

**Foreword to *Educational Change in Correctional Institutions: Professionalizing  
Correctional Education by Applying Ken Wilber's Ideas*, by Thom Gehring**

In 1941, my father lied about his age—he was 17—so that he could join the Army Air Force (as it was then called) and do his part in “the great war against fascism,” as his high-school buddies called it, a phrase that turned out to be more or less accurate. He became a bombardier, then navigator, then pilot; he ended up flying 26 combat missions over Japan and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross twice, a quite rare achievement. When the Air Force split off into its own branch of the service, Dad remained on, eventually becoming a colonel and serving his country with dignity and honor for 30 years. I grew up in various Air Force bases around the country; I always considered it a terrific childhood, all things considered.

In my own lifetime—I’m now 54, and Dad is doing just fine at 78 (and Mom, too, at 76)—I’ve had a lot of time to think about war, and human conflict, and this ugly business of human beings, mostly males, using power and force over one another, usually for harm, but most astonishingly, sometimes for the good. So when I am asked what the single most important and enduring result of WWII was, I usually answer, “Zen Buddhism.”

What? Surely it was the defeat of Hitler and Mussolini and Hirohito, the eradication of Auschwitz, the end of fascism. Yes, clearly those are some of the deeply significant results of that war, results that made WWII the last “good war” that we might ever see, so clearly were the lines drawn. But what I have in mind about Zen is another type of defining moment, very like what happened when the Apollo astronauts, on the surface of the moon, took a photograph of the Earth: the picture of that beautiful globe, hanging in space, without a single political boundary on it, galvanized people around the world. In many important ways, we are indeed one planet, one people, one gesture of the universe, bound up in this together.

Similarly, that is what Zen did to the humanities in this country, starting in the 50s and 60s. When D. T. Suzuki published his three-volume *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, it both exhilarated and terrified humanities professors across the country. Truly great philosophers were awed and often quick to jump on the bandwagon. Heidegger himself was reported to have said, “If I understand Suzuki correctly, this is what I have been trying to say all my life.” I was in the pre-med program at Duke University when I first read Suzuki, and my world came unglued. Something absolutely profound was going on here; and it wasn’t simply Zen itself—although that is a remarkable school of Buddhism—but something more like that photo of the one Earth.

WWII had scrambled dozens of national eggs, and the result was a cultural world omelet. That great conflict exposed virtually every culture in the world to each other, and truly cross-cultural maps of the human condition began to emerge. We in the States were no longer “one nation, under God,” but “one planet, under many Gods”—and from that extraordinarily fertile field, entirely new forms of cultural studies and anthropology began to emerge.

There were two main roads through the thicket of multiculturalism that confronted the post-WWII world: pluralism and integralism. Pluralism was by far the most common and the most widely adopted, certainly in university curricula across the country. It was generally associated with what became known as postmodernism (which, made sufficiently complicated enough to merit university study, was called “postmodern poststructuralist pluralism”)—the press settled on “multiculturalism.” The idea itself was simple enough: we have now seen a sufficiently large number of different cultures to realize that there are no cross-cultural truths, no universals common to all cultures. Each culture creates and constructs its own truths, its own ethics, its own values, none of which necessarily hold for other people, other places, other times. There are no universal truths, only shifting, culturally relative, pluralistic contexts, each of which is incommensurable, all of which are therefore doomed ultimately to be alien to the others.

The study of the “Other” began accordingly to obsess academia. Or perhaps we should say, the impossibility of studying the Other, since the Other is, by the new multicultural definition that swept academia, not really understandable at all. Therefore human beings, when faced with an Other, often tend—usually tend—to seek to oppress it, dominate it, coerce it. The Other was seen as the locus of oppression, repression, and power. Cultural studies, anthropology, and the humanities accordingly became the study of the history of putative power, a field that French intellectuals, led by Michel Foucault, tilled effectively.

Since a primary locus of power has always been prisons and correctional institutions, it is no surprise that Foucault fame’s was launched with his *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Foucault’s early work exemplified in so many ways the notion of pluralism, the notion that because there are only a multitude of truths, with none of them fundamentally better than another, then any interference with another human being can only be for nefarious reasons—for reasons of power and repression. The idea was soon commonplace that all prisoners are actually political prisoners; that all mental patients are actually politically prisoners; and that all education is a coercion of what amounts to political prisoners. Schizophrenia was therefore a form of freedom from political tyranny; emptying the prisons was therefore a sign of enlightenment; doing away with a grading system was a way to free little Johnny. For all of those—prisons, hospitals, schools—were now viewed as basically the ways that one group of humans subjected another group to oppression, torture, imprisonment, and for no other than raw Nietzschean reasons, if reason is the right word.

America in particular was home to this new multiculturalism, even in ways that France itself was not. American humanities students everywhere began to “deconstruct” the old cultural forms that, they believed, imposed universalist schemes on the innocent Other and thus imprisoned and oppressed the Other. By the end of the 1970s, Jacques Derrida—the most widely cited academic of that decade in American universities—proclaimed, “America is deconstruction!”

Why was America open to postmodern pluralism in a way that other countries were not? Zen Buddhism. Zen, more than any other single influence, had already tilled the academic soil, had already given thunderous notice that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy. Zen had thoroughly infiltrated psychoanalysis (e.g., Erich Fromm, and through him, the entire Frankfurt School and the New School in America); it had turned philosophy on its head (via Heidegger and other heavyweights); it had even deconstructed Christianity (via Thomas Merton, who made the trek to Japan). The Beats, fueled directly by Zen espresso, had already cut away the respectability of traditional and stultifying forms, finding a freedom in all that jazz, combining something that vaguely looked like Buddhism with marijuana, wine, and free sex.

Believe me, I had no quarrel with any of that. I still don't. It was simply that, in the midst of that multicultural Picasso painting, with jagged fragments running in every which direction, a new face could also be seen emerging. If some people looked at the newly cooked world omelet and saw pluralistic schizophrenia, others saw the outlines of what looked to be a cultural one Earth photograph.

Integralism is the general name for that other main current in postmodern thought. Suzuki himself was an avowed and beautifully effective integralist—no matter how his work was twisted pluralistically—as were the most influential members of the Frankfurt school (such as Habermas), and eventually, to some degree, even die-hards such as Foucault and Derrida (who finally admitted the existence of the transcendental signifier, thus ending the absolutism of deconstruction).

The easiest way to summarize integralism is that it is pluralism plus universalism. Without in any way slighting the importance of cultural differences and pluralistic contexts, integralism also looks for the commonalities among cultures, the things that they share, a type of unity-in-diversity that denies neither the unity nor the diversity.

In one of postmodernism's many ironies, subsequent scholarship has demonstrated that pluralism itself is a hidden universalism. The cultural pluralist claims that there are no

truths that apply to all cultures, and then gives a very long list of the many truths that apply to all cultures. The pluralist insists, for example, that all knowledge is contextual; that all values are culturally embedded; that interpretation is an inescapable component of all experience; that there is no pregiven world; and that all knowledge is intersubjectively constructed. Those items are not held to be true for only some people. They are held to be binding truths that apply to all people, at all times, in all cultures. In other words, there is not an ounce of pluralism in the pluralist's major claims—they are held to be absolutely and universally true for all peoples and all cultures. This “performative contradiction” led one critic to state that “there are two types of universalists—honest and hypocritical.” Well, whether that is true or not, the integralist is definitely an open universalist, not a hidden one. But the universalisms are conscientiously blended with the pluralisms to disclose a “many-one” view of humanity and its history.

The result of this more integral approach to the human condition suggests a somewhat different view of prisons, schools, and hospitals. The use of force on another human being is the hardest of actions to justify. Pluralism, unfortunately, abdicated any responsibility in this regard, popularly pronouncing all power to be unjustifiable. But Foucault, it should be noted, eventually retracted virtually all of his stronger claims about power; indeed, he ridiculed his earlier position and those still clinging to it (using phrases like “under the pavement is the beach”—the idea that under every repression is a pure and free nature, when under much repression is an even uglier nature). Foucault's followers often failed to acknowledge this reversal in what Foucault jokingly called his “vulgate,” because in America, Foucauldian academic curricula had ironically given them a huge source of power in the universities, and they weren't about to let go of that power, a power that, also ironically, consisted in condemning everybody else's use of power.

But the use of power—the justification of power—is surely the ultimate test of any anthropology. Since power is categorically unavoidable, then how best to use it wisely? Integral approaches don't have the answers, but I believe they do have much better questions.

Integralism = pluralism plus (open/honest) universalism. Various names have tried to capture this delicate combination: “integral-aperspectival,” “universal pluralism,” “inclusive pluralism,” “integral methodological pluralism,” “pluralistic integralism,” among other catchy phrases. What they all specifically mean is that, in looking at this world omelet, we actively search not only for the differences, but also for the similarities. The pluralist situates his universals in a meta-theory; integralists wouldn’t disagree with that, but would simply be more open about the existence of those universals and what they mean. One reformed pluralist referred to them as “good-enough universals,” a phrase I really like.

What are some of these good-enough universals? My own version of integralism highlights five general classes of them: quadrants, waves, streams, states, and types. Thom Gehring particularly makes use of the quadrants, so perhaps I could elaborate a bit using those as examples.

All major extant human languages have first-, second-, and third-person pronouns, in both singular and plural forms (e.g., English: *first-person singular*: I, me; *plural*: we, us; *second-person singular*: you, thou; *plural*: youse, you all; *third-person singular*: he, him, she, her, it; *plural*: they, them, its). The first person refers to the speaker in any conversation; the second person is the one spoken to; and the third person means a person or thing referred to in the conversation.

The more you think about the fact that all extant languages have those major forms, the more interesting it becomes. Whatever else they are, they are good-enough universals. The simplest explanation for their existence is that these major perspectives represent real and enduring dimensions of experience and reality, which have therefore become embedded in natural languages during the course of evolution.

The first-person dimensions of being-in-the-world include, among other things, the interior “I,” self-identity, art and aesthetic expression, introspection, subjective values, normal and altered states of consciousness, interior phenomenology, individual needs and drives. The second-person dimensions of being-in-the-world involve, among other things,

the ways that a “you” and an “I” can come together and form a “we” (which is why “you” and “we” are sometimes treated together as one quadrant), and thus second-person dimensions include culture, hermeneutics, mutual understanding, morality (or how we treat each other with regard), intersubjectivity in all its dimensions, and communication itself. The third-person dimensions of being-in-the-world include the more “objective” approaches to reality, which do not use “I-language” or “we-language” but rather “it-language”—namely, the more scientific approaches that focus on those third-person dimensions of being-in-the-world—approaches that include physics, chemistry, neuroscience, pharmacology, and so on. These “it” approaches are sometimes subdivided into individual and systems approaches, giving us the sciences that focus on an individual or its subcomponents (the more “atomistic” versions of science, including physics, molecular biology, etc.) and those that focus on the collective (such as the numerous forms of systems theory, ecology, complexity theory, and social systems theory). These two approaches are often summarized as “it” (singular) and “its” (plural, collective, systems).

These four major perspectives (I, we, it, and its) are called the “quadrants,” and they are just a simple way to keep track of the four major dimensions of being-in-the-world embedded in all major languages—the intentional, cultural, behavioral, and social dimensions of any occasion. These dimensions of being-in-the-world are most simply summarized as self (I), culture (we), and nature (it). Or art, morals, and science. Or the beautiful, the good, and the true. Or simply I, we, it.

Thom Gehring has used the quadrants to effectively organize our knowledge and history of correctional institutions. At this point, in fairness to others using my work, I have to give the standard disclaimer that I personally cannot vouch for the accuracy of how my work is used by others, including Mr. Gehring. I have not read this book (or any others) for accuracy. Still, Thom has made a careful study of the central ideas and I believe that his efforts will considerably advance the field of correctional studies toward much more integral and inclusive models.

One of the first things often noticed when one adopts an integral perspective of any field is how often the major approaches in that field fall into one of the four quadrants. Thom shows that the same is true of the four major forms of prison management (based on a careful reading of Holl's comprehensive literature review): make men think right, act right, become citizens, or fit into society (intentional, behavioral, cultural, and social). The same classifications have been demonstrated in education, medicine, psychology, politics, among others. I would like to claim credit for all this, but the fact is, it's just "I," "we," "it," and "its."

Similarly useful orienting generalizations can be gleaned from waves, streams, states, and types. Gehring particularly focuses on waves (the stages or levels of development). Needless to say, any developmental stage sequences have to be handled very carefully, because the potential for abuse is significant. This suspicion of developmental stages is one of the many features of pluralism that is incorporated into integralism. Moving beyond pluralism, however, integralism deals openly with the extensive body of research pointing to general stages or waves of development as paths to maturation, and therefore includes stages or waves as good-enough universals when the evidence warrants. Of course, not all stages have to be universal in order to be useful. Some stages apply only to particular cultures or subcultures, some to civilization blocks, some to humans universally; but their wholesale rejection by pluralism seems to be a classic case of lots of bathwater and just as many babies.

In this regard, Gehring is joined in one chapter by Patricia Arlin, a superb developmentalist whose work I have gratefully used myself. Also included are the important developmental studies of Clare Graves, Don Beck, and Abraham Maslow, among others. Gehring demonstrates that the simple use of quadrants and waves can go a long way in helping us not only to organize, but to effectively synthesize, the many important approaches to this incredibly difficult topic. Whatever experts in the field might think of his conclusions, I think he has demonstrated one thing beyond dispute: approaches that are less-than-integral

are most definitely less-than-adequate. The field will never easily be able to go back to piecemeal, fragmented, and broken maps of correctional studies.

That beautiful photograph of one Earth. I think about that a lot. There's something about the way the different continents, the white clouds, the blue oceans, are all clearly separate and distinct, and yet there it is: a perfect oneness, hanging there, right before your eyes. Cultural studies, anthropology, historiography, and humanities, after a several-decade detour into the less useful road in the Zen invasion, have returned to Zen's own integralism after all. I think even my father is okay with that; what he was bombing during the War was not so much an enemy as a boundary and a barrier to a recognition of the one Earth that we all inhabit, not just ecologically, but politically, culturally, spiritually. Japan got MacDonald's, we got Zen—America definitely got the best of that deal. But what really happened is that humanity got what it could no longer ignore: one Earth; one unity-in-diversity; one Spirit, many eyes.