

The Myth of the Given Lives On....

Here, in no particular order, are some approaches (premodern and modern) that could benefit from a constructive postmodern turn. These are approaches that have some truly wonderful contributions to make, but they are clearly devoid of any extensive understanding or incorporation of the postmodern revolution that replaced perception with perspective, the myth of the given with intersubjectivity, and the representational paradigm with the constructivist/genealogical paradigm. The following approaches are simply representative examples of those that are embedded in the myth of the given and the illusions it generates. And the tragedy, as I will repeat several times, is that this is so easily remedied.

Let me preface this with an example of why I think this is so important, particularly for any variety of spiritual studies.

THE TWO CULTURES

The intellectuals and knowledge workers in the West are still divided into what C.P. Snow, some five decades ago, called *The Two Cultures*—namely, the sciences and the humanities. (Notice immediately that the 2 cultures are the Left-Hand world of the humanities and the Right-Hand world of the natural sciences.) The fact that they won't speak to each other is bad enough, but spiritual studies have today been rejected by both. Even what might be considered extremely sophisticated, rational, non-mythic, experiential, elaborate systems of spiritual thinking and practice—for example, Buddhist phenomenology, Vedantin philosophy, Kabbalistic hermeneutics—are simply not taken seriously by the main streams of higher education and learning.

It is common to say that the reason that something as profound as Buddhist phenomenology has been rejected by the intelligentsia is that a materialistic type of science or scientism—which completely rejects introspection, awareness, interiority, etc.—has caused this “taboo of subjectivity,” as Allan Wallace put it in his wonderful book by that title. The idea is that scientific materialism is so powerful and dominant in higher thinking that it has all but demolished the chances of sophisticated spiritual studies being taken seriously anywhere. The humanities therefore won't go near spiritual studies, either. Nasty materialistic science (and especially, gulp, Newtonian-Cartesian science) killed nice spiritual studies.

But that's not the reason; it's not really even close. Science did not kill spirituality; the humanities themselves did. The problem is that the humanities rejected introspection, interiority, and subjectivity, and rejected them with an aggression and thoroughness that didn't even give scientific materialism a chance to get its hands on them. (Oh, it would reject them, too, it just never had a chance.) The

fact is that both of *The Two Cultures* told spirituality (and interiority and subjectivity) to get lost. During a period stretching roughly over the last half of the 20th century (1950-2000), not just science but also the humanities rejected interiority. If we can understand why that happened, we will be right at the very heart of the problem of spirituality in the modern and postmodern world.

No surprise that science rejected spirituality, but why on earth did the humanities themselves aggressively reject spirituality, introspection, consciousness, and subjectivity? Dilthey summed it up: “Not through introspection but only through history do we come to know ourselves.” The subject of awareness generally imagines that it can simply introspect its own awareness and come to know and understand itself, and yet the newly forming geist-sciences (from genealogy to linguistics) were making it quite clear that this was not the case at all. Subjectivity, they concluded, is completely ignorant of the fact that virtually everything that shows up in its awareness is the product of vast intersubjective networks that cannot themselves be seen. These networks, in part the products of history, as Dilthey's quote indicates, are vast cultural backgrounds that actually create the spaces in which subjectivity and consciousness can even operate, and subjectivity remains blissfully ignorant of these formative networks, as it introspects its time away, imagining that it knows itself. As such, it is caught in an elaborate network of lies and self-deceptions,

Here's a simple example, using Spiral Dynamics. Spiral Dynamics is itself an unremarkable remnant of the early, pioneering, developmental structuralists, and works well in this regard, because it was exactly these kinds of discoveries that, at the turn of the twentieth century, began to usher in the postmodern revolution, which flowered in the period we are discussing (1950-2000).

Once you learn any developmental scheme, such as SD, a peculiar fact starts to become apparent. You can be listening to somebody who is coming from, say, the **multiplistic level** (orange altitude), and it is obvious that this person is not thinking of these ideas himself; almost everything he says is completely predictable. He never studied Clare Graves or any other developmentalist, and yet there it is, predictable value after predictable value. He has no idea that he is the mouthpiece of this structure, a structure he doesn't even know is there. It almost seems as if it is not he who is speaking, but **the orange structure itself that is speaking through him**—this vast intersubjective network is speaking through him.

Worse, he can introspect all he wants, and yet he still won't realize this. He is simply a mouthpiece for a structure that is speaking through him. He thinks he is original; he thinks he controls the contents of his thoughts; he thinks he can introspect and understand himself; he thinks he has free will—and yet he's just a mouthpiece. He is not speaking, he is being spoken.

The same is true for dozens of other aspects of subjectivity and awareness: they are the products of impersonal structures and intersubjective networks, and worse, structures and networks that cannot themselves be seen by subjectivity or awareness (not directly, anyway). By mid-century, an enormous understanding of these impersonal structures and intersubjective networks had been gained, particularly in linguistics, grammar, syntax, structures of consciousness, and developmental *a priori* structures. And they all pointed to one thing: the subject of awareness is the product of intersubjective networks about which it suspects little, knows less.

Thus the stage was set for the Great Left-Hand War between modernism and postmodernism in the humanities. Here is what had happened. We have *The Two Cultures*: the Left-Hand culture of the humanities and the Right-Hand culture of the natural sciences. The perpetual battle in the RH world is and always has been between some form of atomism and some form of systems thinking; and the atomists usually win, although never decisively. But both of them are, and have been, physicalistic or materialistic. Ever since Democritus, there have been incredibly intelligent men and women who think that frisky dirt alone is real. Whether that dirt is systems dirt or Newtonian dirt had absolutely nothing to do with anything that is significant in this story.

The real action was shaping up in the interior or Left-Hand culture, because it had already begun to divide into the two dominant camps that would come to define the humanities in the second half of the twentieth century. The winner of this Great LH War would control the 2nd culture, that of the humanities, for the foreseeable future.

THE GREAT LH WAR: THE SUBJECTIVISTS VS. THE INTERSUBJECTIVISTS

The first camp was the Subjectivists; the second camp, the Intersubjectivists. The **Subjectivists** included all those approaches to the humanities that did indeed rely on introspection, subjectivity, consciousness, awareness, and interiority. The most famous, and certainly the most central in the coming war, was *phenomenology*, and the most brilliant advocate of that was Edmund Husserl.

The second camp was the **Intersubjectivists**. Whatever their differences, they were united in an understanding that by the time consciousness delivers an object to awareness, said consciousness has been molded, shaped, created, and constructed by a vast network of impersonal systems and structures, foremost among which are linguistic systems, cultural backgrounds, and structures of consciousness. None of these can be seen by consciousness itself; none of these can be seen by subjectivity; and thus *subjectivity is exactly what has to be called into question*—and, in the final analysis, deconstructed. The phenomena that awareness delivers are not

what they claim they are, but rather are the results or products of subterranean constructions of vast intersubjective drivers. Thus, it is not by subjective introspection, but by understanding these intersubjective structures, that we come to know ourselves.

We saw that an individual can introspect all day long and he will never see anything that says, “This is the orange structure,” or “This is the green structure, or turquoise structure,” and so on. The phenomena that show up in his awareness are already created by structures that he cannot see and does not even expect; yet the phenomena present themselves as if they are real in and of themselves—as if they are actually your thoughts, your desires, your values—when clearly they are not, and thus *the very objects of your own present awareness are deeply deceptive*. Phenomenology, relying on introspection, does not know this, and thus phenomenology, taken in and by itself, is the study of those lies mistaken as truths.

The Intersubjectivists were united on those basic points. There were several subcamps, but the most important included *semiotics* (Ferdinand de Saussure), the study of *cultural backgrounds* (Heidegger), the early *structuralists* (Romaine Jakobson, Levi-Strauss), developmental structuralists (James Mark Baldwin), and the titular godfather of the lies that consciousness delivers, and the necessity of *genealogy* to spot them, Frederich Nietzsche.

In other words, in the Great War of the interior or Left-Hand cultures, the Subjectivists were the humanities who relied on the *inside* of interior holons—zone #1 for the individual and zone #3 for the collective—and the Intersubjectivists were those who relied on the *outside* of interior holons—zone #2 for the individual and zone #4 for the collective. (See fig. 1.3)

Of pivotal interest in this great and coming war was a young, brilliant, alienated French intellectual, Michel Foucault. By the middle of the century, it was clear that whichever way somebody like Foucault went, so would go the world of the Left-Hand culture.

Foucault does not go after science or scientific materialism; to anybody in the know, that's just not interesting, because scientific materialism is simply doing what it always does; and besides, science per se is fine. Foucault does not go after science; he goes after Husserl.

It is Husserl who infuriates Foucault; as does Jean-Paul Sartre, because both of them are champions of introspection, of the belief that consciousness does not inherently lie, that consciousness delivers truth to my awareness. Phenomenology, existentialism, humanism (all the major Subjectivist camps)—these are the things that Foucault goes after, with a vengeance. He particularly tears into humanities dressed up like sciences, as if their lies could be combined with reductionism and have

anything other than a disastrous result.

It is not beside the point that Foucault is gay, before a time when being gay was anything other than deeply alienating and socially condemned. Because, the Intersubjectivists would increasingly come to believe, numerous forms of social oppression are actually hiding out in these vast systems of intersubjective structures, and if you can't even see these structures, how can you work to overcome them? Being gay, every alarm bell went off when Foucault would read accounts of phenomenology, which purported to give "the true essences" and "unchanging meaning" of a thing, simply by turning it around in your mind. But what if the damage had already occurred before the phenomena ever made it to consciousness? Foucault's homosexuality was claimed to be a sickness, and about this alleged sickness, not only did phenomenology and existentialism have no objections, it had no tools to even spot that this was oppression. In terms of his that would soon become famous and influential worldwide, Foucault found that his own discourse was being marginalized—and the results were one form of brutality or another, parading as "the way things are." (The list of the types of marginalizing forces controlling dominant modes of discourse grew enormously: androcentrism, speciesism, sexism, racism, ageism—as soon became obvious, if the subjective is intersubjective, then the personal is the political.)

As the Great LH War progressed, it was becoming clear that phenomenology, existentialism, and humanism could not even handle fundamental items like language and linguistic meaning. Foucault would often comment on this. "So the problem of language appeared and it was clear that phenomenology was no match for structural analysis in accounting for the effects of meaning that could be produced by a structure of the linguistic type. And quite naturally, with the phenomenological spouse finding herself disqualified by her inability to address language, structuralism became the new bride."

Foucault is referring to the fact that a word has meaning only because of its context (e.g., "bark of a dog" and "bark of a tree"—the word "bark" has meaning only because of the other words around it); and those words have meaning only because of other words, and eventually the entire network or system of signs must be studied in order to understand the meaning of any given sign or object or phenomenon in my awareness. The Subjectivists studied the individual phenomena that arose and tried to derive meaning that way; the Intersubjectivists studied the vast *systems* and *networks* of phenomena wherein, it soon became clear, the actual meaning could be found. It was obvious, as Foucault says, that phenomenology was simply no match for structuralism. The subject is not creating meaning (any more than somebody at orange is really thinking up his own values), but rather vast systems and intersubjective networks create meaning. The subject was kaput.

Hence, catch phrases such as "**The death of the subject**" and "**What comes after the subject?**" began to summarize some of the essential differences of the two camps. The Subjectivists were in every way **modernists**; they believed in introspection, in empiricism, in subjectivity—everything that would come to be known, derisively, by phrases such as the myth of the given, the philosophy of consciousness, the philosophy of the subject, the reflection paradigm, and the monological mirror of nature.

The Intersubjectivists were becoming the **postmodernists**, first in the hands of structuralism, semiotics, and linguistics; and then post-structuralism, neo-structuralism, deconstruction, grammatology, genealogy.

But one thing was clear: however you looked at it, the fact remained that vast networks of intersubjective systems—from linguistic structures to Graves values systems—are governing one's awareness and consciousness. You can introspect and meditate all you want, and you won't see them—and they won't go away. We even know now that you can have profound and repeated satoris—and still be at red, or amber, or orange, or green—and *these structures will keep speaking through you*, and you will keep dancing to the strings they are pulling. And you will keep thinking you are free....

THE WINNER OF THE GREAT LH WAR

Paris, May, 1968, the war reached a decisive turning point: the Subjectivists took a massive beating, and would never fundamentally recover (unless and until the Integral Age rehabilitated and incorporated their incredibly important partial truths). Gone from any serious discourse in academia were humanism, existentialism, phenomenology, subjectivity, consciousness. Into academia, triumphantly, came the Intersubjectivists—post-structuralism, postmodernism, semiology, grammatology, archaeology, genealogy.

By 1979, Derrida was the most-often-quoted writer in all of the humanities in American universities. The Great War was over, the Intersubjectivists were triumphant, and it was the Intersubjectivists who categorically, thoroughly, and absolutely rejected any spirituality, introspective meditation, contemplative consciousness, subjectivity and interiority. The simplest reason is that all of those are caught in the myth of the given.

¹ Except as linguistic games, Wittgensteinian or otherwise, which themselves lack any real depth or interiority. In postmodernity, including postmodern academia, you are allowed to play all the spiritual games you want, as long as they aren't spiritual. Postmodernism is awash in superficialities and performative contradictions of that variety, but that isn't serious spirituality, although there are openings there, as elsewhere.

BOTH MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM REJECTED SPIRITUALITY

We have seen that of Snow's *Two Cultures*, one of them is the Left-Hand culture of the humanities, the other is the Right-Hand culture of the natural sciences.

We also saw that it's not just that these 2 cultures are at war with each other. Both of them have their own internal wars. The major war in the Right-Hand world of science has always been between the atomists and the systems approaches. In the Left-Hand world, the great and absolutely pivotal war of the last century was between the modern Subjectivists (zones #1 and #3) and the postmodern Intersubjectivists (zones #2 and #4).

(You would think that the idea would be to integrate all 4 major camps, which indeed it is, a fact that did not really start to come to light until the closing decades of the 20th century and the dawn of the Integral Age. But for that to happen, the truths of all 4 of these approaches must first be appreciated and incorporated, and, so far, we are a long way from that on all sides, as witness the books in this appendix.)

Here is the point. The books in this appendix are representative of incredibly sophisticated spiritual approaches, and yet none of them have yet come to terms with the important truths of the postmodern Intersubjectivists. And this, more than anything, is what has crippled meditation, contemplation, and spiritual studies in the humanities. It is not science or scientific materialism that has done this, because that was never the issue to begin with. The Great War was within the humanities, and here the spiritual writers and virtually all of **the "new paradigm"** writers completely misdiagnosed the situation, with disastrous consequences.

From Capra to Chopra, the spiritualists felt that if they could show that *mysticism had modern scientific support*, this would help get a spiritual worldview accepted in the humanities. This was EXACTLY THE WRONG MOVE in every way. The enemy was never science, which won't listen anyway. The enemy was the Intersubjectivists. And by showing, or trying to show, that spirituality could be grounded in quantum physics, or dynamical systems theory, or chaos theory, or autopoiesis, this played right into the hands of the Intersubjectivists.

The reason is that the postmodern Intersubjectivists were attacking the entire sweep of modernity, which certainly included modern science, but also the modern approaches to the interior domains—they were attacking, we have seen, things like phenomenology, monological methodology, and the myth of the given. And modern science—from quantum physics to systems theory—is likewise a victim to those same problems, starting with the myth of the given. Trying to show that meditation,

Buddhism, spirituality, and the new paradigm were all grounded in the "new sciences," is EXACTLY what the Intersubjectivists suspected all along—namely, that contemplative spirituality is merely a monological approach caught in the myth of the given. Which indeed it is. But by having somebody actually spell it out, by seeing endless claims like *The Tao of Physics*, the Intersubjectivists were even more easily able to thoroughly reject monological Taoism along with the monological physics. Which they did.

What had happened, after the Great LH War, is that the 2 cultures had shifted. There are still the sciences and the humanities, but for the winner on the humanities side of the street—namely, the postmodern Intersubjectivists—all of the modern humanities (phenomenology, existentialism, and introspection) are viewed as being all of a piece with the modern sciences (from systems theory to chaos and complexity theory), because what all of them do indeed have in common is **the myth of the given**, the **philosophy of the subject**, and a deeply **monological methodology**. In those very specific areas, the Subjectivists and the scientific materialists were all of a methodological piece.

Which is indeed the case. And because the Subjectivists (from spiritual studies to Buddhism to new paradigm to meditation to contemplative studies) are all approaches that have failed miserably to come to terms with the Intersubjectivists, and because the Intersubjectivists rule the 2nd culture of the humanities, then all of spiritual studies have been dismissed from any serious academic study. Rejected by modern science because they are interior, and rejected by postmodern humanities because in many ways they share a monological methodology with science, spiritual studies are more or less dead in Western academic culture.

The following books are those that inadvertently have helped with this death, by giving no indication that they understand or are even aware of this Great War that has been fought, and won, by the Intersubjectivists. These books think that the big battle was between, say, William James and scientific materialism, when, in fact, *both of those were on the same side in this war*. The fact that these books can't even tell you why that is the case shows just how desperately ignorant the "new paradigm" and "new mysticism" books are, bless them.

² As anything other than linguistic games or archaeology specimens.

A FEW BOOKS, AT RANDOM

Leadership and the New Science, Margaret Wheatley. Application of (monological) complexity systems theory to business. Chaos and complexity systems theory is “the new science”—it’s fairly new, for sure, but it’s still monological to the core. Extending monological systems is still monological, just a lot more of it. This is what is so easily missed: using systems theory, because it seems inclusive or holistic, only gets half the necessary story, at best—it expands our models to cover all of the Right-Hand world, but does not expand the models to incorporate insights from the Left-Hand world. This is why relying on systems theory is subtle reductionism—a fact that confuses systems theorists no end.

The same mistake is being made when organizations such as the Shambhala Institute take this expanded systems approach and equate it with the Dharmakaya (or nondual Spirit), just because it is expanded—but so is the myth of the given expanded in this approach. And teaching expanded myths is not generally thought to constitute enlightenment.

Homeland Earth, Edgar Morin. Morin is a wonderful writer in so many ways, but misses the essential integral message; Morin attempts a teal/turquoise “unitas multiplex” in methodology, but he is basically a modernist attempting green inclusivity. *Le Method*, his opus,

was developed before the postmodern revolution and is essentially an extension of monological scientific methodology in a meta fashion into new, more inclusive (and still monological) areas. In other words, a genuine understanding of intersubjectivity is missing almost entirely in his work. He also fails to grasp the injunctive nature of 1⁻, 2⁻, and 3⁻-person knowledge, and so his “integral” thought is really just a **3-p x 1-p x 3-p**, at most. (For just that reason, Morin is a favorite of 415-paradigm theorists.) Thus, he will expansively and passionately maintain that you need to include things like art and morals and science, or the good, the true, and the beautiful—which is absolutely wonderful—but then utterly miss the nature of the injunctions necessary to bring forth those domains, without which you have a horrifically imperialistic, subtle reductionism. As noted earlier, he is basically a **3-p(1-p + 2-p + 3-p)**—that is, he includes items like art and morals, but only in a 3-p or meta-monological embrace, not incorporating *their own actual injunctions* into his unitas. This is indeed imperialistic subtle reductionism.

--The Inner Journey Home, A.H. Almaas. Hameed is the finest metapsychologist writing today. I’m a big fan and love his work. But it could be improved so easily by a finer awareness of postmodern currents. The remnants of his reliance on archetypes, metaphysics, essence, aspects, and Husserlian

phenomenology—all of which are monological and laced with the myth of the given, even if a transpersonal given—can easily be jettisoned without affecting his work in the least.

--Loving What Is, Byron Katie. I include this book because it is a good example of a wonderful new set of techniques for spiritual intelligence and glimpsing causal emptiness, but in not understanding (and therefore implicitly accepting) the myth of the given, “the Work” allows postmodernists to completely dismiss it, which is a shame—they could use a little of her work, not to mention Hameed’s and the rest of the authors critiqued here.

--The Web of Life, Fritjof Capra. Capra believes that the world’s basic problem is that it doesn’t understand dynamical systems and complexity theory. (If only Saddam Hussein could have learned dynamical complexity theory, instead of spending so much of his time studying the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm, how different the world could have been.) But the world’s major interior problem is that 70% of its population is ethnocentric or lower, and isn’t even up to the level where it *could* embrace the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm. And then by the time that about 10% of the world’s population makes it to green, where it can begin to understand complexity theory, Capra would like that 10% to embrace monological systems theory, entirely devoid of the interior quadrants (on their own terms), and especially devoid of zones #2 and #4, which cannot be seen with his scientific methodologies. This is classic flatland subtle reductionism, extending the myth of the given into more territories, thus extending falsehoods into new and larger areas.

--Power Vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior, David R. Hawkins. Terrifically interesting ideas, but caught in subtle reductionism and the myth of the given. All the “hidden determinants” he mentions in the subtitle are monological instead of tetra-logical.

--The Varieties of Religious Experience, William James. I mention this as an example of the typically good news/bad news nature of the books in this appendix: the good news is that it extends research and inquiry into transpersonal, religious, and spiritual experiences, which previously were largely dismissed by academia; the bad news is that the methodology by which it does so is monological empiricism (and monological phenomenology)—it extends the crippled philosophy of consciousness into new and expanded areas.

James was a genius and a pioneer in so many ways, and the fact that he took states of consciousness as seriously as he did was extraordinary; but monological is monological, and in that instance he merely extended the imperialism of the philosophy of the subject. Fortunately, James’s sheer genius pushes him beyond his own self-imposed limitations. His empiricism is always open to hermeneutics, the representational paradigm is supplemented with

Peircean pragmatics, and—above all—his is a soul in which Truth and Goodness and Beauty are still a holy and unbreakable trinity.

But radical empiricism is still empiricism. That is, radical empiricism is radical monologicalism. Stages in zone #2 and the constitutive nature of zone #4 are alien to him. Had he availed himself of more of the work of his contemporary James Mark Baldwin, how different it all might have been. This imperialistic empiricism is the worm in the core of this otherwise extraordinary work.

--The Varieties of Meditative Experience, Daniel Goleman. This is a superb book in so many ways. The title is deliberately modeled on William James's extraordinary work. But what is hard for many people to understand is that meditation is monological awareness, trained and extended. If nondual reality is the union of Emptiness and Form, meditation gets the Emptiness right but not the Form. It gets Emptiness right because there are no parts to get wrong; but it misses the nature of Form, at least in part, because meditative awareness (or the philosophy of consciousness) simply cannot see zones #2 and #4. So meditation can help you get freely Free but not fully Full. It realizes Freedom/Emptiness, but not Fullness/Form (it doesn't get tetra-Full). This is why meditative/contemplative practices both East and West include neither structural-stages nor the LL perspective, which cripples their inclusivity and leaves them open to virulent attacks by postmodernists, alas. (As we saw, it is Husserl that Foucault goes after....)

Another way to put this is that meditation is the philosophy of consciousness extended from personal into transpersonal realms, carrying its inadequacies and illusions with it. Meditation is still hobbled by the myth of the given because it is still monological; it still assumes that what I see in meditation or contemplative prayer is actually real, instead of partially constructed via cultural backgrounds (syntactic and semantic). How many Christian contemplatives, when they are meditating and see "interior deities," see them with 10,000 arms (a common form of Avalokitesvara in the East)? The point is that even higher, transpersonal, spiritual realities are partially molded and constructed by vast networks of always implicit cultural backgrounds. Meditative and contemplative realities are never simply given, but rather, are constructed or "tetra-structured" (in this case, esp. by zone #4), something that *meditation will never tell you and can never tell you*. As we have seen, zones #2 and

³ See again Daniel P. Brown as discussed in ch. 3. Meditators think that they actually ARE SEEING dharmas, but they aren't. As the study makes so obvious, what different meditators with different cultural backgrounds and frameworks see are co-constructions of the interpretations they use. Awareness and meditation per se are simply perpetuating the myth of the given and the illusions it generates. Monological meditation and contemplation share that with monological science, which is why the Postmodernists lump all of them together in this one decisive regard.

#4 cannot be seen by introspecting the mind. Meditation is the extension of the myth of the given into higher realities, thus ensuring that you never escape its deep illusions, even in enlightenment (unless you use something like an integral framework to foreground these networks and make them the object of meditation...).

Again, meditation is not wrong but partial, and unless its partialness is addressed, it simply houses these implicit lies, assuring that liberation is never really full, and even satori conceals and perpetuates the myth of the given....

"Neurophenomenology," Journal of Consciousness Studies, Francisco Varela. As one might expect, Francisco Varela, in his otherwise profound neurophenomenology, includes the *shared hermeneutics phenomenology* of zone #3 (precisely because he includes phenomenology, or zone #1); but he is unfortunately blind to zone #2 and its correlative aspects in zone #4—and thus the overall nature of intersubjectivity and its deep significance is absent in neurophenomenology.

Francisco, before his untimely death, helped found the Mind and Life society, associated with the Dalai Lama, an organization otherwise wonderfully dedicated to expanding phenomenology from prepersonal to personal to transpersonal forms in the UL (using meditation), while using brain monitoring to simul-track those changes in the UR. But a lack of post/structural intersubjectivity has allowed this to be severely criticized (and dismissed) by postmodernists. This has also hindered Buddhist phenomenology from having any significant impact in academia. Buddhist epistemology (including Zen, vipassana, and Vajrayana) is steeped in the myth of the given, and because none of that has been effectively addressed, Buddhist epistemology has more or less died in the West, which is a great shame, I would even say something of a cultural catastrophe. It's not entirely too late for an integral Framework to help, but we shall see....

--Science and the Akashic Field, Ervin Laszlo. Intersubjectivity is not only ignored by Erwin Laszlo but, on the rare occasions it isn't, it is badly misinterpreted and caught in a widely extended and imperialistic subtle reductionism (possibly the worst subtle reductionism I have seen, given his braggadocio about its inclusiveness).

As we saw in appendix II, you can't simply give a 3-person description of your allegedly integral reality without giving the 1-person injunctions that will transform consciousness to the levels from which that reality can be seen. Giving merely a series of 3-person assertions is, again, subtle reductionism and monological imperialism.

This is why to enter Laszlo's world is to enter a world of monological everything, extended brusquely and breathlessly into every nook and cranny of the Kosmos. What truly does leave you breathless is the intense nature of the subtle

reductionism and the aggressive methodological imperialism, all of which Laszlo calls “an integral theory of everything.” This is just embarrassing.

Laszlo is indeed a classic **3-p x 3-p x 3p**, alternating, when it comes to interiors, with a **3-p x 1-p x 3p**. That is, he never gets to the interiors as interiors; never hermeneutics but always a cognitive-science type of approach: he will assert that consciousness is foundational and is the inside of all matter, but he simply *asserts* all of that with objectivistic fervor, and never actually explores the interiors on their own terms nor gives any understanding that he even sees methodologies #1 through #4, and on the rare occasion that he does, he again simply asserts they are there, but never gives the injunctions for enacting them. He is essentially a zone-#8 theorist and has been most of his life.

Many years ago, I edited an imprint series—The New Science Library—at Shambhala Publications (I asked Francisco Varela and Jeremy Hayward to be my co-editors, and they agreed). I accepted one of Laszlo's books for it—*Evolution: The Grand Synthesis*—although Francisco Varela strenuously objected to publishing it (his concern, sharply stated, was that “Laszlo is a lightweight”). I felt the book was a wonderful overview of evolution and deserved publication on that account, and so we ended up doing so, although it was already imperialistically subsuming virtually every other methodology under its subtle scientism. (We let it go at the time because it was a scientific imprint series, but still...).

During that time, I also edited *The Holographic Paradigm*; ironically, I was the only dissenting voice in the anthology where everybody hailed it as “the new paradigm.” At the time—this was almost 30 years ago—I felt that “the holographic paradigm” would become the foundation of a certain type of widespread boomeritis worldview, which indeed it did. (See *What the Bleep?*, below.) Each year, some new discovery in physics was hailed as proof that *your very own consciousness* is needed to collapse the quantum wave packet and bring an object into existence, and thus *the philosophy of the subject* was imperialistically pushed to the very foundations of the universe (hence, boomeritis). Fred Alan Wolf, by far the zaniest popularizer of this misunderstood physics, says that your looking at an ash tray actually “qwaffs” the ash tray into existence. (I wonder, if you and I are both looking at the ash tray, is it your consciousness or mine that brings it into existence?) In any event, this is NOT the same thing as the postmodern claim that intersubjectivity is constitutive of a referent's reality, but actually just the opposite: your own ego creates reality.

As of a decade ago, the *quantum vacuum* had become the leading contender here. This was coupled with the necessity to call anything “the new paradigm,” even though that word was being used in almost the exact opposite way that Thomas Kuhn had proposed, as Kuhn himself strenuously pointed out, to no avail. Kuhn's actual point is quite similar to the one we advanced in appendix II,

namely, that all real knowledge is grounded in injunctions or exemplars, and if you have no injunction, you have no data and no meaning, period.

This also points out why Habermas refers to systems theory as being *egocentric* (his term), which totally confuses systems theorists. But Habermas's point is simple and true enough: the philosophy of the subject has no intersubjectivity to correct its narcissism, theoretical or otherwise, and hence the subject imperialistically reigns (e.g., systems theory claims that it includes everything, and it accepts no other that could correct it; hence the egocentrism of the theory). It doesn't matter if you extend the monological philosophy of the subject into transpersonal realms, or into quantum realms, or into interior realms—you are simply on an imperialistic (egocentric) crusade. And when this is the case, the theoretical narcissism often calls forth personal narcissism—hence, the boomeritis often not far around the corner.

And thus, as for “the theory of everything” that Laszlo proposes—and excuse my jadedness here—but you know it will have something to do with “holograms” and the “quantum vacuum,” and it will have to be called “the new paradigm.” And given the popularity of the Integral Approach, you know it will contain the word “integral,” too. Well, here it is, and he manages to get all 4 buzz words into a few sentences: “The hypothesis we can now advance may be daring, but it is logical. *The quantum vacuum generates the holographic field that is the memory of the universe.* This is a remarkable development, for *the new paradigm* offers the best-ever basis for the long sought *integral theory of everything* [his ital].”

Pushing monological reductionism into everything is indeed a grand project. But for somebody who is engaged in a similar subtle reductionism, Edgar Morin is much the better theorist and philosopher, covering more ground with more insight. Laszlo does wonderfully when he discusses zones that actually use methodology #8—namely, systems theory in all its classical and recent forms, dynamic to chaos to complexity. There, as usual, Laszlo is a master. But when he pushes his imperialism into the other 7 zones, the results are less than happy. As you can tell, I am particularly disappointed (and hence a tad irritated) with Laszlo's type of approach, because it does so much damage to so many areas, all the while claiming to be integral.

The Book of Secrets, Deepak Chopra. Serious writers accuse Deepak of being “spirit lite.” I think this is unfair; he is a fine scholar with a searching intellect and superb writing skills. What the intellectuals resent, I think, is Deepak's capacity to write simply and accessibly for wide audiences, which has made his books very popular and often best-sellers (which is usually enough to get you disbarred by the *intelligentsia*). My concern, rather, is similar to that expressed with the others in this appendix: Deepak's lack of understanding (or at least use) of zones #2 and #4 leaves him with a modernist epistemology (namely, empirical or phenomenological, and

particularly the scientific versions of such), which he attempts to extend into interiors a la William James—which again, is fine as far as it goes, but brutal when it goes no further. Deepak ends up trying to prove *premodern metaphysics* with *modern physics*, and the results are a theoretical shambles, I'm afraid.

The second concern I have with some of these approaches is that, precisely because they are often blind to zone-#2 stages, they are blind to how those stages might be operating in them and in their writing. They often present the values of one of these stages and don't even realize that what they are saying is true merely for one of a dozen or so stages of values development. (Further, they may be caught in the dysfunctional forms of these stages and not even know it, as witness boomeritis.) Deepak has a fine understanding of some of the types of phenomenal or *trained state-stages* that can occur in zone #1 (as he showed in *How to Know God*), but because he does not incorporate an understanding of zone #2 or its stages, he himself often comes solely from the green altitude, and all of his zone-#1 stages are therefore looked at from that single zone-#2 values stage.

A rampant confusion of spirituality with the green-wave of values, norms, and cognition is widespread in this culture, due to the influence, it seems, of the green Cultural Creatives, some 20% of the population. (The most widespread form of this green-wave worldview is "the 415 Paradigm.") Not only is this a massive Level/Line Fallacy, it has made the work of the more popular spiritual writers open to extensive boomeritis.

A third major problem with these general approaches is that they are completely blind to the truth-power-knowledge complex. This is another aspect of postmodernism that seems to have passed these theorists by. A sensitivity to intersubjective realities also sensitized most postmodernists to the abuses that come from a claim to have "truth" and "knowledge"—there are simply no such things divorced from power relations. Even (or especially) somebody claiming to have spiritual truth is somebody who is wielding power and attempted power; there is simply no way to avoid this completely for any form of knowledge or truth, and so the best one can do is acknowledge it and attempt to be self-critical about it. Failing that, you have what both modernists and postmodernists always claimed metaphysics was all about: it's all about power, so watch out. The move from metaphysics to post-metaphysics is an attempt to foreground the truth-power-knowledge complex and deal with it consciously, unlike metaphysics, which simply wields it.

Finally, let's note what we can no longer do: we can no longer simply say things like, "We are combining body, mind, soul, and spirit—and heart and community—to produce a truly integral approach." Because that isn't integral (or it isn't AQAL integral), because somebody at magenta or red or blue (etc.) can embrace those tenets. Including the various components of a human being ("body

and mind and soul and spirit and community," etc.), without also including the zone-#2 and zone-#4 genealogical realities and levels of worldspaces, will result not just in a fractured human being, but one that can be deeply immoral as well. If you haven't seen it, I highly recommend that you get a copy of the Discovery Channel documentary video, *Nazis: The Occult Conspiracy*. Hitler and his inner circle—particularly folks like Goebbels and Himmler (head of the SS)—were deeply into the practice of mysticism and mystical states of consciousness. They used astrology before battles, psychic pendulums to locate allied warships, encouraged daily practice of meditation, deliberately selected occult symbols and myths, traced what they felt were their own reincarnations, fully supported "body, mind, soul, and spirit," and had numerous and profound experiences of *unio mystica*. That's exactly what you get when you promote horizontal states and not also vertical stages (particularly in ethics, cognition, and interpersonal perspectives).

--What the Bleep Do We Know? The startling success of this indie film shows just how starved people are for some sort of validation for a more mystical, spiritual worldview. But the problems with this film are so enormous it's hard to know where to begin. *What the Bleep* is built around a series of interviews with physicists and mystics, all making ontological assertions about the nature of reality and about the fact that—yes, you guessed it—"you create your own reality." But you don't create your own reality, psychotics do. There are at least 6 major schools of modern physics, and not one of them agrees with the general and sweeping assertions made by this film. No school of physics believes that a human being can collapse the Schroedinger wave equation in 100% of the atoms of an object so as to "qwauff" it into existence. The physics is simply horrid in this film, and the mysticism is not much better, being that of an individual ("Ramtha") who claims to be a 35,000-year-old warrior from Atlantis. None of the interviewees are identified while they speak, because the film wishes to give the impression that these are well-known and well-respected scientists. The net result is New-Age mysticism (of the "your ego is in charge of everything" variety) combined with wretched physics (all in a type of 415-Paradigm mush; even IF a human mind were necessary to qwauff an object into existence—and even David Bohm disagreed with this loopy notion!—but even if, the point would be that Big Mind is instantaneously qwauffing ALL of manifestation into existence moment to moment—and not just selectively qwauffing one thing into existence instead of another, such as getting a new car, a job, or a promotion—which is exactly what this film says; again, this is the philosophy of the subject on steroids, aka boomeritis).

Bad physics and fruit-loop mysticism, and people are starving for this kind of stuff, bless them. Between modernism (and scientific materialism) and postmodernism (and its denial of depth), there is nothing left to feed the soul, and thus *What the Bleep* would be received with fevered appreciation. I'm sorry to be so harsh about this, because clearly the intentions are decent; but this is exactly the kind of tripe that gives

mysticism and spirituality a staggeringly bad name among real scientists, all postmodernists, and anybody who can read without moving their lips.

--Heterologies: Discourse on the Other, Michel de Certeau. I include this an example of a different problem: understanding intersubjectivity and jettisoning the myth of the given, but only up to the level of green altitude in any line, and thus being *stuck with multiplicities* that are forever incommensurable and incommunicable, a world of fragments and fractures never reaching fractals (i.e., never reaching transglobal commonalities and communions). This is classic arrested development at the (postmodern) pluralistic wave.

This classic limitation shows up especially in postmodernism's incapacity to escape the hermeneutic circle, which it absolutizes (i.e., quadrant absolutism—in this case, the LL, and then only up to green). This is captured in its claim that there are no extra-linguistic realities, a claim that AQAL categorically rejects (along with Habermas and other more integral thinkers).

This postmodern-pluralistic (green) wave has, of course, dominated academic humanities for the last three decades. It has increasingly hardened into its own dysfunctional forms, resulting in pluralitis and boomeritis, as out come the Green Inquisitors (see *The Shadow University*, a chilling account of these Inquisitors in action in American universities).

But this is also the deconstructive version of the postmodern worldview that is now dying down, as the Integral Age begins, according to sociologist Jeffrey Alexander. But the green-wave still owns the humanities in academia, owns the 2nd culture, and it will fight to the death, more or less literally, because, as is now common knowledge, old paradigms die when the believers in old paradigms die. The knowledge quest proceeds funeral by funeral....

Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation, Michael Lerner. Wonderfully driven by a keen spiritual intelligence, but interpreted and enacted at a green center of gravity, with the net effect of trying to force green values on the world, even via a constitutional amendment (this is subtle imperialism in the political arena). As we saw, perhaps the most difficult thing for green to understand is that its values—peace, harmony, healing, transformation, sharing, feeling, embodiment—are values shared only by green. They are not values shared by magenta, red, amber, orange, teal, turquoise, indigo, or violet. If I want to transform the world, implicit in that desire is the assumption, "You are screwed up, but I know what you need." This imposition of my values on you is a subtle violence of values. Second tier, on the other hand, understands that people are where they are, and that you have to let red be red, and let amber be amber, and let orange be orange, and so on. Of course we can work for the growth and development of all humans, but not by forcing my one

set of values on everybody. The real question facing an enlightened society is not how to make everybody green, but how to create **stations of life** reflecting the various **stages**, among other things, and not make one station the domineering monad of the group. I have had 3-hour conversations with Michael on why his view is green, and while he cognitively gets it and even agrees, his center of gravity just won't hold it. So we shall see....

--The Rebirth of Nature, Rupert Sheldrake. This is another of my favorite authors dismissed by postmodernists and humanities professors because his epistemologies are basically an extension of the mirror of nature, or the reflection paradigm (which, we saw, are yet other names for the monological myth of the given). So many of Rupert's early books are right on the money, involving issues that simply have not been answered or even addressed by conventional science, none of which is more important than the development of form or structure in living systems (hence, his use of Waddington's notion of *morphogenetic fields*, or morphic fields, which happens to be a completely viable scientific hypothesis). This got Sheldrake rejected by both modernists—who found that his work threatened their established worldviews—and postmodernists—because Sheldrake proposed all of this using merely modernist (monological) epistemologies, which is enough to get some extremely important ideas rejected outright, when a slight shift would take the same ideas and simply reframe them in more contextual ways.

As a secondary issue, and possibly because of his rejection by both modernists and postmodernists, Rupert as of late has increasingly retreated to a retro-Romantic worldview, which is unnecessary and unfortunate, in my opinion, because it confuses states and stages (and thus equates childhood states with advanced stages), eulogizes pre-rational as trans-transrational, and loses discriminating capacity when it comes to the difference between, say, preconventional magenta and postconventional turquoise. Rupert has always been a brilliant, quintessential turquoise thinker, who now is embracing magenta perhaps out of exasperation. But in either case, the postmodern notions of contextualism, constructivism, and aperspectivism have not yet permeated his thought to a sufficient degree to get him a hearing in postmodern worlds, which is deeply unfortunate.

--The Future of the Body, Michael Murphy. Some of the same problem—the myth of the given, or the failure to address postmodern intersubjectivity—also affects the equally profound work of Michael Murphy, whose "natural history of meta-normal phenomena" is surely the most important treatment of that topic. But it is marred—and equally dismissed by the postmodernists (and hence virtually all of academic humanities)—because of its failure to take into account the constitutive nature of intersubjectivity. The "natural history" Murphy gives is not the simple objectivist account he imagines, but is a view seen only from turquoise or higher, by an educated-Western-white male, acknowledging and using three particular

injunctions, whose own paranormal and meta-normal and transpersonal states and stages enact and bring forth a perceptual capacity that can disclose phenomena that reside in those specific worldspaces—and *then*, and *only then*, can Murphy's data can be seen. And that data, those facts, are definitely real. But they aren't just lying around out there waiting for a universal, objective, natural historian to stumble on them and objectively report them. Assuming otherwise has gotten his entire corpus dismissed by postmodernists, which is tragic. Integralists, of course, include his magnificent work, but that's not the issue.

This is a brilliant work of a true pioneering genius, mandatory reading for integral. But synoptic empiricism is a synoptic myth of the given—or a vastly expanded and still monological phenomenology, as is a natural history of meta-normal and super-normal phenomena. This is easily remedied, as so many of the approaches in this appendix are. In the meantime, this is simply using expanded modernist epistemologies to support premodern metaphysics, and both the “modernist” and the “metaphysics” are in need of overhauling to take into account Spirit's postmodern turn. This research will never get the respect it richly deserves in academic circles until this epistemological and methodological partialness (not wrongness) is addressed. This is truly tragic, in my opinion, because for what it does, it is a crucial ingredient of any integral worldview.

Living Buddha, Living Christ, Thich Nhat Hahn. Perhaps nobody better symbolizes the ambiguity and ambivalence of the spiritual traditions in the post/modern world than Thich Nhat Hahn. The positive aspects are not in doubt: the great heart, the noble intentions, the good that can come from meditation and contemplation. But if the traditions were integral in the premodern world, they are not so in the modern and postmodern world, and thus in today's world, sooner or later, they begin to tear the soul apart, leaving fragments and fractures where wholeness was supposed to be. The spiritual traditions rely for their theoretical aspects on metaphysics, which, as we have often seen, is shot through with a failure to grasp intersubjectivity, among other inadequacies. And for their practical aspects, the traditions have always relied on meditation and contemplation, which embody the myth of the given and monological phenomenology.

These series of partialities and inadequacies do not add up to wholeness. The soul is thus increasingly left with a handful of profound spiritual experiences housed in a fragmented worldview, with a broken framework and a reductionistic attitude. As discussed in chapter 5, this is indeed a prescription for a person to become both deeper and narrower, deeper and narrower, deeper and narrower....

THE PSYCHOACTIVE FRAMEWORK

As we also saw in chapter 5, all of this is salvageable, and without changing any of the basics of the spiritual traditions. A few things need to be added, not subtracted, in order for the great wisdom traditions to become more integral, or capable of embracing Spirit's premodern and modern and postmodern turns. We summarized these changes as **supplement**, and in the Upper Left, we especially emphasized the 3 S's: **shadow**, **states**, and **stages**.

Perhaps the most important of all supplementations is adopting a more integral Framework. Whatever type of Framework you use, if it is truly integral, it will itself begin to reverse the damage, allowing the strengths of the traditions to shine through while contextualizing and curtailing their limitations. The cognitive line is necessary but not sufficient for all permanent growth and transformation. Whatever cognitive View you have, it sets the entire space of possibilities for the other intelligences as well.

A truly Integral or AQAL Framework is not an inert map, it's a **psychoactive map**. It is a psychoactive system that goes through your entire bodymind and begins to activate any potentials that are not presently being used. Once you download AQAL (or IOS—Integral Operating System), it simply and almost automatically begins looking for areas that the integral map suggests you possess but that you might not have consciously realized—any quadrant, level, line, state, or type. The AQAL Framework activates them, lights them up, makes you realize that you have all of these possibilities in your own being. If you have read this far, the integrative process is already activated in you, and you likely understand just what this means.

Simply learning AQAL sets this psychoactive Framework in motion in your own system. This raises the bar for all the other intelligences as well, because the cognitive line, the co-gnosis line, is necessary but not sufficient for all of them. Because the AQAL Framework is originating at indigo (and higher), it sets up a resonance in your own system, which acts like a indigo magnet helping to pull the other lines up as well.

Of course, any of those other lines can and should be practiced, too, but they can only grow into the space of possibilities set by the cognitive line, so set those possibilities as high as you can, download an Integral Operating System, and let the greater possibilities of your own tomorrow begin to unfold, grounded in the great traditions, but moving forward into Spirit's own modern and postmodern flowering....

ON THE WAY TO INTEGRAL GNOSIS

Not supplementing is no longer something that is without its effects and consequences. Not supplementing—not making one's spiritual practice into an integral spiritual practice—can slowly kill you, more or less literally, or worse: figuratively, because what it kills is the soul struggling to be reborn into today's integral age, struggling to be reborn into its own highest estate of Freedom and Fullness, struggling to acknowledge the Spirit that embraces the entire Kosmos whole, with love and charity, valor and compassion, care and consciousness, interiority and identity, radiance and luminosity, ecstasy and clarity, all at once, and once and for all. In the very deepest part of you, you know You, and I know I-I, and We know This: your very Self is the Self of all that is and all that ever shall be, and the history of the entire Kosmos is the history of Your very own Being and Becoming, you can feel it in Your bones because You *know* that is what You are, in the deepest parts of you when you stop lying to yourself about who and what You really are.

And what You are is the great Unborn, timeless and eternal, in its 1st-person perspective as the great I-I, the great Self, the Witness of this page, and this room, and this universe, and everything in it, witnessing it All with a passionate equanimity that leaves you alone as the Unmoved Mover. You are likewise the great Unborn, timeless and eternal, in its 2nd-person perspective as the Great Thou, the Great Other, before whom you bow in an infinite act of complete release and savage surrender and ecstatic submission, and receive in return the entire Kosmos as your blessing and your forgiveness and your eternal grace. You are likewise the great Unborn, timeless and eternal, in its 3rd-person perspective as the Great Perfection, the Holy Spirit, the great Web of Life in all its infinite perfection and dynamic chaos, its pulsating pulsars and exploding nebulae, its stars and galaxies and planets and oceans, through which runs the common blood and beats the single heart of an Eros seeking its own higher wholeness, and always finding it, and seeking yet again, and always finding it yet once more, because You always know that You are here, don't You? And so in fun and sport and play and delight, and remorse and terror and agony and respite, You throw yourself out to start the play all over again, in this, the deepest part of You that gives birth to galaxies within Your heart, lets the stars light up as the neurons in Your brain, sings songs of love and delight to the submission and surrender of Your own good night, and all of this within the space that is You, the space that You feel as Your own I-I, or `this ever-present Witness of the forms of Your own play.

And in the great I-I, as You witness the Forms of Your own play as the entire Kosmos— in that very moment, which is this timeless Now, a Now that has no beginning and no end, there is *simultaneously* Spirit in its 1st-person and 2nd-person

and 3rd-person forms, the Great I and We and It *feel each other*, and in that unitary seamless sizzling Now, which is this very moment before you do anything at all, it is, quite simply, over.

Which means, it has, quite simply, begun.