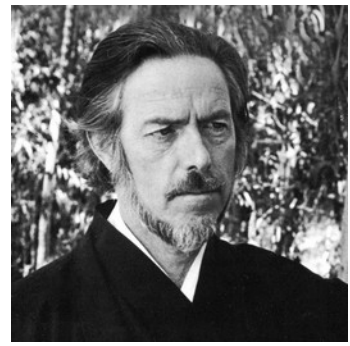
Integrating East and West

Two men were primarily responsible for establishing the pattern of eclectic scholarship that distinguishes Integral Thought. They valued subjective experience as highly as objective observation, and mixed Eastern spirituality with Western philosophy. These men were:

- Alan Watts, an English priest turned Zen "evangelist." He popularized Eastern spirituality in the United States, changing the country's intellectual climate in ways that spurred the growth of Integral Thought.

- Ken Wilber, an American philosopher. He wrote a book, *The Spectrum of Consciousness*, that, in its focus on consciousness and blending of disparate disciplines, was the first expression of Integral Thought.

In the early 1950s, Alan Watts taught Buddhism at the American Academy of Asian Studies, which later became the California Institute of Integral Studies. He became a popular lecturer there, and also lectured on radio, gaining a large following of listeners in the San Francisco area.



Everyone is a part of the universal whole.

"You are a function of what the whole universe is doing, in the same way that a wave is a function of what the whole ocean is doing."

-Alan Watts

He also wrote books on Hinduism and Taoism, explaining these Eastern philosophies in terms that Westerners could readily understand. Through his work, Americans became familiar with Eastern concepts such as karma and Yin/Yang.

Many of the Eastern ideas Watts championed ran counter to traditional Western concepts of the world:

- The universe wasn't created by an all-powerful "maker" who suffers us to live in it. It emerged of its own accord, and each one of us is a living expression of it, a part of the divine.

- We do not come into the world from somewhere else. We grow out of the world, like apples on a tree. There is no separate "man and nature" because humans are a manifestation of nature.

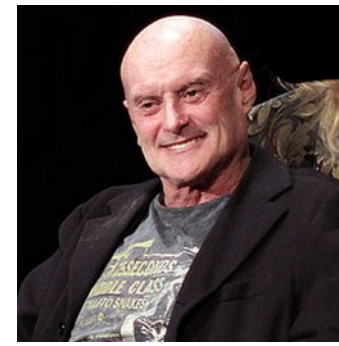
- A person isn't just an isolated ego within a bag of skin, a self inside a body. We're moved by instincts and responses that blur the distinction between inner self and outer world.

- When we get in touch with our universal essence, and gain a deep understanding of ourselves as part of the universe's patterns and flows, we become aware of what saints and sages feel.

Since the time of Plato, the West had tried to understand the universe in terms of its static structure. Watts helped to change that by urging us to examine it in an Eastern way, as a dynamic system. In Integral terms, he helped us see it not as a set of individual parts, but as a collective whole.

In the early 1970s, Ken Wilber spent most of his time in college studying Eastern spirituality on his own, reading texts such as the *Tao Te Ching* and the Upanishads. Later his studies expanded to include various schools of philosophy and psychology.

Informed by his eclectic studies, he wrote *The Spectrum of Consciousness* in 1977. In his book, he noted that Hindus, Buddhists, Christian mystics, and Sufi Muslims all shared a similar view of consciousness, one that was beginning to be recognized by Western scientists as well.



Ancient wisdom is still relevant today.

"This spiritual wisdom is so forgotten in modern times, it is so neglected, that when an even vaguely competent person stands up and points to it...people get a little excited..."

-Ken Wilber

Wilber indicated that there were four general bands in the spectrum of human consciousness, bands that exist within us like the layers of an onion:

1. The Atman. The innermost layer of consciousness. Analogous to dreamless sleep, it's about being part of the timeless Mind that spawned all things.

2. The Transpersonal. The next layer of consciousness. Analogous to dreaming, it includes mystical states of mind through which you feel you're part of the whole universe.

3. The Ego. The layer of consciousness we think of as the "conscious." Analogous to being awake, it's about having a clear self image.

4. The Shadow. A layer of consciousness that emerges when "put on a "mask," suppressing our instincts that we consider undesirable.

With this book, Wilber established the patterns of inquiry that distinguish Integral Thought: blending philosophy and psychology, incorporating ideas from East and West, and combining spirituality with science.

Creating the Integral Model

Two men were primarily responsible for working out the universal context in which evolution unfolds. They identified the four existential quadrants in which evolution takes place, as well as the two evolutionary qualities that enable it to occur. These men were:

- Ken Wilber, who devised a conceptual framework for understanding the universe. His meta-framework encompassed other specific frameworks, and showed where they fit in the grand scheme of human inquiry.

- Steve McIntosh, an independent scholar from the United States. He paved the way for the recognition of Yin and Yang as the two fundamental qualities that enable evolution to occur in the universe.

In the early 1990s, Ken Wilber began trying to make sense of all the different intellectual frameworks that had been devised to explain how the world works. As he describes it:

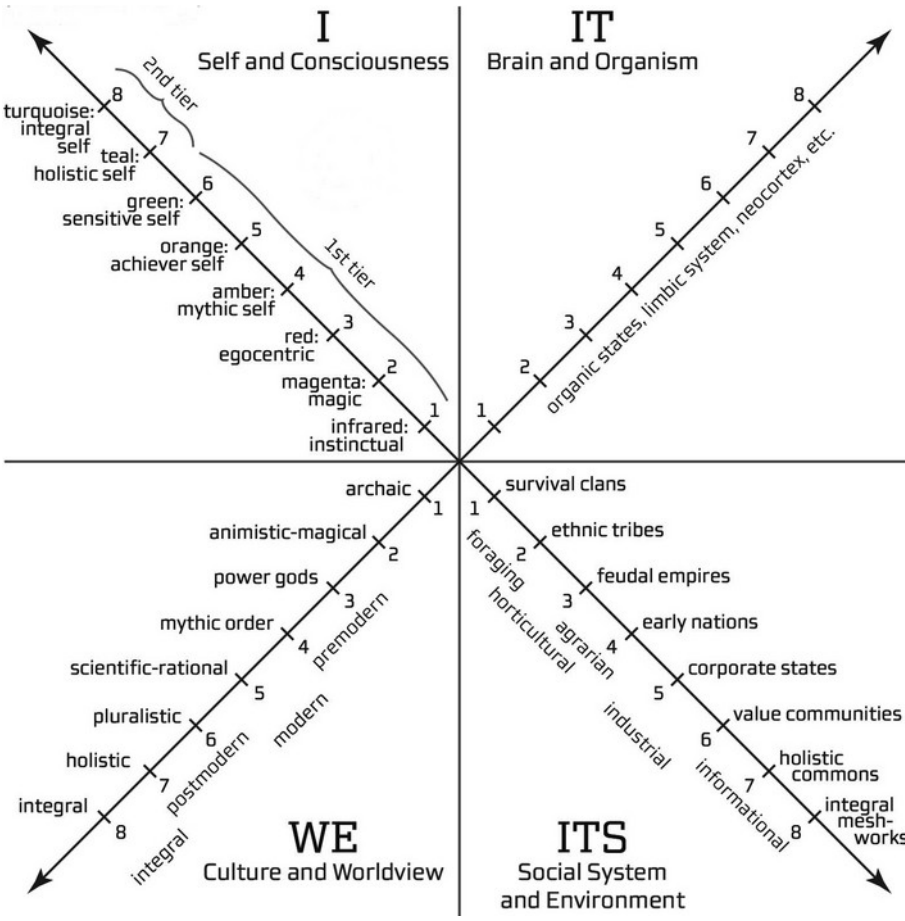
> I simply started making lists of all these holarchical [hierarchical] maps—conventional and new age, Eastern and Western, premodern and modern and postmodern—everything from systems theory to the Great Chain of Being, from the Buddhist vijnanas to Piaget, Marx, Kohlberg, the Vedantic koshas, Loevinger, Maslow, Lenski, Kabbalah, and so on…
>
> The more I looked at these various holarchies [hierarchies], the more it dawned on me that there were actually four very different types of holarchies, four very different types of holistic sequences…I don't think this had been spotted before—perhaps because it was so stupidly simple…

As he reviewed and compared his lists, he noticed that they all fell into one of four categories, which he designated I, It, We, and Its. For example:

I Sigmund Freud concentrated on a person's inner self, their individual/subjective "I."	It Charles Darwin showed how the body plan of an individual/ objective "It" evolved.
We Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote about collective/subjective "We" phenomena.	Its Karl Marx illuminated the collective/objective "Its" of economic systems.

Realizing that these four categories represented basic aspects of existence, he arranged them in a four-quadrant "map" of reality, which he introduced in his 1995 book *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*.

In *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, Wilber also traced the progress of evolution through each quadrant, shown in this diagram from the book:



Wilber's quadratic map wasn't just an elegant conceptual representation of reality. It was also a useful tool in that it could be used to understand the basic aspects of any relationship, system, object, or event.

Take, for example, something as mundane as a man spraining his knee. When we ask the question, "Why did he sprain it?" Wilber's map helps us obtain answers that are rich and comprehensive:

I/Self	It/Object
Part of why he sprained his knee… …is that the long drive from work to his house in the suburbs left him mentally tired. When people get mentally tired, they make mistakes like spraining knees.	Part of why he sprained his knee… …is that the knee is a weak point of the human body. It evolved as a suboptimal solution that nonetheless worked well enough to allow us to walk upright.
We/Culture	**Its/System**
Part of why he sprained his knee… …is that his suburban culture values material wealth over physical health. As a result, he sacrifices exercise to work more, so he can make more money.	Part of why he sprained his knee… …is that he works in an economic system that rewards sedentary labor. Because he doesn't get much exercise, he's overweight, which puts stress on his knees.

In creating his quadratic map of reality, Wilber provided a robust conceptual structure for Integral Thought. His work is the foundation upon which this new school of philosophy is built.

In the mid-2000s, Steve McIntosh wrote a book, *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution*, in which he noted that the two fundamental qualities of the universe's life force—known in Eastern philosophical traditions as Yin and Yang—were essential to evolution.

McIntosh observed that evolution generally involves creative oscillation between integration (Yin) and differentiation (Yang). For example, when bacteria differentiated into predator and prey, some of them developed symbiotic relationships and formed a new kind of integrated organism.

Not only were Yin and Yang were essential to evolution in general, he maintained, they were essential to the evolution of consciousness in particular.

Evolution is enabled by Yin and Yang.

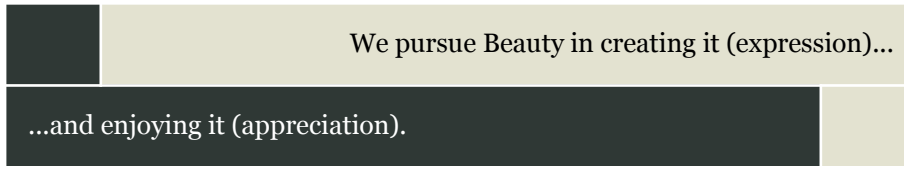
"I want you to simply note this pattern of two opposing forces interacting to produce a transcendence to a new level."

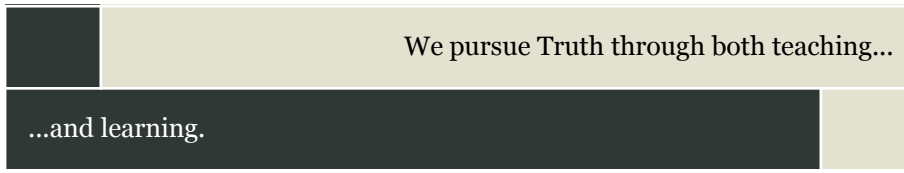
-Steve McIntosh

Yang
Yang is about differentiation, movement, solidity.
It involves masculine qualities.

Yin
Yin is about integration, stillness, fluidity.
It involves feminine qualities.

The evolution of human consciousness, he explained, involves the pursuit of greater Goodness, Beauty, and Truth. It's what induces us to grow as people, and Yin/Yang serve as the in/out "breathing" forces that animate our "metabolism" of these primary values.





In recognizing that Yin and Yang were essential to evolution, McIntosh set the stage for their inclusion in the Integral conceptual model of the universe. When the Integral model includes them, it illustrates not only the four quadrants in which evolution takes place, but the two qualities that enable evolution to occur.

Practical Applications

When U.S. Navy pilot James Stockdale was shot down in the Vietnam War, his first thought was, “I’m leaving the world of technology and entering the world of Epictetus.” It was the Stoic philosophy of Epictetus, he said, that got him through an eight-year stay in a prison camp.

To be considered a step forward in human thought, any school of philosophy should have similar practical value. It should help people survive, thrive, and do worthwhile things they couldn’t do before.

Does Integral Thought have practical value? Yes. It leads to better outcomes wherever it’s applied, such as in personal relationships, organizational dynamics, and mental health.

Personal Relationships

Integral thinkers note that evolution has shaped who we are, not only in our natural social roles, but in the roles we take in one-on-one relationships. One of them is David Deida, a neuroscientist and author who writes about sacred sexuality, intimacy, and romance.

Deida notes that for most people, romantic relationships work best when the roles are polarized. That is, one partner takes a feminine role while the other takes a masculine role. This echoes the divergence of female/male gender roles in humanity's evolutionary past.

What defines a “feminine” or “masculine” role? Deida outlines three stages of romantic relationships in which they’re defined differently. Described in terms of the most common pairing—a predominantly masculine man + a predominantly feminine woman—these stages are:

Stage One: Dependency

The man and woman depend upon each other for support, parenting, or sex. Each seeks to satisfy their own needs.

At this stage, the man uses his Masculine to dominate and the woman employs her Feminine to manipulate. Example: The rich CEO and his trophy wife.

Stage Two: Partnership

The man and woman form an equal partnership that’s warm but unexciting. Each feels supported, but also unfulfilled.

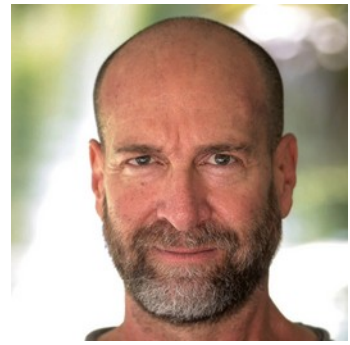
At this stage, the woman channels more Masculine while the man employs more Feminine. Example: The working mom and stay-at-home dad.

Stage Three: Communion

The man and woman share their masculine and feminine gifts through polarized roles. Each exalts and complements the other.

At this stage, the man and woman express their Feminine/Masculine essences in passionate, sacred ways. He’s a “warrior of love” and she’s his “radiant goddess.”

In his book *The Way Of The Superior Man*, Deida points out that most people have a predominantly feminine or masculine essence, and that for them passion is generated in relationships with ample Feminine/Masculine polarity.



David Deida

Expressed again in terms of the predominantly feminine woman + predominantly masculine man, this means that romantic partners should keep a few things in mind:

The Feminine Woman

She lives for love.
A woman is fulfilled through giving and receiving love. This involves her man, but goes beyond him.

Women are not liars.
If she says, "I hate you," it's an expression of her feelings in the moment, not a lasting fact.

Let your feelings flow.
When a woman's waves of emotion get stormy, she should flow with them and express them to her man.

Praise her.
The Feminine grows by praise. To help his woman be more beautiful, a man tells her she *is* beautiful.

The Masculine Man

He lives his purpose.
A man is fulfilled through pursuing his mission. This involves his community and the wider world.

A man's word is his honor.
If he says, "I love you," it should be a true expression of his feelings. If it's not, he's in trouble.

Stand firm in the storm.
When the flow of his woman's feelings gets turbulent, a man should stay present with her.

Challenge him.
The Masculine grows through challenge. To feel a man's strength, a woman tests him for weakness.

Integralists integrate our "dark side."

Part of what distinguishes the Integral worldviews is their integration of our "dark side." In intimate relationships, this takes the form of ravishment. As Deida puts it:

"The dark feminine desire, to be forced to surrender, is as strong as the dark masculine desire to penetrate through a woman's resistance... The desire to ravish is the desire to break through a woman's resistances to open her heart and body into ecstatic loving."

Ravishment doesn't involve the use of force to overcome a woman's "No." It's about giving her the kind of love that turns her "Yes" into an emphatic, ecstatic "Yes!"

Organizational Dynamics

An organization can be as big as a nation, or as small as a sports team. Whatever its size, it can be improved through the application of Integral ideas. That's what Integral theorist Don Beck did when he consulted with Nelson Mandela during South Africa's transition away from apartheid.

By emphasizing the subjective aspects of the situation, and pointing out that the nation's crucial dynamics weren't black/white racial conflicts but rather Tribal/Warrior/Traditional cultural shifts, Beck played an important role in making that transition a peaceful one.

In 1981, Don Beck began visiting South Africa, and saw that his Spiral Dynamics framework for cultural evolution could help the country evolve politically. Around 1990, when South Africa's leaders realized that it needed to move beyond the racial segregation of apartheid, Beck began consulting with them.

Don Beck

Through his writing, lecturing, and TV appearances in South Africa, Beck worked to frame the country's political conflict in terms of the worldviews held by its various social groups: Tribal in the rural areas, Warrior in the townships, and Traditional and Modernist among city dwellers. He said that these were the distinctions that mattered, that they went deeper than race.

When Nelson Mandela became the country's first post-apartheid president in 1994, he sought Beck's advice on how to move forward. Beck told him that trying to set up a Modernist constitutional democracy right away wouldn't work: the country held too many people with Tribal and Warrior worldviews.

Instead, Beck recommended that Mandela first focus on meeting citizens' basic needs in a "decade of development." Its guiding principle, Beck said, should be the tribal concept of *ubuntu*: a bond of sharing that connects all humanity. Mandela adopted policies that reflected his advice, and the country stabilized, becoming both less violent and more prosperous.

In later decades, South Africa's progress slowed because its leaders abandoned Beck's strategy. Nonetheless, Beck's Spiral Dynamics framework played a major part in making it a viable nation.

A key element of Beck's strategy was uniting South Africa through a healthy expression of the Warrior worldview: sports. He convinced both the outgoing president, de Klerk, and the new president, Mandela, that sports presented a way to bring the country together in support of a common goal.

Which sport would be used? Most South Africans were soccer fans, but its Afrikaner ruling class favored rugby, and since the nation needed its Afrikaners on board to move forward, rugby it was. "The only way to speak to the Afrikaner is through religion or rugby," said Beck, "and I chose rugby."

Beck served as team psychologist for the South African National Rugby Team, and prepared a plan to help it win the 1995 Rugby World Cup. In true Integral fashion, his plan emphasized subjective factors. Strong mental preparation, Beck said, would provide the edge the team needed to win the tournament.

This the Springboks did, winning the World Cup by beating New Zealand in the final. Black South Africans supported the team throughout the tournament, and black newspapers, which had previously ignored rugby as a white sport, publicized and cheered the team's victories.

That was partly due to Beck's influence. Before the tournament, he'd recommended that Mandela publicly support the team, which he did. Beck also suggested that the team visit the black townships, which it did, gaining many black fans along the way.

It wasn't just black fans who were won over by Beck's suggestions. He also recommended that African songs be sung by the team's fans, and the mainly white crowds at matches sang the black miners' song "Shosholoza." When Nelson Mandela wore a Springboks team jersey at the World Cup final, many Afrikaners cheered and wept with emotion.

Mental Health

In the 21st century, depression is rampant in American society. Its current generation of adults has four times more depression than their parents, ten times more than their grandparents, and this problem is getting worse, not better: depression is now the leading cause of disability in the U.S.

The Integral approach of therapist Keith Witt points the way toward solving this problem. Unlike the drug-centered treatments that prevail today, Dr. Witt's "bio-psycho-social" therapeutic approach involves all four quadrants—and gets much better results.

Dr. Witt is a clinical psychologist and the author of *Integral Mindfulness*. As an Integral thinker, he's identified why standard drug-based treatments for depression often don't work: they're limited to the Individual quadrants.

Keith Witt

Standard treatments for depression are based upon the view that there's no sickness in a person's mind that can't be cured by medicating their body. Depression should be treated by administering drugs, and if the drugs don't work, just try different drugs.

Dr. Witt's approach to treating depression is very different. He regards it as a complex "bio-psycho-social" condition with roots that aren't so much chemical as cultural and social. The key to effectively treating depression, he maintains, is to recognize its Collective-quadrant aspects. Expressed in terms of the Integral model, his view is that:

Self Many clinicians see depression as a malady of the self…	**Object** …that's caused by chemical imbalances in the body.
Culture But the root cause of depression is a sense of isolation, which arises from a person's weak cultural ties.	**System** Depression is widespread because modern societies make it difficult for people to form strong ties.

Like other Integralists, he looks at things through an evolutionary lens, and explains how cultural evolution contributes to depression. "Modernity produces more depression," he notes. "Tribal groups…have way less depression, way less psychosis of all sorts, less anxiety, because you have a group of people regulating you. Depression is very much involved with socialized relations."

Collective-quadrant therapies work well.

Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its related depression have benefitted from Collective-quadrant treatment approaches like Dr. Witt's.

For example, many ex-soldiers who've attended Native American sweat lodge ceremonies have felt their depression abate after participating in the communal rituals, which include cultural, social, and spiritual elements.

"It's healing right down to the core of that veteran," says Arnold Thomas, the Shoshone Paiute medicine man who conducts the ceremonies for a U.S. Veterans Administration center in Utah.

The Era of Insight

Because we humans are social animals who live in cooperative groups, our interpersonal relationships—our activities in the Culture quadrant—are especially important. Thus, it's cultural evolution that matters most to us.

Our cultural evolution has accelerated over the past few centuries, to the point where there are now two major worldviews vying for supremacy: the Modernist and the Postmodern. Each contributes crucial values and sensibilities—and also creates serious problems.

The emerging Integral worldviews of the Integrative and Holistic represent new levels of cultural evolution. Not only can they help us solve the problems presented by previous worldviews, they can also usher in a "new Enlightenment" that makes civilization more humane and vibrant.

The Age of Reason

When a worldview first appears, it burns brightly for a time, flames out, then reappears later to become the dominant perspective. This happened with the Traditional worldview. It first appeared with the Romans, flamed out with the fall of their empire, then reappeared in Medieval Europe.

The same thing happened with the Modernist worldview. It first appeared in classical Greece, flamed out with the fall of Athens, then reappeared during the Islamic Golden Age. The Modernist worldview sparked the Age of Reason, which supplied the ideas that still animate industrial societies today.

One of the things that distinguished classical Greek culture was the study of philosophy. What is philosophy, exactly? It's the development of ideas about how the universe works (and/or what life means) at the most fundamental, all-encompassing level.

René Descartes

Beginning in the 1300s, the works of the ancient Greek philosophers began to make their way into Europe, and by the 1600s Europeans were developing their own philosophical ideas. In a series of widely-read books, the French philosopher René Descartes argued that the mind and body are completely different types of things. While they may be closely linked, he maintained, the mind and body are essentially separate.

This represented a big departure from the medieval mindset that still prevailed during that time, which melded the Subjective and Objective. For example, the Catholic Church refuted Galileo's discovery of the moons of Jupiter by making a subjective judgment based on an objective fact: it determined that since we had seven holes in our heads (two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, a mouth), there could only be seven planets (including moons) in the cosmos.

Descartes' emphasis on logic and reason contrasted sharply with that sort of thinking. By making a clear distinction between the subjective mind and the objective body, Descartes conceptually detached the subjective observer from what is objectively observed. This enabled Europeans to be "objective" and examine the world scientifically, from the perspective of an outside observer.

With his writings, Descartes freed Europe from the constraints of thought that had been imposed upon it by the Church, and set the tone for the historical era we call the Age of Reason. No longer was faith preeminent, reason was. Truth wasn't received, it was discovered.

Descartes provided an objective perspective.

"It was Descartes who announced the radical split between subject and object that the world has been struggling to come to terms with ever since. He placed the thinking, rational self, the subjective self, in a position distinctly separate from the rest of the universe—the objective world.

"In a sense, we could say that Descartes broke the world in two, metaphysically cleaved it down the center, and the reverberations are still felt today."

-Carter Phipps, author of Evolutionaries

The development of analytic geometry by Descartes (he was a mathematician as well as a philosopher) paved the way for the invention of calculus by Isaac Newton. Newton used his mathematical calculus to formulate some of the physical laws by which things moved in the universe.

Isaac Newton

His *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, published in 1687, described how gravity worked. This book caused a sensation because it not only explained the workings of gravity on Earth, it showed how gravity controlled the movements of other planets. Through Newton, humanity had discerned part of the "blueprint" of the cosmos.

During the Age of Reason, science and mathematics not only revealed some of the natural laws that governed the physical universe, they enabled the creation of a host of new technologies such as the steam engine, improved telescopes, the microscope, and the manned hot air balloon.

The most important of these new technologies was the pendulum clock. It used Newton's second law of motion to keep precise time, and led to the development of another popular piece of technology: the pocket watch. The mechanical watch became the symbol of the age, an object used to illustrate the nature of Nature.

The universe, during the Age of Reason, was seen as essentially mechanistic, like a watch. It was complex, orderly, and operated with precision according to mathematical laws. It was the creation of a "divine watchmaker" who first designed it, then set it in motion.

It followed that if you wanted to understand things, you needed to break them down into their component parts, like disassembling a watch. This was evident in the work of Enlightenment physiologists, who dissected the human body and diagrammed its various systems.

The mind? It was regarded as a spooky, supernatural phenomenon. That's because the philosophy characteristic of the Age of Reason—scientific materialism—held that only observable, tangible things are real.

Newton's discoveries drive the modern world.

The preeminent English poet of the Enlightenment, Alexander Pope, expressed his culture's high esteem for Isaac Newton when he wrote:

Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night/God said, Let Newton be! and all was light.

Newton's contributions are still important today. When the Apollo 8 spacecraft was returning from the moon, and a NASA technician's son asked who was driving it, astronaut William Anders replied:

"I think Isaac Newton is doing most of the driving now."

The Modern World

Each new worldview builds upon the success of the previous one, and arises to solve the problems it presents. The Modernist worldview, for example, was built upon a foundation of Traditional stability, and solved problems presented by Traditional conformity.

In its turn, the Modernist worldview became problematic, and the ideas that would spawn new worldviews began to emerge. People began exploring the subjective realm of the mind, and developing the outlines of a radical new idea: evolution.

Around 1800, a German philosopher named Georg Hegel began advancing ideas that contradicted the conventional wisdom of the Enlightenment. He maintained that history unfolded not in orderly, linear fashion, but according to a contentious back-and-forth process that he called the dialectic. In Hegel's dialectic:

Although he never used the word evolution, Hegel described an evolutionary process, and his ideas influenced later thinkers.

1. An organizing idea emerges, such as when the French king Louis XIV said, "L'Etat c'est moi" ("I am the state").

2. Then an opposite idea emerges in response, such as the motto, "Liberté, Fraternité, Égalité" ("We are the state").

3. When the two ideas are reconciled, they form a new organizing idea, as in France's Second Republic: "Separation of powers benefits the state."

Hegel was ahead of his time in that his dialectical theory of history prefigures a central feature of Don Beck's model of cultural evolution: the oscillation between worldviews with Individual and Collective orientations.

The Warrior worldview enables the individual to transcend the tribe and take heroic action.

When Warrior initiative turns destructive, the Traditional worldview provides collective order.

When Traditional order becomes stifling, the Modernist worldview liberates the individual.

When Modernist liberty allows exploitation, the Postmodern worldview brings collective care.

The main message conveyed by Hegel was that the universe isn't a tidy clockwork set to run, but rather a dynamic system that changes over time.

In the second half of the 1800s, the "social sciences" emerged: anthropology, archaeology, sociology, and psychology. Around the turn of that century, two pioneering psychologists—Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung—set out to map the systems of the human mind.

Freud thought of the mind as having three levels: conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. According to him, our conscious thoughts were influenced by our subconscious memories, and even more so by our unconscious fears and desires. In his view, the unconscious was a hidden repository of violent, immoral urges that shaped our conscious behaviors.

Jung agreed with Freud that the mind has conscious and unconscious aspects, and that the unconscious was important. Jung, however, had a very different view of what the unconscious is and does. He saw it as the mind's core, a powerful center of instinctual wisdom that helps us navigate the deepest and most meaningful currents of life.

The unconscious reveals the richness of life.

"The more the critical reason dominates, the more impoverished life becomes; but the more of the unconscious and the more of myth we are capable of making conscious, the more of life we integrate."

-Carl Jung

A mystic as well as a scientist, Jung delved into his own unconscious to try and reveal truths that science alone couldn't uncover. He also helped other people do the same. The physicist Wolfgang Pauli sought Jung's help in analyzing his dreams, and Pauli said that their sessions helped him be more creative in his scientific work.

Jung and Pauli later co-authored a book, *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche*, that explored what Jung called "the no-mans-land between physics and the psychology of the unconscious." And it was a no-mans-land. Many of Jung's colleagues criticized him for being unscientific, as many psychologists still do. But it's his synthesis of spirituality and science that endears him to Integral philosophers, such as Ken Wilber and Steve McIntosh, who've been inspired by spiritual experiences of their own.

In the 20th Century, the same Modernist worldview that enabled humanity to do constructive things, such as build telephone networks, also enabled it to do destructive things, like wage global wars. That world is still with us, and while it's wonderful in many ways, it's also callous and unstable.

This is evident in the most abstract of the modern world's vital systems: finance. A market crash in 1929 plunged millions into poverty, and a fund bankruptcy in 1998 almost did it again. It was in finance where the Enlightenment philosophy that still prevails today—scientific materialism—failed on its own terms.

Long Term Capital Management was an investment fund with a trading strategy informed by scientific materialism.

LTCM considered financial markets to be more-complex versions of the objective systems that Newton described. It followed, then, that the right algorithms could predict their movements. So, the fund hired a slew of world-class scientists, gave them supercomputers, and had them create its trading algorithms.

Objectively, this strategy failed. In 1998, LTCM lost over $4 billion and went bankrupt, which almost collapsed the global banking system.

Why did LTCM fail? Because, as is the case with scientific materialism, the firm focused on the Objective while neglecting the Subjective.

The Quantum Fund, another investment fund, traded according to a very different concept, that of reflexivity.

Quantum's founding partners realized that financial markets are primarily moved by subjective phenomena. That is, people buy and sell based on their inner thoughts and feelings. More importantly, every person's thoughts and feelings affect those of many others. This means that markets are "reflexive."

Objectively, this approach succeeded. Quantum made almost $2 billion in 1992, and over $30 billion through 2010.

Why did Quantum succeed? Because, as is the case with Integral Thought, the firm recognized the importance of the Subjective.

Postmodern Culture

The Modernist worldview has spawned serious, pressing problems. Modern nations, run according to a mechanized mindset, are generating wealth inequality that's destabilizing societies worldwide, and corporatized science is damaging the biosphere upon which we depend.

Fortunately, the Postmodern worldview has arisen to call attention to these problems. It first appeared with the "social conscience" movements of the 1960s, then became established in the 1990s. It represents positive progress in that it restores the Collective, recognizes the Subjective, and opposes harmful hierarchies.

The Postmodern worldview represents an evolutionary step forward in that:

It restores the Collective.

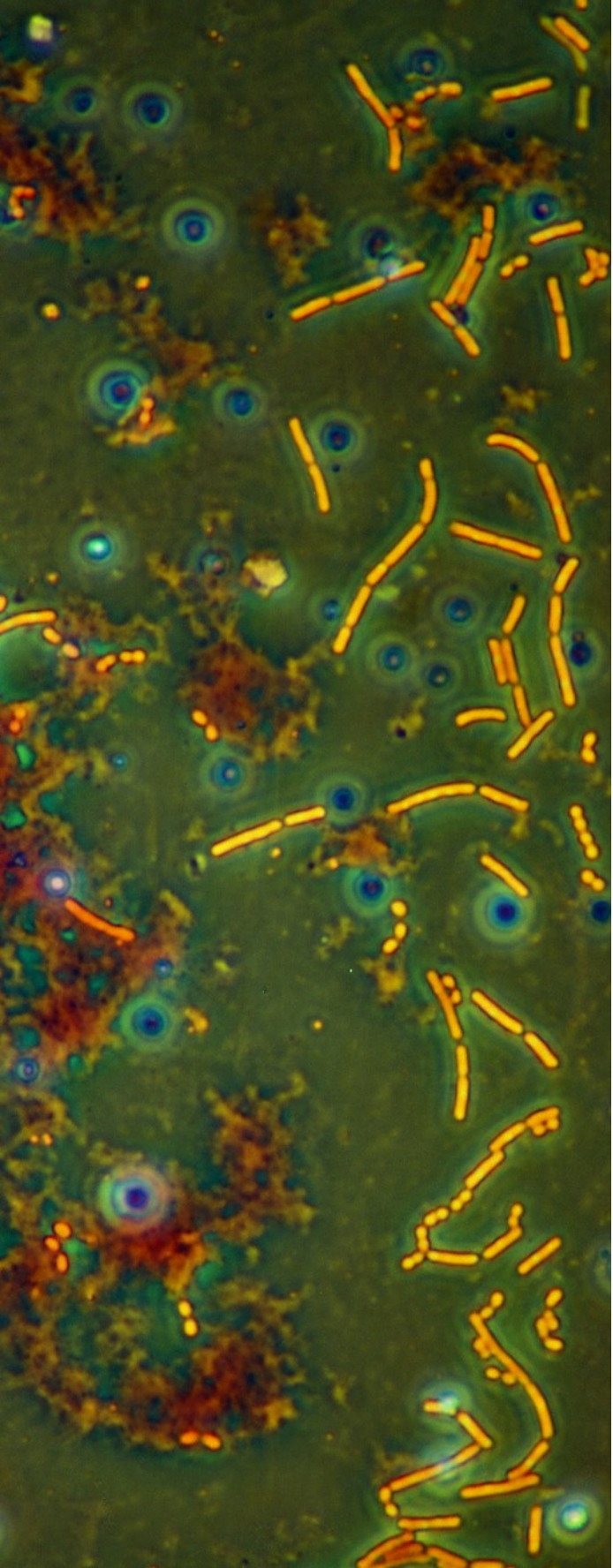
Where the Modernist worldview focuses on the Individual, the Postmodern emphasizes the Collective. For example, people with this worldview don't usually found private corporations. Instead, they often form employee-owned cooperatives.

It recognizes the Subjective.

Where the Modernist worldview observes Objective facts, the Postmodern recognizes Subjective values. It goes beyond the question, "What have I seen?" to ask, "What does it mean?" People with this worldview want to do things that are socially valuable.

It opposes harmful hierarchies.

Where the Modernist worldview lauds elites who "reach the top," the Postmodern notes that they're often exploitative. People with this worldview don't like command-and-control hierarchies. Instead, they favor organizations that distribute power.



Postmodern-era science: cooperation is key.

When the concept of evolution first gained scientific currency in the late 1800s, it did so in Modernist cultures that emphasized competition. Since nature was seen as "red in tooth and claw," evolution was considered to be about "survival of the fittest" competition.

As the Postmodern era dawned in the 1960s, scientists began to see that evolution also involved cooperation. For example, biologist Lynn Margulis showed that the nucleated cell —the basis of all advanced life on Earth—resulted from single-celled organisms forming cooperative arrangements.

Unfortunately, the Postmodern worldview can introduce problems of its own:

It can recognize only the Collective.

When it insists upon consensus-based decision-making, the Postmodern can make meetings seem endless. It also makes itself ineffectual. Since it eschews the leadership structures that help achieve concrete goals, it settles for "raising consciousness" instead.

It can make everything subjective.

One Postmodern insight is that truth can be subjective: what's true for me may not be true for you. But when the Postmodern asserts that *all* truth is subjective, the result is nihilism that reveals "nothing but its own egoic nastiness," in Ken Wilber's words.

It can oppose all hierarchies.

The Postmodern can oppose noxious Dominator and healthy Development hierarchies alike. When it attempts to eradicate the "authoritarian" Traditional and "exploitative" Modernist worldviews, it cuts people off from the good things they offer.

Postmodern-era science: hierarchies are invalid.

Scientists with a Postmodern worldview often reject the idea that evolution involves progress from "lower" to "higher" forms of life. As the biologist Steven Jay Gould puts it:

"If an amoeba is as well adapted to its environment as we are to ours, who is to say that we are higher creatures?"

Most of us would feel better about killing a thousand amoebas than a thousand humans, but the Postmodern, in its antipathy to hierarchy, often shrinks from making these sorts of distinctions.

The Integral Era

Integral thought moves humanity past the limitations of the Modernist and Postmodern. It identifies their conceptual flaws, and lays the intellectual foundation for the next stages of our cultural evolution: the Integrative and Holistic worldviews.

These new worldviews are important. They can restore our sense of purpose, and enable us to evolve better societies through insight instead of trial-and-error. They provide a new reality frame that helps us, as the Integral philosopher Steve McIntosh says, “feel more at home in the universe.”

Integral thought points out the flaws of the Modernist.

The Modernist worldview allows us to look at things objectively by separating the Subjective and Objective. That's good. What's bad is that the Modernist often collapses the Subjective into the Objective. That is, the Modernist can turn the "I" into an "It."

The Modernist can convert subjects into objects. Modern hospitals provide a good example of this: when you're admitted, you're put into a wheelchair and carted around, even if you can walk comfortably. You're not treated as an "I," but rather as an "It," a broken object to be fixed.

Integral thinkers know why the Modernist can exhibit this kind of insensitivity. It's because that worldview tends to dissociate the primary values of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth.

When a person holds a Modernist worldview, they're most concerned with discovering what's true. They're typically not as concerned with discerning what's beautiful, or defining what's good. In Ken Wilber's words, they're constrained by a worldview that has "rejected consciousness and morals in favor of science."

The pursuit of science has produced spectacularly tangible results: men on the moon, a cure for polio, iPhones. So, the modern world's focus on "It" science instead of "I" consciousness is understandable. This focus is not, however, desirable.

Collapsing the Subjective into the Objective, and dissociating Truth from Beauty and Goodness, creates a culture in which leaders talk at people, not with them. Things get bigger, but seldom better. Anything goes, but nothing matters. When one takes an Integral perspective, these pitfalls of the Modernist worldview are clearly seen.

The Modernist can devalue the universe.

"If you describe everything in terms of quantitities and objective exteriors...if you start treating the entire world as an object, you strip it of all value, guaranteed. You have disqualified the Kosmos.

"And when you are done with that, and you pause to look around, you find to your utter horror that you are standing in a flat and faded universe, with no meaning, no depth, no interpretation, no beauty, no goodness, no virtue..."

-Ken Wilber

Integral thought moves us past the Postmodern.

At its best, the Postmodern restores an important equality. Where the Modernist dissociates the three primary values, the Postmodern integrates them, holding the subjective values of Goodness and Beauty in the same regard as objective Truth.

At its worst, the Postmodern enforces an oppressive equality. It can turn the "I" into a "We." Postmodern colleges provide a good example of this: when you come on campus, you're seen only in terms of your culture or group. You're not treated as an "I" individual, but simply as a product, tool, or victim of a "We" race, gender, or worldview.

Integral thinkers note that this position exposes a logical contradiction: if no one can transcend their worldview and think for themselves, is this not also true for someone with a Postmodern worldview?

To avoid that question, the Postmodern employs something it denounces: cultural elitism. It denies the validity of hierarchy, yet it places itself above other worldviews. It condemns value judgments as "patriarchal," yet it makes them when it judges other worldviews to be insufficiently sensitive, compassionate, etc. As Wilber puts it:

> It says all worldviews are arbitrary, all truth is relative and merely culture-bound... But that stance itself claims to be universally true. It is claiming everybody's truth is relative except mine... I alone have the universal truth, and all you poor schmucks are relative and culture-bound.
>
> This is the massive contradiction hidden in all extreme multicultural postmodern movements. And their absolute truth ends up being very ideological, very power-hungry, very elitist in the worst sense.

The Postmodern can foster oppression.

In cultures where Postmodern sensibilities prevail, gender equality is sometimes taken to an unnatural extreme. This makes both men and women feel oppressed in spirit.

In these cultures, men often feel stifled. They're praised for exhibiting feminine sensitivity, but censured for displaying masculine strength. At the same time, women often feel frustrated. Even if they'd prefer to relax into feminine relationship, they're told to strive for masculine independence.

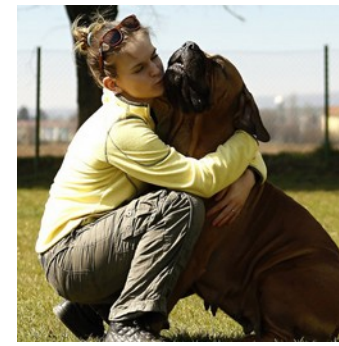
This results in men and women who can't give each other what they need. Men become too soft to make women feel secure, while women become too hard to make men feel loved.

Integral thought renews our sense of purpose.

In 1996, the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace expressed the modern world's prevailing attitude when she wrote in an editorial, "Human life is a cosmic accident with no purpose." According to this mindset, the universe is mostly dead matter, and humans are a fluke.

People with Integrative and Holistic worldviews have a very different take on humanity. They'd write something like, "Human life is a natural part of the cosmos, and has a special purpose." In Integral Thought, the universe is a living system in which humans are important.

Why do Integral thinkers hold that human life is imbued with meaning and purpose? Their thinking goes like this: Consciousness accelerates evolution, and humans represent the most advanced consciousness on this planet. Thus, humans are at the leading edge of evolution in this corner of the universe. Since evolution is the universe's "main event," humanity has an important part to play in the grand scheme of things.



Many Integralists think that our "job" as humans is to be good stewards of evolution. In its raw, wild form, the evolutionary impulse brings suffering to creatures struggling to survive, but since base survival isn't an issue for most humans, we have a duty to try and "tame" evolution in our sphere. When it comes to culture and society, we should substitute kindness for cruelty, foster creativity, and cultivate love.

This doesn't mean that we should impose these values upon others. For instance, we shouldn't try to stop tribal people from hunting animals for food. That would violate the "prime directive," a guiding principle from *Star Trek* that's often cited as an illustration of Integral values. According to this principle, cultures should be allowed to evolve naturally, according to their own collective will, with minimal interference from more powerful groups.

Integral thinkers note that we humans are capable of conscious evolution. We can choose how our species and others will evolve. This means that Integral Thought not only renews our sense of purpose, it imparts a sense of responsibility. Right now we're behaving irresponsibly, as humans are doing significant damage to the Earth's biosphere.

Why are we doing this? Not to meet objective survival needs, but to fulfill subjective cultural wants. Thus, a degraded biosphere is, as Steve McIntosh puts it, "a problem of consciousness." Integral thought is important to humanity's future because it shows how our consciousness must evolve to tackle this problem. We'll need to:

- Adopt new worldviews. The root cause of biosphere degradation is the negative expression of the Modernist worldview, but even a positive expression of it can't turn things around. "Science will save us," goes the Modernist cry, but unless we invent technology that somehow bends or breaks the laws of thermodynamics, that's unlikely to happen.

  Nor can other prevalent worldviews offer a solution. The Traditional view that "God will punish us" is a dead end, as is the Postmodern belief that "Nature should expunge us." It'll take Integrative confidence to make a healthy biosphere a priority, and Holistic awareness to make it stick.

- Recognize the opportunity. Integral thinkers note that things evolve through stress. So, this situation isn't all bad, as it provides the impetus for cultural evolution. As the Postmodern proves ineffectual at addressing our biosphere problem, people will be impelled to move past it and adopt Integral worldviews.

  History shows that when 10% of a population adopts a new worldview, social change occurs. Slavery ended in the U.S. when 10% of Americans thought in Modernist terms. The environmental movement was born when 10% took a Postmodern perspective. When 10% hold an Integrative worldview, we'll begin building a new, sustainable way of life.

Integral thought informs a different kind of leadership.

When it comes to leadership, Integrally-minded people are different. They lead in uncommon ways, and operate differently than leaders who exemplify previous worldviews.

At the levels of the Tribal through Postmodern, exemplary leaders reflect the values that prevail. They wield divine and/or temporal power, and operate mostly in the Objective realm:

- Strong chiefs: The Tribal leader Tatanka Iyotake led his Lakota tribe to victory at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.
- Legendary warriors: The Warrior king David, as a young man, defeated a much larger enemy soldier, Goliath, in single combat.
- Divine messengers: The Traditional prophet Mohammed received revelations, recorded them, then preached them to his people.
- Scientific explorers: The Modernist astronomer Galileo made many astronomical discoveries, and was a pioneer of modern science.
- Social reformers: The Postmodern paragon Gandhi used nonviolent resistance to free his country from imperial rule.

At the Integral levels of the Integrative and Holistic, exemplary people aren't leaders in a conventional sense. They don't so much wield power as exert influence, and they concentrate on the Subjective realm:

- Spiral wizards: The Integrative consultant Don Beck used his ideas about cultural evolution to foster peace.
- Spiritual guides: The Holistic teacher Alan Watts made Eastern philosophy relevant to Western audiences.

Yoda, the Jedi master from the Star Wars movies, is a good example of an Integral leader.

Don Beck saw the various worldviews as occupying positions on a widening spiral, with each successive worldview bringing a broader perspective. He referred to people at the Integrative level who can move skillfully among different worldviews as "spiral wizards."

Spiral wizards are good at identifying the worldviews present within people and organizations, and they use that ability to make human systems work more smoothly.

People generally like spiral wizards because they operate according to the principle of POA: Politeness, Openness, and Autocracy. They're polite, showing genuine interest in people and treating them with respect. They're open, sharing information with others in honest and forthright ways. They're also autocratic, acting independently and taking charge when necessary.

Like the wizards of legend, spiral wizards observe natural flows and rhythms. They know when to press forward and when to back off, where a kind word works wonders and where a swift kick is needed.

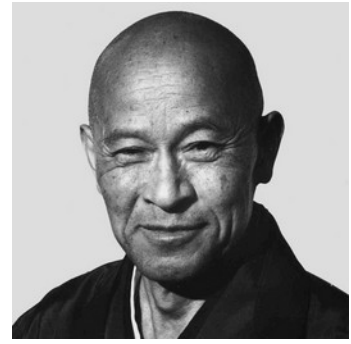
Spiral wizards tend to keep a low profile, because people who believe their own worldview is the best/final one can be threatened by the implication that it's not. When asked, "Who are you?" a spiral wizard may say something like, "I'm nobody, really. Just a regular guy who likes to watch football."

That's who Don Beck was: a spiral wizard who liked to watch football. His friend and fellow Integralist Carter Phipps says about him:

> I grew up in Oklahoma, so I know something about that unique species of American male known as Texans. First, they tend to have a chip on their shoulder and an independent streak. Beck has both in spades. And second, they love football. So during those first encounters with Beck and Spiral Dynamics, my colleagues and I would spend hours and hours discussing the ins and outs of evolutionary stages…then he and I would slip away, find a television, and watch college football.

In the 1960s, when a growing number of Americans were seeking an alternative spirituality, many self-styled gurus sought to lead them down a particular spiritual path. Alan Watts did not. He merely described three paths that were available—Zen Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism—then encouraged people to explore them. In essence, he served as a spiritual guide.

He was an uncommonly gentle and well-grounded one. While he operated at a Holistic level of consciousness, he laughed at the suggestion that he himself was a guru or sage. His tone was more comforting than challenging, and when he spoke of what he called "ultimate things," he did so in a down-to-earth way.



Shunryu Suzuki was a Zen Buddhist monk who came to America in 1959. When one of his students disparaged Alan Watts as a mere popularizer of Zen, Suzuki corrected him, saying, "You should notice what he has done. He is a great bodhisattva."

Although many people in the 1960s counterculture considered him one of its leading figures, he avoided its excesses. For example, he cautioned people against the use of psychedelic drugs: "Psychedelic experience is only a glimpse of genuine mystical insight...If you get the message, hang up the phone."

Watts embodied Zen sensibilities in that he appreciated discipline and structure. He kept the atmosphere at his lectures loose and light-hearted, but would enforce order when necessary. Whenever an audience member attempted to interrupt him, he'd shut them down quickly and firmly, then ask them to hold their question until after he'd finished.

Good spiritual guides don't take themselves too seriously, and Watts certainly didn't, describing himself as a "philosophical entertainer." When the writer Aldous Huxley first met him, he got that impression and remarked, "What a curious man. Half monk and half race-course operator." When Watts was informed of Huxley's assesment, he said, "He got me exactly right," and the two became fast friends.

What about Ken Wilber, the progenitor of Integral Thought? Is he a spiral wizard, or a spiritual guide? He's neither, really. He's a kind of hero, but not the kind we usually think of. He hasn't pulled anyone from a burning building, for instance. His ideas have, however, pulled us into a deeper understanding of our world.

Wilber's personal story parallels that of a hero whose journey is relevant to us today: Parsifal. In the tale of Parsifal, the young man, dressed as a fool, sets out to become a knight. He displays prowess as a warrior, but instead of joining the Knights of the Round Table he sets out alone to find the Holy Grail, a magical chalice that symbolizes balance and harmony. Through a series of adventures, Parsifal gains the wisdom necessary to heal his culture's wounds, and becomes the keeper of the Grail.

Every hero has his flaws, and Wilber does, too. He can be combative when defending his work, and he sometimes gets scientific details wrong. These weaknesses, however, are tied to his strengths. He's got the warrior spirit needed to work through adversity, and the generalist perspective needed to synthesize new ideas.

Like Parsifal, Wilber displayed "warrior" prowess: he was captain of his high school football team. He did something "foolish" when he dropped out of Duke University to study Eastern philosophy on his own. Instead of joining a scholarly Round Table in academia, he set out alone to find his own Grail—the universe's underlying conceptual structure.

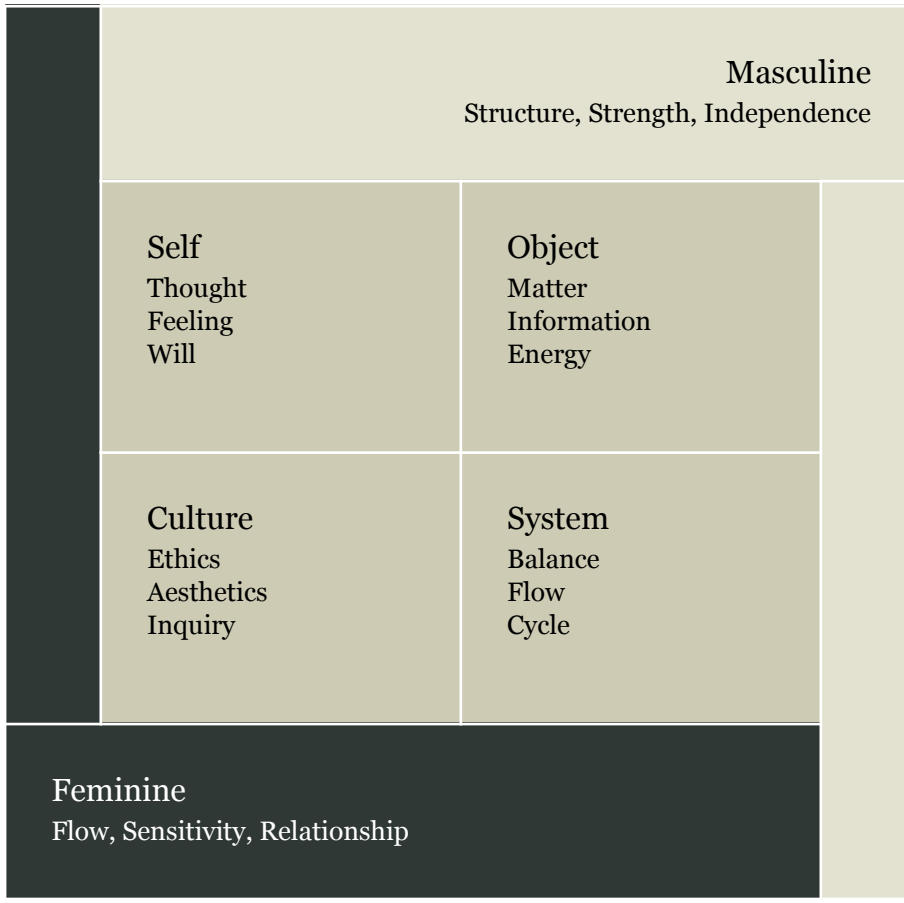
His adventures included washing dishes to pay the bills, having a week-long mystical experience, and living in seclusion for three years while developing his four-quadrant map of reality. By taking this path, which also included a lot of rigorous scholarship, he gained the insights necessary to found a new school of philosophy.

It's also worth noting that the people who meet Wilber think he's a good guy. According to his fellow Integral philosopher Steve McIntosh, he's "friendly, extremely funny, firmly self-possessed, and, of course, brilliant."

Integral thought can guide our civilization.

Can this school of philosophy founded by Wilber, like the wisdom gained by Parsifal, be used to heal our culture's wounds? Yes. Integral Thought can help us think beyond the Modernist and bring the Subjective and Objective into balance. It can help us see past the Postmodern and foster a new harmony of the Individual and Collective.

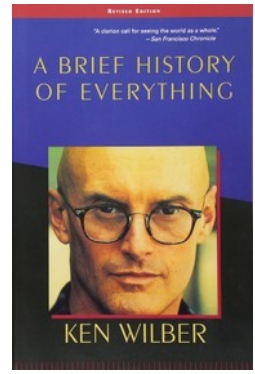
In illustrating our world's basic aspects, the Integral model enables us to diagnose the ills of our society at a fundamental level, and in a comprehensive way. This model is more than a diagnostic tool, however. It's also a navigational aid, a conceptual map-and-compass that we can use to guide our civilization into calmer, more fertile, more beautiful waters.



Further Reading

This book you're reading provides an overview of Integral Thought. The books below explain it in greater detail. If you'd like to explore more Integral ideas, more thoroughly, you'll want to read them.

A Brief History of Everything

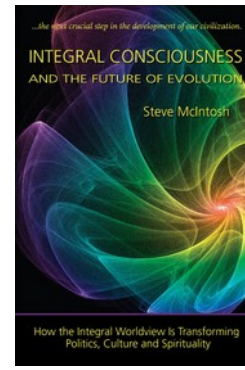


This book, written in 1996, is a shorter, more reader-friendly version of *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, the book by Ken Wilber that established Integral Thought as a new school of philosophy. In *A Brief History of Everything*, the philosophical ideas in his longer work are presented full-force, but in more concise language. Most books written by philosophers are dense, tough reading, but this one is not.

In this book, Wilber presents his four-quadrant conceptual map of reality, discusses the holonic (whole/part) nature of the universe, and describes the evolution of consciousness. The ideas he presents go far beyond these topics, however. Developmental psychology, biology, anthropology, linguistics, classical philosophy—he draws upon these and other fields of inquiry to construct a compelling "theory of everything" that has evolution at its core.

If you've studied the "big name" Western philosophers, this book will make their ideas seem valuable but incomplete. It both includes and transcends their work, relating new insights that read as self-evident truths. When it comes to Integral Thought, this is the book that started it all.

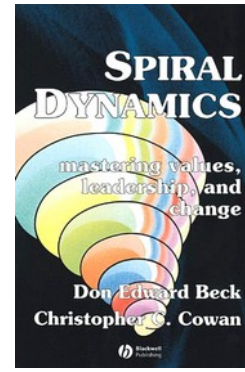
Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution



If Ken Wilber is the creative Dionysus of Integral Thought, Steve McIntosh is its rational Apollo. His book *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution*, written in 2007, provides a systematic overview of Integral ideas. Trained as a lawyer, McIntosh builds a good case for Integralism as a significant advance in human thought.

His book focuses not on the static structure of the cosmos, but on its dynamic evolution. It explores the workings of evolution, with an emphasis on consciousness and culture. In it, McIntosh makes strong contributions to Integral Thought, not only in his observation that Yin and Yang drive the evolution of consciousness, but in his argument that volition plays a major part in that process.

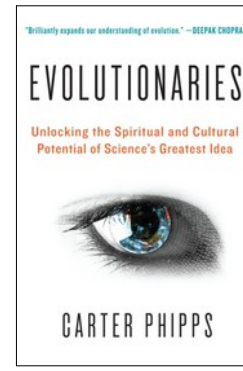
Spiral Dynamics



This 1996 book by Don Beck and his collaborator Chris Cowan takes Clare Graves' ideas on cultural evolution and makes them easy to understand. It uses color codes to organize the various worldviews, then describes them using examples from everyday life. You "meet" people who exemplify each worldview, and as you review their characteristics you'll recognize their mindsets—except now you'll understand why they think the way they do.

Spiral Dynamics outlines the strengths and limitations that come with each worldview, and explains the process by which we progress (and regress) from one to another. As a manual for understanding the cultural values that motivate people, this book is practically useful. As a guide to negotiating large-scale change within and among cultures, it's profoundly important.

Evolutionaries



This book, written by Carter Phipps in 2012, profiles the people whose research and ideas have informed Integral Thought. Some of them aren't mentioned in the book you're reading now, scientists like Elisabet Sahtouris, who went far beyond Darwin in figuring out how evolution works, and thinkers such as Jean Gebser, who traced the evolution of consciousness.

Evolutionaries introduces the reader to the leading figures of Integral Thought—Ken Wilber, Don Beck, Steve McIntosh—and provides clear, concise descriptions of their work. It also explores the spiritual implications of evolution, presenting the ideas of other Integral thinkers who are evaluating our role in an evolving universe—a place where, to paraphrase Wilber, dirt got up and wrote poetry.

Credits

Cover: *Light Field Rendering*, Android Jones, 2017
Page 4: Stock photo of compass, Shutterstock
Page 6: Stock photo of nautilus shell, Shutterstock
Page 8: Stock photos of earth, anemone, and people, Wikipedia
Page 16: Stock photo of quadrants, Shutterstock
Page 18: Stock photo of person, Shutterstock
Page 20: Photograph of boy leaping, Wikimedia
Page 21: Stock photo of rock, Pexels
Page 23: Illustration of the brain, iStockphoto
Page 24: Stock photo of women, Shutterstock
Page 26: Photograph of tribal women, Wikimedia
Page 26: Photograph of muhajeddin, Wikimedia
Page 26: Stock photo of Buddhist monks, Pxhere
Page 27: Photograph of prison inmate, U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Page 27: Stock photo of church parishioner, Pxhere
Page 27: Stock photo of businessman, Pxhere
Page 30: Photograph of coral reef, Wikimedia
Page 31: Illustration of human body, Wikimedia
Page 32: Photograph of Walter Gropius, photographer unknown
Page 32: Photograph of the Bauhaus, Wikipedia
Page 33: Photograph of Magellanic cloud, Wikipedia
Page 36: Painting of koi fish, painter unknown
Page 40: Painting of Charles Darwin by John Collier, 1883
Page 42: Photograph of night sky, Wikipedia
Page 43: Photograph of Alfred North Whitehead, photographer unknown
Page 44: Photograph of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, photographer unknown
Page 45: Illustration of consciousness, stock
Page 46: Photograph of James Mark Baldwin, photographer unknown
Page 47: Photograph of Clare Graves, photographer unknown
Page 48: Painting from *The Red Book*, Carl Jung, circa 1920
Page 49: Photograph of Carl Jung, photographer unknown
Page 50: Photograph of Joseph Campbell, photographer unknown
Page 51: Painting of the goddess Durga, Indian, 18th Century
Page 52: Photograph of Alan Watts, photographer unknown
Page 53: Photograph of Ken Wilber, photographer unknown
Page 54: Stock photo of bookshelf, pexels.com
Page 58: Photograph of Steve McIntosh, stevemcintosh.com
Page 60: *Icarus*, Henri Matisse, 1947
Page 62: Stock photo of couple, Pexels.com
Page 63: Still from the television show *Mad Men*

Page 63: Stock photo of woman and man, Shutterstock
Page 63: Stock photo of couple, PXHere.com
Page 66: Photograph of Nelson Mandela and Francois Pienaar, photog. unknown
Page 67: Photograph of Don Beck, Wikipedia
Page 67: Photograph of African children, Shutterstock
Page 68: Photograph of South African rugby player, photographer unknown
Page 68: Photograph of Nelson Mandela, photographer unknown
Page 69: Stock photo of woman, Pexels.com
Page 70: Photograph of Keith Witt, drkeithwitt.com
Page 71: Photograph of sweat lodge, Public Domain Pictures
Page 72: Illustration of insight, Shutterstock
Page 74: Photograph of clockworks, iStockphoto
Page 75: Portrait of Rene Descartes, Frans Hals, 1649
Page 76: Stock photo of girl with telescope, Shutterstock
Page 77: Portrait of Isaac Newton, Sir Godfrey Kneller, 1702
Page 78: Photograph of the moon from space, NASA, 1968
Page 79: Photograph of New York City, Wikipedia
Page 80: Drawing of Georg Hegel, artist unknown
Page 81: Painting from *The Red Book*, Carl Jung, circa 1920
Page 82: Photograph of skyscrapers, Wikipedia
Page 83: Photograph of pride flag, Wikipedia
Page 84: Photograph of employees, Gearmotion, Inc.
Page 84: Photograph of man and girl, Scott Neeson
Page 84: Stock photo of people around conference table
Page 85: Photograph of *toxoplasma gondii*, Wikipedia
Page 86: Photograph of woman demonstrating, Wikipedia
Page 86: Photograph of King Diamond, Wikipedia
Page 86: Photograph of woman yelling, photographer unknown
Page 87: Photograph of atomic weapons test, Wikipedia
Page 88: Photograph of Glory Chapel, Rawpixel
Page 89: Stock photo of wheelchair
Page 90: Stock photo of skyscraper, Pxhere
Page 91: Photograph of Versailles, Chris Waits
Page 92: Stock photo of stressed woman
Page 93: Photograph of woman holding dog, Pxhere
Page 94: Stock photo of sprouting plant, Public Domain Pictures
Page 95: Still from *The Empire Strikes Back*, 1980
Page 96: Still from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 2001
Page 97: Photograph of Shunryu Suzuki, photographer unknown
Page 98: Still from Ken Wilber presentation, 2005