

INTEGRAL THERAPEUTIC ENACTMENT

by

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## Abstract

Attending to the author's experience as a point-of-departure, this thesis attempts an integration of methods for healing and development that have the potential to be powerfully complementary. Specifically, this thesis weaves together considerations of the Integral approach, therapeutic enactment, and contemplative practice in order to formulate an Integral Therapeutic Enactment (ITE) group-based counseling intervention. The paper introduces Wilber's Integral approach as both a set of social practices for investigation of any domain – a meta-paradigm – and a body of resulting generalizations. Several of these orienting generalizations are explored for their relevance to the therapeutic enactment group counseling process, including the role of dynamic dialectical awareness, implications of holarchical time, and the curative spiral as a model for human change processes. Implications of the Integral approach and contemplative practices are then incorporated into a prototype ITE process. Given the innovative and unconventional nature of the research process and results, the author pays particular attention to issues of validity and reflexivity. The paper concludes with a self-evaluation according to the validity protocols put forward, and an outline of suggestions for outcome research to test the prototypical Integral Therapeutic Enactment group counselling process.

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## Introduction

In the Integral approach, the subjectivity of the researcher is conceptualized as one of three mutually-contextualizing perspectives that together constitute any experience. These concepts are developed in the body of the thesis; what is salient here is simply that the role of the researcher's reflexivity in integral research sits between its near absence in modernist, quantitatively-oriented research, and its sometimes dominance in postmodernist, qualitatively-focused paradigms. With this preliminary statement in mind, I proceed with a first person account of the development of my interest in contemplative practice, the Integral approach and therapeutic enactment.

While returning with my father by airplane after a holiday celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary, my mother, Joy Foster, suddenly lost consciousness. She never revived, dying from what was deemed a stroke a few days later in a Vancouver hospital. That day was December 15, 2001. She was just 52. I will never forget my father's frantic phone call to tell me she wasn't going to make it.

Coming at a time when I was already struggling to find my place in the world as a young man of 23, this huge loss devastated me to a degree that I had never before experienced. Within a few weeks of my mother's passing, I came to a point where I decided that, in order to go on living, I would need to change, and to do this, I would need to get very good help. In what became one of the most fortunate meetings of my life, I decided to travel to Arizona to spend time with a psychologist who ran a home practice, sometimes accommodating clients on a live-in basis. Each day of the two-and-a-half weeks I spent with this man, I received two hours of intensive "in-office" therapy, and many more hours of "out-of-office" therapy as I accompanied him in his other daily

activities. The therapy was enormously healing, sparking a remembrance of a 'true' self I had long forgotten, and marking a turning point towards a more promising life. Not only that, but I gained a friend who walks the path with me to this day. As I recovered from my depression, I did not immediately move towards a career as a therapist; within a few months, however, I embarked upon a career in caring, taking a job in my new home of Vancouver as a resident care attendant working with mentally challenged adults.

The seeds of my interest in helping had been sown. I slowly developed a career, working as a special education assistant in a high school before returning to university to complete an undergraduate education degree that I had failed to finish earlier. In spite of many positive gains in my life, including meeting a wonderful woman -- now my wife and mother of my daughter -- I faced another (albeit milder) life crisis or transition upon the finishing of my education degree in 1997. Feeling damaged by a difficult education practicum placement in the primary grades, and therefore not wishing to work as an elementary school teacher, my career faltered.

Once again, karma or creativity, I'm not sure which, brought about a series of events and meetings that established me more firmly on the path to becoming a counsellor interested in Buddhist meditation, the Integral approach and therapeutic enactment. Early in 1997, I noticed a friend's book entitled *Wherever you go, there you are* by physician Jon Kabat-Zinn (1995). Kabat-Zinn is the developer of a well-respected mindfulness-based stress reduction program that is now taught by physicians across North America. The title of the book appealed to me. I felt I had come to an unfortunate standstill in life; yet, here was a book suggesting that, no matter how quickly I managed to get moving again, I would still be only where I was. No escaping in that sense. Might



as well stop ... a ... little ... more ... often....Notice ... the ... in-breath ....Sense ... the ... out-breath...

My interest in meditation, particularly in its increasingly popular Buddhist forms, had been sparked. In the fall of that year, my now fiancée and I moved to Kingston, Ontario, where she enrolled at Queen's University in the physiotherapy program. That fall, I noticed in the window of a local doctor's office an announcement for an upcoming course in Kabat-Zinn's mindfulness-based stress reduction! During the course, I not only received the benefit of preliminary formal training in meditation practice, but also met a fellow participant who later hired me as a career counsellor at a community-based youth employment centre. Although the interventions of the community agency were ostensibly employment-focused, I quickly found that the predicament faced by many of the young clients – homelessness, histories of abuse, drug problems, learning difficulties, and so on – necessitated more broad-based interventions. We were doing social work at that agency; there was no way around it.

Invigorated, but sometimes overwhelmed by the challenges I faced in helping these young people, I became acutely aware of needing further specific training in personal counselling methods if I was to serve them adequately. When my fiancée completed her physiotherapy degree, we moved back to Vancouver where I enrolled in the prerequisite courses for entrance to the counselling psychology program at the University of British Columbia.

In a process unfolding in parallel to my professional development, I had begun attending weekend silent retreats in order to deepen my familiarity with Buddhist meditation practice. In addition to fairly standard feelings of relaxation that come along

with meditation practice, on one or two occasions I had more vivid experiences of clarity and exhilaration that would last anywhere from a few minutes to a day or so. These non-ordinary states increased my confidence in the healing potential of meditation. They also nudged me towards exploring emerging problems. How could I reconcile these experiences in meditation with the benefits I had received from approaches like cognitive psychotherapy? In other words, how might these seemingly very different models and methods go together?

Becoming increasingly intrigued by these questions, the first theoretical paper I wrote for a course in the counselling psychology program was an attempt to bridge Beck's cognitive therapy with Vipassana meditation. While thinking about the paper, I noted a bookstore staff member's recommendation for Ken Wilber's *Integral Psychology* (2000b). *Integral Psychology* in hand, I embarked on an exhilarating adventure into a way of working dialectically with seemingly incompatible paradigms, such that creative syntheses could be developed. Wilber was apparently an already established master at engaging exactly the kind of question that had become so compelling to me. Over the next two or three years, I read nine or ten of his books, as well as everything about and by him posted on his publisher's website ([www.shambhala.com](http://www.shambhala.com)).

Two of the three strands mentioned in the title of this section – contemplative practice and the Integral approach -- have been introduced. Introducing the third, therapeutic enactment, brings the story full circle to where it began, with the tragic death of my mother. In the counselling program at the University of British Columbia, I met professor and group counselling specialist Dr. Marv Westwood. In my first group counselling course, I shared the story of my mother's death with members of a small

process group. To my surprise and chagrin, I was overwhelmed quickly by the intensity of my emotional reaction when telling the story. I felt I had gotten in over my head, and was now drowning. I sought Dr. Westwood's guidance (he was my supervisor), and through the development of a close working relationship came to believe that I could usefully embark on further healing work around the loss of my mother. I had received excellent one-to-one psychotherapy, and was a fairly regular meditator. However, in spite of the benefits received from these activities, I became aware that I had considerable difficulty thinking about my mother with any equanimity at all.

In October of 2002, therefore, I participated in a weekend "therapeutic enactment" group psychotherapy workshop facilitated by Dr. Westwood and Hilary Pearson. The process of therapeutic enactment, the latest iteration in the tradition of psychodrama, is described in considerable detail later. For our purposes here, it is sufficient to note that therapeutic enactment involves skilled facilitators guiding a protagonist and multiple witnesses in the re-enactment of a traumatic event or events, with the purpose of healing. In my case, I chose to re-enact events around the loss of my mother. The process evoked tremendous sadness and some feelings of regret that, when confronted, afforded equally powerful relief and healing. Some of what occurred will likely always remain a mystery. What I can state with some assurance is that I was able to partly resolve my internalized image of and connection with my mother, such that I can remember her now with a degree of equilibrium rather than confusion and pain.

The enactment and some subsequent experiences possessed characteristics of non-ordinary states. For several days after the weekend workshop, I experienced spontaneously arising surges of energy or "chi" moving up the back of my body. I noted

that these energy movements carried a sense of power, were occasionally disorienting, but most importantly did not seem entirely “personal” in the way that the enactment process itself had seemed to be. I spoke with the instructors as to whether other participants had reported these kinds of experiences, often called “kundalini” in the yogic traditions. They suggested that they had not received prior reports in this regard; furthermore, they were unfamiliar with the term “kundalini”. This apparent gap in understanding with regards to Eastern spiritual traditions bothered me, and I began to think that addressing such issues within a thesis could be useful. For I found myself wondering whether the fact that I was experiencing these energy movements could be related to my background in meditation. Other experiences in meditation had also carried this “more-than-personal” or “other-than-personal” flavour. Based on my understanding of Wilber’s work, I thought that perhaps the enactment process was designed primarily (but not exclusively) as a *healing* modality at the personal level -- that is, at the level of the “narrative self” with its particular history embedded in language and pre-verbal experience from infancy and early childhood. On the other hand, meditation seemed to be primarily a method for *developing* awareness of that which lies beyond but which is not separate from the personal. I eventually came to be fascinated with the integrative inquiry: “what might happen if we put therapeutic enactment and meditation practices together? Could the emerging whole be greater than the sum of the parts?” It occurred to me that the feeling of being “open” and “flowing” that I felt at the end of the enactment -- where the current of emotional experiencing seemed to be rushing uninhibited -- could act as a powerful launching pad for intensive meditation practices that might open “me”

to the intuition of a deeper Self. These are the lines of inquiry that I wish to explore in this thesis, using Wilber's brilliant theoretical work as a foundation.

### Rational Reconstruction of a Life Course: Dynamic Dialectical Awareness

We reconstruct the courses of our lives after-the-fact. Having been immersed in the Integral approach for nearly three years, I now view the point in time at which the problem of reconciling cognitive therapy and meditation became really interesting as signifying the emergence of a degree of **dynamic dialectical awareness** in my own case (see *Nomenclature* for definitions of bolded terms). When sharing my enthusiasm about the Integral approach with colleagues, I have often talked about the orienting generalizations that have resulted from the integrative inquiry of Wilber and other theorists. But what I have been less successful communicating is that these generalizations, while important, are merely *outcomes* of the activity of a dynamic dialectical (or integral) cognition applied to specific knowledge domains. Therefore, I feel it important to briefly introduce characteristics of dynamic dialectical awareness from the perspective of some of the leading constructive-developmental psychologists who have studied it, as summarized by Wilber.

Broadly-speaking, Wilber (2000a) summarizes development within the individual as a three step process in which "going within" leads to a "going beyond", which results in the emergence of greater depth and inclusiveness. Dynamic dialectical awareness, also referred to by Wilber as vision-logic, thus evolves as "the capacity to go within and *look* at rationality [which] results in a *going beyond* rationality" (Wilber, 2000a, p.266).

Important to note for its implications for experiential therapies like therapeutic

enactment, *dynamic dialectical awareness enacts the space in which reason can be synthesized with its predecessors*, such as pre-verbal sensation and emotion. Dynamic dialectical awareness represents a further refinement of reason, is built upon the platform of reason, and thus is not properly thought of as in opposition to reason. Thus, experiential therapy ought not to be seen as a turning *away* from “reason” or “rationality” and *towards* sensation and emotion in an “either/or” fashion, since it is the very development of this deeper reasoning capacity called vision-logic that allows for the healing of the “split” between rationality and emotion to occur in the first place. As therapists we need to recognize the vital role of vision-logic if we are to help clients achieve the goal of bodymind integration. As Broughton says, it is when vision-logic matures that we find that “mind and body are both experiences of an integrated self” (Broughton 1975 in Wilber, 2000a p.270). Furthermore, the limited evidence gathered to date regarding what processes facilitate the development of deeper capacities like vision-logic suggests that meditation may play a critical role in accelerating this kind of “second-order” change (Surya Das & Wilber, 2003). Such understandings regarding the development of vision-logic as a co-requisite to healing the bodymind “split” are central to the development of an Integral therapeutic enactment (hereafter designated as ITE) process. ITE, then, is an approach which includes meditation practices as a way to help ensure that the development of dynamic dialectical awareness and its associated capacities (such as the potential for an expanded morality) occurs alongside efforts at healing historical traumas.

## Addressing Spirituality within Therapeutic Enactment

Another interrelated aim of this thesis is to enhance the ability of therapeutic enactment to address spiritual themes. Clinical experience with the therapeutic enactment group process demonstrates that participants often bring with them individual constructions of spirituality that they value highly (Westwood, 2002). Often, aspects of participants' spirituality are explicitly enacted in psychodramatic sequences. For example, a severely traumatized woman who could not remember how she got home after a vicious assault had a group member enact the role of an angel who carried her to safety. This example illustrates the vital importance of spirituality for many group psychotherapy participants.

As of yet, however, the therapeutic enactment process has no coherent theoretical basis for situating the spirituality of participants. Furthermore, while sometimes enacted in role-plays, the dimension of spirituality is rarely addressed explicitly in the other four major phases of the process (see *Overview of Current Therapeutic Enactment Process* beginning page 39). Thus, an additional question guiding this inquiry is the following: "How can both therapeutic enactment theory and process be modified in order to be more inclusive of participants' spiritualities?" By augmenting the current *theory* of therapeutic enactment with an Integral perspective, and by introducing contemplative and/or meditative *processes*, it is hoped that the capacity of therapeutic enactment to address the dimension of spirituality will be increased.

### The Integral Approach

*"Theory is extremely useful, because your theory determines what you can see"*

--Albert Einstein (*Integral Development Associates*, 2003)

*"Psychotherapy, like life, is always applied epistemology"*

--Michael. J. Mahoney (1991)

As stated in the introduction, this thesis is informed by the Integral approach, the most visible proponent of which is Ken Wilber (1997; 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2002a; 2002b; 2003a). The Integral approach consists of a specific set of **injunctions** -- social practices for coming to know -- as well as an open-ended framework of **orienting generalizations** that have emerged from the application of these injunctions within diverse disciplines. Some of the conventional knowledge domains to which the Integral approach has been applied, and from which its generalizations are derived, include the following: developmental psychology, pre-modern wisdom traditions, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, process philosophy, systems theory, and evolutionary epistemology.

With reference to the injunctions, Wilber (2003a) presents three principles informing the practice of an Integral approach to knowledge creation: **nonexclusion**, **enfoldment**, and **enactment**. *Nonexclusion* means that "experiences brought forth by one paradigm cannot legitimately be used to criticize, negate, or exclude the experiences brought forth by other paradigms" (Wilber, 2003a). Note that paradigm is used in its proper Kuhnian sense to mean a set of practices *as well as* a worldview or interpretive framework (Wilber, 1997, 2003a). The application of the *nonexclusion* principle helps create a space



in which diverse ways of knowing can be brought to the table. Where the Integral approach departs from a purely pluralistic exercise, however, is in the application of a second principle, *enfoldment*. Derived from evolutionary epistemologies which suggest that living systems tend to move in the direction of increasing complexity and inclusiveness, the *enfoldment* principle suggests that, if one practice or theory includes the important elements of another, but then adds further elaboration or depth, then the paradigm or theory that does so can be said to *enfold* the former. Finally, the *enactment* principle (interesting co-incidence of terms!) affirms that

“no experience is innocent and pregiven, but rather is brought forth or enacted in part by the activity of the subject doing the experiencing ... experiences are not themselves innocent reflections of the one, true, real and pregiven world ... and accordingly, one paradigm does not give ‘the correct view’ of the world” (Wilber, 2003a, p.2).

The enactment principle dovetails well with the constructivist view put forward by Mahoney (Mahoney, 1991, 2003a) with regards to the central importance of the *activity* of the organism in the co-creation of reality. And the work of both Mahoney and Wilber intersect with and draw upon Varela et al.’s development of an “enactive paradigm” (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991).

### The Integral Approach and Therapeutic Enactment: Structure and Goals of Thesis

Many of the orienting generalizations which have emerged from Wilber and other researchers’ application of integrative injunctions are relevant for therapeutic enactment.

Each orienting concept deemed applicable is flagged here, and then elaborated in its own section. The generalizations are the following:

1. The vital role of dynamic dialectical awareness (introduced above)
2. Three primary principles of the Integral approach: nonexclusion, enfoldment, enactment (introduced above)
3. "Big Three" perspective-dimensions and the quadrant model: implications for issues of validity and reflexivity
4. Integral methodological pluralism: towards an integration of research methodologies
5. "Big Three" perspective-dimensions, holons and the quadrant model: Integrating individual and group change processes
6. Importance of the intersubjective perspective-dimension
7. Holarchical time and the evolutionary paradigm: the presence of the past
8. Holarchical time and the evolutionary paradigm: moving beyond the Romantic view
9. Beyond time: the ever-present Witness
10. Distinctions between "Integrally-informed" and "Integral"
11. The curative spiral as a model for the change process
12. Transformational dialectic of interpretation and experience: thinking is experience!

The remainder of the thesis follows a structure implied by the above set of generalizations, which are loosely ordered according to whether they more strongly address the awareness required of a practitioner, or rather are focused on making the therapeutic enactment processes themselves more comprehensive. Earlier items in the list emphasize the former process of becoming **integrally-informed** (Schlitz & Wilber, 2003b; Wilber, 2003a) as a practitioner. To be integrally-informed means that a facilitator carries some embodied awareness of the Integral approach, while engaging in whatever activity he/she normally does as a therapist. The second goal, of making the processes of therapeutic enactment more comprehensive, is addressed more directly in the second group. To clarify, **integrally-informed therapeutic enactment** refers to conventional therapeutic enactment conducted by facilitators who are enacting some degree of dynamic dialectical awareness, and who are familiar with some of the orienting generalizations of the integral approach. **ITE**, on the other hand, refers to a therapeutic enactment process that embeds specific integral injunctions, perhaps by following more explicitly the contours of a **curative spiral** (discussed later). Both goals are seen as worthwhile.

*Validity, Reflexivity, and the Integration of Research Methodologies*

How do we decide if the knowledge produced via the application of the three primary injunctions of nonexclusion, enfoldment and enactment is valid? In a primarily theoretical thesis based on the Integral approach, one check for internal validity would be to evaluate how consistently the three principles themselves are enacted. For example, to what degree are important considerations excluded, either from existing therapeutic enactment literature or from the Integral approach? How successfully does the presentation generate a more comprehensive perspective as a result of this dialectical process? And third, how faithfully & insightfully are any limitations of the paradigm of inquiry acknowledged? These questions get us started, but the issue of validity is central to any knowledge enterprise at all interested in “truth”, and thus is developed further in the following sections that also address related concerns of what constitutes good science, researcher reflexivity, and the integration of methodologies.

*“Big Three” Perspective-dimensions and the Quadrant Model*

In order to enfold postmodern insights about the influence of the subjectivity of the researcher in science (Mahoney, 2003b), an integral approach to knowledge creation must effectively address the issue of researcher reflexivity. The construct of the **“Big Three” perspective-dimensions** (Wilber, 2003a) attends to this matter by offering a specific formulation of the co-contextualization of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and objectivity (these are the “Big three” to which this construct refers; note that the term “Big Three” is borrowed from Habermas). In this conceptualization, subjectivity/self-reflexivity is seen as the **1<sup>st</sup> person** perspective-dimension of “I-ness”, while intersubjectivity is put

forward as the **2<sup>nd</sup> person** perspective-dimension of “We-ness”. Finally, objectivity is enacted as the **3<sup>rd</sup> person** perspective-dimension of “It-ness”. Integral theory views these three dimension-perspectives as primary co-constituents of any arising phenomena. (This “I-We-It” formulation also has significant heuristic value since it corresponds to pronouns of language that we use every day).

From an integral perspective, perceiving subjects and the objects of perception are seen to arise together and to be enmeshed within background intersubjective networks that co-constitute them (Wilber, 2000a). Epistemology and ontology, then, are inextricably intertwined (Wilber, 2003a). However, just because there is no *ontologically external* “objectivity” or “reality” does not mean we must throw out *any* notion of objectivity, as some extreme postmodernists have suggested. Rather, we here re-vision objectivity as simply one of these three dialectically interwoven perspectives – the perspective of “It”. Objectivity, then, simply refers to the third person perspective(s) inherent in any occasion. (As a matter of convenience, and from this point forward, I sometimes use the word *perspective*, while other times, *dimension* to refer to the unified concept of *perspective-dimension*. Perspective is the epistemological side of the street; dimension, the ontological. But they are always already arising together, as we have seen).

Many of the concepts of validity we are most familiar with were developed in accordance with a modernist conception of and valuing of objectivity, which postmodernists and constructivists countered by stressing the key role of subjectivity and intersubjectivity (Foster & Arvey, 2003). The Integral approach potentially brings the best of modernism and postmodernism together by postulating that each of the three

perspective-dimensions has its own broad validity claims that must be satisfied, while each is simultaneously meshed with one another. The diagram below summarizes some of the important validity warrants for each dimension-perspective (note that the diagram splits “It” into singular and plural, giving us a grid of four quadrants, also called the *quadrant model*).

		<b>INTERIOR Left Hand Paths</b>		<b>EXTERIOR Right Hand Paths</b>	
		<b>SUBJECTIVE</b>		<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	
<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>		<i>truthfulness</i> <i>sincerity</i> <i>integrity</i> <i>trustworthiness</i>		<i>truth</i> <i>correspondence</i> <i>representation</i> <i>propositional</i>	
			I	it	
<b>COLLECTIVE</b>			we	it	
		<i>justness</i> <i>cultural fit</i> <i>mutual understanding</i> <i>rightness</i>		<i>functional fit</i> <i>systems theory web</i> <i>structural-functionalism</i> <i>social systems mesh</i>	
			<b>INTERSUBJECTIVE</b>	<b>INTEROBJECTIVE</b>	

Figure 1: Validity claims for each quadrant (Wilber, 1997, p.13)

From the diagram, we see that a primary validity claim for the 1<sup>st</sup> person – “I” -- perspective is sincerity or truthfulness. From the 2nd person perspective – “We” – validity claims cluster around themes of justness/care or appropriateness. In this diagram, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person perspective is divided into singular and plural. Taking a third person singular perspective – “It” – validity claims are empirical or propositional. And finally, taking a third person plural perspective – “Its” – validity claims have to do with functional fit within systems. The key point in this conception, however, is that the four perspectives are ultimately integrated: any occasion (such as this thesis) must match *all four*, not just one.

Let’s take an example of a speech action from daily living to see how these validity claims operate together in an integrated fashion (using just 3<sup>rd</sup> person “It” to represent both right hand quadrants. Let’s say you and I are in casual conversation (casual being the first context clue for appropriateness) after class. I might say to you “I am going to go to the store to buy a CD today”. How valid is this statement? The validity claim from the 1st person perspective is sincerity: do I mean what I say? I know, the stakes are pretty low here, but what if I had said “I love you”? We can assess this stated intention intuitively as a listener, but may eventually have to ask ourselves “Is this person sincere, honest?” in order to assess the validity of the statement from the first person perspective (of course, only the person making the statement can know for sure, since this validity claim applies to the first-person). The validity claim from the 2nd person perspective is appropriateness and justice/care (a la Kohlberg and Gilligan). In casual conversation after class at school, saying “I am going to go buy a CD” is probably appropriate to the



context, but perhaps saying “I love you” would not be appropriate. Saying “I love you”, then, while it might be valid from a first person perspective (I might be sincere), would be invalid from a second person perspective, in this particular example. What is considered appropriate often varies from context to context – however, some form of collective “conceptions of what is true, good, beautiful and efficient” constitute the very definition of culture (Shweder, 1999). The main point of the foregoing is that from an Integral standpoint, I must take your and “our” culturally-contextualized perspectives into account in establishing validity.

Turning to the 3rd person perspective, the statement “I am going to the store to buy a CD today” could be tested for validity through a simple empirical experiment of having someone watch all day at the store to see if I show up and do, in fact, buy a CD. Seeing how the 3rd person validity warrant works for the statement “I love you” is a little trickier, due to the fact that the *referent* of the *signifier* “love” exists in the mental/linguistic worldspace, not in the sensori-motor worldspace (for further elaboration of an *Integral semiotics*, see Wilber, 1997; 2003a). Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that love must be interpreted, we can see how the third person perspective is still implicitly in operation by imagining an ensuing dialogue based on the reply: “Are you sure it’s love you are feeling and not base desire?” In this case, we take up a dialogue in which the 3rd person referent is a concept we are calling “love”. We discuss several of “its” features, and then from this third person perspective, try to assess whether indeed, what the speaker is feeling is true to that third person conception.

Note, then, that a conception of objectivity as a third-person perspective doesn’t rely at all on positing an ontologically external world. Instead, we simply find that we

are constantly invoking this dimension in daily speech (and by extension, in other activities). Integral theory just points out that fact to us.

*Implications of the Big Three for Validity of this Thesis*

Just like in the example of the conversation, a thesis must also mesh validity claims of the three perspectives, by satisfactorily answering questions that get to the heart of each. From the first-person perspective, then, we might ask: "How sincere is the author in this enterprise?" Or more self-reflexively, "How sincere am I in undertaking this enterprise? What are my motivations? Am I being fully honest with myself, or am I subtly or not so subtly self-deceptive?" These are questions an Integral researcher must ponder within (but not neurotically so!), and appropriately disclose. At the same time, the integrally-informed researcher proceeds with the understanding that subjectivity is contextualized by intersubjectivity: that is, the researcher moves forward with the recognition that background contexts are co-constituting my perceiving "I".

To meet the validity claim of intersubjectivity, then, I need to incorporate the insights of a "good-enough" structuralism that can help me see patterns that are unseen by just my "I". Based on an exhaustive reading of Foucault, Wilber's Integral reformulation of structuralism (what he calls post/structuralism) is detailed in *Kosmic Karma and Creativity* (Wilber, 2003a, Excerpt D). For our purposes here, we note that some of these patterns might have to do with power, gender, culture, values, and language, as well as the entire notion of stage-like development.

Last, but equally important, this project needs to be informed by third-person validity criteria that have to do with propositional and empirical truths. In the case of a

theoretical thesis, we might inquire, “Is there a logic and self-consistency to the unfolding of the argument? Do I avoid any obvious performative contradictions? (That is, does what I say match what I do?) Is there self-consistency to the enterprise when assessed in that impartial mode with which we are well familiar, since it is indigenous to us?”. I have borne in mind such questions of validity throughout the preparation of the thesis, and provide a self-evaluation towards the end.

*Towards an integration of Research Methodologies: Integral Methodological Pluralism*

Backing up one step from considerations of validity, we can tentatively explore the relevance of the notion of *perspective-dimensions* for the integration of epistemologies and methodologies of research. Wilber calls his orienting framework for methodological integration, **Integral methodological pluralism (IMP)** (Wilber, 2003a). As we did in the previous section, we begin by translating the notion of three primary perspective-dimensions into the quadrant model by dividing the third-person perspective into singular and plural. In the diagram below, we note that these four quadrants correspond to the interior and exterior of singular and plural holons, where the interior singular quadrant represents 1<sup>st</sup> person or “I”, the interior plural quadrant represents 2<sup>nd</sup> person or “We” (technically 1<sup>st</sup> person plural), and the exterior quadrants represent 3<sup>rd</sup> person “It” and “Its” respectively. This diagram, however, adds one more iteration to this unfolding overview of indigenous perspectives. That is, the phenomenon (properly “holon”, defined below) shown as a circle in each quadrant can itself be investigated from either a 1<sup>st</sup> person, *inside* stance, or 3<sup>rd</sup> person *outside* stance. The language here can become tricky, because inside/outside mean something different from interior/exterior. If you

like, simply ignore the language distinctions and look at the diagram to see how different methodologies might be situated with respect to each other. What results is a set of eight perspectives-dimensions with corresponding methodologies most suited to investigating them (Wilber, 2003a). These are shown in the diagram below:

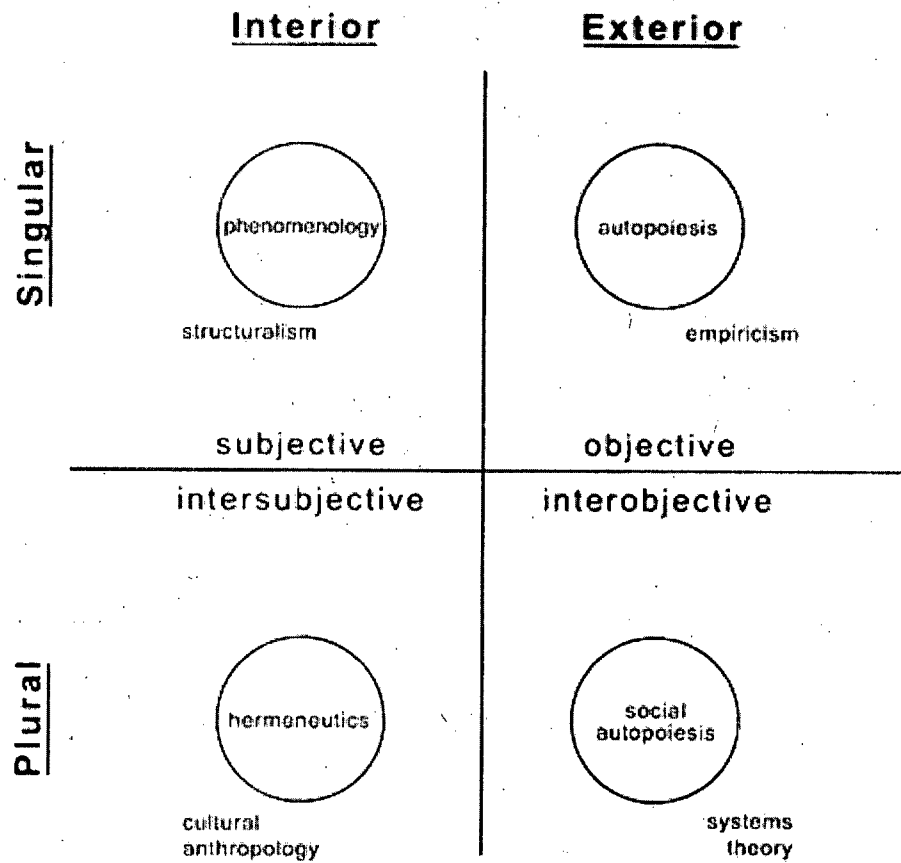


Figure 2. 8 Major Paradigms or Methodologies (Wilber, 2003a, Excerpt D, p.9)

So that the above doesn't seem like merely an abstract exercise, let's explore what might be the implications of the eight major indigenous perspectives and corresponding methodologies for research in therapeutic enactment. For example, how might the above apply to coming to know with more precision and depth the manner in which therapeutic enactment integrates individual and group change processes, one stated goal of the approach (Westwood, Keats, & Wilensky, 2003)? As suggested by the diagram, *coming to know this might require that we devise ways to simultaneously employ methodologies that enact different dimension-perspectives, in order to generate a more integrated understanding*. For example, would it be possible to simultaneously track phenomena both phenomenologically and hermeneutically? Or empirically and hermeneutically? Or from structural, hermeneutic and systems perspectives? Theoretically, a huge range of possibilities is opened up by this meta-paradigm of indigenous perspectives which allows us to situate diverse methodologies in systematic relationships to one another. This orienting framework of relationships among methodologies potentially empowers us to discover and develop understandings of phenomena previously inaccessible. How so? Because rather than seeing one or another methodology as best and rejecting the others, and rather than simply *collecting* all the methodologies together and allowing them exist beside one another in an uneasy truce, we now have the opportunity to bring them together *and connect them*. Wilber terms this approach to investigating various perspective-dimensions at the same time 'simultracking', representing the notion that the research endeavour attempts to track various perspective-dimensions simultaneously. Application of simultracking has been launched by the Institute of Noetic Sciences in its

research on transformative practices (Murphy & Wilber, 2003). Wilber's Integral Institute ([www.integralinstitute.org](http://www.integralinstitute.org)) and the Institute of Noetic Sciences ([www.noetic.org](http://www.noetic.org)) could both be consulted with regards to the use of simultracking as a frontier for innovative, increasingly precise research into therapeutic enactment.

### *Integrating Individual and Group Change Processes*

In addition to its applicability to questions of reflexivity, validity and research methodology, I suggested above that the quadrant model helps us meet a stated aim of the current therapeutic enactment model, the integration of individual and group models and processes of change (Westwood et al., 2003). The quadrant model helps us do this by maintaining the (critically important) integrity or irreducibility of both individual and collective dimensions, while simultaneously explicating their co-contextualization (or perhaps "inter-enactment") of one another.

As demonstrated in the previous sections on validity and research, the "Big Three" perspective-dimensions introduced above can be differentiated further into the quadrant model by adding the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural "Its". One additional term mentioned before will now be defined. The **holon** (a concept Wilber adapted from Arthur Koestler) incorporates the tenets of contextualism, a view that asserts that nothing can be understood just as it is, but instead must be considered in its context. Therefore, a holon as an ontological entity (of which a *human being* is an example) is defined as neither a *part*, nor a *whole*, but instead as a *whole/part*. Wilber gives the example, "... with reference to the phrase, 'the bark of a dog' ... the word *bark* is a whole with reference to its individual letters, but a *part* with reference to the phrase itself." (Wilber, 1995, p.26)

Integral theory suggests that holons (and interlocking patterns of holons called **holarchies**) are fundamental building blocks of existence.

Thinking of human beings as holons helps us understand the relationship between individuals and groups (Wilber, 2000a, 2003a). As a holon, a whole/part, each person simultaneously possesses *agency* – a degree of wholeness, autonomy, self-organization, or intention – that is *always already* embedded in multiple contexts, what Wilber calls *communions*. Every agency is thus an agency-in-communion; by extension, every person is an individual-in-a-group. A collective, in turn, is not composed of individuals, per se, but rather their communions or communications (Wilber, 2003a). Feeling into a “We” space hermeneutically (from the “inside”), we might say that a group is made up of the *communions* of the individuals. Looking at the same occasion “from the outside”, as in systems theory, we might say that a group is made up of the *communications* of the individuals. In neither case, however, is a group made up of the individuals themselves: collectives do not *enfold* individuals within a larger holarchy or compound identity. *Collectives are different from but not ontologically prior to individuals* because collectives haven’t the same type of locus of intentionality as does an individual. To illustrate, if I decide to get up and walk across the room, all the cells in my body come along with me. This kind of control of “I” over the cells in my body is not afforded the “we” of a group over the members of that group. The closest “we” comes to that kind of control is in the case of fascism. In the end, the primary component is the holon, the individual-in-a-collective.

Related to our prior discussion of the integration of research methodologies, whether we examine change in therapeutic enactment as an individual or group process



becomes a matter of the *perspective-dimension(s)* we enact within a unified event, or what Wilber also calls (borrowing from Whitehead) an **actual occasion**, or simply **occasion** (Wilber, 2003a). The manifestation of these *perspective-dimensions* is well familiar to us because, as we noted above, they are embedded in the language we use everyday. Another example that helps point this out phenomenologically is included below, after the following illustrative quote from Wilber:

“There are no perceptions [fundamentally] anywhere in the real world; there are only perspectives. A subject perceiving an object is *always already* in a relationship of first-person, second-person and third-person when it comes to the perceived occasions ... subjects don’t prehend objects anywhere in the universe; rather, first persons prehend second persons or third persons: perceptions are always within actual perspectives ...[note that] generally, first person is any holon with agency or intentionality; second person is any holon to whom agency is directed; third person is any holon referred to ...” (Wilber, 2003a, p.4 Excerpt D).

Here is a second thought exercise in becoming aware of the indigenous, always already nature of perspective-dimensions (the first was in the validity section). An important tenet of the Integral approach can be summarized as the following: “objectivity, subjectivity and intersubjectivity are meshed and arise together”. Yet, a reader might criticize this statement as sounding like a metaphysical postulate. The difference between this statement and metaphysical or modernist conceptions, however, lies in the ability to check it out phenomenologically, in our immediate awareness. If you like, bring your attention to your phenomenological space right now. Do you notice that you have some sense of an “I” reading this page? You could accent this awareness of “I”

by inquiring “Who am I?” Whatever you feel in response is the “I” as currently manifesting. Now, note that you and I are in a kind of dialogue. You have some awareness of my voice as the writer, no? You and I in conversation, then, make a “We”. So far you hopefully have enacted an awareness of subjective and intersubjective dimensions; let’s turn to the objective or 3<sup>rd</sup> person dimension, which as noted in the quotation above is “any holon referred to”. In this case, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person holon that “we” are referring to is the statement, “objectivity, subjectivity and intersubjectivity are meshed and arise together”. We are discussing the propositional truth or untruth of that statement (3<sup>rd</sup> person validity warrant), but always and only in relation to the simultaneously occurring 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person occasions. Thus, if we agree with each other, we can put forward the statement in question as a **post-metaphysical** truth claim, a truth claim that holds only as long as it represents our indigenous experience of “being-in-the-world”. Thus, in no way are we constrained by oppressive metaphysical postulates; instead, we are simply using these post-metaphysical propositions as convenient descriptions of everyday lived experience.

*Importance of the Intersubjective Perspective-dimension: “I-Thou” and Witnessing*

Suggesting their universality as a type of **Kosmic habit**, Wilber points out that these three primordial perspectives (again, four if you count “its” as different from “it”) have recurred in diverse writings and traditions, from Plato’s the Beautiful, the Good, and the True; to Buddhism’s Buddha, Sangha, Dharma; to Habermas’ Big Three of Art, Morals and Science (Wilber, 2000a). Another major writer who has evoked these

dimensions is Buber (1951; 1957), whose "I-Thou" philosophy we will shortly engage in order to explore the importance of the intersubjective in healing.

Therapeutic enactment is a group therapy, and thus while both individual and group components are important, it is the collective aspect that particularly distinguishes therapeutic enactment from the individual approaches that tend to dominate the field of counselling. To illustrate, I note that in the University of British Columbia counselling psychology program at the Masters level, there is a group counselling course but no individual counselling course, subtly implying that all the rest of the courses are focused on individual counselling. If there were a course on individual counselling but no group counselling course, what might that suggest about the dominant focus of a program?

Indeed, critics have charged that many psychological change theories and practices that developed during the modern period tended to focus on individual rather than collective change processes (James & Foster, 2003). Partly in an attempt to rectify this imbalance, postmodern constructivist and social constructionist psychologies have tended to focus on intersubjective processes (Foster & Arvay, 2003). In their radical forms, however, postmodern psychologies have sometimes denied subjectivity altogether, in essence suggesting that only intersubjectivity is real (Foster & Arvay, 2003). Because of their relativistic stance, postmodern approaches have been criticized for their inability to adequately address morality (James & Foster, 2003), and their tendency to slide towards nihilism or narcissism (Foster & Arvay, 2003). The integral approach attempts to rescue both modern and postmodern approaches from their limitations, while preserving their contributions within an expanded dialectic between individual and collective.

According to the validity schematic presented earlier, ethics and morality (distinctions between the two are not explored here) are crucial validity claims for the intersubjective realm. His words infused with a deep reverence for the Other encountered in intersubjective exchange, Buber (1951; 1957) is exemplary in his evocation of the critical role of the intersubjective domain in healing human relationships. Interestingly, he also makes use of the same three primordial perspectives -- those of I, We, and It – put forward in the Integral approach.

In a lecture entitled “Distance and Relation”, Buber (1951) describes a “twofold principle”. The first principle, what he calls “the primal setting at a distance” (p.97) is akin to the concept of *agency* presented above (although the analogy breaks down if pushed too far). By this principle, a world apart from the self is brought into being. The second principle or process he calls “entering into relation”, analogous to *communion*. Buber argues that humans initially differentiate “I-it” relationships through their capacity to see holons (to use our term) as persisting *functionally* in relationship to themselves. Buber notes that some existentialists assert that “the basic factor between men [persons] is that one is an object for the other” (p.106). It is certainly the case that I-It or subject-object relationships are a significant component of human experiencing.

In contrast to the I-It relationship, Buber goes on to elaborate the “special reality of the interhuman” (or the intersubjective, We domain, to use Wilber’s language). Buber says:

“the sphere of the interhuman is one in which a person is confronted by the other.

We call its unfolding dialogical. In accordance with this, it is basically erroneous to try to understand the interhuman phenomena as psychological [from an I

perspective only]. When two men [persons] converse together, the psychological is certainly an important part of the situation, as each listens and each prepares to speak. Yet this is only the hidden accompaniment to the conversation itself ... whose meaning is to be found neither in one of the two partners, nor in both together, but only in their dialogue itself, in this "between" [we-perspective] which they live together" (Buber, 1951, p.106).

Buber confirms the validity of the "interhuman" (intersubjective, We) as something irreducible to the "psychological" (subjective, I), without denying the reality of the psychological.

As Buber informs us, the interhuman is properly the domain of the I-Thou relationship, instead of the I-It relationship. Having successfully differentiated the world and the other in an I-It fashion, humans then wish, and perhaps must for optimum mental health, enter into I-Thou relationships. Buber describes the nature of the I-Thou in terms of mutual validation:

"The wish of every man [is] to be confirmed as what he is, even as what he can become, by men; and, the innate capacity in man [is] to confirm his fellow-men in this way .... Man and many animals ...*call out* to others; to *speak* to others [in contrast] is based on the establishment and acknowledgement of the independent otherness of the other with whom one fosters relation, addressing and being addressed on this very basis ...Genuine conversation and therefore every actual fulfilment of relation between men, means acceptance of otherness" (Buber, 1951, p.102).

Healthful human relationships require I-Thou relationships, as opposed to merely I-It relationships.

From this perspective, we might argue that one way of looking at trauma is as the absence or breakdown of an I-Thou perspective. For example, in order for one person to intentionally inflict trauma on another, the perpetrator must see the victim as an object, and thus the act of trauma reflects an I-It dynamic. Recall the story of Dave Pelzer (1995) who was brutally and systematically abused by his mother: he titled his memoir *A Child Called 'It'*, presumably to reflect the extreme de-humanization he experienced. Conversely, healing occurs with the restoration or generation of an I-Thou perspective. Within therapeutic enactment, the process of group members witnessing the protagonist's struggle optimally enables the generation of an I-Thou perspective-dimension that is an important aspect of healing.

While this idea will not be developed extensively here, it is worth noting that contacting the transpersonal **Witness** has been tentatively proposed as an adjunctive experiential "solution" to the "problem" of the relationship between individual and collective (or self and other). That is, when experiencing Witness awareness, consciousness may be expanding beyond boundaries of individual and group (Wilber, 2003a). In recent training work with wisdom teachers, Wilber acted as a guide, providing "pointing out" instructions for relaxing into Witness awareness (Chopra & Wilber, 2003). ITE seeks to incorporate the Witness Exercise (Wilber, 2000c) as a complement to the current therapeutic enactment protocols.

As a way to conclude this interlude in "We" space, I present Bly's evocative poem, "The Third Body":

*A man and a woman sit near each other, and they  
 Do not long  
 At this moment to be older, or younger, or born  
 In any other nation, or any other time, or any other  
 Place.  
 They are content to be where they are, talking or  
 Not talking.  
 Their breaths together feed someone whom we do  
 Not know.  
 The man sees the way his fingers move;  
 He sees her hands close around a book she hands  
 To him.  
 They obey a third body that they share in common.  
 They have promised to love that body.  
 Age may come; parting may come; death will come!  
 A man and a woman sit near each other;  
 As they breathe they feed someone we do not know,  
 Someone we know of, whom we have never seen.  
 (reprinted in Housden, 2003)*

#### *Holarchical Time and Evolution: The Presence of the Past*

Having looked at the dimension of space (distance and relation), we can now look to the modes of time. A goal of an integrally-informed therapeutic enactment facilitator is to enact as much as possible vivid present moment experience. Rejecting pre-given ontological structures (Wilber, 2001b, 2002b) an integrally-informed approach recognizes that current reality or experience is not merely given, but instead is partly created by the subject (the *enactment* principle). Rather than simply writing *about* this kind of postmodern consciousness, integral therapeutic modalities are better written about *within* a dynamic dialectical awareness that is self-conscious of the fact that it is constantly enacting part of the worldspace in which it finds itself.

Within the worldspace enacted by dynamic dialectical awareness, the sense of time that emerges is non-linear and multi-dimensional. Time is not seen as a two-

dimensional sequence of points (say, seconds) on a line, with the present moment being the middle one (coming immediately after the last moment, and immediately before the next moment). That enactment of time is a modernist one, appropriate to a modernist worldspace. Instead, time is conceptualized as unfolding holarchically: that is, the universe of the present moment is seen to transcend and include the universe of the immediately preceding moment. Imagine that a slightly larger envelope can hold the contents of a slightly smaller envelope, but also leave space for something more ....

Drawing significantly on Whitehead's *Process and Reality* (Whitehead, 1929) and other works, Wilber (2003a) elaborates this holarchical notion of time. Wilber suggests that the past and present constitute an inheritance-with-novelty, or "karma-and-creativity" (p.10). The subject of this moment becomes the object of the subject of the next moment: thus the past is handed forward to the present as a felt reality (felt reality not just as an emotion, but as a totality of subjective experience). Then, the present moment affords a moment of creativity in which something new is added. Wilber goes on to say (still drawing heavily on Whitehead) that the past exerts a form of causality on the present: "the fact that I can feel the previous moment means that I am influenced by it to some degree" (p.15). Therefore, the past "forms the inescapable platform from which any present moment must be launched" (p.23) – giving us an excellent justification to do repair work if that platform is unstable.

Within this understanding, what then is going on in therapeutic enactment? An answer is that we are using the capacity for novelty provided to us in this moment to enact or explore some aspect of the past. Importantly, that inheritance is seen to be *folded into* present moment experience – *the past is right here with us*, in that sense.



When we conduct therapeutic enactment, we make contact with some aspect of our past as it is present with us *now*. One implication, then, is to recognize that the past is not a fixed store of memories so much as it is a felt sense accessible for exploration in the moment. This awareness allows enactment to take place within a vivid sense of the present moment, which is recognized as both the wellspring of the creativity that drives change, and the anchor for our explorations. The practical implication of this for group process leaders wanting to become more integrally-informed is that they consider including specific meditations and contemplations in their daily lives that heighten present moment awareness. For designing an ITE, I suggest incorporating such exercises into the fabric of the process. Some suggestions for doing this are provided later in the paper.

The words of nondual teacher Eckhart Tolle speak beautifully to the importance of the present, or simply *presence*, in healing: “The past perpetuates itself through lack of presence. The quality of your consciousness at this moment is what shapes the future ... the only place where true change can occur and where the past can be dissolved is the Now” (Tolle, 2001, p.38).

#### *Holarchical Time and Evolution: Moving Beyond the Romantic View*

In Westwood, Keats, and Wilensky’s work (Westwood et al., 2003), the authors present the notion of a “primary wounding, break, or insult to the person” (p.126). This statement appears to reflect what is described as the **Romantic view** (Wilber, 1997). The Romantic view suggests that a human being starts life in a state of unconscious connection or union with Spirit, during which it experiences a blissful paradise,

sometimes symbolized by symbiosis with the mother in the womb. Then, this view suggests,

“sometime in the first few years of life, the self differentiates from the environment, the union with the dynamic ground is lost, subject and object are separated, and the self moves from unconscious Heaven into conscious Hell – the world of egoic alienation, repression, terror, tragedy” (p.52-53).

Drawing inspiration from the Romantic view, the goal of therapy becomes, in essence, an attempt to *return* to a pristine state that seems to have been lost in the historical past. In other words, the focus of therapy driven by the Romantic view is **healing**.

Wilber (1997) outlines insuperable difficulties with the Romantic view (consult text for a full elaboration of these arguments). In contrast, an Integral approach puts forward an evolutionary perspective that suggests that, in historical time, humans are in a constant state of **developing**, of slowly evolving towards increasing complexity and inclusiveness (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Cohen, 2002b; Redfield & Murphy, 2002; Wilber, 1997, 2000a, 2000b). Traumas, breaks, or insults to the person indeed occur, and one goal of therapy is to help *heal* these wounds. However, these wounds are seen to be to a relative self, a self that is forever becoming.

For a self that is forever becoming, the future is very important. Some therapeutic approaches – for example, those with roots in the work of master therapist Milton Erickson – have significantly emphasized the role of the present and future in therapy. O’Hanlon and Bertolino (1999), developers of possibility brief therapy, comment,

“an important distinction for Erickson was his emphasis on the present (and the immediate future) and a de-emphasis on the past and the search for causes and

reasons of present difficulties. His view was that activity by the person in the present was the most important element of success in psychotherapy” (p.18).

Erickson himself remarked succinctly, “clients come to therapy for a better future, not a better past” (O'Hanlon, 1987). Furthermore, nondual teachers such as Andrew Cohen suggest that through contemplating the future,

“knowledge of what has not yet occurred but yearns to, begins to exert a powerful influence on the now, the present moment ... and this pull changes everything. Because you suddenly realize that *what you're doing now has an influence on the future*. You see, if there's no future, it doesn't matter what you do. If there's no future, there's always a danger of nihilism ... but if you awaken ... then the future suddenly becomes a very important part of the present” (Cohen, 2002a, p.1)

Based on these considerations of time, facilitators wishing to be integrally-informed need to maintain a balanced conception of the relative weighting to be given to present moment enactment, past traumas and the pull of evolution or developmental forces. They might want to be especially careful not to buy into the Romantic view to which trauma paradigms and experiential therapies have sometimes implicitly subscribed (Wilber, 2000c). With regard to designing an ITE process, facilitators might perform an analysis of current therapeutic enactment phases (introduced below) according to the relative weightings generally given within each to the various time dimensions. For example, enactment sequences themselves are often past-oriented, group safety-building processes are usually present-oriented, and the behavioral transfer phase emphasizes the future. While remembering that therapeutic enactment is primarily a trauma repair

approach and thus naturally weighted to the past, careful consideration could be given to the possible benefits of increasing the emphasis on the present-time group container, or on future-time behavior transfer. For example, perhaps the six-week follow-up meeting could be expanded to include a specific consideration of how adult developmental processes can be most effectively engaged in daily life.

*Beyond Time: Ever-present Witness*

If a pristine state is not to be found in evolutionary time – either past, present or future – then whence is it? Within the Integral approach (Cohen, 2000, 2002b; Wilber, 1991, 2000a, 2000b), this **Witness** or capital ‘S’ Self is seen to be located outside of historical time and space altogether – it is in fact radically free of qualities, which means the names given to it and the sense of it just imparted are both inadequate. The Integral approach goes on to suggest that the ultimate mystery is the **nondual** relationship between these “two” things: the relative self and world constantly becoming, and the ever-present Witness. The Buddhist *Heart Sutra*, for example, describes nondual awareness as the direct realization that “That which is Form is not other than Emptiness, that which is Emptiness is not other than Form” (Wilber, 2000b, p.155). And although seemingly pointing to a lofty condition, nondual awareness is said, when an individual finally uncovers it, to be entirely natural, even obvious (Wilber, 1991). Thus, Zen calls it Ordinary Mind. In this way, nondual awareness represents a developmental pinnacle (in which the world is entirely *transcended*), while simultaneously being the ground of everything (the world is also completely *included* or *embraced*; (Wilber, 2000b). Finally, it is important to note that nondual awareness is entirely post-symbolic and trans-rational: it is much better described as that which reads this page than as any particular intellectual

concept, but all descriptions are ultimately inadequate (Wilber, 2000a). Because it is trans-rational, nondual awareness must be approached *experientially*, through engaging in specific practices that have been used throughout the ages to awaken understandings that lie beyond language. Wilber's Witness Exercise (2000c) is a representative example or summary of the kinds of injunctions used in the wisdom traditions to "point out" what is ever-present.

These evolutionary and nondual understandings are important for both clients and facilitators. For clients, the notion of a Self that has known no trauma offers a perspective that helps individuals "grasp the possibility of 'return' to a healthy place in therapy" (Westwood, 2002). For therapists involved in therapeutic enactment and other trauma repair methodologies, the understanding that a pristine state lies outside of historical time is important because it helps situate these trauma repair practices in a broader scheme. We can see that *trauma recovery approaches in and of themselves help to restore relative wholeness, but generally are not designed to help the individual access directly that Self that has never been traumatized*. The recognition of this limitation within current trauma repair methodologies opens the way for the inclusion of injunctions and practices that are designed to help an individual contact, sense, or relax into Witness consciousness itself.

#### From Integrally-informed Practitioners to Integral Therapeutic Enactment (ITE)

To this point, the emphasis of the paper has been on how researchers and facilitators of therapeutic enactment become "integrally-informed"; that is, how they can think about what they do from within the dynamic dialectical space enacted by an

Integral approach. In the following sections, while continuing to develop theoretical notions, the emphasis shifts more to the process of therapeutic enactment itself, guided by the question, "what would an ITE process look like?" This latter section begins, then, with an overview of the current therapeutic enactment model.

### *Overview of Current Therapeutic Enactment Process*

Therapeutic enactment developed largely out of the work of Marvin Westwood and Patricia Wilensky, through many years of their group counselling work with Moreno's (1971) psychodrama model. During this time, several limitations of Moreno's model have been addressed, and new process elements have been added (Westwood et al., 2003). First, to provide a stronger container for individual safety, Westwood and Wilensky prepare the outline of each enactment prior to engaging in the process. Second, and related to the first, the role of spontaneity is changed from being a key transformative element during the enactment, to being seen as a desired outcome after the enactment, and in the ongoing life of the client. Third, catharsis is not seen as primary but rather is situated as a part of an overall healing process that places a strong emphasis upon the integration of new meanings within an interpersonal (group/social) context. Fourth and related, the group process itself is seen to have a greater role in healing for the individual than it does within the original psychodrama model.

The theoretical underpinnings of the current model include elements of group counselling theory, self-psychology and object relations theory, schema and script theory, and Gestalt theory (Westwood et al., 2003). Drawing on Shutz' (1958) work on group counselling, for example, the therapeutic enactment process attends to the needs of

individuals in group settings for inclusion, control and trust. From self-psychology and object relations, therapeutic enactment theory incorporates an understanding of how identity is shaped within an interpersonal context through the internalization of relationships with primary caregivers (Ford & Urban, 1998). The therapist(s) are seen as good-enough parental objects who allow projected material to be re-introduced to the participant in a useful and safe manner. Incorporating understandings from schema and script theory (Bruning, Schraw, & Ronning, 1999), therapeutic enactment sees that the problems of an individual often have roots in faulty self-schemata (background interpretive frameworks for making sense of experience), and scripts (mental frameworks for procedural knowledge). The enactment process facilitates the activation and re-narration of these problematic schema and scripts. Finally, the therapeutic enactment model draws on Gestalt learning theory with its emphasis on heightening awareness of here-and-now experience, and the integration of figure and ground.

The current therapeutic enactment process has five phases. They are:

- 1) *assessment and preparation*: facilitators meet once or several times with the client to determine therapeutic needs, and plan the enactment
- 2) *group building*: specific processes are employed to develop a climate of trust, safety and cohesion which encourages risk-taking within the enactment
- 3) *enactment*: with help from the facilitator, the client enacts the chosen scene; other group members are usually involved in assuming specific roles; through the enactment, catharsis and resolution of thoughts and feelings related to the problem incident is facilitated

- 4) *group processing*: client and group members are encouraged to express their personal response to the enactment; this process helps the client consolidate the experience and increases group cohesion
- 5) *integration and transfer*: the client reflects on the enactment process and the input of other group members; then, the client makes a commitment regarding the application of the new learning in daily community life. This phase also includes individual supportive phone contact with the facilitators in the week or two immediately following the enactment, as well as a three-hour group follow-up session with the entire group occurring six weeks after the workshop.



Figure 3 illustrates this sequence, including sub-phases (Westwood et al., 2003) **Error! Not a valid link.**

Figure 3: Five phases of therapeutic enactment

*The Curative Spiral: A Model for the Change Process in Integral Therapeutic Enactment*

Presented below is the curative spiral, a heuristic for conceptualizing the process of ITE.

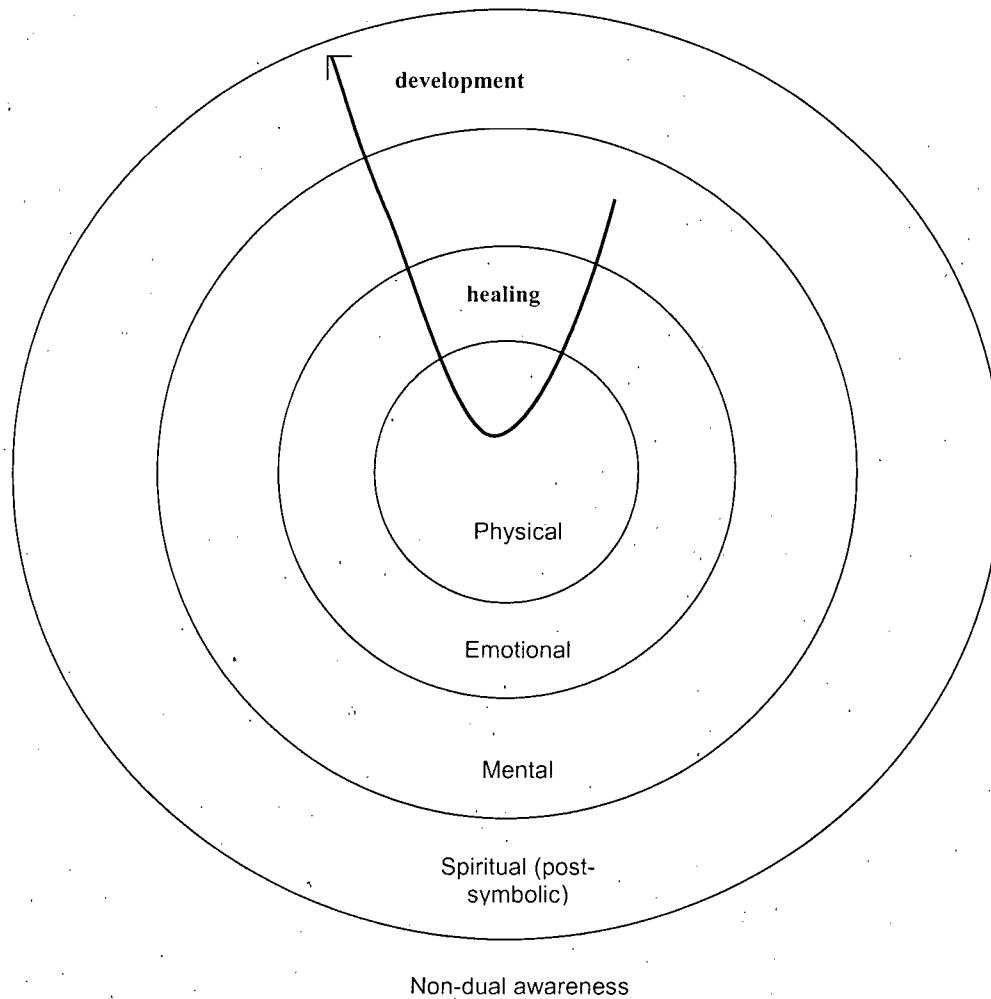


Figure 4 – The curative spiral (adapted from Wilber, 2000b, p.95)

Within the integral approach, every human being is seen as a **holarchy** that incorporates at least physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual holons (also called **levels** or **basic structures**, used synonymously here (Wilber, 1997, 2000b). In a healthy person, each of these *basic structures* of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual is *differentiated from* but *integrated with* each of the others. What this means is that these structures are nested within each other: as we move from the simplest but most fundamental *physical* to the more complex *emotional* and so on, each subsequent level transcends-and-includes the previous structure which becomes nested within it. For example, the *emotional-sexual* structure (called *chi* in the Chinese tradition and *prana* in the Hindu tradition) emerges through but subsequently cannot be reduced to physical sensations (Wilber, 2001a). The process of development is thus a movement towards increasing depth and inclusiveness. Note that Nondual awareness is depicted as that which is both the deepest level and the unbounded, ever-present Witness of the entire sequence (Wilber, 2000b).

Drawing on pioneering thinkers Sheldrake (1981) and Laszlo (1987), Wilber proposes that there are processes of downward and upward causation constantly occurring between these nested levels (2000a). For example, the positive physical processes engendered through aerobic exercise or weightlifting has an “upward” influence on emotional and mental processes, as most anyone who works out will tell you. Conversely, a beneficial change in thought processes, say through cognitive re-scripting, can have a beneficial effect on both emotions and the physical body. Countering catastrophic thinking with more constructive or “realistic” cognitions can reduce negative affect and even enhance immune system function (Seligman, 1990).

Among other benefits, these understandings help diffuse arguments as to whether cognition, affect or behavior is the primary causal agent in effective change processes. Instead, the Integral approach proposes that optimum change processes *engage as many basic structures of the person as possible – physical, mental, emotional, spiritual – thereby bringing into play multiple causal influences that potentially interact synergistically.*

Inscribed within the diagram is an arrowed line indicating one possible trajectory for an Integral experiential therapy that engages multiple levels. Broadly speaking, the path of therapy has two phases, labeled on the diagram as **healing** and **development** (these terms were introduced earlier and will be explicated further below). Note where the arrow begins: at the point of entry into a therapeutic process, the awareness of a typical North American adult usually transcends-and-include sensations (physical level), emotions and images (emotional level), as well as more language-bound symbols, concepts, rules and roles (mental level). Correlated with this general *cognitive* structure, the same adult might be expected to be working on the development of a *self-identity* that McAdams (1995) calls the “narrative self”, and which Kegan (1994) calls a “self-authoring” identity. Addressing identity, the processes currently in place in therapeutic enactment – some of which involve assuming various roles, re-scripting various cognitions, naming and expressing emotions, moving physically, and so on -- can be seen to enact primarily a *healing* of the less than optimal narrative self by engaging the already transcended-and-included, but nevertheless damaged, structures in conjunction with which that self has formed. With the addition of contemplative or meditative practices, a person could be introduced to higher spiritual structures, which can begin to transform

that narrative self. At the point of engagement with practices specifically designed to access the spiritual level, the ITE process moves into a second phase focusing on **development**.

Note that it is not necessary to think of these two phases of healing and development in the linear manner just presented; I put them forward in this highly structured manner in order to facilitate understanding. There are few therapies that proceed in such a lockstep manner through various structures! Rather, I recommend looking at healing and development as dialectical processes, mutually reinforcing each other. Various sequences of specific processes could be experimented with in an attempt to find the most synergistic combinations. For example, one design would be to follow the two-step healing and development model fairly faithfully, say by including a three-day enactment weekend, followed by a three-day silent meditation retreat. Other designs might oscillate back and forth in their emphases upon healing or development (as well as oscillating from experiential to interpretive foci – see next section). Based on the integral methodological pluralism proposed earlier, outcome evaluations of various designs could be conducted to help guide these practical deliberations.

*Transformational Dialectic of Interpretation and Experience: Thinking is Experience!*

A goal of the present therapeutic enactment program is to balance experiential and interpretive modes (Westwood, 2002). We could categorize therapeutic approaches very broadly according to what degree they emphasize *interpretation*, on the one hand, or *experience*, on the other. The fact that we have approaches to therapy called “experiential” implies that others are not, or at least are less so. Interpretive approaches

are often equated with cognition or thinking, while experiential approaches are equated with feeling, expressing, and behaving. . Referring back to the descriptions and diagram of the five phases of the therapeutic enactment process, note that the initial planning, group processing, and final integration phases emphasize a more interpretive mode, while the middle phases of group-building and the enactment itself emphasize an experiential mode.

What the integral approach adds is an opportunity for individuals to experience the thought process itself *in an experiential as well as reflective mode*. In fact, the transition point at which a healing experiential therapy becomes a developmental experiential therapy is the awareness that *thinking itself is an experience!* While often equated in the aforementioned therapy approaches with the interpretive or reflective mode, “thinking” can potentially be experienced as vividly as (although qualitatively different from) feelings and sensations. Thoughts are not “labels” or “abstractions” attached to experience *post hoc*; to conceptualize this way is profoundly dualistic. Rather, thoughts are part of the very flow of experience. Wilber elaborates,

“Experience is basically just another word for awareness. If I experience my body, it means I am aware of my body. You can indeed be aware of your body, but you can also be aware of your mind – you can right now notice all the thoughts and ideas and images floating in front of the mind’s inward eye. You can, in other words, *experience your mind*, be aware of your mind ... when that begins to happen, usually in meditation or contemplation, you can have even higher experiences, spiritual experiences, mystical experiences...” (Wilber, 1998).

Wilber, then, proposes *thinking as experience* as a doorway to spiritual development.

Expanding our conception of what constitutes experiential therapy adds what we might call a “vertical” dimension to the “horizontal” action versus reflection, experience versus interpretation, or thinking versus doing dynamic already well established in psychotherapy. By engaging in intensive meditation practices designed to develop awareness of the thought process itself, the apparent horizontal boundary between interpretation and experience becomes more porous. That is, a person becomes more vividly aware that he or she is experiencing much when reflecting, and similarly is engaged in interpreting even while seemingly involved in dominantly experiential modes. The figure below summarizes:

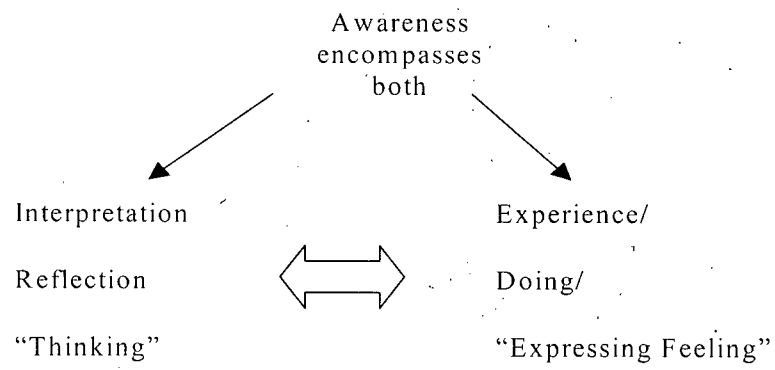


Figure 5: Vertical and horizontal components of “experiential”



The acknowledgement that thinking is experiential is a key distinction between conventional and Integral experiential therapies. Many conventional experiential approaches such as Gendlin's focusing (1981) tend to access structures in the zone lying between largely pre-verbal sensation/emotion and linguistic thought processes (Wilber, 2000b). In surfing waves developmentally prior to the emergence of linguistic processes, these approaches facilitate the *healing* of structures already incorporated into the self. An Integral experiential therapy, on the other hand, would *both* make use of such methods as part of its healing arc, *and also*, use meditative injunctions that enact awareness of the thought process itself. In this way, the door is opened for experiential therapies to facilitate both healing and *development*.

#### *Designing Process: Integral Therapeutic Enactment*

What might ITE look like at a process level? A basic parameter for modifying the program design is to maintain a pattern of emphasis that oscillates between interpretive and experiential aspects. That is, any meditative exercises will be added to parts of the established process that currently emphasize *experience*, while contemplations to help make sense of the meditative exercises will be incorporated at equivalent junctures. Given that initial consideration, the following changes might be introduced during each phase.

*Phase 1: assessment and preparation.* When interviewing and assessing potential clients, facilitators will be attentive to the existential-spiritual themes in the client's story. If the client is open to this, the therapists will explore the client's beliefs

(interpretations) about life's deeper meaning and values, and/or spiritual experiences he/she might have had. Depending on the interviewer's style, a brief self-report assessment tool could be used to gauge the suitability of including spiritual themes in that client's enactment. An example measure is the recently developed *Personal Meanings of Spirituality Scale* (Graci, O'Rourke, & Mahoney, 2003). If deemed appropriate, aspects of the client's spiritual experiences could be incorporated into the enactment. I believe it worth exploring whether the vivid re-enactment of an earlier spiritual experience could help the individual heal from a trauma that occurred at a different point in time.

*Phase 2: group building.* This phase includes two sub-phases. The first is the introduction of the theoretical underpinnings of the therapeutic enactment model. Added to the overheads currently being used in this sub-phase would be the diagram of the curative spiral. The discussion of this overhead would include an introduction to the model of the person as being made up of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual components. In addition, the process of therapy would be presented as a dialectic of healing and development. Facilitators will make it clear that they have no intention of imposing any metaphysical interpretation of life's meaning upon clients, but will simply offer experiential exercises from which clients can draw meaning or not as they see fit. The idea of the Witness, known by many different names in different traditions (see Appendix 4), would be presented. Clients would be informed that a specific exercise will be employed during the enactment process to help relax into Witness consciousness.

An additional possibility would be to talk about the role of witnesses in trauma and healing, and then use this conversation as an introduction to the idea of the transpersonal Witness. That is, would it be possible to imagine that even when there

were no human witnesses to see and intervene in a traumatic situation, might the Witness still have been present? This is a deep existential question whose contemplation might help pave the way to a more powerful enactment experience. I note Jesus' words, "For where two or three come together in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (*The Holy Bible: New international version*, 1984, Matt. 18:20).

The second sub-phase (and an ongoing activity) includes the building of a safe and inclusive container which promotes risk-taking. No specific modifications to this phase are included in the ITE model.

*Phase 3: enactment.* Typically, there are several enactment sequences during a given enactment workshop. For example, a weekend format might allow for six enactments to be conducted, each lasting two to three hours or more. The total time for each enactment may be extended by up to an hour with the incorporation of the Witness or other meditation exercise. As indicated on figure 5, each enactment consists of sub-phases including setting the scene, selecting roles, enactment, catharsis and resolution.

At the end of each resolution sub-phase, the Witness exercise will be conducted. This positioning for the exercise follows Wilber's suggestion (2000c) that nondual injunctions like the Witness exercise be used as a type of "capping exercise" for experiential change processes. Furthermore, employing the Witness exercise at the end of an enactment means the entire process will follow the sequence illustrated by the curative spiral, wherein the experiential process engages emotional and physical levels before cycling back through to enact more mental, spiritual and nondual processes.

*Phase 4: group processing.* With the group processing phase, the emphasis shifts from a more experiential to a more interpretive mode, as the leads, role carriers and

finally witnesses debrief the enactment, *now including their experience of the Witness exercise.*

*Phase 5: integration and transfer.* This phase has two parts. First, each enactment workshop concludes with a session addressing the implications for daily life of the change process in which clients have just been engaged. Second, this phase includes a specific integration session of several hours, usually scheduled for six weeks after the enactment workshop.

In the first sub-phase, participants may explore behavior changes they may wish to implement given their experience of enactment. For example, a person might plan to call a relative that he or she has not spoken with for some time. Given the increased emphasis on the future and on development in ITE, this phase might be extended by an hour or two. Furthermore, since ITE highlights values and meanings, an individual's plan for new behaviors might also include those resulting from a different perspective regarding one's spiritual heritage. A plan for change, then, may or may not result in a desire to engage in a different way with religious or spiritual practices. In keeping with the tradition of pluralistic tolerance, facilitators would have no agenda regarding the actions the individual may or may not want to take in this regard. However, by more deliberately acknowledging the sacred dimensions of life, ITE revitalizes psychological change processes, allowing interested individuals to re-engage with the spiritual level in a more deliberate way. Facilitators, then, need to have at hand a collection of community resources that includes as many world wisdom traditions as possible. In addition, resources that incorporate an Integral perspective more explicitly will also be provided.

These resources and an overview or map of world wisdom traditions taken from Wilber's work on the perennial philosophy will be included in the appendices (numbers 3 and 4).

Having re-engaged in daily living for several weeks, participants are encouraged to share their experiences in the follow-up integration session (second sub-phase). While the emphasis of this session is more interpretive than experiential, I propose that this event either begin or conclude with an enactment of the Witness exercise. Furthermore, given the accent in ITE on development of potentials, information would be provided regarding how to adopt into daily living practices which have been shown to accelerate development (e.g., Leonard & Murphy, 1995).

*Additional component: mindful eating practice.* Meals are generally shared communally during an enactment weekend. Within the monastic and meditative traditions, meals are often shared in silence, with an emphasis on developing mindful awareness (Brazier, 1995; Hanh, 1995; Miller, Fletcher, & Acebo, 1995). An integrally-informed therapeutic enactment would include one meal per day conducted as a mindful eating practice. Instructions on this practice would be given to participants before the first designated meal (and are included as Appendix B). The concentration developed during the silent eating practice will hopefully contribute to the effectiveness of the Witness exercise, and potentially to the rest of the enactment process as well.

#### Conclusion: Validity, Strengths, Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The expansiveness of the Integral approach makes the partiality of a single research effort obvious, and strongly constrains a researcher's tendency to try to ordain a

particular methodology as “the one right way” to investigate phenomena. For example, against the background of the major indigenous perspectives (see Figure 2), even the very best hermeneutic study accounts for only about 1/8 of the “big picture”! And so it is with any single research paradigm. Furthermore, the fact that the Integral framework is open-ended and evolving frustrates attempts at intellectual closure. Reminiscent of the dialectic of the great Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna (see Batchelor, 2000; Murti, 1987), a subtle but important thrust of the Integral approach is to point out the limitations of any conceptual system in the face of trans-conceptual Spirit (Wilber, 2000a). Having presented this “disclaimer,” let me continue with a self-evaluation of validity.

Early in the paper, I presented three questions (broadly related to the three principles of nonexclusion, enfoldment and enactment) that might guide discussion of validity. The first question was “*To what degree are important considerations included or excluded?*” The central dialectic of this thesis is between the Integral approach and the theory and practice of therapeutic enactment. Looking first at inclusion of relevant therapeutic enactment literature, I note that while I included an overview of theory and the five phases of enactment, additional thoroughness in reviewing therapeutic enactment literature would be warranted. To be specific, I did not provide a detailed analysis of trauma theory, nor recent PhD work on witnessing completed by Patrice Keats. It would be interesting to explore in more depth connections between witnessing and the Witness – a consideration that might lead towards the heart of the mystery of intersubjectivity.

While an important focus of the paper was to elucidate distinctions between healing and development, future research would want to explore these differences in much more depth. For a doctoral level dissertation, I might be advised to develop a more

detailed literature review of transformational practices. Many psychotherapeutic and wisdom practices claim to help people transform, but which actually do, and in what ways? And how is transformation defined, exactly? Wilber has identified the lack of an adequate literature review on this topic (2003b) and has made the carrying out of just such an analysis of transformational practices a major priority for Integral Institute.

I mentioned early in the paper some non-ordinary experiences I have had in meditation and therapeutic enactment, implying that both these paradigms seem to have the capacity to evoke non-ordinary *states* of consciousness. However, the nature of the similarities and differences between the states produced by each was not explored in any detail. Future research could thus examine the nature of various *states* and their relationship to healing and development.

This discussion of transformation or development (they mean virtually the same thing in the Integral approach) and *states* leads us to consider two more components of the Integral psychology model, *levels* and *lines*. Note that the five major aspects of the model I will address here are *quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types* – together providing a framework for assessing the inclusiveness dimension of validity. *Levels* (e.g. physical, emotional, mental and spiritual) and *lines* (rather like Gardner's idea of "multiple intelligences" (1983; 2003) are the two of these six that tend to follow a developmental or transformational pattern. What, then, are the developmental repercussions of non-ordinary *states* on transformation of various *lines* through different *levels*? Also, what are the differential effects on transformation of powerful but time-limited "peek" experiences versus consistent meditation practices over the long-term? Questions such as these would be interesting to pursue.

One deduction derived from the *quadrant* model is that for the results of any change process to persist, they must be anchored in all four quadrants (Lovins & Wilber, 2003). The quadrant addressed the least in this thesis is the Lower Right or exterior-collective, which refers to the institutions and political structures that are often simply called "the system". Yet, the weight of this quadrant is emphasized by several leaders involved in the emerging Integral approach as they attempt to promote broader social change (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Beck & Wilber, 2003a, 2003b; Garrison & Wilber, 2003; Lovins & Wilber, 2003). Historically-speaking, I would argue that counselling psychology has been relatively ignorant of the importance of this quadrant, certainly in comparison to disciplines such as social work which address the social-institutional quadrant directly. Engaging this domain, further development of ITE could incorporate an understanding of large-scale systems change. Facilitators could then use I.T.E. in conjunction with efforts by international aid groups to heal victims of ethnic violence (as one example of many).

Returning briefly to a discussion of lines or multiple intelligences, the foregoing analysis of therapeutic enactment focused on the line of *cognition* in its broadest definition as awareness. That is, as one moves from physical to emotional to mental to spiritual, awareness expands to include first sensations, then emotions, then thoughts, then trans-linguistic cognitions (Wilber, 2000b). However, this developmental line of basic structures of awareness is seen to be *necessary but not sufficient* for development in a host of other crucial lines such as interpersonal and moral (Wilber, 1997). Future research could usefully examine interactions between I.T.E. and development in multiple lines (and, in fact, such research has already begun; Black, 2003).



The category of “horizontal” types (Wilber, 2000b) is seen to include not only those such as Myers-Briggs or the Enneagram (Riso & Hudson, 1999), but also gender considerations and the surface features of ethno-cultural differences. The role of factors pertaining to type is not explored in this thesis; future endeavors could explore how women and men, or introverts and extroverts, or Caucasians and Asians (and so on) experience therapeutic enactment.

The second and closely related guiding question for validity was “*How successfully does the presentation generate a more comprehensive perspective?*” This thesis accomplishes this goal in a number of ways. First, the thesis incorporates a notion of *development* to complement therapeutic enactment’s traditional focus on *healing*. Related to the dialectic of healing and development, this thesis provides a framework for balancing emphases within therapeutic enactment on different dimensions of time. One outcome of this framework elucidating the multi-dimensional nature of time is that it helps organize how therapeutic enactment could be productively linked with therapeutic approaches that target different time dimensions. For example, a recent initiative by Westwood and Borgen at UBC combined therapeutic enactment (past-present focus) and career counselling (present-future focus) for peacekeepers (Westwood, 2002). The explication of time dimensions included in this thesis provides a rationale to support such combination approaches; perhaps there are many more syntheses that could be helpful in generating more comprehensive solutions to problems of human suffering.

This thesis succeeds in generating a more comprehensive approach to therapeutic enactment by including spirituality more explicitly in its model of human change.

Spirituality is a confusing notion because of its multiplicity of meanings. Helping to

clarify, Wilber (2000b) outlines at least five major definitions of spirituality found in the literature. This thesis addresses three major definitions of spirituality, at least to some extent. The first is spirituality as highly meaningful but brief *peak experiences*.

*Spirituality as peak experience* is presented in the self-reflexive introduction as a strong motivator for me in undertaking this project. The second definition of spirituality is as a *level or basic structure* that is fundamentally trans-linguistic. The curative spiral (Figure 4) presents *spirituality as level* in order to encourage therapeutic enactment practitioners to include transformational practices such as meditation. The third definition of spirituality I used is *spirituality as a developmental line* having to do with issues of faith and ultimate meaning. For example, interviewing prospective clients about what things in life mean the most to them would reveal themes having to do with this definition of spirituality. Subsequent research could unpack all five of these definitions (and perhaps add some new ones) in order to assist psychotherapy in including spirituality in a more comprehensive manner.

Finally, I believe this thesis helps generate a more comprehensive perspective by putting forward a credible model for the integration of research methodologies. Integral methodological pluralism (IMP), based on Wilber's innovative work on perspective-dimensions may well prove to represent a landmark advance in epistemology for the human sciences. Part of my hopefulness in this regard is based on the grounding of IMP in a novel form of mathematics that Wilber proposes may transcend-and-include conventional mathematics (Wilber, 2003a). If this proves to be the case, a grounding in mathematics bequeaths IMP and the field of psychology a rigor traditionally reserved for the natural sciences.

The third question proposed early in the paper regarding validity was “*how faithfully & insightfully are any limitations of the paradigm of inquiry acknowledged?*”.

In this regard, a common criticism of the Integral approach by clinicians is that Wilber is not a counsellor himself. Therefore, this line of criticism goes, his paradigm lacks the pragmatic savvy of those formulated by dedicated practitioners. My belief is that until and unless adequate attempts are made to explore and apply implications of the model for practice, this criticism will be difficult to validate one way or the other. The literature on the application of the Integral approach to counselling and psychotherapy is growing but remains small. This thesis attempts to add to that nascent body of work.

The theoretical depth and scope of the Integral approach, along with the confidence with which Wilber asserts his views, invites criticism as to whether Wilber is sufficiently self-reflexive regarding limitations of his model. Wilber argues for the “partial truth” of other systems of knowledge: does he admit the partiality of his own efforts? Evidence gleaned from books and interviews suggests that he does most definitely. For example, Esalen founder Michael Murphy and Wilber agree in a recent interview that they “aspire to be a footnote”, that they hope their ideas are subsumed by further evolution in thought (Murphy & Wilber, 2003). In *Eye of Spirit*, Wilber (1997) notes,

“People shouldn’t take it [my model] too seriously. It’s just orienting generalizations. It leaves all the details to be filled in any way you like ... I hope I’m showing that there is more room in the Kosmos than you might have suspected” (p. xi).

At the same time, Wilber advises others who attempt integrative work that “you can’t honor various methods and fields ... without showing how they fit together. That is how to make a genuine world philosophy” (p. xi). Specifying relationships between multiple perspectives, rather than merely assembling those perspectives, is what defines the Integral approach. Dynamic dialectical awareness attempts not only to collect the dots, but to connect them, albeit in an open-ended fashion (Wilber, 2002a).

### *Next steps*

They say every ending is a new beginning. I want to conclude, then, by proposing a plan for a dissertation that would employ an integral methodological pluralism (IMP) to undertake a process and/or outcome evaluation of an ITE pilot workshop. In personal communication, Dr. Westwood, a key therapeutic enactment developer and nationally-recognized group therapy expert, has indicated his support for this proposal. This program of research would seek to make advances both epistemologically, in a way that could benefit human science researchers from diverse disciplines, and pragmatically, by helping to develop more comprehensive change processes.

In terms of epistemological advance, IMP brings a level of rigor or “objectivity” to interior approaches sometimes seen to be lacking in such. Simultaneously, IMP includes subjectivity and intersubjectivity as equal partners with objectivity in “reality”. In this way, IMP offers a believable resolution to the crisis in psychology in which psychology seems to have no clear paradigm of inquiry (Driver-Linn, 2003). It offers a credible way out of the “science wars” – which are, “in essence, disagreements about what constitutes good science” (2003, p.270) – by putting forward a philosophy of

science arguably more comprehensive than any other currently available. To aid with the epistemological aspect of the dissertation, I will be approaching key Integral Institute members identified as having expertise in this emerging meta-paradigm, Esalen founder Mike Murphy (Murphy & Wilber, 2003) and Institute of Noetic Sciences research director, Marilyn Schlitz (Schlitz & Wilber, 2003a, 2003b).

The research design conceived according to principles of IMP would be applied to an ITE pilot workshop. The suggestions provided in this thesis for modifying the therapeutic enactment process in a way that emphasizes spirituality and development would be carefully reviewed for their viability in application. Integral Institute would be contacted to help locate a qualified, psychologically-minded meditation teacher who also has some familiarity with the Integral approach. Participants would be drawn from either or both of two groups: graduate counselling students who have expressed interest in meditation and transformational work (there are many of these); or, helping professionals interested in ITE as a form of professional development. These groups are deemed most appropriate for an intervention that requires of participants a fairly high level of intellectual sophistication. I hope that participants drawn from these groups will also be especially useful sources of feedback regarding how to improve the process.

Providing appropriate follow-up is a key aspect of the therapeutic enactment process. To assist those who may want to further explore spirituality, a part of the dissertation will involve specifying parameters for and assembling a database of community resources. Because participants have diverse individual and cultural backgrounds, and thus different frameworks for spirituality, a task of a pluralistic psychotherapy is to include these multiple systems. Doing so successfully requires the

development of a significant knowledge base regarding the integration of the wisdom traditions and spiritual practices with conventional psychotherapy. Dr. Susan James is currently engaged in multidisciplinary research whose purpose is to integrate knowledge domains of philosophy, psychotherapy, and wisdom traditions of Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism (James & Prilleltensky, 2002). The candidate is engaged as a research assistant on this project. Key findings will be included along with resources available from Integral Institute in preparing a spiritual community resources database for those participants wanting to explore their spirituality in more depth.

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### Nomenclature

#### **Actual occasion (occasion)**

Borrowed from Whitehead, actual occasion refers to the features, contents, or phenomena that constitute any particular moment in the holarchical unfolding of moment-to-moment existence (Wilber, 2003a, Excerpt A).

#### **Big Three**

Whether conceptualized as art-morals-science, or I-We-It; or subjectivity-intersubjectivity-objectivity, the Big Three (like the quadrant model), orients us to important dimensions of being-in-the-world.

#### **Curative spiral**

A heuristic device to guide an Integral therapy, the curative spiral describes a process of therapy in which regression facilitates healing of the personal, thus laying the foundation for transpersonal development. The curative spiral traces a journey through the basic levels of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

#### **Dynamic dialectical awareness**

Also known as vision-logic, dynamic dialectical awareness refers to the ability to “go within and look at rationality”, which “results in a going beyond rationality” (Wilber, 2000a, p.266). Dynamic dialectical awareness represents a cognitive capacity beyond formal-operational upon which the Integral approach relies.

**Enactment principle**

One of the three major principles guiding the Integral approach, enactment means that “no experience is innocent and pregiven, but rather is brought forth or enacted in part by the activity of the subject doing the experiencing” (Wilber, 2003a, p. 2).

**Enfoldment principle**

One of three major principles guiding the Integral approach, enfoldment refers to a process in which one paradigm includes the essentials of another and then adds further practices, such that the subsequent paradigm includes but goes beyond the former. For example, it is claimed that the Integral approach enfolds pre-modern, modern and post-modern paradigms. This principle is similar to the holarchical nature of time put forward in the thesis, in which the universe of this moment transcends-but-includes the universe of the preceding moment. The image of progressively larger envelopes can be helpful in visualizing enfoldment.

**1<sup>st</sup> person, 2<sup>nd</sup> person, 3<sup>rd</sup> person or I-We-It**

These terms help track the unfolding of primary perspective-dimensions of being-in-the-world. For example, when I take a first person perspective (I), certain phenomena arise; when I take a second person perspective (We; technically, first-person perspective, different experiences are generated, and similarly for third-person (It).

### **Healing and development (dialectic)**

The dialectic of healing and development helps differentiate approaches which seek to restore the (always) relative wholeness of a person at a given point in their life, from those approaches that aim to help the person develop into a greater wholeness. The former are practices of healing; the latter, methods of development. Integral approaches seek to balance and integrate these two categories of practices as best suits the individual and their circumstance (or more precisely, as best accommodates evolutionary pressures in all four quadrants).

### **Holarchy**

Nested hierarchies of holons; e.g. molecule to cell to organism is a holarchy, as is emotion to symbol to concept; each senior holon in a holarchy transcends-but-includes its junior.

### **Holon**

“a whole that is part of other wholes. For example, a whole atom is part of a whole molecule; a whole molecule is part of a whole cell; a whole cell is part of a whole organism, and so on” (Wilber, 2000b). Holons are the fundamental building blocks of the universe.

### **Integral methodological pluralism (IMP)**

IMP refers to a meta-paradigm that allows specific research methodologies to be systematically related to one another. In so doing, IMP opens a door to discovery in

research since it allows phenomena to be “simultracked” in diverse dimensions of being-in-the-world (Wilber, 2003a).

### **Injunctions**

Injunctions are statements that take the general form of, ‘if you want to *know* this, *do* this’. Connecting a practice with its resulting outcome, injunctions are a critical ingredient of any scientific approach. A simple example of an injunction would be “if you want to see the moons of Jupiter, look through a telescope” (Wilber, 1997).

### **Integral approach**

Wilber introduces the term Integral *approach* in *Kosmic Karma and Creativity*, Excerpt B, in order to emphasize that Integral refers not simply to a particular worldview or theory, but instead to a set of social practices or epistemologies that in turn bring forth data/phenomena. Around these new data then grow new theories or worldviews. Thus, thinking of Integral as a theory or worldview overlooks its grounding in specific practices.

### **Integrally-informed versus Integral**

Introduced in *Kosmic Karma and Creativity*, this distinction helps distinguish practitioner from practice. That is, an integrally-informed practitioner operates within the worldspace enacted by dynamic dialectical awareness and has some familiarity with the orienting generalizations of the Integral approach as applied to his or her particular field. Integral



refers to the components of the practice itself, which may be less or more comprehensive. Both goals are worthwhile.

### **Kosmic habit**

Kosmos is similar to the term cosmos, except that Kosmos not only includes exterior domains of matter and energy, but also interior domains of consciousness. The term Kosmic habit refers to a post-metaphysical conception of structure. That is, rather than seeing structures as metaphysical, *a priori* givens to which subsequent developments must conform, a post-metaphysical conception reconstructs structures in an *a posteriori* fashion as *patterns of nature's unfolding*. Kosmic habits, then, take the form of probability waves for finding certain phenomena at certain locations in spacetime. These patterns are never immutable; there is always an element of creativity or transcendence available in each moment. However, the older the Kosmic habit and the deeper the groove worn into the fabric of the Kosmos, the more stable and resistant to change is that "structure". See Kosmic Karma & Creativity, Excerpt A, for in depth discussion of Kosmic habits (Wilber, 2003a).

### **Levels/basic structures**

Qualitatively distinct levels of organization, arranged in a nested hierarchy. The basic structures/levels refer to those of awareness, or "cognition" in the broadest sense of that word. These basic structures correspond to those of the traditional Great Nest of Being, which stretches from physical to emotional to mental to spiritual (Wilber, 2000b).

**Nondual**

Nondual or nondual awareness refers to that which simultaneously transcends and embraces or includes all Form. In a similarly paradoxical way, nondual awareness represents a developmental pinnacle and while being ever-present in ordinary awareness. Note that Nondual awareness is radically post-conceptual, and thus the meaning of it just imparted is inadequate.

**Nonexclusion principle**

As one of three major principles guiding the Integral approach, nonexclusion means that “the experiences brought forth by one paradigm cannot legitimately be used to criticize, negate, or exclude the experiences brought forth by other paradigms” (Wilber, 2003a, p.2). In other words, nonexclusion implies that “everybody is right” but only *within* the limits of the particular paradigm being employed. The Integral challenge is to find and elucidate the boundaries (boundaries are interfaces that both connect and separate) of each paradigm.

**Orienting generalizations**

One of the outcomes of an Integral practice in scholarship, orienting generalizations are statements about a given paradigm or field of study that are pitched at a level of abstraction that allows for different paradigms to be systematically coordinated or brought into agreement (Wilber, 1997).

### **Perspective-dimensions**

Along with holons (sentient beings), perspective-dimensions are the “stuff” of the cosmos. Ontologically prior even to perception or awareness, the concept of perspective-dimensions, or more simply, perspectives, intuitively understands the simultaneous arising of the major dimensions of being-in-the-world. This understanding moves us from metaphysics to post-metaphysics, helping bring to fruition the project begun by postmodernity. The concept of perspectives overcomes the subtle monological bias of models built on “subjects perceiving objects” by weaving intersubjectivity into the very fabric of our systems of interpretation. Subjectivity, objectivity and intersubjectivity are thus seen as mutually arising dimensions of being-in-the-world. (see *Kosmic Karma and Creativity*, Excerpt D, for further discussion of this radical, difficult but potentially (r)evolutionary concept).

### **Post-metaphysical**

Post-metaphysical describes approaches that do not rely on *pre-existing ontological structures* in order to account for experience or reality. That is, in post-metaphysical approaches, epistemology and ontology are intertwined.

### **Quadrant model**

Four general classes of holarchies, representing the interior and the exterior of the individual and the collective. The quadrant model is a useful tool for orienting ourselves to various aspects of being-in-the-world.

**Romantic view (versus Integral view)**

The Romantic view suggests that human beings begin life in a state of unconscious union with the divine. As they grow up, they become more conscious but somehow lose this connection with the Ground of Being. The goal of therapy or spiritual practice, then, is to regain connection with the divine in a more conscious fashion.

Against the Romantic view, the Integral view puts forward a combination of evolutionary and nondual understandings. The nondual understanding is that at no point can connection with the divine be lost; rather, Spirit is always already present as the Witness of all experience (while also being immanent to that experience). The evolutionary understanding suggests that human life follows a general pattern of development towards increasingly complex and inclusive forms that more fully embody the divine. Thus, as individuals are born and mature, they have the opportunity to become increasingly (but never fully) adequate to the divine, while at no point being separate from it.

**Simultracking**

Simultracking refers to a specific way of applying the meta-paradigm of integral methodological pluralism. Specifically, simultracking refers to the attempt to simultaneously track the unfolding of phenomena within more than one quadrant by enacting more than one paradigm of research (see Wilber, 2003a).

### **Transcend-and-include**

Transcend-and-include refers to the nature of the process of unfolding in moment to moment existence (microgenetically) and in individual and socio-cultural evolution (macrogenetically). Each moment includes all that has preceded it while adding an element of creativity. Likewise, as individual capacities or collective worldviews develop, they tend to include their predecessors while simultaneously introducing novel Ingredients.

### **Witness**

The self that orients and integrates consciousness in the causal domain. Just as important, this Self is responsible for the overall integration of all the other selves ... it is the Self that shines through the proximate self at any stage and in any domain ..." (Wilber, 2000b, p.127). More simply, the Witness can be described as pure formless awareness (Wilber, 2000a p.332).

### Appendix A: The Witness Exercise

Note: This exercise is read by the facilitator as a guided meditation. Warm-up to the exercise consists of a brief stretching exercise to relax the body, a few minutes of concentration on the breath to develop concentration, and then the following awareness-expanding exercise.

The witnessing of awareness can persist through waking, dreaming and deep sleep. The Witness is fully available in any state, including your own present state of awareness right now. So I'm going to talk you into this state, or try to, using what are known in Buddhism as "pointing out instructions." I am not going to try to get you into a different state of consciousness, or an altered state of consciousness, or a non-ordinary state. I am going to simply point out something that is already occurring in your own present, ordinary, natural state.

So let's start by just being aware of the world around us. Look out there at the sky, and just relax your mind; let your mind and the sky mingle. Notice the clouds floating by. Notice that this takes no effort on your part. Your present awareness, in which these clouds are floating, is very simple, very easy, effortless, spontaneous. You simply notice that there is an effortless awareness of the clouds. The same is true of those trees, and those birds, and those rocks. You simply and effortlessly witness them.

Look now at the sensations in your own body. You can be aware of whatever bodily feelings are present—perhaps pressure where you are sitting, perhaps warmth in your tummy, maybe tightness in your neck. But even if these feelings are tight and tense, you can easily be aware of them. These feelings arise in your present awareness, and that awareness is very simple, easy, effortless, spontaneous. You simply and effortlessly witness them.

Look at the thoughts arising in your mind. You might notice various images, symbols, concepts, desires, hopes and fears, all spontaneously arising in your awareness. They arise, stay a bit, and pass. These thoughts and feelings arise in your present awareness, and that awareness is very simple, effortless, spontaneous. You simply and effortlessly witness them.

So notice: you can see the clouds float by because you are not those clouds—you are the witness of those clouds. You can feel bodily feelings because you are not those feelings—you are the witness of those feelings. You can see thoughts float by because you are not those thoughts—you are the witness of those thoughts. Spontaneously and naturally, these things all arise, on their own, in your present, effortless awareness.

So who are you? You are not objects out there, you are not feelings, you are not thoughts—you are effortlessly aware of all those, so you are not those. Who or what are you?

Say it this way to yourself: I have feelings; but I am not those feelings. Who am I? I have thoughts, but I am not those thoughts. Who am I? I have desires, but I am not those desires. Who am I?

So you push back into the source of your own awareness. You push back into the Witness, and you rest in the Witness. I am not objects, not feelings, not desires, not thoughts.

But then people usually make a big mistake. They think that if they rest in the Witness, they are going to see something or feel something-something really neat and special. But you won't see anything. If you see something, that is just another object-another feeling, another thought, another sensation, another image. But those are all objects; those are what you are not.

No, as you rest in the Witness-realizing, I am not objects, I am not feelings, I am not thoughts-all you will notice is a sense of freedom, a sense of liberation, a sense of release-release from the terrible constriction of identifying with these puny little finite objects, your little body and little mind and little ego, all of which are objects that can be seen, and thus are not the true Seer, the real Self, the pure Witness, which is what you really are.

So you won't see anything in particular. Whatever is arising is fine. Clouds float by in the sky, feelings float by in the body, thoughts float by in the mind-and you can effortlessly witness all of them. They all spontaneously arise in your own present, easy, effortless awareness. And this witnessing awareness is not itself anything specific you can see. It is just a vast, background sense of freedom-or pure emptiness-and in that pure emptiness, which you are, the entire manifest world arises. You are that freedom, openness, emptiness-and not any itty bitty thing that arises in it.

Resting in that empty, free, easy, effortless witnessing, notice that the clouds are arising in the vast space of your awareness. The clouds are arising within you-so much so, you can taste the clouds, you are one with the clouds. It is as if they are on this side of your skin, they are so close. The sky and your awareness have become one, and all things in the sky are floating effortlessly through your own awareness. You can kiss the sun, swallow the mountain, they are that close. Zen says "Swallow the Pacific Ocean in a single gulp," and that's the easiest thing in the world, when inside and outside are no longer two, when subject and object are nondual, when the looker and looked at are One Taste. You see?

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Endnote: After it has been read out loud slowly, the facilitator instructs participants to continue to allow their awareness to be expansive and deep, without making any particular effort. This can be sustained for another few minutes.

Appendix B: Eating as a Meditation (Young, 1998)

**Eating as a Meditation:  
Working Through Compulsion and Elevating Satisfaction**

by Shinzen Young

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Each time you take a bite, taste sensations spread over the palate, tongue, cheeks and throat and smell spreads into your nose. If the tastes are pleasant, it will cause a rippling of pleasant sensation throughout your body. An analogy may be helpful. When a pebble is tossed into a pond, it causes a splash where it lands and from that splash ripples spread through the whole pond. The morsel of food is like the pebble; your body is like the pond. The explosion of tastes in your mouth is the splash and the associated reaction of your whole body is the rippling. This global reaction may be subtle but remember, when it comes to working with feeling, "subtle is significant." If you can detect the ripples and let them come and go without clenching you will greatly deepen your sense of satisfaction.

Eating meditation is an example of spiritual purification through experiencing pleasure with mindfulness and equanimity. Through it your baseline of fulfillment in daily life can be permanently elevated. Since it involves a tangible pleasant object of concentration, it makes a good compliment to sitting meditation where unpleasant sensations are sometimes present.

Of course, sometimes unpleasant sensations may arise during eating. For example, if you eat something that you dislike, waves of tension, aversion and cringing may spread through the body. Although it is not necessary to seek such an unpleasant experience, it is helpful to remember that by bringing mindfulness and equanimity to those sensations, deep psychological blockages such as separation, fear and alienation are being broken up.

Eating slowly and mindfully may also cause one to become impatient and driven to gobble. If this should happen be happy! It represents a significant opportunity to work through the drivenness and achieve more ease in daily life.

If during the eating process you feel impatient and driven, try to detect this in terms of tangible "driver sensations" throughout your body. What is true of the ripples of pleasant sensation that bring



satisfaction is also true of the tensions and pressures that produce drivenness: they may be subtle and cover much or all of your body.

Observe them with precision and acceptance. In this way drivenness, not only around eating, but in all aspects of your life, will get worked through. Life becomes lighter and easier. Your actions become dynamic and zestful, arising from a fundamental inner peace, as opposed to being driven by subliminal suffering.

When approaching eating as a form of meditation it is useful to pay attention to your posture. Try to keep your spine straight while at the same time allowing the whole body to "settle in." Rather than "meditating while eating", try to get the sense that you are in a deep meditation sit during which you just happen to be eating.

Eating slowly will help you focus and also perhaps bring up driver sensations. In order to deepen your state, you may want to occasionally pause, put down your utensils and close your eyes for a period of time. After you have completed your meal, it is instructive to sit for a while and savor the delicate vibrations of satisfaction that suffuse your body after pleasant experiences. In daily life we seldom have an opportunity to contact this significant phenomenon.

You may find that a rhythm develops as you eat. You are aware of the tactile sensations in your hand and arm as you reach for the food, then the flavor qualities and texture sensations in different parts of your mouth and the smells going up to your nose, then your whole body reacting to the tastes and smells and finally the gradual subsiding of taste, smell and body reaction. Then the cycle begins again. Drivenness and impatience may arise just before a bite, or as the flavor and pleasure subsides after a bite, or throughout the whole process. Try to "love your impatience to death" by patiently observing it.

Two sources of distraction during eating meditation are thinking and preoccupation with what's happening around you. Remember: your defined object of meditation is taste, smell and body sensations. As soon as you feel the tug outward into the sights and sounds around you, gently return to taste, smell and body sensations. As soon as you feel the tug inward to planning, judging, fantasizing and memory...lovingly return to taste, smell and body sensations.

If you are willing to put in some effort, you can enter a kind of slow motion, "eternal present" while eating. The simplest fare then becomes a celestial samadhi!