

Do Critics Misrepresent My Position?

A Test Case from a Recent Academic Journal

Christian de Quincey recently published “The Promise of Integralism: A Critical Appreciation of Ken Wilber’s Integral Psychology.” It’s a little hard to tell exactly what he thinks about my system, because on the one hand he offers what seems to be a genuine appreciation (e.g., “Perhaps other than Kant and Hegel, no one has presented a comparable comprehensive framework for integrating the ‘three cultures’ of science, morality, and art.... More than any other individual, he has pieced together a truly remarkable map of the mind”). But in the next breath he is engaged in intense *ad hominen* attacks on me as a person. Although de Quincey does not know me—in fact, he has never met me—he gives the reader a lengthy, intimate psychoanalysis of me as a person completely lacking in feeling, emotions, caring, and compassion, and therefore a person utterly bereft of any spirituality at all. Just how spiritual can I be, he implies, when I am such a nasty, vitriolic, mean person?

To complicate matters, de Quincey has a tendency to take one detail and excoriate me for “completely misunderstanding” it, but then in footnotes he concedes that I actually do understand it, often quite perfectly, but I should emphasize the point more. As we will see, there is not a single major issue where de Quincey categorically rejects my model, although he gives that impression at every turn, with each theoretical criticism followed by yet another *ad hominen* attack. I must confess that I came away from reading his essay with an almost complete confusion about what was said and how I should respond.

This is no doubt due to the fact that I lack all feelings and thus have no interpersonal compass (-:-).

As is often the case with my critics, I happen to agree with much of what de Quincey has to say; it is simply that, in trying to establish his own view, he finds it necessary to distort my own, perhaps to better emphasize the differences between us. In doing so, de Quincey either takes a partial aspect of my position and claims that it is my total position (he does this quite often); or he simply does not present my actual position in the first place. I will try to point out where and how this occurs in his critique. As students of my work have been quick to point out, misrepresentation of my work is quite common, simply because there is so damn much of it, and many of my actual positions are buried in obscure endnotes; I have not helped much in this regard, a situation I am doing my best to rectify (as I will explain below).

But, as I said, I happen to agree with virtually all of de Quincey's main points (and my overall writing, when accurately reported, makes it very obvious that I agree with him). There is an old saying, "Scholars spend their time maximizing their minimal differences," and it strikes me that de Quincey is trying to make room for his contributions by attempting to aggressively muscle me out of the picture in the areas that reflect his own special interests and concerns. Still, he asks (in one of those footnotes that quietly retract his criticism of my model), "I hope he [Wilber] sees me as an ally in the project to put the second-person perspective on the radar screen in consciousness studies and philosophy of mind. I think there is room in his four quadrants for true intersubjectivity, and I'm just trying to clarify what I think it is." Well, I do see de Quincey as an ally in that regard, and I have ever since I tried to help him get his

important book on intersubjectivity published; and I still consider his position a very important contribution vis a vis the profound significance of intersubjectivity not only for consciousness, but for the Kosmos as well. I will try to emphasize these important points of agreement as we go along, since de Quincey does not.

There are three main areas of my work that de Quincey especially criticizes: the nature of intersubjectivity, the mind-body problem, and panpsychism. In all three cases, de Quincey severely misrepresents my position. Unfortunately, this type of misrepresentation happens so often that I now have something of a reputation for crying “wolf”—every time a critic disagrees with me, I complain that, poor me, I’ve been misunderstood. I can see how people would get very tired of hearing me make this charge (believe me, nobody is more tired of it than I). So what I would like to do is, as several people suggested, use de Quincey’s article as a test case, and simply give point-by-point comparison between what he says my position is and what my works actually say. By giving direct quotes from the work de Quincey is ostensibly summarizing, and putting them next to what de Quincey claims is my view, I hope the reader will get a clear sense of just where and to what extent my actual view is simply not being presented fairly.

Therefore, in all three cases I will indicate what de Quincey says is my position, and then give quotes from my work showing what my position actually is. Because, again, there are two separate issues here: whether my work is portrayed accurately before it is criticized, and the nature of the criticism itself. I do not feel that de Quincey does a very good job of the former, but he does a fine job with the latter (most of which, as I

said, I agree with), and I am more than glad to be an ally in those many issues about which we agree.

INTERSUBJECTIVITY

“So there is intersubjectivity woven into the very fabric of the Kosmos at all levels.”

--A Brief History of Everything

De Quincey's major criticism, and the one he spends the most time on, is that I identify intersubjectivity solely and exclusively with verbal linguistic exchanges. This is pretty much the opposite of my view. When de Quincey's essay appeared, I was flooded with letters and emails pointing this out this considerable distortion, and several long articles have already been written in an attempt to correct his obvious misrepresentation of my position (portions of some of those critical articles are included below). I will try to suggest how I believe de Quincey got his inaccurate impression, and then point out my actual position.

Here is the gist of de Quincey's criticism: “Wilber leaves no doubt what he means by ‘intersubjectivity’: It is a subject-to-subject connection mediated by language and interpretation—and ‘*only...* by interpretation.’ There is no unmediated, direct experience of the other.” While de Quincey gives two examples of this, both taken out of context, it flies in face of hundreds of examples and statements such as the above quote from *Brief History*, which clearly state my overall position: “Intersubjectivity is woven into the very

fabric of the Kosmos at all levels”—not just the linguistic levels, but all levels, right down to atoms and quarks.

De Quincey arrives at his conclusion by focusing on a specific example where I am talking about *one type* of interpretation, in this case linguistic (so that I give an example of talking or having a conversation), and I am trying to drive home the point that, in those cases, we must add an interior interpretation to the exterior surfaces, or else we will never reach any sort of understanding. However, never do I say, at any point, that in the entire Kosmos this is the *ONLY* type of intersubjectivity. (When I talk about having “only” linguistic interpretation, I mean that, as far as the linguistic signifiers themselves go, we must add interior interpretation, the shared intersubjective signifieds known by empathic resonance). I *never* say there is only linguistic intersubjectivity in the entire Kosmos; that flies in the face of my entire “all-quadrant, all-level” model, which sees intersubjectivity as one of the four quadrants that goes all the way up, all the way down.

That I maintain there is only linguistic intersubjectivity is something that de Quincey himself adds to my work, and he does do only by excluding an enormous amount of what I have to say on the subject. Even in the above example that de Quincey quotes, where I give linguistic exchange as one type of intersubjectivity, and I say that interpretation is mandatory to get at the interiors, de Quincey again assumes that interpretation *only* means linguistic interpretation (as we will see, this is a standard pattern in all three of de Quincey’s main critiques: he takes one or two examples out of the whole of my work, latches onto them, and ignores dozens or even hundreds of other statements to the contrary. When my actual overall position is pointed out, he simply

repeats his two or three quotes, which are indeed true—and very partial). But in many places I define interpretation as a “sympathetic resonance from within”; I give examples of how interpretation functions in deer, in wolves, in geese, and even in electrons. To assume that the intersubjectivity found in electrons is verbal is silly, but this is the view that de Quincey ascribes to me.

If we move from his presentation of my position to his presentation of his position, things are quite different. As I said, I happen to agree with much of de Quincey’s ideas on intersubjectivity, and I heartily applaud his endeavors to bring second-person intersubjectivity to consciousness studies, thus putting flesh on the “2” in the 1-2-3 of consciousness studies. (This is also, I feel, why articles such as de Quincey’s recent essay in JTP fare much better than his critique, because he can focus on his own important work instead of having to subtly or not so subtly distort mine in order to highlight the importance of his own contributions).

De Quincey usefully describes three major meanings of “intersubjectivity.” Intersubjectivity-1 is defined by isolated, atomistic subjects coming together through communication of signals; this is a type of Cartesian or mediated intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity-2a is a coming together of subjects that mutually condition each other in the process; a type of immediate mutual apprehension. Intersubjectivity-2b assumes that the relationship between subjects is primary, and individual subjects co-emerge out of this prior relationship; a very strong, immediate, coming-into-being together.

To begin with, de Quincey claims that I do not understand or include in my work the most important version of intersubjectivity, namely Intersubjectivity-2b (where relationship is primary and subjects are secondary); he maintains that I allow ONLY

Intersubjectivity-1. And yet de Quincey himself gives my primary definition of intersubjectivity by correctly using the following quote from me: “Subjective experiences *arise in the space created by intersubjectivity.*” In other words, intersubjectivity is primary, and subjects arise in that field—which is exactly Intersubjectivity-2b. The way I usually state intersubjectivity is even stronger: “Intersubjectivity is the field in which *both* subjects and objects arise” (SES, BH, ES, IP). This is an even stronger form of intersubjectivity than de Quincey allows, since for him subjects mutually co-create, but for me, both subjects and objects co-create, all the way up, all the way down.

After quietly acknowledging that I actually do understand “real” intersubjectivity, de Quincey ignores that fact and then seizes on the wording in one example (and only one example out of hundreds) to claim that I allow only Intersubjectivity-1, that generated by linguistic signs. This is categorically false.

But the real difficulty here is that my writing on the whole makes it clear that I acknowledge and actually include all three of those forms of intersubjectivity—I believe that all three of them exist, and I have given examples and explanations of all three of them in my writings (see below).

Moreover, I add at least two more types of intersubjectivity not dealt with by de Quincey. I will focus on one of these, which in many ways it is the most important of all. With reference to de Quincey’s numbering scheme, we could call it Intersubjectivity-3, namely: the agency of all holons opens directly, immediately, onto Spirit itself, and thus all holons share a deep, nonmediated, nonlocal, profound intersubjectivity due to the fact that all holons immediately touch each other via the Spirit that each of them fully is. This “ultimate” meaning of intersubjectivity is for me the primary meaning, and I believe that

all of the other forms of intersubjectivity issue forth from this all-pervading Ground. As Schopenhauer noted long ago, without a common Self in and to all people, you can't get *any* form of intersubjectivity going in the first place—and that certainly includes de Quincey's Intersubjectivity-2b, which by comparison is very a limited and partial conception of intersubjectivity, in my opinion.)

Students of my work are quite clear about all five types of intersubjectivity that I believe exist. Here are a few excerpts from Sean Hargens' work-in-progress, *The Evolution of Intersubjectivity*.

Sean begins by pointing out that “What is needed is a clarifying framework that can hold simultaneously the many dimensions of intersubjectivity. I believe that Ken Wilber's ‘all-quadrant, all-level’ (AQAL) ontological-epistemological model is such a framework. It provides an evolutionary/developmental continuum that can serve to clarify many of the misunderstandings that occur in discussions of intersubjectivity. De Quincey isolates a number of these confusions and offers three different definitions of intersubjectivity as a way of overcoming these impasses.... Despite the fact that de Quincey acknowledges Wilber's model to honor intersubjectivity, he tends to focus on only one part of what it has to offer, namely the intersubjectivity that is a result of an exchange of linguistic tokens [Intersubjectivity-1]. A closer reading of Wilber's model reveals a much more comprehensive approach to intersubjectivity. Although the fullness of Wilber's model, as it relates to intersubjectivity, is often buried in footnotes and/or is simply implicit, nevertheless, enough pieces do exist within the body of his writings to see a different picture than the one de Quincey paints.”

Sean outlines five types of intersubjectivity that I include in my work (and which Sean unpacks at length, adding enormously to anything I have written on these types; I have included, as Appendix B, Sean's summary of these five types of intersubjectivity recognized by my work). He then says, "Now that I have highlighted some of the limits of existing approaches to intersubjectivity, and stated that even de Quincey leaves some important dimensions of intersubjectivity unaddressed, I will turn to Wilber's model as a starting point for articulating an integral approach to intersubjectivity.... The five dimensions discussed above are all considered to constitute the Lower-Left quadrant of Wilber's integral model. Thus when de Quincey claims that 'unlike Habermas, Jacques, Buber, or Mead, intersubjectivity is not a central concern for Wilber,' I beg to differ. After all, de Quincey only cites one book (out of 18) to support this claim—although that one book, surprisingly, contains passages which speak to all five dimensions.

"I agree with de Quincey, insofar as Wilber's writings cover a variety of topics, he doesn't deal exclusively with intersubjectivity. Thus it is not the central concern, but it is definitely a central concern. However, the sense I get from de Quincey's article, which has been confirmed in personal communication, is that he means it in a more pointed way. But Wilber's entire integral agenda is in part the stated need for us to honor 'The Big Three' (subjective, intersubjective, and objective domains of the Kosmos). Thus, arguably you could claim that Wilber actually elevates intersubjectivity to a place unequaled by most theorists who have dealt with it. I can think of no other metaphysical frameworks that have explicitly stated that Intersubjectivity is one of three legs stabilizing the Kosmological stool. I imagine that de Quincey's retort is that while Wilber deals with intersubjectivity he is only dealing with

one of three types of intersubjectivity and fails to see that intersubjectivity as context (de Quincey's

Intersubjectivity-2b) is ontologically prior to intersubjectivity as mutual understanding (de

Quincey's Intersubjectivity-1). However, as we saw in Part I above, Wilber actually provides a system that not only recognizes the three types of intersubjectivity that de Quincey highlights but goes beyond those to offer five distinct dimensions, several of which have sub-dimensions."

Hargens summarizes: "Again, de Quincey's position is based on a limited and selective reading of Wilber. Admittedly, Wilber hasn't unpacked these dimensions in his writings to date but that is a far cry from claiming that Wilber doesn't make intersubjectivity a major concern. Clearly, Wilber's 'all-quadrant, all-level' model can give voice to the complexity of intersubjectivity far more comprehensively than any other contemporary approach."

Although de Quincey did not send me his paper and allow me to check for any misrepresentations, he circulated it to numerous others. Several people approached me warning of the severe distortions in the paper. Keith Thompson sent de Quincey a series of emails outlining my actual position in an attempt to help de Quincey correct his obvious errors. Thompson checked his summary of my position with me first in order to see if he had correctly presented my view, and I told him that I found his representation to be very accurate. Here are those sections where Thompson is correcting de Quincey misrepresentations (reprinted with permission)¹:

The heart of de Quincey's argument is that Ken's "intersubjectivity" is derived merely from the exchange of linguistic signifiers and is really "interobjective." I disagree. Wilber could not be more clear that he derives the Left-Hand or interior quadrants ultimately from Spirit or nondual consciousness, which is single (or more accurately nondual), and therefore is identical in all holons (e.g., all beings have buddhamind or buddhanature). His intersubjectivity thus arises from the direct and immediate contact of all interiors with Spirit—which is equally and immediately present in all beings, and thus all beings are immediately co-present in Spirit—and not from the exchange of objective signs (or anything else objective), although, as he makes clear, those exchanges also occur (but they are of the manifest realm, not of ever-present, omni-present Spirit).

Wilber has said there are forerunners of this position (namely, that intersubjectivity in itself comes directly from nondual Spirit) in Vedanta, Fichte, and Emerson, among others. I can't remember all the places he has said this, but I remembered one—I looked up Emerson in the index of SES and found an endnote where Wilber explicitly says this. He is talking about one of the strongest forms of intersubjectivity in reference to an Emerson quote, where Emerson says that all interaction between people assumes a common point, and that common ground (the ground of intersubjectivity) is God. Wilber emphatically agrees. So in the endnote (note 1 for chap. 8), Wilber contrasts the way in which Emerson derives intersubjectivity (namely, from the fact that there is but one Over-Soul common in all beings) and the way Habermas derives it (namely, from the exchange of

linguistic signifiers). Wilber believes that both forms exist, but as to which is more fundamental, Wilber decidedly sides with Emerson against Habermas in this regard.

[For reference, here is the full endnote—KW:

Notice that Emerson handles Habermas's "identical signification" in a very direct way: it is not that we merely assume identical signification in order to get the conversation going; it is that on the deepest level we share a common Self or Nature, namely, God, and that is why the conversation can get going! Habermas's omega point of mutual understanding, while still true, is outcontextualized by Emerson's omega point of mutual identity (and in this Emerson is in a long line of descendants from Plotinus through Schelling to Emerson, as we will see). For Habermas, the "who" of Dasein is found in the *circling* of the intersubjective circle; for Emerson, the "Who" is simply God.

Thus Emerson refers to the Over-Soul as "that common heart of which all sincere conversation is the worship." Hölderlin: ". . . we calmly smiled, sensed our own God amidst intimate conversation, in one song of our souls."]

This is why Wilber often says that intersubjectivity is the ground in which both subjects and objects arise. That could not be the case if intersubjectivity were derived from exchanges of subjects and objects, although those also occur, and Wilber sometimes just talks about those, but this must be seen in the context of his overall position.

In other words, Wilber criticizes Habermas exactly for what de Quincey incorrectly ascribes to Wilber. I believe Wilber (and others) will call de Quincey

on this. For Wilber, intersubjectivity is ultimately possible because of a common nondual Spirit (or the simultaneous presence of Presence in each holon), and then within that, exchanges of signifiers can occur, and so on. Wilber sometimes talks about the latter, but he clearly takes the former as its real ground. The latter is a special case of the former, and the former is logically prior to (transcends and includes) the latter.

Keith includes a discussion of my view of holographic interpenetration and its important but limited role in intersubjectivity, which I include as an endnote.²

To return to de Quincey's critique. The most common pattern in all three of de Quincey's main criticisms is this: each time I address an issue (such as intersubjectivity or the mind-body problem), I outline several different meanings (or aspects) of the problem, and I state that I believe that *all* of them must be included in any integral theory. I do that with the five meanings of intersubjectivity, and I do that with the three major meanings of the mind-body problem. In each case, de Quincey quotes me where I am emphasizing the importance of one of the aspects, then he quotes me emphasizing another aspect, then he charges me with contradicting myself (or being ambiguous, confused, or befuddled). I feel that this gives the impression that de Quincey seems to have a hard time holding multiple perspectives in mind; he wants me to choose just one aspect and privilege it above all others, and when I don't do this, he charges me with ambiguity. It's very hard to respond to such charges, especially the way that de Quincey will cut and splice quotes to show that I have several different meanings in mind (and I

have several different meanings in mind because surely there are several different meanings in reality).

But, as previously suggested, in each of his main criticisms, de Quincey eventually backs off and subtly retracts his charges (although he will often preface this retraction by repeating his charge of ambiguity). With regard to Intersubjectivity-2b, which de Quincey first says I completely lack, he finally states: “Wilber does talk the language of presence—the foundational experience of intersubjectivity.” He then quotes me (correctly):

Consciousness is an inseparable mixture of experience and mental-cultural molding.... Every experience is a context; every experience, even simple sensory experience, is always already situated, is always already a context, is always already a holon.... As Whitehead would have it, every holon is already a prehensive unification of its entire actual universe: nothing is ever simply present.

... but contexts touch *immediately*. It does not require “mystical pure consciousness” to be in immediate contact with the data of experience. When any point in the mediated chain is known (or experienced), that knowing or prehending is an immediate event in itself, an immediate “touching.” The touching is not a touching of something merely present but rather is itself pure Presence (or prehension).

Let me repeat that I see all five or so forms of intersubjectivity as being profoundly important. I include several forms of intersubjectivity not addressed by de

Quincey, including a nondual spiritual ground (which in one sense is the most fundamental of all), but all forms of intersubjectivity have, I feel, a very important place and thus should be honored and embraced in a more integral approach to the topic.

What is perhaps most embarrassing for de Quincey is that, in an article in the same issue of the *Journal of Consciousness Studies* in which de Quincey's critique appears—and in which he says I really only allow linguistic intersubjectivity—I clearly state my actual position, and it contradicts everything de Quincey claims:

Both the Lower-Left quadrant and the Upper-Left quadrant are postulated to exist “all the way down”; that is, this is a form of modified panpsychism (“pan-interiors”), which seems to be the only model capable of faithfully rendering this “master template.” This implies that intersubjectivity also goes “all the way down” and that humans, as “compound individuals,” contain all the pre-human forms of intersubjectivity as well. Thus, in humans, intersubjectivity is not established merely by exchange of linguistic signifiers, which is the commonly accepted notion. Rather, humans contain pre-linguistic intersubjectivity (established by, e.g., emotional or prereflexive co-presence with and to the other); linguistic intersubjectivity (established by the co-presence of interiority whose exteriors are linguistic signifiers but cannot be reduced to those exteriors); and trans-linguistic intersubjectivity (established by the simple presence of Presence, or nondual Spirit). In short, intersubjectivity is established at all levels by an interior resonance of those elements present at each level, a resonance that appears to span the entire spectrum of consciousness, pre-linguistic to linguistic to

trans-linguistic. The suggestion that I limit intersubjectivity to the exchange of linguistic signifiers is quite off the mark.

And yet, some fifteen pages later in the same journal, de Quincey is claiming that I acknowledge “*only* the exchange of linguistic tokens,” and therefore, as he summarizes his entire point: “Bottom line: This is not an incidental or ‘nit-picking’ critique. Basically, to spell it out: *One quarter of Wilber’s four quadrants is left void or vacant*” (his emphasis).

De Quincey finishes this particular critique, as he does all of the others, by saying that the “highly significant” reason that I leave out the Lower-Left quadrant is that I personally am out of touch with my feelings, and therefore I cannot recognize the importance of non-linguistic intersubjectivity.

This would hurt me deeply had I any feelings, but since I don’t... (-). Let me just say two quick things: one, academic writing generally shuns emotionally laden writing, but the fact that I often, of necessity, conform to that requirement does not mean that I personally lack feelings or that I can’t write in a feelingful way. For an example of the latter, I suggest de Quincey read *Grace and Grit*, which he cannot possibly have done and still claim I lack feelings. I must say that I was a little bit shocked that the one book where I bear my soul to the reader—and the one book that people who know me claim is the “real” Ken Wilber—is completely overlooked in de Quincey’s relentlessly ugly psychoanalysis of me.

Second, even in academic writing, I have a widespread reputation as a passionate and engaged writer, with page after page of ecstatic expression, especially of the Divine.

I cannot believe de Quincey managed to willfully ignore all of these passages, there's so damn many of them! But because it is important for de Quincey to portray me as being—his words—“vehemently anti-feeling,” he ignores not only all the sections of my work that don't fit his mold, but also entire books. He claims that I have “a fiery determination to invalidate any possible psychotherapeutic intervention that might open up to experiential (realities),” thus overlooking all the books I have done on centauric psychotherapy, experiential therapy, etc. (see, for example, chap. 8 in *No Boundary*, which is nothing but experiential therapy).

De Quincey continues this line of attack by saying that “Wilber's immense rational fortress has been erected to withstand any possible intrusion of ambiguity, paradox, or mystery, and is designed to shut out the messiness of intense feeling.” But this is simply ludicrous, since that leaves out not only my insistence on the trans-rational realms of consciousness (which are the cornerstone of my entire approach), but also the entire spectrum of emotions that I have written about (see below). The fact that a large part of what I have to do is provide rational justification for trans-rational states is taken by de Quincey to mean that I have nothing but rationality, in me or my work.

Those of you who have read my work know differently. Here is the conclusion of *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, which according to de Quincey is an “edifice complex” built entirely to screen out mystery, feeling, ecstasy, etc. Of course, because this the conclusion to SES, it says what my final position really is. (Forgive me for having to do this....)

Let the world be quiet. Let the heavens and the earth and the seas be still. Let the world be waiting. Let the self-contraction relax into the empty ground of its own awareness, and let it there quietly die. See how Spirit pours through each and every opening in the turmoil, and bestows new splendor on the setting Sun and its glorious Earth and all its radiant inhabitants. See the Kosmos dance in Emptiness; see the play of light in all creatures great and small; see finite worlds sing and rejoice in the play of the very Divine, floating on a Glory that renders each transparent, flooded by a Joy that refuses time or terror, that undoes the madness of the loveless self and buries it in splendor.

Indeed, indeed: Let the self-contraction relax into the empty ground of its own awareness, and let it there quietly die. See the Kosmos arise in its place, dancing madly and divine, self-luminous and self-liberating, intoxicated by a Light that never dawns nor ceases. See the worlds arise and fall, never caught in time or turmoil, transparent images shimmering in the radiant Abyss. Watch the mountain walk on water, drink the Pacific in a single gulp, blink and a billion universes rise and fall, breathe out and create a Kosmos, breathe in and watch it dissolve.

Let the ecstasy overflow and outshine the loveless self, driven mad with the torments of its self-embracing ways, hugging mightily samsara's spokes of endless agony, and sing instead triumphantly with St. Catherine, "My being is God, not by simple participation, but by a true transformation of my Being. My *me* is God!" And let the joy sing with Dame Julian, "See! I am God! See! I am in all things! See! I do all things!" And let the joy shout with Hakuin, "This very body is the Body of Buddha! and this very land the Pure Land!"

And this Earth becomes a blessed being, and every I becomes a God, and every We becomes God's sincerest worship, and every It becomes God's most gracious temple.

And comes to rest that Godless search, tormented and tormenting. The knot in the Heart of the Kosmos relaxes to allow its only God, and overflows the Spirit ravished and enraptured by the lost and found Beloved. And gone the Godless destiny of death and desperation, and gone the madness of a life committed to uncare, and gone the tears and terror of the brutal days and endless nights where time alone would rule.

And I-I rise to taste the dawn, and find that love alone will shine today. And the Shining says: To love it all, and love it madly, and always endlessly, and ever fiercely, to love without choice and thus enter the All, to love it mindlessly and thus be the All, embracing the only and radiant Divine: now as Emptiness, now as Form, together and forever, the Godless search undone, and love alone will shine today.

THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM

De Quincey's second and third criticisms deal with aspects of the mind-body problem, and here his treatment of my position is something of a replay of his treatment of intersubjectivity. He uses the same type of argument: when I offer several important but very different meanings of the topic, each of which I deeply feel should be honored, de Quincey will cut and splice the quotes and then suggest I am contradicting myself. De Quincey dismisses two of the three important meanings of the mind-body problem that I think we should honor; he focuses on one aspect—the subject-object relation—and aggressively tries to show that my model “doesn't even begin to offer a solution” to this problem—but he then once again subtly retracts his entire criticism, acknowledging that

“Wilber’s [view] can offer a solution for the subject-object relation”—after he has excoriated me for totally misunderstanding the mind-body problem, completely misrepresenting Whitehead, and also being a really nasty person to boot.

Once again I came away from reading this section with basically no idea what to make of it. So I might not convey this part of my response very well, and I hope I don’t misrepresent what de Quincey is trying to say, because once again I feel he has some fine points. Also, although I tried as hard as I could to make chapter 14 in *Integral Psychology* (which discusses these three meanings) as clear as possible, I am now—given de Quincey’s reading of that chapter—worried that I didn’t succeed very well at all, so allow me to try to simplify and summarize. Here are the three different meanings of the mind-body problem that I believe are quite common and that I carefully outline in *Integral Psychology*:

(1) For the average person, “mind” often means my conceptual, willing, and intentional self, and “body” often means my emotions, sensations, felt somatic sense, and so on.

(2) For many cognitive scientists and various materialists, “mind” means “brain” and “body” means organism. In this usage, the brain is in the body or in the organism.

(3) For many philosophers, “mind” means “interiors” and body means “exteriors”—or, in general terms, mind means “subject” and body means “object,” so that the mind-body problem ultimately means the relation between subject and object.

Explicitly following the great nondual wisdom traditions (such as Vedanta and Vajrayana), I divide this meaning into two subdivisions: relative and absolute (as I will explain)—call them 3a and 3b.

Now, my major point is that all three (or four) of those aspects of the mind-body problem are very important, but each of them has a different “solution,” so to speak. De Quincey cuts and splices my three meanings with my three proposed solutions in a way that makes me look like a complete idiot, whereas all my good friends know that I am only a partial idiot. So let me try to state what I believe are the three solutions to these three very different aspects of the mind-body problem. Notice that in each of the three aspects, *both* “mind” and “body” have very different meanings, and I am simply suggesting that we need to be aware of these different meanings.

(1) The first aspect of the mind-body problem is actually something that developmental psychologists have gone a long way toward solving, or at least explaining in a plausible fashion. Those aspects of the mind that we call “conceptual” or “rational”—such as formal operational cognition—and those aspects of the body that we refer to as “impulses” or “felt sensations” or some such, are related in a “transcend and include” fashion. In this particular regard, the mind-body problem is a conflict between two levels in the UL quadrant. (Please note: this meaning of “feeling” is NOT the only meaning of feeling that I give. De Quincey consistently mistakes my position that there are pre-rational feelings to mean that *all* feeling is *merely* pre-rational, which is exactly the opposite of my actual stance, as I will discuss later).

When referring only to this aspect of the mind-body problem, developmentalists have found that, for example, sensorimotor prehensions are transcended and included in concrete operational prehensions, which are transcended and included in formal operational prehensions. Thus, in this specific sense, the “body is in the mind,” which

means that the mind (e.g., formop) transcends and includes the body (e.g., sensorimotor feelings).

This relation of “transcend and include” actually goes a long way to helping us unravel the riddle of the “composition problem,” as I try to suggest in my article appearing in the same issue of JCS as de Quincey’s. I will return to this point momentarily.

De Quincey ridicules this meaning, calling it “either meaningless or patently false.” But he does so because, once again, he claims that this is the ONLY meaning of the mind-body problem that I give, when it is actually only one of three meanings. De Quincey again seems to have trouble holding all of these perspectives in mind and honoring the importance of each. But I feel that this part of the mind-body problem is important to address. I also like the “flavor” of the fact that, in this specific sense, the “body is in the mind,” because it gives a wonderful sense of enveloping and inclusion. De Quincey implies that no theorist would acknowledge this meaning. With obvious disdain, de Quincey states, “Ask any average mind-body theorist to choose between ‘mind in body’ or ‘body in mind,’ and they will choose the former.” He might want to start with Mark Johnson’s marvelous book, *The Body in the Mind*.

(2) For most materialists, of course, the body is not in the mind, the mind is in the body. That is, mind is equated with brain, and since the brain is in the organism (or in the body), then the duality is “solved” by a flatland exclusion of all interiors. Neither de Quincey nor I accept this “solution,” of course. But my point is that, while this fails as a solution to the overall mind-body problem, it is an important aspect of an integral theory of consciousness, because it involves a systematic investigation of the Upper-Right

quadrant, including neurophysiology, brain chemistry, neuroscience, and so on. The solution to this aspect is simply more empirical scientific research; I won't say any more about this aspect since it is fairly straightforward in its contours.

(3) Perhaps the most important aspect of the mind-body problem involves the relation of interiors and exteriors, or the relation of subject and object. As indicated, I subdivide this into relative and absolute approaches, based on the nondual traditions (as I will explain in a moment).

In my opinion—and I explicitly state this not only in *Integral Psychology* but in the article appearing in the same JCS volume as de Quincey's—the solution to #3a is best handled by a type of Whiteheadian process philosophy, and the solution to #3b is best handled by a type of Zen awakening or satori.

So those are the three (or rather four) aspects of the mind-body problem as I see them, and the four suggested solutions: a developmental transcend and include; further empirical research; Whiteheadian process philosophy; and Zen (or similar nondual contemplative practices). De Quincey severely misrepresents my position on every single one of those items.

Instead of giving several quotes in this case—it becomes boring very quickly—let me simply give one example of how I believe that de Quincey gets misled in his presentation of my work. The problem, again, is that although I explicitly state that all four of these meanings are important parts of the overall puzzle, de Quincey takes each one in turn, claims that it is the ONLY aspect of the mind-body that I acknowledge, and then lambastes and ridicules me for being confused, ill-informed, and befuddled. I must

admit, I came away from reading this section reeling under the weight of my crushing stupidity. :-)

Here is the example—and notice that de Quincey wants me to chose only ONE of the four aspects of the problem as being “the” problem, instead of felicitously acknowledging the importance of each. He says, “But the real mind-body problem, as Wilber knows, is precisely how the causal interaction between the mind and body can be explained. It is a split between the UL quadrant (mind) and UR quadrant (body or brain)—not between two levels of the UL quadrant.” I acknowledge that *both* of those aspects are important—they are in fact meanings #3 and #1—but de Quincey dismisses one of them and then claims that I clearly do not even understand what the mind-body problem is: “Wilber does seem to be confused about what the mind-body problem is (as identified by philosophers for centuries—e.g., Schopenhauer’s ‘world-knot’ or, more recently, Levine’s ‘explanatory gap’ and Chalmer’s ‘hard problem.’ The ‘world-knot’ is not about relating higher and lower interior levels, about how reason and feelings or emotions are related [my meaning #1]. His confusion arises because Wilber uses the word ‘body’ in two very different senses”—actually, three different senses, all clearly identified in the text—notice that de Quincey wants me to pick just one aspect of the “body,” and when I don’t, he accuses me of confusion. He says I use the word “body” in several “contradictory” ways, when actually I am *reporting* that various theorists have used the word “body” in at least three different and often contradictory ways. When I report these three different usages, de Quincey accuses me of self-contradiction.

He goes on to say, “But Wilber’s ‘body’ is not at all the same as that in the ‘mind-body’ world-knot.” Here, by ignoring my other, equally important meanings of “the

body,” he claims that I am saying that meaning #1 is the ONLY meaning of body—and of course that body (#1) is not what most philosophers of the ‘world-knot’ mean: they mean body #3 (or interiors and exteriors), and I clearly give that meaning (of interior and exterior) is in the chapter that de Quincey is summarizing: after introducing the first two meanings of the mind-body problem, I give the third: “‘mind’ can mean the interior dimension in general—or the Left Hand—and ‘body’ the exterior dimension in general—or the Right Hand.” That third general meaning, and its proposed solution, is explored at length in the book; I will return to it in a moment.

De Quincey pays no heed to that discussion; he then gives the “real” mind-body problem, which is nothing but a repeating of my third meaning: “However, the real mind-body problem is not how to account for how different interiors relate, it is to explain how interiors and exteriors are related.” Correct; but that’s meaning #3, the meaning that is, as I indicated, the most fundamental (but not sole) aspect of the mind-body problem. De Quincey ignores all of this, and proceeds as if meaning #1 is the only meaning I present. He then berates me for presenting a “straw man” argument. And his argument concludes, once again, by announcing that I miss this crucial part of the mind-body problem (the relation of interior and exterior) because I am out of touch with my own interior feelings. He then says that “no mind-body theorists, besides idealists and Wilberesque ‘integralists’ would accept that meaning....”

But, as usual, after chastising me for not even being able to recognize the central meaning of the mind-body problem—namely, meaning #3a—de Quincey then quietly retracts everything he said: “The real mind-body problem is how are feelings in the body? That’s the world-knot, as Wilber...correctly points out.” But as usual, this retraction

comes after several pages of attack on my capacity to understand to the problem, alternating with personal attacks on me as a person because I am out of touch with my feelings. After all of that, there comes, usually in a footnote, the subtle retraction, which often begins “To be fair....” (One suspects that if, instead of putting the theoretical and ad hominem attacks first and the fairness second, de Quincey first presented the fairness, then the size of the article would have shrunk dramatically.)

When it comes to my four proposed solutions for the four interrelated aspects of the mind-body problem, de Quincey again mixes and matches my suggestions in a way that left me breathless with my dumbness. But unfortunately, the very article appearing alongside of de Quincey’s in the same JCS issue directly contradicts every major assertion he makes about my proposed solutions (see below).

De Quincey particularly misrepresents my relation to Whitehead. As clearly stated in both *Integral Psychology* and in the JCS article, I believe something like a Whiteheadian process philosophy is the best solution to aspect #3a. As I put it in the JCS article appearing along with de Quincey’s, “The relative solution to the relation of subject and object is best captured, I believe, by a specific type of panpsychism, which can be found in various forms in Leibniz, Whitehead, Russell, Charles Hartshorne, David Ray Griffin, David Chalmers, etc.” Some fifteen pages later, in the same journal, de Quincey is excoriating me for not only denying Whitehead’s approach, but almost completely misunderstanding it. (Incidentally, I sent the manuscript of *Integral Psychology* to David Ray Griffin—arguably the greatest living Whitehead scholar—and asked him to read it for mistakes. As I will report in Appendix A, Griffin replied that, with one exception I will mention below, he had no problem with my entire presentation of Whitehead.)

I have often stated that I accept virtually all of Whitehead's process philosophy, *as far as it goes*. I have added two criticisms of Whitehead, and offered two correlative additions to correct what I feel are inadequacies in his model; but I clearly state, as in the quote given above, that, on the manifest plane, the crucial relation of interiors and exteriors (subject and object) can best be handled by a type of Whiteheadian process philosophy. I repeated this point strongly in the book de Quincey is reviewing, adding ways in which Whitehead's prehension could be extended even further: "At each of those levels [of the spectrum of consciousness], not only do interiors prehend their corresponding exteriors, they prehend their own past (Griffin would agree with that, I believe). This appears to account not only for Mind-Body (interior-exterior) interaction [i.e., meaning #3a], but for interior causation, interior inheritance, and mind-body interaction [meaning #1]." In other words, I am fully acknowledging that the Whitehead/Griffin stance covers important aspects of meanings #1 and #3a (and of course it can therefore handle #2). I explicitly identify myself with that tradition for those particular aspects of the mind-body problem (I will explain my criticisms of it in a moment).

De Quincey gives that same quote of mine and then says, "So here, Wilber is borrowing Whitehead's notion of 'prehension' and applies it to his quadrants." That is absolutely correct, as I announce myself (you can even find the word "prehension" on the standard four-quadrant diagram). De Quincey continues: "To the extent that Whitehead's process philosophy accounts for the relationship between subject (interior) and object (exterior), Wilber's prehension-enriched quadrants can offer a solution for the subject-object relation [and therefore a solution the 'world-knot' of the mind-body problem]."

But, in that case, it is not Wilber's model that supplies the solution, it is Whitehead's (which Wilber has assimilated into this own)."

Correct. So let's unpack that statement. Since I have assimilated Whitehead's prehension into my model, and since that does solve the mind-body problem in de Quincey's view, then my model does solve the mind-body problem. In this regard, it does not matter that part of my model is explicitly adapted from Whitehead (with full acknowledgement). It matters only that my model, by de Quincey's yardstick, has solved the problem. At one stroke de Quincey once again erases his major criticism of my stance (an erasure that is, also again, buried in a footnote).

But notice also: when he says that it is "not Wilber's model but Whitehead's," he has badly overstated the case. Whitehead does not have the quadrants; he does not have a full holarchy of consciousness (as de Quincey fully concedes); therefore he cannot solve aspect #3b of the mind-body problem; he does not understand levels and lines; and—as even David Ray Griffin conceded—Whitehead's dialogical approach is, to use Griffin's words, "incomplete" compared to my "complete" model (see Appendix A); and hence the model that solves the mind-body problem is not merely Whitehead's. De Quincey robs me of any contributions to the mind-body problem, precisely because the only mind-body problem he recognizes is #3a. But I maintain that all four aspects are important; and most significantly, I claim that Whitehead has no solution whatsoever for aspect #3b (or satori), and his "solution" for #3a needs to be supplemented with a quadratic approach (see Appendix A). This leads to my criticism of Whitehead's view as very important but very partial, a criticism that focuses on (1) Whitehead's lack of a true or complete intersubjectivity, and (2) his failure to include higher, nondual waves of consciousness,

whose disclosures are part of the solution to the fourth aspect of the mind-body problem (aspect #3b). As I said, I will summarize this critique in an appendix.

By switching back and forth between my four meanings of the mind-body problem, and ridiculing all of them except #3a, de Quincey tries very hard to give the impression that I simply have no idea what I am talking about. “Wilber reveals a surprisingly loose grasp of the subtle and key issues in philosophy of mind.” As the prime example of this, he gives a lengthy attack on my summary of the materialist side of the debate. After ridiculing my presentation, comes the retraction: “Wilber may have in mind eliminative materialists.” That’s exactly what I have in mind, as the discussion itself points out.

De Quincey then returns to meaning #3a, and states again that “Without something like Whitehead’s process approach, Wilber cannot be expected to solve the mind-body puzzle.” As noted, this assertion occurs in the same issue of JCS where I clearly state that aspect #3a of the mind-body problem can best be solved by a type of Whitehead process approach. De Quincey then says that because I do not embrace Whitehead, this shows again that I am a reprehensible person: since I do not use Whitehead, my claims are open to “severe criticism from anyone versed in the nuances of the mind-body problem”—in other words, somebody other than me—and my presentation “will be dismissed, at best, as naïve, or, worse, as a case of hubris.”

De Quincey finishes his condemnatory attack on my discussion of the mind-body problem by switching to meaning #3b—the transrational or transpersonal aspect of the mind-body problem—which, I suggest, can be solved only by a development of consciousness beyond the rational mind and into the transrational or supramental waves

of development (i.e., the final relation of subject and object is fully grasped only in a nondual consciousness).

What does that actually mean? To begin with, notice that the “Cartesian dualism” that virtually everybody criticizes involves the notion of a mind-subject set apart from, or divorced from, all the body-objects “out there.” The *ultimate* relation of the subject and object is the ultimate meaning of the mind-body problem (i.e., aspect #3b). On the relative or manifest plane, we can “think through” this mind-body problem and arrive at relative solution—namely, a type of Whiteheadian process philosophy. But we cannot “think through” the ultimate solution, because this involves a transformation of consciousness to the nondual state. There is thus a simple “test” for whether I have solved this aspect of the mind-body problem: if I feel that I am on “this side” of my face looking at the world “out there,” then I am still held captive by the Cartesian dualism, even if I am thinking nice Whiteheadian thoughts. It is only when there is a profound realization (satori) that I am not merely “in” this particular bodymind looking out on the world, but rather, I am everything that is arising moment to moment—an immediate realization that has no inside and no outside, but only an ever-present awareness that is one with all manifestation—that there comes a deep and ultimate understanding of the relation of subject and object—or so claim the great nondual wisdom traditions. That is aspect #3b of the mind-body problem and its solution according to the nondual traditions; and I believe that that is the fourth aspect of the mind-body problem that very much needs to be included in any integral approach. I will reprint this part of my discussion of the mind-body problem in an endnote.³

De Quincey ridicules my suggestion as being merely a “promissory integralism” because it promises to deliver the answer if we develop to higher waves. But, asserts de Quincey, “Wilber is clearly aware that his model cannot really deliver on that promise.” It cannot deliver on that promise for two reasons, he says: because I am talking about higher, transpersonal, or spiritual development, and because I am not a spiritual or developed person, then I am not qualified to make these assertions. And two, the very notion of solving the problem only in higher stages of development is a vapid promise, a “promissory integralism,” since it does not address the issue of how the interiors and exteriors *relate*.

But the interiors and the exteriors “relate” only on the manifest plane; on the nondual, they do not relate to each other, for they are “not-two” (nor is this an identity theory, since they are “not-one,” either).⁴ And, on the relative plane where they do relate, I have already stated that a type of Whiteheadian process approach can do that (as de Quincey acknowledges); and thus, if we leave aside the ad hominem argument, it is very hard to see exactly what his objection amounts to. So, after raking me over the coals for my hubris and lack of interior feelings, de Quincey once again subtly retracts his criticism: “I agree with Wilber that a full understanding of the mind-body solution involves a development of consciousness.” So de Quincey is offering his own promissory integralism, which is totally fine with me. Why he won’t allow me to do so is never really explained.

What I am attempting to suggest is that, apart from what can be said about the relation of subject and object on the relative, phenomenal, manifest plane—which involves aspect #3a and which can be best handled by a type of Whiteheadian process

approach—the ultimate relation of subject and object (#3b), at least according to the great saints and sages, can only be understood with a growth in consciousness that discloses the supramental, transrational states of nondual awareness. If you believe, with de Quincey, that I am a ghastly person who could not possibly have access to any sort of higher, spiritual states, then you can at least look at the numerous reports of renowned mystics who have made similar claims.

This solution to this part of the mind-body problem does not replace or supplant the other three meanings (and the other three partial solutions); it is simply the capstone of an integral approach that attempts to honor and include all four of these meanings and all four partial solutions. After de Quincey's portrayal of my discussion as feeble at best and deeply befuddled at worst, I feel compelled to say that many scholars in the field wrote me with praises on what a fine overview and summary I had given, and many felt that an AQAL approach to the problem, because of its inclusiveness and its charitable integration of all four aspects, was one of the best attempts to date to unravel the world-knot.

PANPSYCHISM

De Quincey starts this section with typical charity: “Related to his unsatisfactory treatment of the mind-body problem is Wilber's problematic characterization of panpsychism. It is really his own invention, another ‘straw man,’ easy to knock down, but of little practical value because it does not inform us about real panpsychism.”

De Quincey's main objection—again, it is very hard to tell exactly what he is objecting to, since he subtly retracts his criticisms or acknowledges that I do, after all,

seem to know what I'm talking about—appears to be as follows. I believe that interiors “go all the way down”—this is a form of panpsychism that I call “pan-interiorism.” I often say that I am not a panpsychist, I am a pan-interiorist, but that's just word quibbling. But I quibble for this reason:

I accept the Whitehead/Griffin version of prehension (as far as it goes), but I state a personal preference: “I accept the notion of Whitehead (Hartshorne, Griffin) that we can picture ‘prehension’ as perhaps the earliest form of interiors (every interior touches—prehends—an exterior at some point, since interior and exterior mutually arise), but when that prehension is explained in terms such as feeling or emotion, I believe that is overdoing it.”

De Quincey uses this to claim that I reject all panpsychism (which is obviously not true), that I don't understand what Whitehead and Griffin mean by that term (a claim not shared by Griffin himself), and that “What's happening here is either Wilber engaging in one-upsmanship word quibbling, or he is committing the emergence fallacy.” Typically, these are the only choices I am allowed.

Well, in this case, I am word quibbling, as I myself point out. There are two reasons that I accept “prehension” but not “feelings” as a name for the interiors that go all the way down. De Quincey's authoritative assertion is that I reject the word “feelings” because I am out of touch with mine, and therefore I cannot see the truth of his position. But I maintain that I don't use the term “feeling” because: (1) as I said, it's just a bit much, and yes, this is word quibbling (for whatever reason, I can believe that atoms have prehension, but atoms having feelings is a tad overboard for me. But that's all it is, a personal preference, as I make very clear), and (2) the deeper reason I try not to

characterize or qualify the nature of interiors is that *ultimately* (and here I am switching from a relative to an absolute form of argument a la Madhymaka), ultimately the interiors of each holon open directly onto radical, absolute, unqualifiable Spirit or pure Emptiness, so that the interior of each holon acts as an *opening* or *clearing* in which other holons can emerge, so that all holons are mutually arising in the clearing that they mutually supply for each other. (This is also the ground meaning or ultimate meaning of intersubjectivity, which exists alongside the four or five others.) This meaning is explained in length in several endnotes in SES, and is carefully repeated in *Integral Psychology*.⁵ Although it is a view that is based on something of a combination of Heidegger, Nagarjuna, and Asanga—and helped along by Michael Zimmerman’s wonderful readings of those theorists—I believe this view itself is rather novel and unique. De Quincey discusses none of this view, or even mentions it, but readers can consult IP and SES if they would like to pursue it.

De Quincey then subtly retracts: “Wilber’s ‘interiors’ all the way down and Whitehead’s ‘prehensions’ all the way down are tokens of the same ontological type. This is the essence of panpsychism.” Correct, as I myself state on numerous occasions. De Quincey has once again excoriated me for something I do not believe, and then himself retracted his attack in a footnote.

In the course of his condemnatory attack on my “straw-man panpsychism”—which I explicitly identify with Whitehead’s and Griffin’s—de Quincey moves into a long discussion of the confused nature of my treatment of feelings in general. De Quincey claims that I relegate feelings or emotions ONLY to the lower, prerational levels

of development. This is categorically false. In an online interview with Jim Fadiman, I summarize my overall position:

Jim Fadiman: A serious question. I have a fairly good idea of the value of the intellect, of thinking, observing, analysis, etc. I see it as being turned to positive ends as one develops. The positive value of emotions is less clear to me as one develops spiritually. They seem to be filters, veils, disturbances in the force, etc. Many spiritual traditions seem to downgrade them as one gets closer to the Divine. Can you offer some clarification?

KW: It helps me if I remember that there are at least two different meanings or types of emotions or affects, which we might call horizontal and vertical.

With the former, we are talking about the types of emotions that exist at a *particular level* of consciousness, and in most cases this means a not-very-high level at that. In Vedanta, for example, we have the five major levels or sheaths of consciousness, which are: *anna* (or matter), *prana* (or emotional-sexual), *mano* (or lower mind), *vijnana* (or higher mind), and *ananda* (or bliss)—and then Atman (or I-I). Notice that the emotional level is only the second level—not very high at all, and a level that, if clung to, is definitely an impediment to higher levels, as you note.

Prana, of course, is the level of dense emotions—anger, fear, hope, envy, hatred, jealousy, desire, longing, lust, and so on—all of which, as you say, tend to cloud and veil awareness. And not just spiritual awareness: prana can (and does) cloud lower mind and higher mind (and everything higher than that). This prana-maya-kosha is the engine of species preservation, and it will—especially in lower stages of development—completely

over-ride and cloud individual mind and soul—if it gets the upper hand, so to speak (which it always does at early developmental stages).

The traditions are pretty unanimous that those emotions have to subside, even be subdued and conquered, in order for any sort of enduring development to occur—not to mention enlightenment.

But then there are the “vertical affects,” as it were—which are a type of subtler and subtler emotions—and these occur as part of the process of actual growth and development itself—and include such affects as care, compassion, mercy, universal love, and transcendental bliss. These are not detractions from higher growth, but the motivational currents of higher growth: good news in every way.

We have many examples of this from orthodox developmental psychology. A quick example: the work of Carol Gilligan.

Gilligan found that female moral development goes through three or four major hierarchical stages (yes, contrary to popular misconceptions, Gilligan maintains that female development, just like male development, occurs in hierarchical stages), which she calls selfish, care, and universal care.

Those are the same general stages as preconventional (egocentric), conventional (ethnocentric), and postconventional (worldcentric). Males go through the same hierarchy, but they tend to emphasize rights and justice whereas females tend to emphasize care and communion, according to Gilligan. But, says Gilligan, both males and females can then reach an integrated stage, which largely integrates male-agency and female-communion. (This integral stage I call the centaur, which is the doorway to the transpersonal.)

Well, here is the point: the emotion-affect of care/concern/compassion starts out, in the preconventional stage, applied only to myself (the selfish stage). This is basically the prana-kosha level, the level of emotion in the “bad sense” (although it serves its absolutely necessary function at that level, including species preservation.)

But as the lower mind emerges (mano), these selfish emotions expand into the stage of care (where care and compassion is extended to members of my family, clan, group, tribe: ethnocentric). As the higher mind emerges (vijnana), care once again expands to universal care (worldcentric), where I extend care and compassion to all peoples, regardless of race, sex, color, or creed (which can be further integrated in the integral stage).

And finally, as the transpersonal wave emerges (ananda), these emotions expand yet again into transcendental love-bliss, universal compassion not just for all humans but for all sentient beings, the radiance of the Divine.

Each of those higher emotions-affects are actually the motivating engines of each of the higher stages of consciousness development. So they are *crucial* components of our own liberating growth. Far from taking us away from the Divine, they take us closer and closer.

(Of course, in the formless, there are no affects; but when you arise from the formless, you arise with compassion, and that motivates the entire life of the bodhisattva: in other words, never are we without these vertical affects in the realm of manifestation.)

I hope this helps, good sir....

As you can see from that exchange, I believe that feelings or affects in the broad sense span the entire spectrum, from lowest to highest (and yes, at the very lowest ends I prefer to speak more in terms of “interiors” than in terms of affects, a bit of word quibbling that I explained earlier). Thus, going all the way back to books such as *The Atman Project*, where I give over a dozen levels of consciousness, I always give a column that says “affects” or “emotions,” and these range *across the entire spectrum*, top to bottom. I again clearly repeat this in *Integral Psychology*, the book de Quincey is ostensibly reviewing (it left me wondering if he even looked at the charts in that book). Once again, de Quincey profoundly misrepresents my actual position, and then uses his misrepresentation to attack me as person who lacks feelings and therefore cannot see that feelings span the entire spectrum.

TONE

Unfortunately, because de Quincey spends so much time on my allegedly vitriolic tone, I must respond. And, also unfortunately, this puts me in the awkward position of having to defend myself as being a basically decent person. It’s lamentable that I have to do this, but when the *Journal of Consciousness Studies* allowed de Quincey to include almost four full pages of a mean-spirited attack on me as person, I really have no choice. That the *Journal of Consciousness Studies* printed this lengthy ad hominen attack is reprehensible, but it leaves me no choice but to respond.

Fortunately, I am one swell guy with a fun-loving, deeply feelingful, charming and witty sense of humor; a clear, expansive, wonderfully spiritual and open awareness that smiles on everybody equally; I do not take these snotty attacks on me personally,

having long ago transcended all ego (cough, cough); and gosh, I am like total fun at a party. So with that honest and objective introduction, let's get started.

We have already heard de Quincey's basic argument: I live in what he calls a "Zombie world, lacking any felt interiority." That is, I am out of touch with feelings in general. But then, he adds, that is not quite right, because I am clearly in touch "with Wilber's vitriol and anger, and lack of compassion." This renders me unfit to "speak and write about higher, spiritual, states or stages of consciousness."

On what evidence does de Quincey base this assertion? Since he has not met me—and since most of the critics he cites have not met me, either—he is presumably basing his condemnation on my writing alone. Two points:

One, in his own article, de Quincey insists (quite correctly, I believe) that we cannot draw conclusions about Whitehead the person merely from the writings of Whitehead. De Quincey then proceeds to do exactly that with me.

Two, which writings of mine are supposed to be vitriolic? Apparently, two books—*Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* and *The Eye of Spirit*. As students of my work know, there was a period that spanned three books out of twenty (namely, SES, BH, and ES), where, for the first time in my life, I engaged in a modest amount of polemical statements in a book. In the twelve books preceding *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*—spanning a period of 25 years of writing—there was literally not one single polemical sentence. Students have calculated that, as a percentage of my total writings, the polemical aspects amounted to 0.0007 of my total work.

There are some interesting questions here. Why, out of so much written material, did that little bit of polemical writing exist at all? Why did I do it? What was motivating

me to do this? And what was the nature of the few theorists that I attacked polemically? Why did I select a dozen or so theorists (out of thousands mentioned in SES) to criticize polemically? Did they do anything to possibly bring it on themselves, or was this just a unilateral case of me being rotten to the core?

If polemic means, as de Quincey suggests, that a person is not spiritual, then for those first twelve books I must have been a very spiritual person. But then, apparently very abruptly, I lost all spirituality and became a vitriolic, angry, uncompassionate fellow. (But that also must mean that, in the numerous books since ES that contain no polemic at all, I must have regained my spirituality?)

And here's a final set of questions: Who would take 0.0007 of a person's writings and make that the *total* example of his style? De Quincey explicitly does this; but why such a narrow and biased reading of my delivery? What's going on here?

To begin with, if you would like to know why—after twelve books and hundreds of articles with no polemic in them at all—I did indeed include, in SES, a series of what most people would call very mild polemical criticisms of about a dozen theorists (I will give an example of my “vitriolic anger” in a moment)—then you might want to look at the introduction to the second revised edition of SES (which is out in paperback from Shambhala), where I discuss my motives at length. I also review my motives in a three-part interview posted at wilber.shambhala.com.

As for the dozen or so theorists that I polemically criticized, every single one of them, without exception, had engaged in “condemnatory rhetoric” of equal or usually much worse dimensions. Some of the venomous writing of these people made mine look like a Girl-Scout picnic. And frankly, I decided to give them a dose of their own

medicine. I fully grant that this was not exactly turning the other cheek, but it did show us that while these folks can dish it out, they don't take it very well at all.

It was from this group of a dozen or so theorists that what can truly be called vitriolic attacks on me as a person first arose. Those attacks were repeated by others—none of whom had ever met me—and this whole notion that my entire body of work is marked by anger and vitriol was launched. It was repeated by others (who had also not met me), and every time the story was told, I seemed to become nastier and nastier. Right up to the present where de Quincey (who, as we will see, is a good friend of exactly these theorists) will refer to my work as what he calls “The Great Chain of Being Nasty” (p. 183).

It should also be said that virtually every one of the theorists that I criticized has taught at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS). When I was first criticizing these theorists, I did not know that they all shared a CIIS connection; it was only after the fact that I realized that, for whatever reason, CIIS was attracting this type of (what I claimed to be dubious) scholarship. I will return to what I feel the meaning of this might be in a moment.

So, exactly how bad was my “vitriol”? Robert McDermott, who was president of CIIS at the time that SES came out, led the attack on me as a person with an article called “The Need for Dialogue in the Wake of Ken Wilber’s *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*.” From the title you might think that this was about the need for dialogue in the wake of Ken Wilber’s *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*. Actually, it was page after page of what a deeply flawed person I was.

The gist of the article was that polemic of any sort indicates a lack of spiritual consciousness. As an assertion of fact, this is of course categorically false. Virtually all of the truly great and widely recognized spiritual philosophers have engaged in polemic at various times, including Plato, Plotinus, Nagarjuna, Hegel, Fa-tsang, Asanga, Schelling... the list is endless. And never mind that the amount or intensity of what little polemic I have released comes nowhere close to that of my esteemed predecessors: the fact is, I am in good company (as are every one of the theorists I criticized).

When the editors asked McDermott to give actual examples of this “great chain of nasty” that is me, here are the worst offenses that McDermott could find: I referred to one group of theorists as “power-hungry”; I referred to some others as being “angry” and “monological”; and, finally, I used this sentence: “These are some of the most quarrelsome groups around—trying to get various eco-groups together is like trying to herd cats.”

On the basis of that evidence, I was publicly condemned and pilloried by McDermott. His chums at CIIS began repeating his criticisms, and from that epicenter word spread that I was a mean, uncaring, uncompassionate, and nonspiritual or even anti-spiritual person— notions all spread by people who had never even met me. (Which, as we will see, is probably one of the problems—as a person who does not make the circuit, I am a bit of an unknown; I become something of a Rorschach blot which invites all sorts of projections onto me, both unrealistically positive and negative.)

Sidebar: After the vituperative response of these theorists to SES, and a series of articles in *ReVision* that continued to pillory me, I was approached by a group of editors who wanted to do *A Guide to Ken Wilber*, in part to undo the distortions of my work that

were rampant. I agreed to participate, but only if they added a section called “Kindred Visions,” where I would invite other important theorists—and *all of my critics*—to have their own say. The editors agreed. I approached every critic who had attacked my position and offered them space for their views; I also approached many of my own favorite integral thinkers. Some 80 theorists responded with wonderful essays—including Stan Grof, Jorge Ferrer, and Michael Washburn (among the critics); and many theorists, such as John Searle and Charles Taylor, offered very moving summaries of their attempts at a more integral philosophy.⁶ The only person out of 80 who refused to join this dialogue was Robert McDermott, which certainly seems to make his plea for “the need for dialogue in the wake of SES” appear not very genuine.)

More than one critic has pointed out that the criticisms I leveled against these dozen or so theorists were very strong, often fatal criticisms. It was also pointed out that these criticisms have never been satisfactorily answered. Instead, these theorists switched tactics and began a campaign of character assassination in what would appear to be an attempt to divert attention away from the inadequacy of their theories. The argument, which de Quincey also uses, is: Wilber is a bad person; therefore what he says is not true; therefore I do not have to answer his critique of my position, I only have to repeat, louder and louder each time, that Wilber is a mean and uncaring person.

I repeat, none of those people have met me, none of them know me at all. And conversely, there are no examples of people who know me well going into print saying that I am essentially a mean, angry, vitriolic, or uncompassionate person. Those charges are made only by people who do not know me. One conclusion would seem to be that I am acting as a Rorschach blot for these folks to project their unresolved issues onto me.

However, since I don't know them, either, I will not formally pursue that charge, although I must say that many who know these people well have made that charge on my behalf.

I personally feel that the worst that can be said about that 0.0007 of my work is that I displayed an acerbic wit—which, let me add, the letters to Shambhala showed that the vast majority of people liked and appreciated (mail has run 10 to 1 in favor of my tone)—and that I wanted to mix things up to get this field agitated a bit, and I can swing a pretty good club (as can every one of the theorists I chastised). But it has been patently apparent for several years that anybody who raises this issue of “tone” is usually acting in the orbit of CIIS and those theorists who have angrily engaged in character assassination as a way, it seems, to avoid the inadequacies of their own theoretical offerings.

As interesting supportive evidence, notice this striking fact: de Quincey got his Ph.D. from CIIS, but in his autobiographical statement in the *Journal of Consciousness Studies* in which his ad hominen attack on me appears, he completely omits that fact. He states that he holds degrees from JFK, but as for his Ph.D., he is strangely silent. Odd thing to leave out, isn't it?

So, one last time for old time's sake, I am going to sink into that horrible vitriol which has marked my entire writing career, and say that I think all of those folks are a bunch of randy toadies and ninny bunnies.

BORROWING

In perhaps the most embarrassing part of his attack on my work, de Quincey accuses me of subconsciously plagiarizing his work (although why he would want to

claim that the model that he so aggressively attacks is actually his model is not made clear). As much as you want to see your critics fumble the ball when they are unfairly attacking you, this was just painful to watch.

In 1995 I published SES. The core of its argument, as de Quincey acknowledges, was a call to integrate “the Big Three”—the big three of art, morals, and science; or the Beautiful, the Good, and the True; or I, we, and it; or first-, second-, and third-person dimensions.⁷

Three years later, in 1998, de Quincey presented a paper that called for integrating first-, second-, and third-person approaches. He sent me this article in 1997. I told him I agreed with it, since it repeated my own model and my own conclusions.

In his JCS article, de Quincey suggests that, having read his paper, I unconsciously “borrowed” his call for integrating the Big Three. He says, “I was pleased to see Wilber subsequently emphasize what I was calling for: a comprehensive 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person approach to consciousness studies (which Wilber now calls the 1-2-3 of consciousness studies).” But, of course, I had been emphasizing that Big-Three approach starting with SES, as its many endnotes make perfectly clear, and this approach was repeated—including the call for a Big-Three approach to consciousness studies—in *The Eye of Spirit*, written in 1996 and published in 1997 (see the *Collected Works*, volume 7), all of which saw the light of day before de Quincey’s paper began circulating.

In an endnote, de Quincey says, “I do want to state for the record that the call for a comprehensive 1, 2, 3 of consciousness studies was first presented in my Tucson paper in 1998.” What evidence does he have for this, and how does he deal with the awkward fact that SES was out in 1995? De Quincey never answers or even addresses that, but he

does say the evidence of my borrowing can be seen in the fact that I use two phrases in *Integral Psychology* that are similar to phrases found in his 1998 paper. These two phrases are “agree with each other” and “comprehensive theory.”

This, as I said, is simply painful. I deeply appreciate that Christian wants to have his ideas acknowledged, and I am more than glad to point to him as a worthy comrade in the drive for an integral Big-Three approach to consciousness studies. I have a reputation for scrupulously giving credit where credit is due, as thousands of footnotes readily attest, but the suggestion that I got this idea from de Quincey just left me totally speechless (as it did every person I talked to about his article). But de Quincey is quite right about one thing: there is indeed some extensive, unconscious borrowing going on here.⁸

SUBTLE ENERGIES

In my own system, the “body/energy” component is the Upper-Right quadrant, and the “mind/consciousness” component is the Upper-Left quadrant. The integral model I am suggesting therefore explicitly includes a corresponding subtle energy at *every level* of consciousness across the entire spectrum (gross to subtle to causal, or matter to body to mind to soul to spirit). Critics have often missed this aspect of my model because the typical four-quadrant diagram shows only the gross body in the Upper-Right quadrant, but that is only a simplified summary of the full model presented in my overall work.

In the traditions, it is often said that these subtle energy fields exist in concentric spheres of increasing embrace. For example, the etheric field is said to extend a few inches from the physical body, surrounding and enveloping it; the astral energy field surrounds and envelops the etheric field and extends a foot or so; the thought field (or

subtle body energy field) surrounds and envelops the astral and extends even further; and the causal energy field extends to formless infinity. Thus, each of these subtle energy fields is a holon (a whole that is part of a larger whole), and the entire holonic energy spectrum can be easily represented in the Upper-Right quadrant as a standard series of increasingly finer and wider concentric spheres (with each subtler energy field transcending and including its junior fields). Each subtle energy holon is the exterior or the Right-Hand component of the corresponding interior or Left-Hand consciousness. In short, all holons have four quadrants across the entire spectrum, gross to subtle to causal, and this includes both a “mind/consciousness” and a “body/energy” component.

De Quincey assures us that “subtle energies don’t fit into any of the quadrants.” On the contrary, those subtle-energy experts who are more familiar with my work, including Larry Dossey and Michael Murphy, have stated that an AQAL approach to these energies might be the closest approach we have to an integral theory of both consciousness and subtle energies.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that, of the ten or so major issues that de Quincey addresses in my work, he substantially misrepresents every one of them. I have in each of those cases given what de Quincey says, followed by direct quotes of mine showing what I actually said, and readers can see for themselves the jarring discrepancies.

Obviously, the question arises as to why this happens. I will set aside any personal or professional motivations of de Quincey’s (I really don’t know him), and instead focus on what seems to me the sufficient reason for such widespread

misunderstanding of my work: the sheer volume of the material. I also have a tendency to write on two levels—the main text and the voluminous endnotes, and often my nuanced position is buried in the endnotes. There is also the fact that I constantly try to incorporate criticism into my work and alter my ideas based on responsible criticism—hence the four major phases of my work, with others surely to follow (thus, the idea that every time somebody criticizes me I claim that I am being misunderstood is ludicrous; if that were the case, I would never have presented any model beyond wilber-1. Even de Quincey acknowledges that “Wilber has a way of assimilating and accommodating the barbs of his critics”—a backhanded compliment for the fact that I greatly appreciate responsible criticism and do whatever I can to fix any problems with my presentation.) But this often means that somebody will give a blistering attack on, say, wilber-2, and that attack gets repeated by others who are trying to nudge me out of the picture, with the result that, as the editors of *A Guide to Ken Wilber* concluded, over 80% of the published and posted criticisms of my work are based on misrepresentations of it.

Keith Thompson offers what I think are two cogent criticisms of the way I write as contributing to this problem. I believe he is correct on both counts.

Having said all of that, do I find Wilber maddening? Yes. Surely not in all respects, but very much so in some. The annoying problem that I have found in attempting to criticize Wilber’s work is that he often states his actual, detailed position on a topic in several obscure endnotes spread over several books (this is certainly true with his treatment of Whitehead; also his theory of semiotics, his actual stance on intersubjectivity, holography, etc.). Then, since in the main text

of his books, he tries to be more popular, he often gives simplified, popularized, and therefore sometimes slightly misleading accounts of his real position. If you want to criticize him, criticize him for that! It has gotten tons of reviewers into real trouble, because they take his popularized statements at face value. Of course, Wilber's defenders then come back with the actual quotes about his real position, dug up from some obscure endnotes, and the reviewer looks like an idiot. This can be very exasperating, but still, it doesn't excuse critics misrepresenting his actual or more sophisticated position.

Speaking of Wilber's defenders: Shambhala is about to add a new feature to Wilber's domain of the Shambhala Web site. It's going to be called "Wilber Watch," and it's going to identify misrepresentations of Wilber's views. I told a friend who works at Shambhala that this seemed to me, well, a bit funny. He said in one sense he agreed... but then he forwarded to me many illustrations of said misrepresentations, and I was frankly amazed. Most involved egregious misreadings of Wilber's work, some of so studied in their mistaken conclusions that it was hard not to attribute bad faith to their promulgators. By the way, not a single one of said "misrepresentations" was simply a matter of the writer reaching different interpretations than Wilber. Ken has repeatedly said he has no problem whatever with anyone reaching different conclusions than his. I have watched many Integral Institute participants do that time and time again, sometimes quite vociferously disagreeing with Ken. Each and every time, Ken has nodded and said something like, "Fair difference of interpretation.... I can see how you reach that conclusion."

At the same time, Ken has a very keen eye for “different interpretations of the data” that are in fact little more than misreadings (willful or not) of his work. I don’t blame Ken’s “defenders” for wanting to identify these and hold them up to a wide audience. (Wilber’s section of Shambhala has gotten more than a million hits already this year.) A really good and valid criticism, it seems to me, would not be to try to attack his position on a single issue (like philosophy of mind or intersubjectivity), but call him to task for never producing a definitive glossary. For work spread out like his, that is inexcusable. I think he or his students are working on one (last I heard it was 400 pages), but he really needs to be kicked in the ass for this.

Point taken. I have also decided that there is no real way out of this morass of misrepresentation unless I start teaching my material. De Quincey’s article was the straw that broke this camel’s back. It was so off the wall that I decided I really needed to take some sort of action.

Nor can I count on the editors at professional journals to help me out here (Bob Forman is a major exception), because they face the same difficulties as everybody else. The managing editor of JCS was sent a long email by Keith Thompson pointing out the many inaccuracies in de Quincey’s article (portions of that email were reprinted above). The editor declined to do anything about it, or even to print Thompson’s corrections. Nor did the editor show me de Quincey’s article before it was published; nor did the editor offer me a chance to respond to these distortions. Again, I don’t blame editors for this; I

doubt that I would give much space to a whiney author who's always complaining
"That's not what I said!"

The good news in all this is that it has spurred me to begin taking this material out in the world myself. This will also give people a chance to see me in the flesh, and thus decide if I am really the devil that their projections proclaim. (Of course, they might decide yes! But at least it will be based on real intersubjective impressions, not shadow projections.) I have already started doing this with Integral Institute, as Keith noted above, and we are starting a period in Integral Institute's history where this type of interaction will only be increasing.

Appendix A—My Criticism of Whitehead as True But Partial:

The Move from an Incomplete Dialogical View to an Integral/Quadratic Formulation

Although Alfred North Whitehead, according to the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, has had almost no impact on professional philosophy, he does have a small but loyal cult following, many of whom find in Whitehead a philosophy congenial to spiritual concerns. In many ways I am one of those fans. As I have often pointed out, I believe

that when it comes to the microanalysis of moment-to-moment experience, Whitehead's notions are indispensable, notions such as prehension, concrescence, prehensive unification, "the many become one and are increased by one," the hierarchy of real occasions, the transcend and include nature of prehensions themselves, and so on.

But I have also suggested that, especially when it comes to the nature of intersubjectivity, Whitehead's view has the lingering impressions (and limitations) of British empiricism from which it arose (as Whitehead once put it: "Spend your days and nights with David Hume." Now when it comes to any sort of truly integral or AQAL formulation, David Hume is the last gentleman you want to spend much time with). The paradigm of British empiricism is an analysis of immediate experience of an object by a subject. That is, it is an investigation of monological occasions presented to the sensorimotor awareness (using "sensorimotor" to mean both the cognitive and affective dimensions of that level). I see the rock, I see a patch of red, I see an object—those are the occasions that form the basis of most of empiricism.

As usual, I am not saying that is wrong; I am suggesting it is very partial. The more I studied the positive aspects of postmodernism, the more I became convinced that in addition to the immediate and monological apprehension of an object by a subject, there were types of knowing and experiencing that, although never leaving a grounding in immediate experience, were so complex and sophisticated—and involved background cultural contexts that never entered awareness as an object that was once subject—that we needed to supplement immediate empirical knowing (or even immediate conceptual knowing) with interpretive, dialogical, paradoxical, ambiguous, intersubjective awareness, an intersubjectivity that is not just a *result* of the interaction between a

prehending subject and other prehending subjects, but rather forms the priorly existing space or field in which both subject and object arise, *after which*, the subject then prehends the object in Whiteheadian process terms.

I am not saying that you can't take a Whiteheadian approach and stretch it to cover radical intersubjectivity; I am saying that it is better to start with intersubjectivity and derive Whiteheadian process as a limited subset of that prior field. In other words, instead of starting with the paradigm of "I see the rock"—which is the apprehension of a Right-Hand object by a Left-Hand subject—let us *start* with a quadratic formulation—which means that not just subjects and objects (or interiors and exteriors) go all the way down, but *all four quadrants go all the way down*. In this case, the Lower-Left quadrant (of intersubjectivity) plays a constitutive role in the formation of both the subject and the object (which then act to inform and alter the intersubjectivity, so that all four quadrants are mutually co-creating). All four quadrants equally conspire to result in what appears to be the simple "I see the rock," but in fact, both the "I" and "the rock" exist in cultural contexts, preconscious backgrounds, and intersubjective structures that do not themselves enter awareness when "I see the rock," and yet shape and form that prehension without that prehension ever even knowing it.

This is, of course, the standard critique of empiricism by hermeneutics, or the standard critique of Anglo-Saxon philosophy by Continental philosophy. The more I studied philosophers such as Heidegger, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Charles Taylor, Thomas Kuhn, Foucault, and a host of other interpretive philosophers, the more I became convinced that simple empirical knowing (the Left-Hand subject prehends a Right-Hand object) had to be supplemented by a four-quadrant analysis that gave equal emphasis to

all four quadrants in the generation of immediate experience, and that the empiricists, by analyzing the picture only in its final stages, were missing several crucial ingredients.

My suggestion, then, is that instead of taking “I prehend the rock” (or “I prehend the concept”) and pushing that down into the atoms of experience, we instead take the four quadrants and push those all the way down to the atoms of experience. In other words, the paradigm of prehension is not “I see the red patch,” but rather, “I and the red patch arise in the space created (in part) by intersubjectivity, and once I and the red patch have arisen, then I see the patch in an immediate prehension.” And *ultimately*, that intersubjectivity itself can exist—that is, subjects can participate in each other’s immediate presence—because the agency of each subject opens directly onto nondual Spirit or pure Emptiness, so that, as I often put it, the agency of each holon acts as an opening or clearing *in which* other holons can manifest to each other, and that opening or clearing itself is (in part) a product of the four quadrants, so that a holon’s *culture* (LL quadrant) is always already an intrinsic part of the holon’s prehension of any objects. This is my attempt to include, all the way down, the enduring insights of the great postmodern writers, writers that, in Whitehead’s time, were really just becoming well-known and well-respected.

Thus, I maintain (as explained in SES and elsewhere) that *this four-quadrant space “goes all the way down”*—because interiors and exteriors go all the way down, and so do singular and plural. This does not particularly contradict anything Whitehead said, but it is a richer, fuller, and more integral expression of the very nature of real occasions, which is not “Left-Hand subject prehends Right-Hand objects,” but “All four

quadrants arise mutually, the *end result* of which includes a subject prehending an object (physical, emotional, conceptual, etc.).”

Thus, even in Whitehead’s notions of concrescence and prehensive unification, I do not detect a vivid understanding of strong intersubjectivity. Rather, using a merely Whiteheadian process philosophy, one must construct intersubjectivity (and true dialogical experience) from a repeated application of prehensive unifications and concrescences, all of which are to some degree after the fact. I believe this hampers Whiteheadian process philosophy from becoming a truly integral philosophy. By adopting a quadratic, instead of limited dialogical, approach, I am not denying Whitehead but enriching him.

(Interestingly, de Quincey himself maintains that Whitehead does *not* have a complete understanding of Intersubjectivity-2b. De Quincey mentions none of this in his attack on my work, presumably because he wants to use Whitehead—who “solved” the mind-body problem according to de Quincey—in order to beat me senseless, and thus it will not do for him to point out that, well, Whitehead really doesn’t understand intersubjectivity. The fact is, only a quadratic formulation can coherently push true or complete intersubjectivity all the way down, and therefore only a quadratic formulation can really handle the mind-body problem [#3a].)

My second objection is that if Whitehead is not “all-quadrant,” he is not “all-level” either—he does not have access to a full map of the spectrum of consciousness. This is uncontested by Whitehead scholars (including de Quincey), so I won’t dwell on it. My point is simply that, according to even de Quincey, Whitehead is neither all-quadrant

nor all-level, and thus an AQAL formulation can “transcend and include” the important contributions of Whitehead without repeating his acknowledged limitations.

(Note also that because Whitehead does not write about the nondual wave of awareness, he does not have a solution to aspect #3b of the mind-body problem, either; and thus, once again, by moving to an AQAL formulation this final aspect of the mind-body problem can likewise be solved. I am aware of no other approach that offers plausible solutions to all four aspects of the mind-body problem.)

David Ray Griffin and I had an email exchange on some of the limitations of Whitehead’s process philosophy, which is printed with his permission (this conversation was first published in the Introduction to volume 8 of the *Collected Works*):

DG: “My only real problem with your discussion of Whiteheadian process thought is your criticism of it as monological....Each occasion is internally influenced by EVERY prior occasion and exerts influence on EVERY future occasion.... How much more relational could an ontology be? Indeed, some members of the camp refer to this as ‘process-relational’ thought. And some of us refer to this an ‘ecological’ view of the self....”

KW: “You can be ecological and relational and still be monological. Traditional systems theory, for example, is a relational and ecological model, but it is entirely in third-person it-language (monological). Most ecological sciences are monological. Almost all Gaia theories are monological. And to the extent that some Whiteheadians talk about I-it prehensifications—even in relational and ecological terms—they are often stuck in monological modes.”

DG: “Regarding monological: it is true that a Whiteheadian subject prehends only ‘objects.’ But this is by definition: whatever is prehended by a subject is by definition an object for that subject. It does not imply ‘objectivity’ in the (dualist) ontological sense.... The objects of the elementary prehensions... are ‘objects-that-had-been-subjects,’ so that the prehension (or feeling) of them is a ‘feeling of feelings.’ So it seems very misleading to use the term monological....”

KW: “Well, it’s tricky. For me, the intersubjective space is the background out of which the subject arises and in which the subject prehends objects, and that background permeates the subject (even if it entered as object), and then *henceforth*, as the new subject creatively emerges, it emerges in part from this intersubjectivity, and thus intersubjectivity at that point first enters the subject as part of the subject, not as an object-that-was-once-subject. This intersubjectivity is thus truly dialogical, not monological. Analogous to, e.g., somebody at moral-stage 5 will have his thoughts all arise within that space, but that structure was *never* an object, but rather forms part of the structure in which the new subject arises moment to moment, and thus enters the subject as prehending subject, not as prehended object that was once subject.”

DG: “I think I see your point—that what you call real dialogue involves a more [quadratic] view of the self. But given the subtlety of the distinction between this and Whitehead’s view, it seems misleading to characterize it as ‘monological.’ Why not distinguish between two kinds of dialogical positions—call yours ‘complete’ and call Whitehead’s ‘partial.’”

I also discussed with Griffin my belief that both subjectivity and intersubjectivity arise ultimately from nondual Spirit as the real Self of all holons. He again agreed that this could not be easily accommodated in a Whiteheadian system, and he again suggested I refer to Whitehead's view as "incomplete" and mine as "complete" in this regard.

I think that is a good idea, and so I will repeat that I believe that enriching Whitehead's partial view with a more complete, quadratic view of experience allows us to move towards a much more integral framework for Kosmic occasions.

Keith Thompson brings his own reflections on a more integral approach to these issues:

Based on my own reading of Whitehead, I give him tremendous credit as a unique historical who broke with the scientific materialism of recent centuries. His philosophy of organism is such a radical break that it is only in the last twenty years that an intellectual climate has emerged allowing Whitehead's work to be received by a wider audience. At the same time, it's clear to me that Whitehead has limitations, and to me these are important because today it is possible to fill in the blanks and extend Whitehead's enterprise. This is not possible in a context where it is seen as of fundamental importance to defend Whitehead, in the sense that many avowed "Whiteheadians" seem constrained to do. Likewise, I have never understand the impulse of "Aurobindonians" to say that Aurobindo's system is "complete." (It is not. Wilber has identified weak areas and fleshed them out impressively.) Heidegger was clearly a Nazi sympathizer. That fact cannot, I believe, rightly be used to attack *Being and Time*. However, neither can

one's appreciation for that book explain away Heidegger's shameless toadying to Hitler.

Let me close out with a few observations about the issues at play regarding Whitehead, beginning with remaining issues in the Wilber-Griffin colloquy.

Griffin says (to Ken), "My only real problem with your discussion of Whiteheadian process thought is your criticism of it as monological...." I found this to be quite telling. Here Griffin doesn't take issue with Ken's criticism of (what Ken argues to be) Whitehead's incomplete holarchy. This is where Wilber's all-quadrants, all-levels, all-lines approach is quite useful. By using AQAL, you can create a more accurate holarchy of compound individuals in both the Upper Right—atoms to molecules to cells to neural cords to triune brain, etc.—and therefore get a much more accurate holarchy of interiors in Upper Left—prehension to sensation to perception to symbols to concepts to rules to formop to vision-logic to subtle, etc.—and therefore you escape reductionism of all interiors to (mere) prehension. Griffin didn't challenge that at all.

In acknowledging interiority, Whitehead reduces all interiority to prehension: the pre-conscious experience of a subject "feeling" another subject (as object). Now it's true that Whitehead does explore a variety of prehensions (conceptual, hybrid, impure, negative, and physical) but it seems to me that at the end of the day these are all shades of the same color. Whitehead doesn't fully develop or appreciate the many types of interiority that emerge after prehensions. This takes nothing away from my appreciation of Whitehead, who after all was

writing before the major insights of developmental psychology had come onto the scene.

Precisely with this understanding in our time, I would say that Whitehead's inability to distinguish the many variations of interiority is a form of reductionism because it collapses all interiors into the concept of prehension (complex as this concept is). Expand interiors beyond the limited (though insightful) notion of prehensions, and a hierarchy of interiors becomes apparent. This hierarchy of interiors (subjectivity) has correlates in the exterior (objective) dimensions of form and it is important to acknowledge these parallel and equivalent hierarchies.

Which of course brings us to Wilber's mappings (AQAL). The relationship between the levels in each of these hierarchies is one of "transcend and include" as Wilber famously puts it. Whitehead captures this with his adage: "The many become one and are increased by one."

Whitehead's account is incomplete in an important way because he fails to honor the complexity of interiority in all its varieties. It is problematic to assign the concept of "prehension" (the basic unit of interiority) to all exteriors, as Whitehead tends to do. The interior-exterior relationship complexifies with evolution; I don't feel this understanding coursing through Whitehead's intellectual bloodstream. One also needs to account for the post-rational stages of interiority (e.g., the realms discussed at length by such traditions as Buddhism and Vedanta). Whitehead doesn't do this, which is understandable, since he had no rigorous practice for opening experientially to trans-rational domains. (Aurobindo

did and Wilber does.) Nor, apparently, did Whitehead read widely in those areas. Well, we all have our blind spots....

Appendix B: Intersubjective Nuances (by Sean Hargens)

Figure 1: Intersubjectivity as (Cultural) Context

Definition	The structures created by intersubjective meshworks, which are unavailable as an object. These structures are constitutive of the subject.
Examples	Structures include: Linguistic, ethical, cultural, aesthetics, and syntactic. ¹
Thinkers	Foucault, Derrida, Saussure, and Heidegger.

Figure 2: Intersubjectivity as Resonance

Definition	The degree of “mutual understanding” between two holons based on the degree in which depth and span-domains are shared and similar.
Divisions	<p>Depth-Domain: The degree of depth (vertical axis) of the Kosmos represented.</p> <p>Worldspaces: Unconscious resonance between two subjects who share physical and/or emotional domains.</p> <p>Worldviews: Conscious resonance between two subjects who share a subjective level of psychological development.*</p>

¹ Wilber (2000c) gives these examples p. 570.

	<p>Span-Domain: The amount of span or width (horizontal axis) of the Kosmos represented.</p> <p>Including: culture, language,</p>
Thinkers	Gebser, Elgin, Schutz, Aurobindo, and Habermas

* See Figure 2.5 for the three dimensions within the concept “worldview.”

Figure 2.5: Dimensions of a Worldview

Intersubjective	The cultural worldview resulting from the average level of development of any given culture at any time.
Subjective	The personal worldview resulting from the average level of development of an individual. Can either be in sync with the general culture, but can be both higher and lower than that.
Objective	The level of reality that an individual chooses to focus on with their subjective worldview.*

*This process results in a cartography of over two dozen worldviews.

Figure 3: Intersubjectivity as (Phenomenological) Space

Definition	The felt-experience of dimensions of intersubjectivity.
Divisions	<p>Resonance: How one experiences the depth and span they share with other holons.</p> <p>Relationships: How one experiences relationship with other subjects.</p> <p>Spirit: How one experiences the ground of Being.</p>

Thinkers	Husserl, Schutz, Grof, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, and Abram
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*Recall, intersubjective structures are not available to felt-experience, rather this is refers to how one experiences their culture

Figure 4: Intersubjectivity as Relationships

Definition	The way we identify and have relationships with other subjects/objects.
Divisions	<p>It-It: An objective subject in relationship with an objective object.</p> <p>I-It: A subject in relationship with an object.</p> <p>I-I: A subject in relationship with a subject.</p> <p>Solidarity: Relating to another subject because they mirror you (e.g., your values, creed, ethnicity, nationality, gender).</p> <p>Difference: Relating to another subject as a subject despite the fact that they are different from you in important ways.</p>
Thinkers	Kegan, Irigaray, Benjamin, Buber and Whitehead

Figure 5: Intersubjectivity as Spirit

Definition	The transcendental quality to the relationship that allows for any dimension of intersubjectivity to manifest.
Divisions	All four dimensions: Context, resonance, space, and relationship.

Thinkers	Wilber, Emerson, Schopenhauer
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NOTES

¹ In the following email I have changed “you” to “de Quincey.”

² Keith Thompson:

Now it is true, as several have charged, that Wilber does not derive intersubjectivity solely from anything holographic. The reason, as he told me once, is that the holographic theory is based merely on the interpenetration of finite subjects and objects, and thus fails to also include the infinite (it includes the All but not also the One). So he refuses to use merely holographic theories to derive intersubjectivity, because that leaves out the unbounded infinite Spirit that is the actual ground of all four quadrants, including the intersubjective.

But he does say that on a given, finite, manifest level, the holons are holographic. He says this clearly and often in *Eye to Eye*. In fact, in the first edition of that book, he said “between levels, hierarchy, within levels, holarchy (meaning holographic).” Then he switched terminology in the second edition of *Eye to Eye* but kept the identical meaning: he chose “heterarchy” to mean “holographic interpenetration of each holon on a given level,” since no holon was “higher or lower” than another, but all of them had “mutual interpenetration with equivalence.” And he chose “holarchy” for between levels because Koestler had already established the usage for that word. But clearly, Wilber finds holons of similar depth are mutually interpenetrating and mutually co-creating and holographic. He repeats that standard formula in SES (“Within levels, heterarchy, between levels, holarchy”). He then talks about pathological heterarchy and pathological holarchy, etc.

So he would definitely agree his theory is not merely holographic in any typical sense, because holography doesn't account for those aspects of holons that are nonequivalent and it doesn't account for the infinite. This is why he is often viewed as an opponent of the holographic paradigm (ask any of the more obsessive Wilberphobes at CIIS), but clearly that is only "half true."

³ This is from *The Eye of Spirit*, second revised edition, CW7, note 12 for chapter 11:

The "impassable gulf" is simply another name for the subject/object dualism, which is the hallmark not of Descartes's error but of all manifestation, which Descartes simply happened to spot with unusual clarity. It is still with us, this gap, and it remains the mystery hidden in the heart of samsara, a mystery that absolutely refuses to yield its secrets to anything less than post-postconventional [or nondual] development.

I have repeatedly had people explain to me that the Cartesian dualism can be solved by simply understanding that . . . and they then tell me their solutions, which range from Gaia-centric theories to neutral monism to first-third person interactionism to systems theory [to Whitehead process philosophy]. I always respond, "So this means that you have overcome the subject-object dualism in your own case. This means that you directly realize that you are one with the entire Kosmos, and this nondual awareness persists through waking, dream, and deep sleep states. Is that right?" "Well, no, not really."

The [ultimate] solution to the subject-dualism is not found in thought, because thought itself is a product of this dualism, which itself is generated in the very roots of the causal realm and cannot be undone without consciously penetrating that realm. The causal knot or primordial self-contraction—the ahamkara—can only be uprooted when it is brought into consciousness and melted in the fires of pure awareness, which almost always requires profound contemplative/meditative training. The subject-object duality is the very *form* of the manifest world of maya—the very beginning of the four quadrants (subject and object divide into singular and plural forms)—and thus one can get "behind" or "under" this dualism only by immersion in the *formless* realm (cessation, nirvikalpa, ayn, nirvana), which acts to dissolve the self-contraction and release it into pure nondual awareness—at which point, the traditions (from Zen to Eckhart) agree, you indeed realize that you are one with the entire Kosmos, a nondual awareness that persists through waking, dream, and deep sleep states: you have finally undone the Cartesian dualism.

⁴ As Nagarjuna demonstrated, the ultimate relation of subject and object cannot be stated in words but only realized with Enlightenment (satori). Any attempt to state the *ultimate* relation of subject and object by using *relative* words will fail. This relationship can be shown (with satori), but not said (without satori). This applies only to aspect #3b of the mind-body problem.

⁵ See note 15 for chap. 14 in *Integral Psychology*, which also gives the endnotes in SES.

⁶ *Kindred Visions* is still in the process of being edited and assembled. We had so many wonderful contributions we are at a loss as to how exactly to proceed. Most likely we will simply post all of them on Integral Institute's website once it is up and running. Stay tuned to Shambhala.com for more information.

⁷ Technically, "we" is first-person plural, and "you" is second person. But I include first-person plural ("we") and second person ("you/Thou") as *both* being in the Lower-Left quadrant, which I refer to in general as "we." The reason I do so is that there is no second-person plural in English (which is why southerners have to say "you all" and northerners say "you guys"). In other words, when "we" is being done with respect, it implicitly includes an I-Thou relationship (I cannot truly understand thee unless WE share a set of common perceptions).

⁸ And "for the record," I first used the phrase "the 1-2-3 of consciousness studies" in a conversation with Frances Vaughan and Roger Walsh in 1996. Roger had come up with what he called a "20-20" rule, which is that it would be great if funding organizations had a rule that at least 20% of funding had to go to research in each quadrant. This got us to talking about an upcoming talk that Frances was going to give, and we decided that she should call it "The 1-2-3 of Consciousness Studies," as a shorthand for the Big-Three approach of integrating first-, second-, and third-person approaches. I can't remember whether Frances or I first came up with that phrase—they can't remember, either—but we did agree she would call her talk by that title. Immediately thereafter I began using that phrase as another shorthand for the Big Three approach to consciousness. Two years later I made some of the endnotes in *The Eye of Spirit* the basis of an article in JCS with the title "An Integral Theory of Consciousness," which was written in 1996 and published in 1997—again, well before de Quincey's paper crossed my desk—and parts of which were actually published in the Noetic Sciences Review, where de Quincey works. The first printed use of the phrase "the 1-2-3 of consciousness studies" occurred in 1996 as I edited "An Integral Theory of

Consciousness” for its eventual inclusion in volume 7 of the CW, where the phrase can be found in several places, such as p. 378. And then, with *Integral Psychology*, I used the phrase “the 1-2-3 of consciousness studies” as a chapter title—all of this in a type of homage to that conversation with Frances and Roger, and which I personally trace to Roger’s “20-20” rule.