

The Enneagram and Ken Wilber's Integral Kosmology

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Six months after the *Enneagram Monthly* began publication, an interesting debate appeared in its pages between Ken Huffman and Robert Frager: "Subjective vs. Objective: Searching for Common Ground." ¹

Each author presented arguments about how we should approach our study of the enneagram. Huffman focused on the importance of intuition, creativity, and intersubjective sharing of ideas while Frager pointed out the benefits of research and testing, as well as the limits of human intuition. Both articles were well-reasoned and intelligently written. It would have been difficult to decide which of the arguments deserved to win the day.

But the most interesting things I read on the debate was in the "From the Editors" column:

Please note how as an "amateur's advocate," Ken Huffman is horrified at the prospect of the Enneagram becoming a "guilded and unionized" profession, while Robert Frager (as a scientist) is concerned with factual errors that would distort truths to the point of becoming meaningless. Both are right, of course.

It was the last line that caught my eye: "Both are right, of course."

Are they really? Are both approaches right? If they are, then why bother having a debate at all?

Well, a debate is useful for getting ideas out on the table and forcing people to really think about the issues. So a successful debate would be one that stimulates a lot of individual thought and group discussion.

I liked the "objective vs. subjective" debate in the *EM* because it did just that: it stimulated a lot of reader reaction and follow-up discussion in the months to come. But what it did not do was to resolve the "objective vs. subjective" question. Neither argument clearly prevailed in the end.

Why is this? Is it because none of the debaters had sufficient rhetorical skill to win the day? Or is it just as the editors observed at the very start—because "both are right."

The idea of having a debate to determine which idea is really right is an example of *either/or* thinking. This is based on a competitive model of reality, and it's common in American culture. We place competing ideas in the arena and let them all "slug it out" until one is declared the victor.

But there is an alternative approach: *both/and* thinking. This is based on a pluralistic view of reality. Using this model, we don't assume that only one idea has to be best. We evaluate each approach on its own merits.

I see the *both/and* approach as central to enneagram work. It's central because the whole premise of what we do is that there is no one right point of view—there are at least nine! What is "right" depends upon one's purposes and priorities.

Both/and thinking is also central to Ken Wilber's integral philosophy of life. It's based on the idea that everything in life is "holonic"—that is, that everything plays the role of both a part and a whole. When something is seen as just a part, it can look incomplete; when it's seen as the whole, it can look like the best or only choice. But when we can hold both perspectives simultaneously, two things happen: we begin to appreciate the paradoxical nature of life and to develop the kind of awareness that we need to grapple with multidimensional realities.

In this article, I explore this perspective in greater depth, because it forms the foundation for much of Ken Wilber's current work. Although my main focus in this article is on how the enneagram community can benefit from adopting a more integral framework, I also talk about ways that Wilber's "integral community" can benefit from the insights of our work with the enneagram.

An Integral Philosophy of Life

A *both/and* approach to life is multidimensional in nature. It reflects a view of reality that's both intriguing and paradoxical—a view particularly well-represented by Ken Wilber's integral philosophy of life.

Wilber has been working for the past 30 years on his philosophy. He originally referred to this work as the Atman Project, referring to the spiritual quest to realize the Self (the Atman). Wilber was not entirely satisfied with existing cosmologies and decided to see whether he could create a more comprehensive alternative. His goal was to create “an integral philosophy that would believably weave together the many pluralistic contexts of science, morals, aesthetics, Eastern as well as Western philosophy, and the world's great wisdom traditions.”²

Wilber wrote his first book detailing his integral philosophy, *The Spectrum of Consciousness*, in 1977. He's continued to develop his ideas ever since, recently publishing his 23rd book on the topic, *Integral Spirituality*. His goal has been to develop a framework capable of adequately describing how human consciousness develops and evolves. This is quite a project, which is probably why he's had to write so many books!

I didn't start reading Wilber's books until about seven years ago. Before then, I knew just enough about his work to avoid it. To contemplate reading Ken Wilber was like undertaking the study of 19th century Russian literature: it just seemed like too big a task to take on unless you had at least six months for deep reflection.

I don't know whether I ever would have gotten around to reading Ken Wilber if I hadn't encountered his autobiography, *One Taste: Daily Reflections on Integral Spirituality* (2000). I like autobiographies, because I find them easy to follow and emotionally resonant. They often reveal things about people that you'd never figure out from reading their other work.

Fortunately for me, Wilber's biography was a little more than a biography—it was a brief introduction to his work. Interspersed between everyday happenings and personal musings were the key ideas of his kosmology—his view of the world.³ A couple of his ideas really grabbed my attention, and I couldn't resist delving deeper (an occupational hazard for a Four with a Five wing). That's how I got hooked on Wilber's books.

Wilber's kosmology is complex, but his writing is lucid. So I found I was able to follow his ideas pretty easily. However, digesting them was not quite so easy, because their depth and breadth make them hard to absorb. (I found that while I could follow his ideas when I was actually reading them, but I couldn't actually remember much afterwards. I had to read and re-read the ideas in order to retain anything.)

But the result is definitely worth the effort, because Wilber has developed a truly remarkable and elegant framework for describing the evolution of human consciousness. Its multidimensional orientation, insistence on methodological pluralism, and openness to innovation make it a philosophy that really deserves to be called *integral*.

What about an Integral Enneagram?

Where does the enneagram fit into this integral picture? Well, it doesn't really quite fit—not just yet.

Although Ken Wilber makes mention of the enneagram (see below), he doesn't seem overly impressed by the system. Yet when G.I. Gurdjieff first introduced the enneagram to his students, he said that it was a hidden symbol that connects all the processes of world creation, a symbol of such great import “that it has never at any time or at any place been published or communicated in its entirety.”⁴

Indeed, the origins of the enneagram remain elusive to the day. But the fact remains that anyone who works with the enneagram knows it's more than an intellectual system. It's a living source of energy and wisdom. We might not understand everything about the enneagram, but we understand enough to appreciate its benefits.

So how is it that a system of this magnitude lacks has so little visibility in Ken Wilber's nascent field of integral studies? The two fields ought to have a lot in common. Both focus on human consciousness and evolution. Both offer insightful teachings that can be practically applied in everyday life. As I mentioned above, both fields have a *both/and* focus. And both specialize in somewhat different aspects of consciousness, so they can potentially inform each other.

And yet, at this point, they don't seem to share much common ground. Why is this?

In this article, I'll try to answer that question. More precisely, I'll try to present Ken Wilber's key ideas in a way that will enable interested readers to answer that question for themselves. In a previous article,⁵ I highlighted key problems that I saw with the paradigm that most of us currently use in enneagram work. I characterized this paradigm as narrow, negative, psychologically divisive, and insufficiently coherent. This characterization might have ruffled some feathers, but that wasn't my intention. My goal was to identify some important issues for the field—to get them out in the open so we could talk about them.

However, I did actually have some ideas about an alternative approach to working with the enneagram, and they're based on Ken Wilber's integral philosophy.

As I said earlier, Wilber has been developing his integral approach for several decades, so he's had a lot of time to create a solid theoretical base. I think he's done a good job. The most current version of his philosophy is broad-based, value-neutral, integrative, and coherent. At the same time, it remains on the cutting edge of innovative thought because of Wilber's ongoing practice of allowing new ideas to supersede old ones have outlived their usefulness.

We in our field can take the same approach. We can look carefully at the framework we're currently using and let go of ideas that no longer support our work. What does it matter where we've been in the past? What matters is the future. What matters is that we can actually "break out of the box."

This article is designed to help this jailbreak along! My approach here is to present Wilber's key ideas in what I hope is an accessible format. My main focus will be on his evolutionary outlook. By evolutionary, I mean a perspective in which the unfolding of human consciousness is viewed in terms of an ever-evolving, forward-moving progression toward Source. This evolutionary impetus is at the very heart of Wilber's integral philosophy. And it's probably the single biggest thing that sets the integral approach apart from the enneagram approach.

In the enneagram field, we focus less on the movement of consciousness than on its *lack* of movement. We start by conceptualizing the enneagram types as a fixated structures that limit our freedom of movement. We believe that type develops during early childhood in response to early experiences, experiences that are often characterized as "wounds." We see type as something that blocks, displaces, or otherwise interferes with the manifestation of Essence in our lives.

The effect of this kind of outlook is the subtle but pervasive sense that ego (as enneagram type) is the enemy of Essence. This "ego vs. Essence" attitude is ubiquitous—it's very hard to find anything written about the types that doesn't place them in some sort of opposition to Essence. As a result, the emergence of ego-personality in early childhood becomes regarded as a step *away* from Essence instead of a move *toward* Essence.

Ken Wilber takes a different view. He sees the emergence of ego consciousness as a step forward, not backwards. To him, it represents the emergence of the differentiated self, which is a

cause for celebration. It's a major landmark in the gradual movement of the developing self towards ever higher states of consciousness (just the advent of the Enlightenment was a movement of Western European culture toward the differentiation of the three value spheres of Art, Science, and Ethics). So Wilber in no way sees the transition from fused consciousness into egoic consciousness as regressive or unfortunate.⁶

Of the two views—the progressive or the fixed—I much prefer the progressive. I think it offers a better model of personal and spiritual growth than the fixation model we're currently using. That's why I'd like to see us take a really close look at this “ego vs. Essence” idea, because I don't think it will stand up to close scrutiny, even in its “weak” form (which grudgingly allows for the necessity of ego development while at the same time subtly denigrating ego at every turn). Until we stop characterizing ego as the bad guy, I don't see how we can evolve much further as a field.

In my previous article, I tried to make a convincing case for the idea that we need a new (read *more functional*) paradigm. In the present article, I hope to demonstrate why Ken Wilber's integral philosophy can serve as the basis for this new paradigm. Here's five key advantages I see to making the move to a more integral perspective:

- *First, it's a move away from negativity.* This alone will revitalize the field, as well as making the enneagram more attractive to newcomers.
- *Second, it's an efficient way to revamp the field.* Wilber's philosophy is already in place, so we don't have to re-invent the wheel. He's created a house that's “move-in ready.”
- *Third, it will increase our credibility as a field.* Because of his brilliance as a philosopher and meticulous intellectual habits, Wilber's work has earned the esteem of people in diverse disciplines. His ideas may be revolutionary, but they're well-respected. In addition, his commitment to methodological pluralism means that we can give equal value to both the subjective and objective ways of working with the enneagram. We need not reduce the enneagram to an narrow empirical construct in order to be taken seriously as a field.
- *Fourth, it will foster creativity and innovation.* Ken Wilber has developed a philosophy that is cutting-edge in every way. It's a framework that encourages original thinking and intellectual daring. Just what we need to get the creative juices flowing!
- *Fifth, it will bring something of value to the field of integral studies.* What we bring is, of course, the enneagram itself. The enneagram is deep and mysterious. Working with the enneagram focuses our attention on the greatest mystery of all—the mystery of motivation. If we choose to embrace an integral vision, we'll not only bring the clarity of that vision to our own field—we'll also bring the mysterious energy of the enneagram to that vision. I'd like to see where that would lead both fields.

* * *

So now you have the “Reader's Digest” version of the article. For more background and details, you'll have to read further.

In Part I, *The World of Wilber*, I lay out the key tenets of Wilber's philosophy—his take on the enneagram, ideas about the nature of transformation, Four-Quadrant Model, and his “pre/trans” fallacy. In Part II, *The Integral Enneagram*, I discuss the pre/trans fallacy and how it can be applied to the enneagram field to help us understand the weaknesses in our current paradigm. Then comes the fun part: mapping the integral approach onto the enneagram and looking at what the enneagram can offer the field of integral studies.

PART I: THE WORLD OF WILBER

Ken Wilber and the Enneagram

Although Ken Wilber is interested in anything that involves human consciousness, some things obviously interest him more than others. As it happens, typologies (e.g., Jungian types, astrology, and the enneagram) are among his least favorite topics.^{7,8}

Wilber refers to typologies like these as *horizontal* in nature, because they emphasize individual differences among people at a certain level of development, mostly the ego-personality level. Wilber does not exactly denigrate the usefulness of such typologies, but he does question their universality and empirical verifiability. He also hints at the possibility that such typologies can degenerate into stereotypes. However, he also says that he has “no objections” to anyone’s using such typologies “in an interpretive fashion.”⁹

In *A Brief History of Everything* (2000), he specifically discusses the enneagram, noting among other things, that “right now, the Enneagram is being popularized in America and used as a new psychological parlor game—Want to find yourself? Take a number!—which is a lot of fun.”¹⁰

Ouch! This is exactly the kind of image that those of us who are serious about the enneagram want to avoid!

But the quote doesn’t end there. It contains one last line: “But it [the enneagram] also has higher uses.” Hmm...that sounds promising. So the enneagram is not just a parlor game. It has higher uses.

To what higher uses does Wilber refer? Here it is, in his own words:

*The enneagram divides personality into nine basic types. These nine types are not levels of consciousness. They are personality types that exist on all levels of consciousness. So what you have are nine types on each of the nine or so major levels of consciousness—and you can see what a truly multidimensional and full-spectrum model looks like.*¹¹

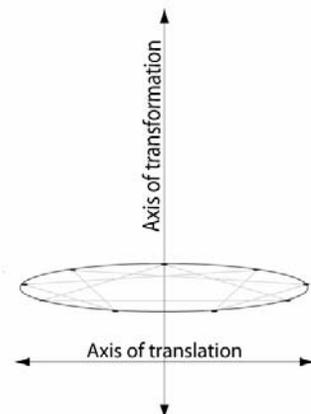
This last statement is very interesting. It envisions a way of working with the enneagram that is both horizontally and vertically integrated. Does this sound intriguing to you? It does to me. If the enneagram can actually help us do what Wilber says it can do, why doesn’t he take a greater interest in it?

Transformation vs. Translation

I think that one thing that’s likely to kill any interest that Wilber might develop in the enneagram is the heavy emphasis that the field places on personality fixation. In my view, the construct of personality is too narrow to be useful¹² and the focus on *fixation* reveals a built-in negative bias against personality. But the worst thing about the emphasis on personality fixation is that the single greatest gift of the enneagram—its ability to reveal *core motivation*—remains either unseen or seen only as a way to understand ego defense mechanisms.

I can’t state too strongly my position that core motivation is not a function of the personality self (for more information on why I think so, please see the article “The Enneagram of Life Paths,” on my web site).¹³

The enneagram is absolutely unique in offering a way to describe the psyche from a motivational perspective, that is, from the inside out.



No other system for categorizing human behavior starts taking core motivation as a given and then studies its effects on attitudes, behavior, and the like. Science can't even conceptualize such a thing. All empirical investigations work from effect to cause—*never* do they work from cause to effect. So from a scientific perspective, the enneagram is an incredible find. I really don't think I'm overstating my case to call its potential impact on science *revolutionary*.

But we're not going to be in a position to start any scientific revolutions if serious thinkers like Ken Wilber look at the enneagram as a parlor game. We've got to broaden our focus.

We can start by looking at the nature of the work we're doing. We'd like to think we're using the enneagram to promote a change in consciousness. The question is, What kind of change?

According to Wilber, there are two major kinds of change that are possible: *translative change* and *transformational change*. Translative change is the product of inner work done to enhance one's sense of worth, self-identity, and psychic integration (*psychic* here means integration at all levels of the psyche). It can bring meaning to life and can entail a profound change in perspective.

However, according to Wilber, this kind of change is not transformational. Transformational change by definition entails a shift not just in horizontal position, but in vertical level. Transformational change, on the other hand, does not enhance the current self's sense of meaning—it instead effects radical changes in very constitution of the self. It so alters its basic nature and center of gravity that the self as we know it seems to no longer exist—hence, Wilber's use of the word *shattering* to describe this kind of change.¹⁴

Although Wilber doesn't disparage translative change, he's much more interested in transformational change. What's more, he believes that a lot of people confuse the two. So they think that they've experienced a significant spiritual transformation when they've actually just enhanced their spiritual understanding on the level of the personality.

I think this is why, despite the prominence of the word *integral* in his work, he really places particular emphasis on the vertical dimension of reality. I don't think that Wilber necessarily believes the vertical dimension is more important than the horizontal dimension, but I do think he believes the vertical dimension to be a lot less visible (and even invisible) to many people. So he plays it up a lot, probably to remind his readers that it actually exists.

Since the emphasis of the enneagram field is mostly on personality (i.e., the self at the one level—the Flatland level), most of work is likely to be mainly translative in nature. This isn't because the enneagram lacks transformational potential, but because we who work with it tend to focus on translation. If we really want to use the enneagram for transformational work, we need to shift our attention from the horizontal to the vertical axis, because energy follows attention. If we want to use the enneagram to vertically transform ourselves, we need to stop focusing just on personality, particularly fixated personality.

Looking at fixation too much can actually act as a barrier to vertical transformation. Fixation is fascinating. Since energy follows attention, getting “fixated on fixation” can be a real problem. How can we become attuned to the subtler, more refined dimensions of life if most of our attention is on passions, fixations, and defense mechanisms? That just gets us stuck in Flatland. (*Flatland* is Wilber's term for the myopic perspective that sees the material plane as all there is to life.)

There's really no good reason that any of us need to be permanently stuck in Flatland. We can use the enneagram to work in both a translative and transformational way. But it's important to understand the difference, so we don't engage in translative work expecting a transformational result (or vice-versa).

“All Quadrants, All Levels”

If we want to understand the nature of transformation, we need to understand the potential contexts in which transformation can take place. To that end, Ken Wilber developed a four-quadrant matrix designed to serve as the centerpiece for his transformational theory (see Table 1).

Wilber calls this his “all quadrants, all levels” (AQAL) model. This model shows four ways of knowing—that is, four different perspectives from which to view the world. Each perspective sees the world in a different way, so none of these perspectives can easily be reduced to any of the others.

The **left-hand** column focuses on our subjective impressions—our personal states of awareness (*upper-left*) and shared perspectives and states of communion (*lower-left*). The **right-hand** column focuses on the objective world—how we study isolated phenomena to determine cause-and-effect relationships (*upper-right*) and how we study interactions between phenomena (*lower-right*).¹⁵

Table 1. Ken Wilber’s “All Quadrants, All Levels” (AQAL) model.

	Subjective (Inner motivational)	Objective (Outer behavioral)
Individual	“I” perspective (inner experience)	“It” perspective (empirical study)
Collective	“We” perspective (shared experience)	“Its” perspective (systems analysis)

This AQAL model is extremely general and can thus be applied in many ways. For example, we can use it to map the domains used for each type of inquiry.¹⁶

Table 2. Major modes of inquiry into human consciousness using Ken Wilber’s AQAL model.

	Subjective (Inner motivational)	Objective (Outer behavioral)
Individual	Psychoanalysis Depth psychology Meditation & mysticism Art & music Drama & literature	Laboratory behavioral research Animal-based human models Behaviorism Physical anthropology Artificial intelligence
Collective	Moral & ethical systems Systems of jurisprudence Cultural anthropology Discourse communities the Internet	Social psychology Sociology Systems theory Chaos & complexity theory Cybernetics Economics

We can also use it to focus on the “quality standards” used as a basis for judging value in each of these domains.¹⁷

Table 3. Applying Wilber’s AQAL model to look at values for four major modes of inquiry.

	Subjective (Inner motivational)	Objective (Outer behavioral)
Individual	Truthfulness Sincerity Integrity Trustworthiness	Truth Correspondence Representation Proposition
Collective	Justness Mutual Understanding Cultural fit	Functional Fit Systems Theory Social systems mesh

Both Tables 2 and 3 delineate four very broad domains of inquiry, each with its own appropriate goals, standards, and methodologies. None of them is reducible to any of the others. There’s no argument about which one is either best or more basic. All are considered to be legitimate domains in their own right.

The AQAL model reflects Wilber’s commitment to the proposition that truth is not unidimensional in nature. In this day and age, this equates to the idea that the objectivity (read *science*) does not have a monopoly on truth. A few hundred years ago, it might have been the subjective approaches that had the upper hand.

For each of these domains, Wilber has hypothesized a number of levels or stages of evolutionary development (his most recent version contains about 13 levels). Each level has a unique name designed to convey the specific qualities associated with that specific level of that specific domain (Wilber is nothing if not precise).

However, Wilber’s penchant for picking obscure terms and/or inventing words for his levels means that they’re not terribly informative to the casual reader (try wrapping your mind around terms like *eukaryotes*, *conop*, *formop*, *typhonic*, etc.). For our purposes here, a much-simplified three-level version will suffice. For this particular table, I’ve arranged the four quadrants next to each other to make it easier to compare the levels:

Table 4. Three major levels of consciousness by quadrant.

Subjective-Individual Intentional (Mind)	Objective-Individual Behavioral (Brain)	Subjective-Collective Cultural	Objective-Collective Social
 superconsciousness	 complex neocortex	 post-modern	 planetary level
 consciousness	 limbic system	 modern	 nation level
 unconsciousness	 neural activity	 pre-modern	 family level

This table shows the basic fabric of Wilber’s approach: some number of (horizontal) domains and some number of (vertical) levels or stages within domain. Together, they form a matrix that can be used to trace how evolution (vertical ascent) occurs in each domain. The matrix can also be used to roughly compare the form that each level of consciousness takes depending on its domain (although this works better with Wilber’s original matrix than with my simplified matrix).¹⁸

The bottom line here is that Ken Wilber is trying to demonstrate two things: (a) that any legitimate kosmology must allow for the existence of all of these four domains of inquiry and (b) that each domain of inquiry has a unique way of evolving itself.

The danger today is that modern societies like ours value the upper right-hand (logico-empirical) quadrant above all else; none of the other quadrants can compete with it. Ken Wilber is trying to create an equal playing field, so that science and subjectivity no longer need to try to kill the other off.

If we apply the logic of this AQAL model to the “subjective vs. objective” debate between Huffman and Frager, can we gain any fresh insight about the basis for each argument? What I see is that Huffman is not so much against using a scientific approach for studying the enneagram as he is expressing reservations about the possibility that too much science will tend to exclude or de-value alternative approaches. And perhaps he’s right to worry, because in his pro-science argument, Frager clearly devalues intuition by suggesting that it can really only be trusted to the degree that it can be empirically validated: “Intuition and judgment can come in later, in understanding and evaluating test research and test results.”^{19,20}

What would Robert Frager’s stand in favor of enneagram objectivity look like if he had to take a model like the AQAL seriously? In that case, he’d no longer be able to utilize the current cultural bias against subjective approaches to support his views. He’d have to come up with a more compelling argument to defend his position.

However, if both of the authors were supportive of an AQAL type of approach, I doubt that there would even be an “objective vs. subjective” debate at all. Or perhaps the whole discussion would take on an entirely different tone. For example, I could imagine looking at the issue from a much more context-sensitive perspective. Instead of trying to argue which approach is best, discussion participants would try to determine which approach is best *for what purpose* (or situation or audience).

By the way, I’m not trying to “pick on” the participants in this particular debate. It was an interesting exchange and I enjoyed reading the authors’ opinions. But I think it would have been even more interesting (and could have had a more lasting impact) if it had taken place within the context of a *both/and* perspective.

Holons and Holarchy

Earlier I briefly introduced Ken Wilber’s concept of holons—units which by definition are both independent entities (wholes) and aspects of some larger entity (parts). Actually, holons are not the brainchild of Ken Wilber, but of Arthur Koestler, a brilliant if unorthodox thinker of the mid-20th century.

Koestler was a Hungarian Jew born around the turn of the last century. He led an extremely interesting and eventful life, which included conversion to the communism cause around 1930. During the Spanish Civil War, he went as a journalist to cover the Spanish Civil War, but he was secretly a sympathizer with the Republican (anti-Fascist) cause. Captured by government (Fascist) forces, he was put on Death Row in solitary confinement. While awaiting his execution, he had a series of deep mystical experiences that changed his life, which he later referred to as “the hours by the window”.²¹

Koestler was miraculously saved from execution as the result of a publicity campaign launched by the English newspaper for which he worked. Released from captivity, he dropped out of the Communist Party, wrote his best-known work, *Darkness at Noon*,²² and began to explore a wide range of philosophical and psychological topics from a decided different point of view.

One result of his explorations was that Koestler became appalled by scientific reductionism:

*By its persistent denial of a place for values, meaning, and purpose, ...the reductionist attitude has cast its shadow beyond the confines of science, affecting our whole cultural and even political climate.*²³

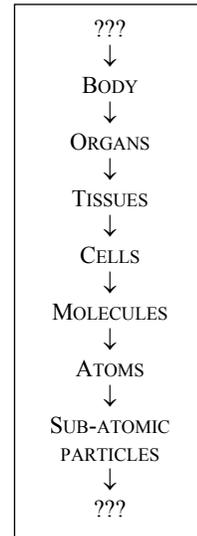
He pointed out that the ultimate end of such a philosophy was to define man as nothing but 90 percent water and 10 percent minerals—“a statement no doubt true, but not very helpful.”²⁴

Koestler had looked at the opposite of reductionism, holism (the idea that the whole is more than the sum of its parts), and found it similarly unhelpful as a way to explain the basic nature of the manifest universe:

*What we need is a third approach, beyond reductionism and holism, which incorporates the valid aspects of both. It must start with the seemingly abstract yet fundamental problem of the relationships between the whole and its parts—any “whole,” whether the universe or human society, and any “part,” whether an atom or a human being.*²⁵

To that end, Koestler coined the term *holon* to describe the basic “whole-part” nature of essentially everything in existence. The chart to the right illustrates how this scheme works.²⁶

Koestler uses the term *holarchy* to describe the relationships between different elements in the chain. A holarchy is like a hierarchy, but is not intended to convey the sense of a rigid, authoritarian structure that we often associate with hierarchies. A holarchy, by contrast, consists of “autonomous, self-governing holons endowed with various degrees of flexibility and freedom.”²⁷



Enter Ken Wilber. Wilber, like Koestler, is a theorist looking at ideas from a very broad perspective. Also, like Koestler, Wilber is against reductionism, so the idea of a universe composed of holons appeals to him. It gives him an intelligent way to talk about his favorite topic: the transformation of human consciousness.

Remember that Wilber believes that real transformation always involves a shift on the vertical axis of consciousness. This means that transformation always involves a profound alteration in our actual level of consciousness, not just insight into our current level of consciousness (which he would call translation, not transformation).²⁸ So it’s useful for Wilber to have a way of conceptualizing the relationship between different levels of consciousness, and this is what he got when he discovered the holon. It’s actually what enabled him to conceptualize and write *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*; he says that once he realized the holonic nature of the universe, “the book began to write itself.”²⁹

There’s a great deal more than could be said about holons,³⁰ but what’s relevant to our discussion here is how we could use this model of holons in our work with the enneagram.

The most significant way I think we can benefit from an understanding of the holonic nature of reality is to help us strike a balance between our role as an individual and the role we play as participant in a larger whole. Let me explain.

If we think of each human being as a holon—which we are—then we know that each of us has a role to play as an autonomous individual (a whole) and also a participant (a part) in something greater than ourselves. Since human beings are conscious beings, we can choose to identify more with one of these roles than another. In American culture, we tend to identify with the role of the individual—the whole. Traditionally, as a culture, we’ve liked to think of ourselves as “rugged individualists.” But many people have now come to realize that extreme individualism brings alienation, not freedom, so the pendulum has been swinging the other way. Many people now yearn to experience the larger dimension of themselves (the self beyond the personality).

But to actually experience ourselves in this way—to experience what we in the enneagram community might call the Essential Self—is not so easy. This is because most of us no longer trained in either the attitudes or the practices that tend to attract that kind of experience. We are just now in the early stages of remembering how to welcome this into our lives. The activities include meditation, reflection, contemplation, chanting, zhikrs, holotropic breath work, shamanic journeying, and (some say) ingestion of chemicals that facilitate altered states (peyote, ayuhuasca, etc.). The attitudes include openness, patience, responsiveness, watchfulness, self-acceptance, receptivity, sincerity, willingness, and surrender.

We might ask ourselves where the enneagram comes into this pictures. Well, one way it obviously comes in is as a tool for helping us see how we've misidentified partness for wholeness (by believing that our personal point of view is the only possible point of view there is). Before we encounter the enneagram, most of us seem to be carrying around a subtle but definite sense that there's only one right way to think, feel, and act. When we learn about the enneagram, we find out otherwise. We find out there are eight other points of view that are fundamentally different from our own and valid in their own right. This helps us accept other people as they are.

But what about each of us? What's our reaction to discovering our point of view is partial? For many of us, it comes as a real shock. It can make us feel bad or wrong. (I sure saw a lot of personal memoirs when I was indexing the *Enneagram Monthly* that reflect that very sentiment.)

Why the feeling of wrongness? Because we feel we've made a mistake. It may have been unavoidable, but it's still a mistake. And in this culture, mistakes induce feelings of shame.

Mistakes also make us want to fix ourselves, the quicker the better. In the enneagram world, this seems to make us want to disidentify with our point of view—to “transcend the bounds of type,” or some such thing. The problem is that we have no place else to go. Our point of view is our point of view.

But you know, we really ought to be dancing in the aisles! (At least, after we get over the initial shock.) Notice what's happened. We start out mistaking our partness for wholeness (thinking our point of view is the only point of view). Then we discover our partness for what it really is. This is disconcerting, but it's our first real step toward experiencing a greater sense of wholeness. But we don't see it that way. What we notice instead is that we're not whole right now (or at least we're not experiencing ourselves that way). Our attention tends to fixate on all the ways in which we're not whole. We can really make ourselves miserable by focusing on this sort of thing.

It doesn't have to be this way! We don't have to think of our enneagram type as an albatross around our neck. It's okay to have a personality, even though it's not perfect. It doubt very much whether it's even suppose to be perfect—after all, it's a part, not just a whole. It could be that its very lack of completed perfection is supposed to clue us in to the fact that we are not alone.

Moving *toward* wholeness does not mean moving *away* from partness. That's the message of Koestler's theory of holons. Partness and wholeness co-exist as long as we're in physical reality. And this is deliberate! It's what makes diversity (and hence, Life) possible. So experiencing Essence does not mean ceasing to experiencing our enneagram point of view. The two are not mutually exclusive—they're not even antagonistic. They're complementary.

This means that type is not a barrier to experiencing Essence. Type and Essence can be experienced at exactly the same moment. This may seem paradoxical, but it's true. Life is not a struggle between “ego vs. Essence”—it's a cooperative venture between ego and Essence.

According the Wilber, even the idea that ego fades out during higher stages of development is doubtful. He says that although the term *trans-egoic* implies that ego is lost in higher stages, Wilber doesn't buy it. What's lost is our exclusive identification with ego, not ego itself.

If by ego, you mean a functional self that relates to the conventional world, then ego is retained (and often strengthened). Likewise, if you mean—as psychoanalysis does—that an important part of the ego is its capacity for detached witnessing, then that ego is definitely retained (and almost always strengthened).³¹

It may be strange to think of ego as a friend instead of as an enemy. But if everything in existence consists of whole/parts (holons), the seeming incompleteness of ego consciousness is no longer a problem to be solved. It's simply the nature of the psyche at a given stage in development or state of consciousness (and perhaps at every state of development, even Enlightenment).

According to Wilber, at each new stage of development, we “transcend and include” all the structures of the previous stages. We don't kill them or even just leave them behind. They become part of what we are and what we're becoming.

Differentiation ≠ Dissociation

The idea that we transcend and include all that we've been reflects an essentially integrative outlook. It says that any experience we have ever had can become part of who we are and what we're becoming. Nothing is excluded.

However, modern life can seem so fragmented and alienating at times that it's hard to believe that it's actually possible to integrate all the separate bits of ourselves, especially the less attractive bits. This is probably how the idea of differentiation has become equated with the idea of dissociation. Since the time of the Enlightenment, we've been putting things in smaller and smaller boxes—slicing life up into increasingly specialized compartments—and the result is the growing sense that differentiation is a bad thing.

Ken Wilber disagrees. He says that people actually confuse differentiation with dissociation. As a result, they're attracted to the idea of returning to an undifferentiated state, because they think of this as a state of unity or integration. However, Wilber points out that lack of differentiation does not signify a state of integration. It signifies a state of fusion, fixation, or arrested development.

Wilber says that differentiation is not dissociation. Differentiation only becomes dissociation when it goes too far. However, this distinction is lost on those who Wilber refers to as “pre-modern revivalists,” by which he means those who idealize the state prior to differentiation.

Wilber is a fan of differentiation. He regards differentiation as a evolutionary advance, citing the Enlightenment as a turning point where the three domains of art, morality, and science became truly distinguished from one another. Prior to the Enlightenment, these three domains remained largely undifferentiated. And this allowed what happened in one domain to dominate what happened in the other two domains. He cites the example of the Middle Ages, where the sin of heresy was against the Church was also regarded as treason against the State. Or where Galileo's work was banned because science could not disagree with religion.

During the time of the Enlightenment, these three domains began to be differentiated, so that each of them was understood to be a separate and independent mode of inquiry. A spirit of tolerance was born that Wilber refers to as the “dignity of modernity.” According to Wilber, there was a period in which art, science and morality not only co-existed as separate but equal domains of development, but were to some extent integrated or at least in step with one another. However, their paths soon began to diverge. The outer-oriented scientific domain became highly-respected; other two inner-oriented domains, art and morality, became increasingly trivialized. They still existed, but they lost the esteem they had once enjoyed. They were no longer seen as necessary or important—at least not in comparison to science and rationality.

Wilber calls this development the “disaster of modernity.” He also calls it the “collapse of the Kosmos,” in that art and morals (which correspond to the upper- and lower-left-hand side of Wilber’s Four Quadrant model) no longer constituted valid ways of knowing (epistemology). The whole left-hand (subjective) side of the model was collapsed into the right-hand (objective) side. As Wilber puts it, “Never had such a powerful rationality clamped down so violently on interior life.”³²

This development did indeed lead to fragmentation and dissociation. But Wilber does not see the solution to this problem as a return to a pre-differentiated world, because differentiation per se was never the problem. It was the move *past* differentiation into dissociation that caused the collapse of the Kosmos.³³

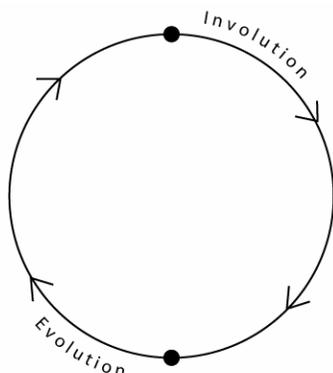
Closely related to the idea that differentiation is the same thing as dissociation is the idea that pre-rational thought is the same thing as post-rational thought. What both ideas share in common is the romantization of the pre-rational.

In order to see how this works, we have to understand how Ken Wilber conceptualizes the evolution of consciousness. Wilber divides the process of development of consciousness into three main stages. Note how, in Table 5 (below), the first and last column both include subjective or interior modes of consciousness, while the center column is entirely objective or exterior in nature:

Table 5. Moving through the three major stages of consciousness.

DEVELOPMENT STAGES OF CONSCIOUSNESS		
Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
SUBJECTIVE / INTERIOR (Undifferentiated)	OBJECTIVE / EXTERIOR (Differentiated)	SUBJECTIVE & OBJECTIVE (Integrated)
Pre-rationality	Rationality	Transrationality
Pre-personality	Personality	Transpersonality
Pre-ego	Ego	Trans-ego
Pre-consciousness	Consciousness	Post-consciousness
Pre-conventionality	Conventionality	Post-conventionality
Pre-modernity	Modernity	Post-modernity

According to Wilber, when we speak of the evolution of consciousness (the ascent of matter to Spirit), we also have to speak of the *involution* of consciousness (the descent of Spirit into matter).



The latter literally represents “the Fall” (of Spirit into matter) where Spirit gets “kicked out” of the Garden of Spirit and cast into the denser world of matter. The moment when Spirit arrives in matter—i.e., the moment of physical birth—is the low point on the cycle. This is the point where Spirit-in-matter (Spirit-incarnate) is as far away from Spirit-as-Spirit as it can get. From that point, it begins the slow but inevitable ascent back to Spirit.

One important thing to notice is that the return of spirit-incarnate to Spirit is not really a return. It’s a move forward. If

it were literally a return, once we got to the bottom, we'd retrace our steps, going back from where we came (the circle would be a half-circle). But we don't retrace our steps—we do not go back. The only way to get “back” to Spirit is to progress through the stages in development.

According to Wilber, at the moment of birth, a baby is at the beginning of the pre-rational stage. It's all instinct. Although it may contain a blueprint for development, that blueprint has yet to be manifest in a meaningful way. During the first few years of life, the baby/toddler begins to develop a real sense of self—an ego or personality—that gives it the ability to function as an autonomous entity in the physical world. This marks the transition from Stage 1 to Stage 2. As the ego-personality develops, the child begins to objectify herself (to realize that she's separate from Mommy) and to develop the ability to reason.

The functionality of this ego-personality self is of course affected by early childhood experiences—children in a loving, supportive environment tend to develop a healthier sense of self than those in a less loving, less supportive environment. This gives them the ability to “transcend and include” their experiences from the previous stage of development—although they are no longer babies, the experiences of babyhood are integrated into the psyche (not split off and repressed).

But whatever their environment, all children who are more or less normal develop an ego-personality self, because having a functioning ego-personality self is what's required for the next stage in the evolutionary process. Happily, it's also what enables them to become an autonomous person who can function in physical reality.

Stage 3 in the evolutionary process involves the integration of objective and subjective modes of awareness. Both are needed to experience the Kosmos from an interior and exterior perspective. Since Stage 2 is primarily objective in nature, moving into Stage 3 may be perceived as a move “back,” because it restores to us our lost sense of subjectivity.

But it's really a move forward, not backward, because it incorporates the objective discernment acquired during Stage 2. So Stage 3 is not the fused, undifferentiated consciousness that we experienced in the womb or during babyhood—it's a highly refined and integrated awareness that transcends but includes all of our experiences in the previous two stages.

The “Pre/Trans” Fallacy (or Life Before and After Objective Awareness)

The “pre/trans fallacy” is Wilber's term for a misconception regarding the nature of objective vs. subjective modes of awareness. It occurs as the result of combining both subjective stages—Stages 1 and 3—with one another and then comparing them to Stage 2 (objective consciousness). This often creates a scenario where higher spiritual qualities are projected onto pre-rational states or cultures, which becomes romanticized. At the same time, Stage 2 (objective) modes of consciousness become the enemy of subjective experience.

According to Wilber, the pre/trans fallacy is possible because of the collapse of the Kosmos. When the objective paradigm defeated the subjective paradigms a couple of centuries ago, the value of subjective knowledge was subtly but definitively denigrated. Total objectivity appeared to be the final destination of the mature human being.

Among people with deep feeling sensibilities, this is a terrible destination! Total objectivity sounds like a nightmare, not Enlightenment! This is probably why, from the 19th century onward, there has existed what Wilber calls a “retro-Romantic” movement that has tried to move as strongly in the direction of subjectivity as the evolving culture of modernity has tried to move in the direction of objectivity. What neither position takes into account is that *both* are equally important for the next stage in evolution—that it's a *both/and* proposition.

The retro-Romantics cherish the subjective (interior) dimension of life—art, music, poetry, drama, sentiment, depth, meaning, values—and they are determined to find a place for these things in a world steeped in high-tech gadgetry and alienating empiricist values. If they realized that the current objective paradigm is but a step toward a paradigm that is truly integral—that encompasses and honors both the subjective and the objective—they might see it in a more positive light. But they don’t—what they see is its coldness and lack of feeling. It causes them pain. The pain in turn produces a feeling of contraction (a desire to go back to a non-contracted state) and a value judgement—“This feels wrong. It’s not natural, not okay.”

This experience occurs not only on a cultural level, but on a personal level. It makes people want to get rid of the part of themselves that feels dissociated from life. What part is this? It’s the ego-personality part. It’s because the ego-personality is experienced as that which cuts one off from one’s essential nature.

The truth is that it’s not ego that’s the problem—it’s a lack of understanding. We know what we feel—the pain of separation—but we don’t understand either its immediate cause or its deeper significance. Wilber speaks to the immediate cause when he talks about Stage 2 differentiation going too far. But what has created in us a tendency to move from differentiation to dissociation? Why do we over-analyze, over-rationalize, over-objectify?

I think it’s that we’re trying to evolve but we don’t know how. It’s in the nature of human consciousness to evolve, even in the absence of understanding. But because of cultural factors that go back at least two thousand years, if not further, we’ve lost the tools we need for the next step in the journey—so much so that many people don’t even realize that there even *is* a next step. On one hand, they have the impression that rationality is as good as it gets. On the other hand, they sense there’s more to life and can’t help but seek it out (even if that means going back to an earlier era).

Table 6 shows what life might look like from a retro-Romantic point of view:

Table 6. How consciousness looks when “pre/trans fallacy” thinking predominates.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF CONSCIOUSNESS		
Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
SUBJECTIVE / INTERIOR (Undifferentiated)	OBJECTIVE / EXTERIOR (Dissociated)	SUBJECTIVE & OBJECTIVE (Integrated)
No overdeveloped rationality	▶ Overdeveloped rationality	Transrationality
No imbalanced personality	Unbalanced Personality	Transpersonality
No inflated ego	Inflated ego	Trans-ego
No alienation	Alienated consciousness	Post-consciousness
No restrictive conventions	◀ Reactive conventionality ³⁴	Post-conventionality
Pre-modern idyll	Cynical modernity	Post-modernity

Here the move from Stage 1 to Stage 2 is viewed as a move out of an undeveloped but essentially “pure” consciousness into a state of consciousness that’s both alienated and unbalanced. Since there’s

no way to move forward (into Stage 3 integration) from such a position, the only alternative is to move *back* to Stage 1—back to the womb, back to nature, back to God, back to a simpler way of life. The only problem is, it doesn't work. The disaster of modernity cannot be undone by returning to a pre-modern society. Nor can the lost sense of interiority be remedied by regressing to a pre-rational state.

The only solution is to seek the value in what we're experiencing right now, knowing that it lays the foundation for what is to come. Stage 2 rationality isn't bad, simply limited. If we get really fed up with its limitations, we don't have to pine for the past. Instead, we can prepare for the future. This basically involves two steps. The first step is to move back from dissociation into differentiation (see Table 7):

Table 7. Moving from dissociation to differentiation.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF CONSCIOUSNESS			
Stage 1	Stage 2		Stage 3
SUBJECTIVE (Undifferentiated)	OBJECTIVE (Dissociated)	OBJECTIVE (Differentiated)	SUBJECTIVE & OBJECTIVE (Integrated)
Pre-rationality	Overdeveloped rationality	Discerning rationality	Transrationality
Pre-personality	Unbalanced personality	Balanced personality	Transpersonality
Pre-ego	Inflated ego	Uninflated ego	Trans-ego
Pre-consciousness	Alienated consciousness	Attuned consciousness	Post-consciousness
Pre-conventionality	Reactive conventionality	Practical conventionality	Post-conventionality
Pre-modernity	Cynical modernity	Adaptive modernity	Post-modernity

Table 7 shows how each kind of Stage 2 dissociation can become Stage 2 differentiation. It also shows how differentiation is not as a final destination, but simply a jumping off point for further growth. There is life after Stage 2—the objective experience of reality is not “all there is.” Like all stages, it's simply a way station on the path.

The second step in preparing for future growth is to adopt some kind of practice that facilitates the transition from Stage 2 to Stage 3. Stage 3 consciousness is not just mental in nature, so it can only be understood via direct experience (not armchair analysis). We can only experience Stage 3 consciousness on a regular basis via what Wilber calls *injunctive practices*, the idea that “if you want to experience that, do this.” Meditation, breath work, bodywork, mantras, and mindfulness are some of the injunctive practices that can give us glimpses of what Stage 3 consciousness is all about.

If we dislike what we're experiencing at Stage 2, we may be tempted to use these kinds of techniques to “leave it all behind,” trying to move to Stage 3 states of consciousness before we've become sufficiently balanced at Stage 2. While it's technically possible to do this, moving prematurely from Stage 2 to Stage 3 creates new problems. Each stage of development is associated with characteristic pathology, as Wilber makes clear in *Integral Psychology*.³⁵

The bottom line is that transformational techniques (those designed to boost us from one level to the next) are no substitute for translative techniques (those designed to help us consolidate the self at

our present level of functioning). Both are necessary and desirable, but they have different purposes. If we get too eager to move from Stage 2 into Stage 3 prematurely, we run the risk of falling apart once we get there.

So a healthy and functional Stage 2 ego-personality provides the means to exercise mental discernment and make ethical decisions. If we deny the need for the ego-personality self (or even denigrate its value), we shoot ourselves in the foot, because it's hard to integrate something that we fear and dislike.³⁶ That's why Jung speaks not just of tolerating the Shadow, but *embracing* it. It's only with love and acceptance that healing is possible.

This is where what Wilber calls translative methods may be helpful, because for him, "translation" is by definition any process that supports (horizontal) integration and stabilization. When the ego-personality becomes differentiated in a healthy way, it becomes capable of integrating both past and present experiences into itself. It can, in Wilber's words, "transcend and include."

My personal experience is that something which transcends and includes can also *be* transcended and included. To the extent that I'm actively seeking to find my greater wholeness, that greater wholeness is also seeking to find me, to include me as part of itself. It's a two-way street, and I don't have to do all the work myself. When I genuinely open myself to something greater, help is always there. Instead of experiencing only my "partness," I begin to experience my wholeness. Instead of moving backwards into the womb, I can move forwards—into the Light.

PART II: THE INTEGRAL ENNEAGRAM

The Pre/Trans Fallacy & the Enneagram

To summarize what we've talked about so far, Ken Wilber's model of development of consciousness is based on the premise that the human soul experiences its lowest point at the moment of physical incarnation. It occurs at the end of our downward journey into matter, at the end of the involutory process. From that point on, all further stages of development represent an evolutionary advance in consciousness. The process is not without its ups and down, but the ups are what predominate.

In the enneagram community, enneagram type (which is generally equated with personality or ego type) is usually said to develop during early childhood. Ken Wilber would agree with this idea. However, his view of personality is very different. While Wilber sees the development of ego-personality as representing a *gain* in consciousness, people in the enneagram community tend to see it as representing a *loss* in consciousness.

In enneagram circles, the infant or small child tends to be viewed as living in an Essential state until the development of ego-personality in early childhood. Ego is said to displace Essence (our essential core or quality of Beingness) in response to early childhood wounding. Our enneagram type is said to reveal the nature of the wound.

This looks to me like a classic example of Wilber's pre/trans fallacy. Stage 1 consciousness is idealized, while Stage 2 consciousness is made the villain (because "ego displaces Essence"). To the extent that it's even visible, Stage 3 is confused with Stage 1, which means that the infant's state of consciousness is viewed as exalted instead of undeveloped. At the same time, Stage 2 ego development is denigrated (because it's what has moved us out of the idyll of Essence into a state of alienation and imbalance). There's a natural yearning for a return to a non-dissociated state.

However, there's a problem, because none of us can really go back to the womb. Type is with us for life, and we know it. We can't return to Stage 1, only move forward toward Stage 3. But it's hard to do, because we don't like the separation we experience in Stage 2. We accept the necessity for it, but we don't really like it. Our acceptance is reluctant, not open-hearted. And this acts as a barrier to real integration.

This isn't the only problem with a model based on the idea that ego displaces Essence. There are others. First, it's logically impossible. If Essence is really essential, how can ego displace it? Essence has to be present, whatever else is going on. Second, if ego personality development is a necessity for both ordinary functioning and spiritual advancement—which Wilber thinks it is—then how likely is it that ego have a fundamentally adversarial relationship with Essence? Third, if ego personality literally develops in response to early wounds, why do people from very nurturing early environments still have personalities? Fourth, if personality represents pathology, why do people who are recognized as spiritual masters still have personalities—and very distinctive personalities, at that? Fifth, how do we account for young infants showing very definitive (pre-)personality traits that often appear to have little if nothing to do with early environment? Sixth, how useful is it to think of ego-personality as pathological? How does taking such a position affect our ability to maintain a long-term, sustainable interest in inner work?³⁷

All of these questions are worth addressing. I raise them in hopes that they'll engender a lively discussion in enneagram circles. But the one that I want to concentrate on is the last question, because that's the one that interests me most. It speaks to the need for a theory to provide practical support for

useful work. When we say something is “mere theory,” what we’re really saying is that it is not useful for taking us where we want to go.

In the case of enneagram work, where most people want to go is in the direction of growth and integration. Few of us really want to get distracted by irrelevancies or bogged down by negativity.

But that’s exactly what happened to me. Soon after I started working with enneagram, I found myself feeling discouraged because the things I “knew” about myself based on the enneagram weren’t helping me to become either a better or happier human being. They were just making me miserable!³⁸

The Sufis have a saying: “First, remember your faults. Then forget your faults.” Dwelling on our faults once they are visible doesn’t make them go away. It just keeps us circling around them, like an airplane waiting to land.

I didn’t want to circle the airport forever, so I had to find a different way of working with the enneagram. I explored many different approaches, but I find Ken Wilber’s integral approach particularly useful because of its breadth and depth. It provides an alternative theoretical framework that’s not only comprehensive, but inspiring.

Using an integral approach, it’s possible to see the ego-personality (enneagram) type as simply a cognitive-perceptual structure. The development of this structure is a natural consequence of moving out of Stage 1 (undifferentiated) awareness into Stage 2 (differentiated) awareness.

The nine enneagram types or points of view can be conceptualized as particular ways in which this differentiation can occur. They could be likened to blood types or somatotypes. It’s quite possible that this structure can become dissociated (alienated and fragmented) during various points in development. When this happens, the system begins to get out of balance, sometimes to an extreme degree. What we call fixated functioning I see as the psyche’s attempt to re-establish equilibrium. Fixation provides stability, but at the expense of flexibility. So it’s not a perfect solution. But it’s good enough to get most of us through our childhood and adolescent years.

Let me speak briefly to this idea of “good enough” functioning. The term was coined by D.W. Winnicott in reference to the idea that parenting doesn’t need to be perfect, it just needs to be “good enough.” Maybe this is true of our personality self, as well—maybe it doesn’t need to be perfect, just good enough. Good enough for what? Good enough for two things: allowing us to function in a way that is life enhancing (yet morally appropriate) and providing us with a foundation for continued growth.

Take a look at Table 8. It’s adapted from the tables I used earlier to talk about dissociation and differentiation. I used it to list the characteristics of healthy (differentiated) vs. unhealthy (dissociated) enneagram types.

Table 8. Two different views of enneagram type.

Which column best describes enneagram type?	
<p>DISSOCIATED ENNEAGRAM TYPE</p> <p>Fixated rationality Unbalanced personality Inflated ego Alienated consciousness Reactive conventionality Cynical modernity</p>	<p>DIFFERENTIATED ENNEAGRAM TYPE</p> <p>Flexible rationality Balanced personality Uninflated ego Attuned consciousness Practical conventionality Adaptive modernity</p>

Column 1 looks very much like a conventional enneagram description. Consciousness here is described as fixated, unbalanced, inflated, alienation, reactive, and cynical. Column 2 describes consciousness differently: as flexible, balanced, supportive, receptive, practical, and adaptive. The idea here isn't actually to decide which one is the best description—either one could be appropriate, depending on the individual.

There are two things to note here. The first is that Column 2 even exists. In conventional enneagram teachings, there is no Column 2, only Column 1. Enneagram type can't be positive in nature, because type is by definition fixated.

But suppose there could be a Column 2. What would it look like? Here I've used Column 2 descriptors that are positive, but not too positive. They're not idealized or spiritualized. They're the qualities of a "good enough" personality. They're qualities that we actually see in ordinary people we know and in ourselves. They're not the qualities of a saint.

So moving from Column 1 to Column 2 doesn't overshoot the mark. Ego doesn't become Essence, it just becomes uninflated. Fixation becomes flexibility and alienation becomes attunement. A dysfunctional personality becomes functional (good enough).

Enneagram Innovation with the Integral Approach

Shifting out of a personality-as-fixation viewpoint facilitates new and creative ways of working with the enneagram. Let's take a brief look at some ways that we can use Wilber's model to look at the enneagram with new eyes.

One approach is to use Wilber's Four-Quadrant (AQAL) model as a way to provide us with a multifaceted way to look at the enneagram. There are several ways to proceed. One way is to look at each of the four squares as a different mode of inquiry.

Table 9. Types of enneagram inquiries we can ask in each quadrant.

	Subjective (Motivation)	Objective (Behavior)
Individual	Who am I? What is my nature? What motivates me? How can the enneagram help me know myself better? What's my enneagram point of view? How can an understanding of my type help me live a happier, more creative life?	What is the nature of human individuality? How can it be operationalized and measured? What's the scientific potential of the enneagram as a tool for describing individuality? What methodologies exist to answer questions about the enneagram and the enneagram types? What standards are appropriate for validating enneagram data?
Collective	How do we as separate human beings come together in a group? How can we communicate with one another? What are our shared values and concerns? How can the enneagram help us support each other?	How do individuals relate to one another? What factors affect these relationships? What can the enneagram tell us about interpersonal relationships and group dynamics? What can studying the enneagram tell us about the nature of these relationships?

What's interesting about this exercise is that all the questions focus on human motivation and behavior. But they do so from very different perspectives. Which one is best? It's hard to say. It depends upon our purpose and priorities. Is it to promote inner growth (upper-left)? To promote mutual understanding (lower-left)? To determine the objective nature of the enneagram and the types (upper-right)? Or to look at the enneagram as a way of looking at interpersonal dynamics (lower-right)?

We can also use the AQAL to look at the methods and applications relevant to each domain.

Table 10. Enneagram applications by quadrant.

	Subjective (Motivation)	Objective (Behavior)
Individual	Inner integration & transformation Individual counseling Executive coaching Body & energy work Creative & intuitive work	Enneagram typing tests Enneagram typing interviews Empirical research protocols Body typing Handwriting analysis
Collective	Enneagram type panels Team building in business settings Demonstrations in front of groups Small group work Ethical standards in the field	Enneagram as an interactive system Analysis of triads & other patterns Demographics of enneagram types Differences in enneagram systems

In the upper-left, we have enneagram work that is creative, intuitive, and personal in nature. In the lower-left are activities designed to facilitate communication, promote teamwork, build community, and develop ethical standards. In the upper-right are objectively-oriented methods for

typing and type analysis. In the lower-right, are objectively-oriented approaches for looking at larger patterns involving the enneagram and the types, including comparisons of different ways to conceptualize the enneagram as a system.

A framework like this is useful for a lot of reasons. It can help distinguish different ways of working and what purposes they serve. It helps us see the multiplicity of approaches that are actually possible. And it shows how different ways of working can complement one another.

If you recall the “subjective vs. objective” debate between Huffman and Frager that I discussed at the beginning of this article, it was all about which approach can best serve as a basis for enneagram work. What’s interesting about the AQAL matrix is that, while it gives us the means to compare the two approaches (right vs. left column), it doesn’t necessarily engender comparative thinking. I find that seeing everything on a four-quadrant matrix makes it easy to appreciate the particular contributions of each quadrant. Each perspective seems to engender a different set of questions and serve as the foundation for a diverse ways of working. How much sense does it make to debate which one is best?

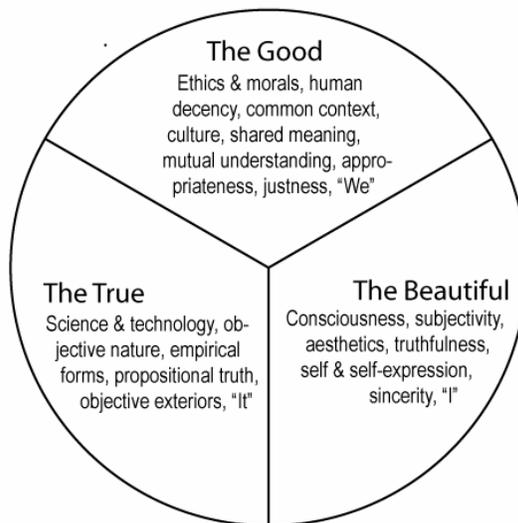
That’s what I like about AQAL. It gives us a way to see why pluralism makes sense. So long as we retain the 2 x 2 matrix—and the idea that there is no one right approach—we allow people to work within any of these four quadrants without the need to make one better (or worse) than another. We can accept each approach as legitimate within a particular context. What’s more, we can look for ways that each approach can inform the other three approaches. I find this way of working creative and synergistic.

Wilber’s “Big Three” Value Spheres

There’s one other way of mapping the enneagram onto Wilber’s framework that involves one other construct that I’ve only discussed in passing. But it may be the most interesting from an enneagram perspective, because it’s based on looking at the world from a tri-fold point of view.

Wilber’s *The Marriage of Sense and Soul* has a good introduction to the this tri-fold approach. There Wilber discusses what he calls the “three value spheres” of art, science, and morality (alternatively, The Good, the True, and the Beautiful). Wilber says that “I refer to these three value spheres as the ‘Big Three’ because they are three of the most significant of modernity’s differentiations, destined to play a crucial role in so many areas of life.”³⁹

The Big Three are actually closely-related to the Four Quadrant model, because they are created by combining the two “objective” quadrants (which are the two that are probably most similar in nature). Once we make this modification, instead of a four-quadrant grid, we have a three-triad circle (see graphic).



The “Big Three”

The descriptions under each of the three headings are not paraphrases—I used Wilber’s terms to describe each of these domains. Anyone familiar with the three enneagram Centers should find them of interest.

The three Centers have been described in different ways by different enneagram theorists. They are one of the most talked-about aspects of enneagram theory. They are also one of the more confusing areas, in part because authors use the same terms to mean different things (e.g., *feeling*) or new terms to refer to traditional concepts (e.g., Hurley & Donson’s use of *creative* to describe the center that they themselves call instinctual).

What’s interesting to me about all the different theories is that they’re all right, in that they all study the Centers from a slightly different perspective. Each perspective is useful in its own way, for answering a somewhat different type of question.

It’s beyond the scope of this article to focus on the fine differences in Centers theory. The main thing I’d like to do here is to see whether mapping Ken Wilber’s “Big Three” onto the enneagram centers provides yet another perspective on the centers. Here’s how this mapping compares to the four other major Center theories:

Table 11. Placing Wilber’s “Big Three” values spheres (art, science, & ethics) on the enneagram.

	8 9 1	2 3 4	5 6 7	Principle
Palmer	Gut	Heart	Head	Origin of attention
Riso & Hudson	Instinctual	Feeling	Thinking	Orientation around dominant issue
Wright	Feeling (judging, power management)	Doing (acting out, expressing)	Perceiving (data-collection)	Focus (underlying impetus)
Hurley & Donson	Creative (Doing)	Relational (Feeling)	Intellectual (Thinking)	Revised label (Traditional label)
Wilber’s “Big Three”	Ethics (“The Good”)	Art (“The Beautiful”)	Science (“The True”)	Domain (Dominant value)

The “Big Three” way of splitting the pie has to do with what people value the most, the value sphere to which they are most *attuned*. People of all types would have access to all three value spheres, but they would be particularly attuned or sensitive to the value sphere of their own center. Let’s try out this hypothesis.

Let’s say that Types 2, 3, and 4 are “Beauty” types—individuals particularly attuned to love and beauty. This would make them particularly interested in creative self-expression, image-making, and aesthetics. Even the interest in relationships may reflect the need to have a receptive audience for self-expression. If balance is lacking, this attunement to beauty may cause image and appearances to become overly important, causing image to obscure inner beauty instead of revealing it. The sorrow associated with these types could be the result of living in a world where beauty is undervalued.

Suppose we consider Types 5, 6, and 7 to be “Truth” types—people for whom truth is the highest good. Along with a particular appreciation for the truth would come an intuitive understanding of the consequences of ignoring the truth—consequences that naturally engender fear. If the personality is dissociated, the fear would also be dissociated and thus irrational. But to the personality that is balanced (differentiated), the fear represents an all- too-rational sense of trepidation that arises.

It’s not difficult to envision Types 8, 9, and 1 as “Ethics” types. These are the individuals who are most sensitive to issues of justice and fairness, as well as power dynamics. When they are

unbalanced, their concepts of justice may also be unbalanced. But the basic impulse—to curb the strong and protect the weak—is not only legitimate, but admirable.

In fact, all three of these impulses—to express beauty, to find the truth, and to ensure justice—are admirable. To me, they embody what human evolution is all about. Looking at the Centers from a “Big Three” perspective focuses our attention on a perspective that I’d characterize as dramatic or dharmic. Koestler or Wilber might characterize this perspective as that of the part looking in the direction of the whole.

From this perspective, each of us is not alone. We’re all part of a much larger drama. We each have a unique role to play. Understanding our enneagram type helps us better understand the nature of this role and appreciate the contribution it makes to the play as a whole. This gives us the incentive to become a more committed and compelling player. And this makes the play more lively, and more likely to evoke a heartfelt response. The focus is on the play, but the benefits accrue to everyone involved, including the player.

It’s a refreshing perspective. I get to participate in the play where no one’s the star. I get to forget about “me”—me and my problems, me and my relationships, me and my spiritual path. I get to walk away from my self-centered perspective and into the dance of life.

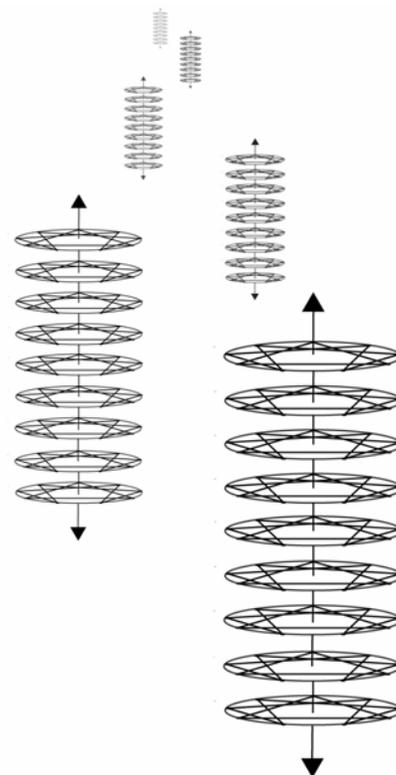
A Multi-dimensional View of the Enneagram

So what you have are nine types on each of the nine or so major levels of consciousness—and you can see what a truly multidimensional and full-spectrum model looks like.

This is what Ken Wilber said seven years ago about the enneagram. It’s a vision of an enneagram that looks at how (a) nine enneagram *points of view* account for individual differences (b) on many different *levels* (c) in many diverse developmental *lines* of consciousness (cognitive, emotional, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, body awareness, relational, etc.).

Wilber pointed out that the enneagram, as it’s used now, looks primarily at differences on a horizontal level. He cites Riso & Hudson’s approach as the only one that uses a vertical scale to measure levels of development. However, Riso and Hudson’s scale conceptualizes levels mainly in terms of mental health. To open up the field, it would be helpful to use a variety of scales to look at development, for example: Beck’s Spiral Dynamics, Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development, Piaget’s States of Cognitive Development, Sri Aurobindo’s Stages of Spiritual Development, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Steiner’s Bodily Awareness, St. Teresa’s Stages of Spiritual Life, Fortune’s scale of Erotic Relationships, Wilber’s Level of Emotional Affect, etc. (See the back of Wilber’s *Integral Psychology* for an intricate depiction *over 60 different scales* and how they relate to one another.)

Using a multi-faceted approach, we could look at a given individual’s development using several different scales. Let’s say I develop several different scales designed to measure different types of intelligence—I’ll call my set of scales the “Rhodes Multi-faceted Intelligence Inventory” (RMII!). As a Four, I take the inventory and discover that I have a high level of emotional intelligence, a moderately high level of cognitive



intelligence, a moderate level of ethical and spiritual intelligence, a low level of practical intelligence, and a very low level of bodily intelligence.

Ken Wilber takes a similar approach, looking at what happens when we “move with the enneagram arrows” from an integral perspective. Using Beck’s Spiral Dynamics scale (where the sequence *green* ► *orange* ► *blue* represents a descent in level), Wilber notes that a person might be predominantly a green-level enneagram Type 7, but under stress might move to Type 1 at a green level; under more severe stress, he might move to Type 1 at the orange or even blue level. “Notice, however, that what the enneagram alone cannot spot is the change in levels.”⁴⁰

Here Wilber is making the point that we need a way to get finer-grained understanding of dynamics like these within our own system, and he’s pointing out how a more integral approach could facilitate that kind of understanding (or at least alert us to gaps in our understanding).

I agree. An integral approach would help us not only to become more attuned to how our enneagram type shows up on a variety of vertical scales, but would also help us to think in terms of “part/whole” relationships, translative vs. transformational distinctions, and the idea that subjectivity is not the enemy of science.

It’s not that I think Ken Wilber’s approach is the “end all and be all” of integral theories. Despite its many advantages, I find him very “heady” at times, and his love of neologisms and acronyms can drive me up the wall. He also spends a lot of time and energy going into excruciating detail on matters that seem, well, not very interesting (like some of his stuff aimed at winning over the post-modernists to a more integral view). Maybe it’s because I’m a female, and really abstruse philosophical and political arguments eventually produce in me a longing to break off and walk up to Starbucks for a latte. (Sorry if that sounds sexist, but it’s the truth!)

Nevertheless, Ken Wilber is a brilliant philosopher who has developed a framework that can break people out of the mold of “old paradigm” thinking. In this article, I’ve tried to show how his system provides a structure for working the enneagram in a new way—a way that’s broad-based, value-neutral, and intellectually creative.

A Role for the Enneagram in Integral Studies

So far I’ve just talked about the advantages that Wilber’s paradigm provides to the enneagram field. But actually, I see that the enneagram field can bring a lot of added value to Wilber’s approach, as well. This is because nothing in Wilber’s theory really focuses on the nature of motivation. This is where I see that the enneagram can make a real contribution to integral studies.

Using the enneagram, it’s possible to look at Wilber’s lines of development from a motivational point of view. Earlier, I talked about using my hypothetical RMII test to measure my development on several kinds of intelligence scales. The profile I imagined would be consistent with someone of my enneagram type (although perhaps a little stereotypical). Still, I’m guessing that there are probably characteristic patterns of development that could be generally predicted by enneagram type, because the motivation of each type tends to make some kinds of development more attractive than others.

On the average, we might expect Type 5 to score high on tests of cognitive development, Type 1 on scales measuring ethicality, and Type 2 on measures of relational awareness. It would be interesting to look at patterns for each enneagram type, especially at different points during their lifetime. What would they look like in a young adult? Would the pattern change later in life (as individuals see areas of imbalance and seek to compensate for development “lags”)? If someone knew their type from an early age, would this affect their future development in any way?

Using the enneagram as a jumping off point, we could also look at the question of motivation in the broadest, most integral sense. The enneagram shows us that each point of view is associated with

a definitive core motivation. Where does this motivation come from? I've already said that I don't think it comes from the personality self, because the personality is just one horizontal slice of the psyche. I see that motivation can manifest through the personality, but it's hard for me to imagine that it actually originates there. I think it has to have a deeper source.

Exploring the nature of this deep motivation is an interesting question for the enneagram community. But it's even more interesting from the perspective of integral studies, because the latter is specifically focused on developing a multifaceted understanding of consciousness. Implicit in Wilber's "theory of everything" is the idea that human consciousness is evolutionary in nature, but there's nothing in his theory that accounts for the mechanism by which this evolution occurs. The enneagram might be a fruitful place to seek such a mechanism.

I would propose the hypothesis that Life itself is imbued with a sense of purpose or intentionality, and it fulfills itself by creating new and more evolved manifestations in the world of form. But to do so, it requires a vehicle or structure that can contain this purposeful energy. Each of us is such a vehicle. What we call our enneagram point of view is that which determines the nature of the energy that motivates us. When we embody the energy of our point of view, we become co-creators with Life in a particular way. Life receives the benefit of our creative activity and we receive the benefit of the experience we acquire from participating in the co-creative process.

If we start thinking that the motivational energy actually originates in us, rather than simply flowing through us, that's when narcissism sets in and ego can become inflated. Seeing ourselves as co-creators (holons!) is how we restore our sense of inner balance and outer harmony with life.

Thinking of motivation as transpersonal in nature reminds us that life is not a mechanical process. Life has a purpose, and that purpose includes *us*! It includes us as individuals and as partners, family members, and community participants. It includes us at the level of the ego-personality and at every other level of our individual consciousness. It includes our likes and dislikes, our successes and mistakes. Everything is included, nothing is left out. That's what a holonic perspective is all about.

Ken Wilber has developed a framework for fleshing out this holonic perspective, with an emphasis on what we can do to strike a balance between our role as "part" and our role as "whole."⁴¹ What he is just beginning to incorporate are actual practices that are designed to promote this kind of balance, although Wilber himself is the first to stress the absolute necessity of such practices.⁴²

Even so, there is one element still missing: an understanding of how individual differences in motivation affect the development of balance. How do we know what kinds of disciplines or activities might work best for an individual? The idea that "one size fits all" doesn't really work. When individuals try to follow a regimen for which they're not temperamentally suited, they may fail to progress simply because they're doing something that goes against the grain.

For example, as a Four, I find it difficult to adhere to self-development practices that are too formulaic, too scheduled, or too socially-demanding. Free-form meditation is helpful, along with other on-the-fly techniques designed to keep me receptive and focused. Other people would find this approach too free form, but it works for me. I used to feel "spiritually inadequate" because I wasn't very good at conventional practices, but now I know the problems I experienced were mostly the result of a mismatch between temperament and technique.

Integral theorists who are developing methodologies for promoting integral awareness can benefit from an understanding of individual differences. Knowing something about enneagram type would help them tailor their methods, not just to fit each line of development, but each type of temperament.

It's obvious to me that both fields—the enneagram field and the field of integral studies—have a lot to offer one another. But so far, I'm not sure that either field has quite seen the potential of the other to support its work.

All of us who work with the enneagram know its potential to change lives. But I think our enneagram work can go to a whole new octave, so to speak, if we can see beyond the confines of our current paradigm. The enneagram is a revolutionary tool and I think it needs a revolutionary paradigm like Wilber's to do it justice. At the same time, I think that a paradigm like Wilber's needs a tool like the enneagram to inform it both about the nature of motivation in general and individual differences in particular.

We in the enneagram field are concerned about ways to bring the enneagram into the mainstream, because we assume that this is the best possible way to disseminate its teachings to others. But we ought to consider the possibility that the enneagram is actually *ahead* of the mainstream, not outside or behind it—that the enneagram is providing us with a map of where consciousness is evolving in the future.

It's for this reason that I think the best way to develop the field is to seek a paradigm that is attuned to the energy of the future, not the energy of the past. We need to align ourselves with what is to come, not with what has come before. That's why simply coming up with a validated typing test or getting influential people to endorse the enneagram is not going to take the field where it needs to go. We need a broader vision and deeper roots. We need an integral vision for the future.

Postscript: Wilber's New Directions & the Enneagram

After I'd finished writing most of this article on the enneagram and Ken Wilber's integral philosophy, I received a copy of Ken Wilber's newly-published book, *Integral Spirituality* (2006), to review for *Enneagram Monthly* (please see inset).

Each book that Ken Wilber writes is both a reprise of his foundational ideas and an excursion into new areas of inquiry. So there's a lot of new material in this book. Below I'd like to touch on just the areas that are particularly relevant to our exploration of the potential role of the enneagram in integral studies.

The Role of Types. One idea is that Wilber has decided to focus more attention on the role of *types*. What Wilber means by "types" is not just personality types, but any way of categorizing people based on individual differences, e.g., gender, personality, age, ethnicity, culture, etc. I'm not sure why he uses the term *types* when the term *individual differences* is both broader, more descriptive, and more standard among researchers. Perhaps it's because, in the past, he's primarily been focusing on personality (and in particular the enneagram). However, in this book, he uses the example of gender as a "type," and gender is clearly not a personality variable.

As I noted at the beginning of this article, in the past Wilber has taken little interest in typology. He's been more interested in looking at general trends (what researchers would call *main effects*) rather than individual differences. However, he now seems ready to give type its due, because when discussing the five factors basic to any integral theory, he lists them as *quadrants, levels, lines, states* and *types*!

One of his earlier objections to type is that type is not empirically verifiable. But if he's defining gender as a type, he must not have really thought this idea through, because the effects of gender differences have been empirically verified many times over (much to the chagrin of some feminists).

It remains to be seen whether the same is true of enneagram type. (Nevertheless, Wilber ought not reject a construct as worthless simply because it cannot be empirically verified. It may just be the kind of construct that is better evaluated using the standards of one of the other three quadrants.)

Myth of the Given. This myth is basically the idea that "what we see is what we get"—that what we perceive is literally the same thing as what is present. But Wilber observes that this is an illusion:

*What our awareness delivers to us is set in cultural contexts and many other kind of contexts that cause an interpretation and a construction of our perspectives before they even reach our awareness. So what we call real or what we think of as given is actually constructed—it's part of a worldview.*⁴³

Here Wilber is focusing on the effect that culture has on how spiritual experiences are both created and interpreted. His main purpose here is to separate out those elements of mystical experience which are really universal from those which are culturally influenced. But his comments could easily pertain to the effects of enneagram type. People well-versed in the enneagram might argue that enneagram type is at least as powerful a shaper of interpretation as cultural factors. So anything that Wilber might say about the effect of cultural factors likely applies to enneagram type.

Wilber also notes that it's impossible *not* to have a context that shapes our awareness—that is, a point of view. In other words, we never evolve so much that we cease to have a point of view. Further, he says that this point of view will even shape the way that we experience Enlightenment.^{44,45}

I find this extremely interesting. We might have some sort of rarified idea that experiencing Enlightenment might somehow take us beyond having any sort of viewpoint. But Wilber obviously doesn't think so—just the opposite. In fact, he defines cognitive development in terms of a person's ability to take perspectives: *Cognitive development is defined as an increase in the number of others with whom you can identify and an increase in the number of perspectives you can take.*⁴⁶

If this is true, then it sounds like enneagram work can be valuable as an aid to cognitive development.

States, Stages and Structures. In *Integral Spirituality*, Wilber clarifies the differences between these three related but not identical aspects of the psyche. Most people doing spiritual work focus on states of consciousness, mainly with an eye to experiencing transcendent states of awareness. However, Wilber says that an exclusive focus on states will not suffice, because states ≠ stages, and experiencing higher stages of consciousness is as important as experiencing higher states. This is because a state is temporary while a stage is much longer lasting and solid.

He says that someone at any stage of development, high or low, can experience any state of awareness, at least for a while. But eventually they come back to the state of awareness that they ordinarily maintain—and when they do, they interpret their experiences in light of that usual state of awareness (that is, in light of the *developmental stage* they're at). He uses the rather extreme but apt example of a Nazi who reaches high states via meditation, and then interprets his experience according to a romantic, Aryan mythological view of the world.

Spiritual evolution in an integral sense would involve not only experiencing (and even maintaining) a high state, but in evolving in the way that we *interpret* such a state. Our interpretation needs to evolve right along with our ability to experience high states; otherwise, there's a split between the two, and people wind up with too literal interpretations of their experiences.

According to Wilber, Enlightenment is fullest when we can experience all states and all stages, not just all states. *Structures* are the interior matrices that support the psyche at any given level, providing it with stability (and it's this stability that distinguishes a stage from a state).

Structures are important because they support the stages; and stages are important because they determine how the states are interpreted. This distinctions between them are important because they give us the tools we need to see beyond “the myth of the given.”

This teaching is useful for enneagram work because each enneagram type represents one of nine primary ways in which the structure of our psyche can vary. Thus, if it's true that our stage of development determines how we interpret higher states of consciousness, we might expect to see recognizable differences in the way that different enneagram types approach spiritual practice in general and in the way they both experience and interpret higher states of consciousness.

Shadow Work at Multiple Levels of Development. Wilber explores the difference between psychological (shadow) work and spiritual work (notably meditation) in an effort to straighten out the confusion that exists about which technique is most helpful for dealing with difficult emotions. This is an extremely valuable discussion for anyone who does serious inner work, because it focuses specifically on the issue of what to do (and what not to do) when discordant feelings arise in meditation. Should one just observe them and keep meditating (while trying to disidentify from them)? According to Wilber, the answer is no. They have to be experienced first. Wilber's motto is always "transcend and include," not "observe and detach."

He notes that trying to use meditation or other spiritual techniques to get away from uncomfortable emotions does not work. Instead, we tend to experience higher states (and even move to higher stages) *carrying our shadows with us*, "which is why even advanced meditators often have so much shadow material that just won't go away."⁴⁷

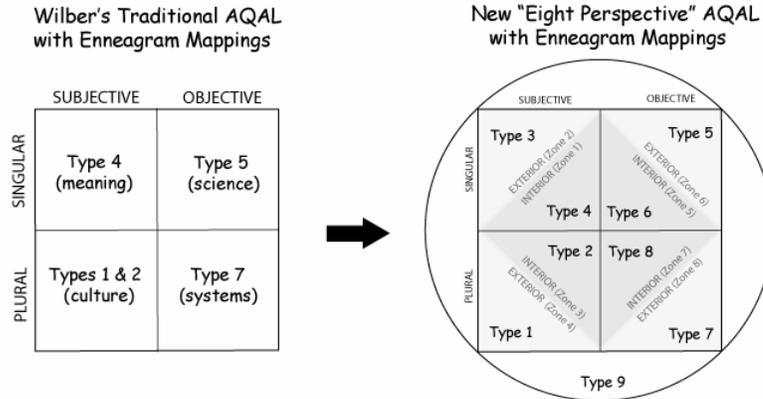
The problem with seeking refuge at higher stages is that these, too, have their characteristic pathologies. It's not just the pre-ego or ego levels that can be fixated, but the trans-egoic levels, as well. This may sound like bad news to people who think of ego as the main barrier to enlightened consciousness, but it's true.

If our individuality exists as multiple levels of consciousness, then the shadow work we do is not confined to the ego level. If we focus exclusively on the ego, we may miss issues that have nothing to do with ego defenses (e.g., the effects of spiritual conditioning on our interpretation of spiritual states or the inability to "ground" after experiencing higher states, etc.). Understanding that the potential for both balance and fixation exists at all levels of development is helpful for reminding us that the spiritual journey is not really about getting anywhere. It's about being here now.

Eight Hori-zones or Worldspaces. In *Integral Spirituality*, Wilber splits each of his four quadrants in half, creating what he calls eight "hori-zones," or zones of awareness. He says that "each zone is a view with its actions, its injunctions, [and] its lifeworld" (p. 38). Each has a unique perspective and methodology.

Gosh, don't those zones of awareness sound rather like enneagram points of view? They sure do to me. I'd already noticed that the *right* side of his AQAL model looked a lot like the *left* side of the enneagram (with Type 4 in the upper left, and Types 1 and 2 in the lower left). The *left* side of AQAL looked a lot like the *right* side of the enneagram (with Type 5 in the upper right and Type 7 in the lower right). This is what makes it possible to map the "Big Three" value spheres onto the three enneagram centers (see above).

When Wilber splits his quadrants in half, he creates eight points of view (for each quadrant, there is now an inside and outside point of view). The inside point of view is more subjective/interior while the outside is more objective/exterior. I tried mapping the enneagram points of view onto his scheme, and came up with what I think is a plausible scheme:



Types 3 and 4 are in the upper left quadrant, which focuses on the individual from a subjective point of view (Type 3 from a cooler more impersonal perspective and Type 4 from a warmer more personal perspective). Types 1 and 2 are in the lower left quadrant, which focuses on the collective from a cultural point of view (Type 1 from the outside view that seeks to create codes of conduct for civilized behavior and Type 2 from the inside view that seeks to create experiences of communion and communication).

Types 5 and 6 are in the upper right quadrant, which focuses on the individual from an objective point of view (where Type 5 takes the more detached or 3rd person view of objective reality and Type 6 takes the more inner or experiential point of view of objective reality). Types 7 and 8 are in the lower right quadrant, which focuses on the group from an objective view (where Type 7 is into systems theoretical or “connect the dots” perspective and Type 8 is coming from the perspective of “L’etat c’est moi!”—the idea that the entire system is represented in the monad).

Type 9 isn’t present in any single quadrant, but is present in the circle around the entire square. This makes intuitive sense if we think of the “Nine” space as essentially aperspectival in nature. (Note: The zone numbers are Wilber’s designations for each of the eight zones.)

While it’s beyond the scope of this summary to discuss this mapping at any length, I wanted to at least present it here, for the perusal of enneagram readers. It’s a new concept Wilber has just introduced in *Integral Spirituality*. I think he may have intuitively recreated the enneagram here, minus the focus on core motivation. I find this an extremely intriguing possibility and would like to explore this further in the future.

Susan Rhodes is a cognitive psychologist with a long-time interest in spirituality, creativity, and interdisciplinary studies. She likes to explore the enneagram from many perspectives (including systems theory and archetypal psychology), using many modalities (films, experiential exercises, and collage work), and in light of many enneagram elements (subtypes, wings, and other enneagram patterns). Her web site is www.enneagramdimensions.net.

¹ EM, Oct. 1995.

² *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, p. xii.

³ The word *kosmology* is not a typo. Wilber describes himself as a kosmologist with a “k” to distinguish himself from regular cosmologists, whose interest in the cosmos is confined to the physical plane of existence. One of Wilber’s basic premises is that life is not confined to one plane or level of existence, and neither is consciousness—hence, the “k” in kosmologist.

⁴ Lecture by G. I. Gurdjieff reproduced on www.endlesssearch.co.uk/philosophy/enneagramtalk.htm.

⁵ “Let’s De-Pathologize the Enneagram!” (see *EM*, Oct. 2006).

⁶ This doesn’t mean that Wilber is naïve about the existence of problems that arise as the self develops. He discusses them in a number of his writings (see, e.g., p. 189 in *Up From Eden*, 1981/1996, for a particularly poignant account of the potential tradeoffs associated with the emergence of ego; see pp. 91-98 in *Integral Psychology* and Chart 1-a for a discussion of the pathologies that can occur at various stages of development). What it does mean is that Wilber does not see the stage itself as a problem.

⁷ For details, please see his discussion on typologies in *The Eye of Spirit*, 2001, pp. 358-359.

⁸ This lack of interest in “types” seems to be changing—see pp. 11-15 in his new book, *Integral Spirituality*, and my discussion on this topic in the Postscript to this article.

⁹ *The Eye of Spirit*, p. 359.

¹⁰ *A Brief History of Everything*, p. 191.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

¹² I prefer to speak of individual differences, because this is a more generic approach that doesn’t limit our focus on individuality to just the ego-personality level.

¹³ There I discuss the idea that enneagram type represents an archetypal energy that comes *through* the personality rather than originating *from* the personality (www.enneagramdimensions.net).

¹⁴ *One Taste*, p. 26.

¹⁵ I’m not sure I agree with Wilber about the way he uses pronouns for the right-hand (objective) side of his AQAL model. I think I’d rather go for the pronoun “he, she, or it” for the top-right, and “they” for the bottom-right. Using “it” for the top-right is too narrow and using “its” for the bottom-right is awkward. Objectifying something doesn’t necessarily mean it becomes an “it”—it just means that it’s a third-person (*he, she, it, or they*) construction, not a first-person (*I or we*) construction.

¹⁶ This table is very loosely based on Wilber’s table on p. 77 in *A Brief History of Everything*. But I take liberties here, because Wilber’s approach makes references to his favorite philosophers, and such references would be obscure to someone unfamiliar with his works.

¹⁷ This table is pretty much identical to Wilber’s 2 x 2 AQAL table on p. 97 in *A Brief History of Everything*.

¹⁸ See, e.g., *A Brief History of Everything*, p. 67, for Wilber’s more complex version of the AQAL graphic.

¹⁹ *EM*, Oct. 1995, p. 22.

²⁰ The argument that intuition and judgment is faulty has been a hot topic in my own field, cognitive psychology, for some time. It’s beyond the scope of this article to get into a discussion of the research, but suffice it to say that even among empirically-oriented cognitive psychologists, there are many voices that speak in support of the reliability of human intuition and judgment. I should note here, however, that I understand and support Robert Frager’s interest in applying appropriate scientific standards when doing research of any kind, including research on the enneagram. It’s just that I don’t see science and intuition in opposition to one another—I see them as complementary.

²¹ See Chapter 13 in Koestler’s *Bricks to Babel* (1980) for a brief account of his experiences. (*Bricks to Babel* is a highly-readable and fascinating account of the major events in Koestler’s intellectual life, and it’s a good place to start for anyone interested in his ideas.)

²² *Darkness at Noon* is a fictionalized but extremely plausible account of an individual arrested and pressured by the State to confess to crimes he did not commit. It was written just after the Communist “show trials” of the 1930s in which leading Communist officials gave public testimony that they served as spies for the West. At the time, no one in the West believed this was true, but they couldn’t imagine how a prominent Communist could be compelled to make a false confession in open court. *Darkness at Noon* revealed the psychological dynamics behind these confessions. (The book is eerily similar to

biographical accounts by real victims published after Stalin's death). The book became a bestseller and is easily Koestler's best-known work.

²³ *Janus: a Summing Up*, p. 25.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁸ I find it useful to think of transformation as an energetic shift and translation as a psychological shift, or to think of translation as akin to Jung's idea of strengthening the ego (which he says takes place in the first half of life) and transformation as Jung's idea of letting go of the ego (which takes place during the second half of life).

²⁹ *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, p. xiv.

³⁰ See Chapter 2 in *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* for a more in-depth introduction to holons.

³¹ *Integral Psychology*, p. 91.

³² *The Marriage of Sense and Soul*, p. 94.

³³ See Chapter 4 in *The Marriage of Sense and Soul* for more information.

³⁴ By *reactive conventionality*, I mean a response to conventional standards that somehow misses the mark, by being either overly conformist or non-conformist.

³⁵ See pp. 91-114 for a discussion of lower-level, mid-level, and higher-level pathologies; see the chart on p. 197 for a very detailed list of pathologies at nine different levels of development.

³⁶ One thing that may be confusing here is that it's common in mystical literature to speak of "ego death" or "ego annihilation" as part of what happens as one advances toward Spirit. Wilber himself refers at one point to the self "becoming toast." But my sense is that this way of speaking is not so much a form of ego-bashing as it is an attempt to convey the radical shift in perspective that occurs in higher spiritual states.

³⁷ Some of these same concerns were raised by Ken Wilber himself in an amazingly long (11-page) footnote in *Eye of the Spirit* (pp. 365-377), in which he focuses on the developmental theory embodied in A.H. Almaas' Diamond Approach. Although it's well beyond the scope of this article to discuss the details of that critique, it generally focuses on the problems associated with equating the development of ego-personality with the loss of Essence. Since the dominant paradigm in use within the enneagram community embodies a very similar view, Wilber's comments are well worth reading.

³⁸ I'm not denying the value of receiving information on the fixations, passions, or defense mechanisms associated with my type. That information is extremely valuable. But it to be imparted within the context of a much broader view of human nature.

³⁹ *The Marriage of Sense and Soul*, p. 74; see pp. 49-53 for more details on the "Big Three" values spheres.

⁴⁰ Ken Wilber Online: Introduction to Volume 7 of the Collected Works, p. 26, http://wilber.shambala.com/html/books/cowokey_7intro.cfm/.

⁴¹ In *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, Wilber says that "both of these capacities are absolutely crucial and equally important...even a moderate imbalance will lead to structural deformity" (p. 49); See Ch. 2 for a detailed discussion of holons.

⁴² Since the founding of Integral Institute (Ken Wilber's alternative think-tank) in 1998, Wilber has been developing programs together with other like-minded individuals to create practices specifically designed to promote integral awareness in body work, mental training, meditative practice, emotional intelligence, shadow work, ethics, sexuality, business, and couples therapy; see Chapter 10 in *Integral Spirituality* for a discussion.

⁴³ *What is Enlightenment?* Magazine, p. 68.

⁴⁴ *Integral Spirituality*, p. 115.

⁴⁵ Wilber actually talks here about choosing our point of view, which is interesting because I'm not sure the degree to which this is actually possible, probably because of my experience with the enneagram. Working with the enneagram impresses upon a person the difficulty (or even impossibility) of really changing one's point of view, at least insofar as it's part of our temperament. If Wilber is serious about studying the effects of viewpoint, it might benefit him to investigate the deeper dimensions of the enneagram.

⁴⁶ *Integral Spirituality*, p. 113

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 128.