

# **An Approach to Integral Consciousness and Politics: An Interview with Steve McIntosh**

(Author of *Integral Consciousness* and CEO of Zen and Now)

**Russ Volckmann**

*I first came across Steve McIntosh's name as the author of the book *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution: How the Integral Worldview is Transforming Politics, Culture and Spirituality*. Here was a work that linked integral theory to the idea of worldview, evolution, politics and culture, even spirituality. What a bonanza!*

*I was intrigued to discover that McIntosh is the Founder and CEO of the company, *Zen and Now*, designers and distributors of clocks, timers and other products using natural acoustic sounds and natural hardwood materials. I am always interested in how business leaders are attracted to and using integral approaches to their work. In McIntosh's case, as an entrepreneur and executive, the book was a bonus for interviewing him for the *Integral Leadership Review* (March 2008). In that interview our focus was very much on his business and his role. When it was completed, I felt that there was still a lot more valuable ground to explore and invited McIntosh to participate in a second interview that would focus more on his perspective on integral theory and its implications.*

*In the book, he builds on the work of Ken Wilber, *Spiral Dynamics*® and other philosophies, theories and models, while offering some critiques that show that he, too, might stake his claim to be viewed as a philosopher in his own right. Here is a sample of the perspective he brings,*

I have a direct personal experience of integral consciousness, and thus I know that it is a historically significant new level because I can see how extremely useful it is. Yet integral consciousness is more than just a tool for problem solving; it's an identity-providing platform for cultural allegiance, a worldview that invites our passion and our loyalty. As integral practitioners we have to see ourselves as ambassadors of the future.

*I wanted to learn more about this passion and its nuances. To begin with, I came to understand that much of work on theory and research and application is about the future, is about a creative process and thereby brings meaning to our work. I wanted to learn more about an approach that allows us to use more integrative approaches. I wanted to discover the potential for such approaches to bring different paths to engaging the challenges we face on so many levels of our—and the world's—existence. This interview is the result.*

— **Russ Volckmann**

**RUSS:** *Steve, it seems to me that a critical foundational piece in your work has to do with the idea of the dialectic, whether we're talking about a Hegelian dialectic or a Gravesian developmental dialectic. Would you comment on that?*

**STEVE:** Sure. Integral philosophy is primarily a philosophy of evolution. And as we come to better see and understand evolution, when we see it in cosmology, biology, consciousness and culture, we can begin to detect certain things about the overarching master system of evolution, or how evolution works overall, especially in the realm of consciousness and culture. This reveals the process that is being enacted by evolution. And it exists across scale; that is, it is a process of development that acts at the micro and macro levels of development. Of course, this process is the well-known dialectic of development.

The term “dialectic” can be found in Ancient Greek philosophy, where it was more about a dialogue between people. However, since Hegel, the dialectic has been understood as a process whereby conflicting systems overcome themselves through a kind of transcendent synthesis. Most people are familiar with the terms “thesis,” “antithesis” and “synthesis.” But those terms have been criticized as a kind of vulgarization of the dialectic. There is a danger when you break this process down into its parts that you could lose the essential truth of the dialectic—that it is more of an integrated process as a whole rather than a series of steps.

However, seeing a moving process as a series of steps can be helpful in understanding the process. For example, until motion picture film was invented people didn't understand how horses ran in terms of the order that they put their feet down. But when they first filmed horses running, they were able to look at the frozen frames of their feet, so they began to understand how horses ran because they could see it in stopped motion. So understanding the dialectic in terms of “thesis,” “antithesis” and “synthesis” is a useful construct; it allows us to see how the horse runs, if you will, and it gives us a snapshot of this moving system. As long as we keep in mind that the dialectic of development is this process by which the universe develops and greater degrees of complexity and integration are achieved, we can see that this process of dialectical development has discrete elements, but we don't lose sight of the fact that it's a moving system as a whole.

**Q:** *As I think of the evolutionary perspective in your writing and in the notion of the dialectic, I see an optimistic way of viewing life. There is movement and change towards some higher stage, whether it's higher levels of complexity and capacity to engage complexity or whatever it might be. One of my favorite authors—someone who has influenced me considerably over the years—is Charles Hampden-Turner. He put together a model of psycho-social development back in the late 60's, early 70's that is a dialectic and involves interactions between two people (or groups). In addition to the dialectic developmental model, he offers an anomic model—going up and going down—showing that there are processes of disintegration and integration. I did find reference to regression in your writing, but I never got an understanding as to whether you see us as being in a continuous progressive process, or whether there is something more complex going on.*

**A:** Certainly, if you just look at the evolutionary record, regression, stagnation—these things are always a possibility. Evolution is never simply a unilinear advance towards greater perfection. Sometimes we definitely have to go backwards. Whether this is built into the system with some kind of regularity, whether regression is somehow part of the formula of the dialectic, I have to admit that I'm not sure. Mine is not a Pollyanna view of progress where it's just upward and onward at all times. Indeed, the life condition that we face here at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in which regression of our civilization is a real possibility—that's an important life condition that is calling for further development. So, whether these life conditions have to be just potential threats or whether they have to be actualized to motivate growth is something that is rather spontaneous and dynamic and not necessarily something that can be understood with a formula.

Let me add, regarding the dialectic, that it's more than just the shape of the process of evolutionary development. It's more than just the master system of evolution. Dialectical thinking is actually a mindset or critical part of the worldview of integral consciousness as I understand it. That is, in modernist consciousness—what Piaget calls “formal operational thinking”—there tends to be a lack of seeing problems through a developmental lens. For example, if you see a problem, it's typically conceived of as an either/or proposition. But from a dialectical perspective, when you begin to look at life's problems and conflicts and any kind of unsatisfactory situation, you begin to recognize that the conflicting elements are themselves being partially created by the relationship that they have with each other. You begin to see how the conflicting relationship is actually constitutive of the elements themselves. And this leads to the insight that conflicts are always moving in time, and that as conflicting systems move in time they demonstrate the process of a thesis calling forth its antithesis—they naturally reveal these polarities. And when we begin to recognize the dynamic of thesis and antithesis, this shows us how every problem, or every developmental situation, is really is a transcendent synthesis that's waiting to be achieved.

It takes practice, but this dialectical perspective actually provides a new epistemological capacity. And this new capacity can be compared to the emergence of the heightened sense of reason and logic that arose with the modernist stage of consciousness. Modernists are able to use reason and logic as a new epistemological capacity over and above that ability at the traditional stage. And it seems to me that when you begin to see things developmentally, see things dialectically and recognize problems as opportunities for growth, this provides a dramatic new way of seeing that can really make a big difference in improving the human condition.

**Q:** *As you very clearly point out, using at least the perspective of traditional, modernist, postmodern, and integral levels, all of these levels of consciousness exist at the same time in our societies currently; is that correct?*

**A:** Sure. That is, the elements of the dialectic are continuously co-creating each other to a degree, forming each other in their relationship. When we talk about these specific stages of history and culture, one of the insights of the integral worldview is that the history of

consciousness continues to be spread out over the last 4,000 years of human development. That is, even though we're alive here in the year 2008, not all of us live in the same time in history. And according to Jean Gebser, it is the ability to recognize these historical structures of consciousness as they continue to exist in the present within the minds of individuals that actually gives rise to integral consciousness. These stages become transparent to your understanding when you begin to see them within people. For example, we can see how each one of these historical stages continue to include people who exemplify them in the present. And we can see how each stage has developed its own kind of orthodoxy—there are religious fundamentalists who are orthodox traditional, and there are atheists and scientific materialists who are rather orthodox modernist.

However, these structures of consciousness exist not only within the awareness of individuals, we can also see how these stages exist within a larger intersubjective system, which we might characterize as an “internal ecosystem of consciousness and culture.” And when you gain an integral perspective, one of the things that happens is you feel a drive to awaken all of these forms of consciousness within yourself, so that you're able to make meaning with and share the values of the tribal, the warrior, the traditional, the modernist, the postmodern, and the integral—all these stages. From an integral perspective, you need to be in touch with all of these stages, you need to be able to metabolize their values in order to be authentically making meaning from the level of integral consciousness.

**Q:** *This sounds very much in keeping with what Don Beck talks about in terms of spiral dynamics—that the spiral lives within. Is this what you're getting at?*

**A:** Right. A good example would be business people. Maybe they have an MBA. They're highly educated and they find themselves in business. So we could perhaps recognize that they are operating from a modernist value system, or modernist stage of consciousness. But if they don't embody within them some of the more enduring and foundational values of traditional consciousness, there can be a tendency to collapse back into a kind of warrior consciousness, or what spiral dynamics calls the “red meme.” For example, in the case of Enron, you see these sort of lawless corporate types basically engaging in criminal behavior. One of the things that caused them to regress into a criminal stage, even though they were highly educated and wealthy, was their lack of the values of traditional consciousness, which make people play fair, be honest and have honor in themselves. If you don't have those values within yourself, then the stage that you've achieved—say modernism or postmodernism—can be unstable. You can find yourself collapsing back and ruining your life like the executives at Enron did. If they just had a sense of fair play, then the company may not have crashed down like it did.

**Q:** *One of the aspects of the integral perspective that you are writing about has to do with the realm of spirituality. It's my sense that one of the challenges for an integral theory in gaining legitimacy—at least in the academic world, and possibly elsewhere—is the giving of equal value to that which can be measured and that which cannot be measured. The introduction of the idea of spirituality is a critical factor in that consciousness that you were just speaking about. Can you tell me a little about what you mean by spirituality?*

**A:** Sure. From my perspective, integral philosophy is founded on experience—that which is experiential, that which can be subjected to the tests of broad empiricism, if you will. This includes not only sensory experience of the material world, but also mental experience. For example, any experience with mathematics is a largely mental experience. It's not grounded in sensation; it's something that transcends the experience of our senses. Similarly, when we know another person in a relationship, this can be a very important form of experience that cannot be reduced to merely a sensory experience.

But in addition to sensory experiences and mental experiences, we can also have distinctly spiritual experiences that can be achieved in a variety of ways. For example, my deepest and most profound experiences of beauty, truth, and goodness are certainly spiritual experiences. And spiritual experiences can also be had through practices such as meditation and prayer. Indeed, it seems to me that spiritual experience is an important aspect of what it means to be human at every stage of development. Spirituality isn't something that can simply be reduced to the mythic stage of consciousness that only exists on a traditional level. Spirituality for me is a very important part of my life—it's what motivates me to get up in the morning, and it's what motivates me to write philosophy books. Spirituality is not a level of development to be transcended; it's a line of development that continues to find original expression in every stage, including the integral stage. And as human spirituality develops, ideally, it transcends and includes the best of the spirituality of the previous levels.

However, in my book, I do argue that science, philosophy, and religion need to be afforded a degree of separation. In other words, science deals with the physical facts of the external universe, and it has a level of proof that can be compelling; if you can prove something scientifically, it compels agreement. Spirituality, on the other hand, while it can be practiced and directly experienced, it deals with realities that exist in the realm of what we might call the "theosphere." That is, I'm arguing that the physiosphere and the biosphere are in the realm of science; the noosphere—the realm of consciousness and culture—belongs to the realm appropriate for philosophy, and then there's the spiritual world space, which can be identified as the theosphere—this is the realm of religion or spirituality. And spirituality has a very important role to play in making us feel at home in the universe by giving us explanations of the nature of the ultimate and teachings about life after death. These are teachings that can be used and practiced. For example, I definitely use the idea that I'm going to survive my body as an important orientation for my life on a daily basis.

Taking a million-year view of things really clarifies what's valuable. If I think about what will matter a million years from now, I think, well, my family and the people whom I love will matter, and the work that I did in the world to try and make it a better place while I was still here will matter. It's because of that million-year perspective that I'm fortified and motivated to do good works. I'm not doing good works in the hope that I'm going to survive my body; it's because I take for granted that I'm going to survive my body that I try to do good works. I'm not saying that you need to have a spiritual or million-year perspective or believe in life after death in order to be motivated to do good works in the world, but I've certainly found that it helps me. Religion makes you feel at

home in the universe, and I think this is an important role for it to play. So I think we need to preserve the realm of spirituality and not try to reduce it to science or philosophy. I think we need to allow for the legitimacy of explanations that need to be taken on faith or explanations that have to be taken on the authority of a spiritual teacher or wise person? I don't think we can eliminate those just because they can't be proved scientifically.

**Q:** *It would seem to me that what you're suggesting is that, for some people, having the orientation that you've just described as one you have, where you have an element of faith and this million-year perspective that you've talked about, has a way of creating meaning for life and justifying it. It seems it is dependent on some esoteric notion of what the totality is all about as opposed to someone else who might look at the same situation and say that life in this lifetime is an experience I'm having. I might follow exactly the same patterns of behavior as you, because it means that my experience of this life in the now—in the present—is far more satisfying, for whatever reason, than requiring me to have that kind of million-year perspective and to act on faith rather than to act on a set of positive values related to my current experience.*

**A:** I think the integral worldview is roomy enough to include all kinds of spirituality—theistic spirituality that recognizes God as a being, non-theistic spirituality like Buddhism that recognizes Non-Dual emptiness as the ultimate, or philosophical spirituality which can be rather agnostic regarding these big, supernatural explanations, but can nevertheless recognize spirit in a very circumspect way. I think all these forms of spirituality can find a home within the emerging integral worldview.

On this note, I recently received an email from Connie Barlow, who is married to Michael Dowd. The two of them travel around the country giving talks on evolutionary spirituality. Michael just came out with the book *Thank God for Evolution*. They are a wonderful couple doing good work. After reading about them I sent them a copy of my book. Connie then sent me an email complimenting me on my book and she included a couple of critiques. One of them was she thought that I did a good job of separating Ken Wilber's metaphysics from integral philosophy, but that now I had to separate my own metaphysics from integral philosophy.

(Laughter)

I respected that; it was a thoughtful comment and it made me think. So next week I'm going to have a conference call with Michael and Connie and a few others to discuss this subject. My take on it is that we are in this universe at some existential level—we have to admit there is something rather than nothing. We're starting from there. And so once we come to grips with this, there's really no way to get away from metaphysics. Moreover, we can see that each stage has its own version of metaphysics. For example, if you're at the traditional level, your metaphysics is defined by the Bible, the Qur'an, or the mythic explanation that goes with your tradition. Then with modernism, there is a different ontological explanation of the way things are. It starts with Deism, but then the more

extreme forms of modernism adopt a sort of atheistic perspective that the universe is a random accident, and there is no purpose to it; it has just emerged somehow.

**Q:** *Or at least agnostic in the sense of just not knowing; mystic, in a sense.*

**A:** Right, but to claim that we can somehow eliminate metaphysics, that we can have no questions or answers about the nature of reality, or no explanation of why there is something rather than nothing ... this position is still thoroughly metaphysical. It's kind of a minimal, anti-metaphysical metaphysics, but it's still something that has to be taken on faith to a degree. Think about it. Human consciousness is so small and the universe is so vast, and the mystery of it is so great, that to claim that you know for sure that there is no God—now, that's a statement of faith.

**Q:** *That's the atheist view. I'm talking about an agnostic view of not knowing, of holding that there are questions of spirituality to be explored. There are questions we cannot know the answers to; hence, it relies on faith or a way of resolving those issues in our lives so that we can move forward.*

**A:** Yes. Because I'm doing this public work in the realm of philosophy, I certainly wouldn't say that the agnostic position is illegitimate; I think it's a reasonable kind of stance to take regarding the mystery of the universe. However, if the agnostic says, "There is no way anybody can know," I would say that...

**Q:** *No, that's not what they say. They say, "We don't know now."*

(Laughter)

**A:** Fair enough. But I can say that I do know, for me at least, I can testify that I've had a direct experience of the love of God. And this is, of course, a metaphysical, spiritual proposition—which I can't prove. But I want to add that my faith is not motivated by the need for security, I already feel secure so I don't need a mythic teaching to give me that security. For me, faith is more of an active adventure of using my consciousness to know or experience that which is beyond my everyday mental experience. For me, the spiritual practice of faith is kind of super-thinking. My experience of God's love for me as an individual—as part of my own spirituality—is something I know deep down at the cellular level, even though I know it by faith. It's kind of paradoxical to talk about, but faith is definitely a spiritual practice, and it's not just a belief in myths and miracles.

**Q:** *Interesting. You talk about a realm in which at least some of us have never had that experience, and wouldn't even begin to know how to reach it.*

**A:** Well, Blaise Pascal has a wonderful quote on the subject. He says, "Human things must be known in order to be loved; but divine things must be loved in order to be known." When you practice faith at the higher levels of consciousness, that faith gives you an experience which verifies that which you have faith in. But again, these things can become extremely paradoxical.

Various forms of spirituality do rely on the authority of the tradition or the teacher; and I think that can be appropriate in the realm of spirituality. But in the realm of philosophy, which I think in a sense should bridge and separate science and spirituality, philosophy can investigate and discover that which is beyond science. And it can do so in a way that doesn't rely on any particular belief system. Philosophy can unite people who may have differing views of what spirituality is, or an agnostic view. So even though you may not have a robust concept of the spiritual, you can nevertheless find answers and get a universe perspective on things like evolution and consciousness through integral philosophy.

**Q:** *You have several critiques of what you call the integral reality frame. Perhaps since I'm introducing the concept of the integral reality frame into this conversation for the first time, you can summarize what that phrase means.*

**A:** Each stage of consciousness, or epic of human history, has its own explanation of the universe, and those explanations don't necessarily remain static; they evolve. For example traditional consciousness in all its forms provides an explanation of the universe that frames that worldview. The reality frame of that worldview creates a kind of cell wall of the organism, the permeable boundary which makes the worldview a real evolutionary system. Indeed these worldviews are not simply phases of history; they cohere as evolutionary systems, which are somewhat similar to biological organisms.

One of the big insights of integral philosophy is the way that it recognizes real evolutionary systems within the internal universe of consciousness and culture. These internal systems share characteristics with the external systems of biology. So as we begin to recognize the internal systems of consciousness and culture, we see how these are composed of human agreements—value agreements that cohere into these historically significant worldviews which have systemic integrity. And so one of the things that gives each worldview its systemic integrity is its abiding reality frame. Each of these worldviews is a cultural agreement on the one hand, but each stage also exists within a larger dialectical evolutionary spiral—an internal cultural ecosystem. And the reality frames which help these stages cohere as systems are inevitably created through the use of some kind of metaphysics.

We can see this very clearly in the role that Rene Descartes' philosophy played in the Enlightenment. Descartes' framing of the subjective and the objective domains—his famous, "I think, therefore I am," has now become known as "the philosophy of the subject." This reframing of reality into subjective and objective realms—the objective being scientifically investigatable, and the subjective being supernatural, a realm of matter and mind—actually helped to forge the reality frame of modernism. Indeed, much of the postmodern reality frame has actually arisen through the various attempts to transcend the problems of this "philosophy of the subject." However, we're getting into some rather dense philosophy, which I try to unpack and explain carefully in Chapter 8 of my book. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that every worldview has some kind of reality frame, some kind of metaphysics that it uses to create the agreement structures which



make it cohere as a worldview and allow it to do the important work that these worldviews do to produce cultural evolution.

Moreover, we can see how these reality frames are subject to the dialectic, such that the problems or shortcomings of each specific reality frame require that the next reality frame to emerge in the sequence of evolution be in sort of an antithesis to that. We see this dialectic progression in action in the way that the reality frame of traditional consciousness is defined by the mythic order of religion. Then the reality frame of modernist consciousness swings the other way and is defined as whatever can be proved by science. Then the reality frame of postmodern consciousness swings back to a kind of unconstrained subjectivism. Thus, the integral worldview—in order to be a worldview, in order to take form and do the work it needs to do within the timeline of human history—needs to have its own distinct reality frame. Ken Wilber has tried to offer such a reality frame through his four-quadrant model, and I take issue with it to a degree, but I also applaud it.

I think that Wilber has done for the integral worldview something very similar to what Descartes did for the modernist worldview. He reframed reality. That's what the quadrant model does. It shows the internal universe in new and important ways. Wilber recognized that this domain of intersubjectivity—the lower-left quadrant as it's called—is not just a metaphor. It's not just a structure of language, but it's actually a real domain of evolution where real systems—these systems of culture, these human worldviews—have an ontological existence. These structures are not just in my head. They're not merely subjective, even though they're not completely observable scientifically. So they're not merely subjective, but they're not objective either. These cultural structures exist in this newly framed domain called intersubjectivity. And this is what gives integral philosophy a lot of life. It gives it the ability to make contact with these cultural systems in ways that are revolutionary, and in ways that give us new powers to improve the human condition. The main reason I love integral philosophy, the main reason I'm attracted to it, is because it's pragmatic. It can do work. And so this new reality frame is one of its important features that gives it its ability to do this work.

**Q:** *Let's talk about integral mapping for a moment. You've referred to the holon and the quadrants and by implication with developmental levels, the holarchies. I noticed that in your treatment of the history, which was very well done, summarizing the original contributions of Arthur Koestler and how Wilber has built on those, that you at one point made reference to the distinction between individual and social holons. In the work that I've been doing with Mark Edwards and Integral Leadership Review, we've been separating those two, so that when we're talking about the four quadrants, at least in my mind—I'm not going to speak for Mark—I think of upper-left as intentionality and as the worldview and the beliefs of the individual. Upper-right is the biology and behaviors. What I've done in thinking about the individual is then to treat the upper-left as intentionality about self; in other words, the agentic intentionality, and the upper-right as the agentic behaviors. The lower-left and lower-right are the communal aspects of culture and systems if you will, but not so much the literal culture and the systems as*

*much as how the individual comprehends those. Do you make any distinctions between individual and collective holons?*

**A:** Sure. I think Ken Wilber has done very important work in correcting the confusion in this area. For example, Wilber talks about deep ecology, environmental spirituality, at great length, where there is often this misunderstanding between the nature of an individual holon and a social holon. Readers of Wilber will know that you can't just stack a social holon on top of an individual holon and call it a holarchy. So I think that distinguishing social holons from individual holons is an important element of integral philosophy.

**Q:** *You write about the notion of artifacts that Wilber and Fred Kofman have talked about. It would seem to me that in talking about an individual holon, there is no artifact.*

**A:** The quadrant model has been very useful in taking holons and showing how they emerge simultaneously in these different domains, but I also have some critiques of the quadrants, which I offer in Appendix B of my book. I'm not saying that the quadrants are invalid, I'm just saying that they are one slice of a picture that we are trying to discern, and we can't use them as the end-all and be-all of integral theory.

**Q:** *It's just affirming what Wilber talks about in terms of them being the map and not the territory.*

**A:** Also, all aspects of integral philosophy are true, but partial; they're adapted to our time in history. Indeed, the whole point of the worldview is that it can help us make progress relative to the specific problematic life conditions we face today. But as those life conditions eventually become ameliorated to a degree, then progress will come in the form of a newer worldview that's partially antithetical to the worldview of the integral. In other words, by using the spiral of development we can see how these worldviews emerge in this dialectical sequence, and this has predictive value. It not only shows us how we can create the integral worldview in our time, it also shows us that the integral worldview is not the end of history. It, too, will one day be transcended as it develops the successes, and the problems that are associated with those successes, that will call forth the next stage.

**Q:** *There you are really pinpointing what I think is probably the greatest strength of the work that's being done around all of this—the recognition of the relationships among the different worldviews, frameworks and stages of development and how they are necessary to each other in the evolutionary process.*

*One of the critiques of the integral reality frame that you offer is that as a philosophy, or as a metaphysics, it lacks a robust theology. Could you say a little more about what you mean by that?*

**A:** Sure. At the end of Chapter 8 entitled, "The Integral Reality Frame," I offer some critiques along the lines of what I've just described, I explore how we can poke holes in

this integral reality frame. So I offer four distinct critiques that are basically grounded in each one of the levels, beginning with traditional consciousness. However, in this critique of the integral reality frame made from the traditional level, I'm not trying to create a cartoon caricature of traditional consciousness, rather, I take it seriously and recognize that there are people with good sense and good faith who have a center of gravity of traditional consciousness. For them, creating higher levels of civilization is grounded in a religion. It's grounded in faith, and grounded in a robust theology that explains where we came from, where we're going...the big questions. So the traditional critique is that the integral reality frame allows for spiritual pluralism, and so it cannot provide an authoritative theology that all integralists agree with.

Again, in my book I argue that philosophy and religion ought to be afforded a degree of separation so that we can carry forward the values of spiritual pluralism that emerged at the postmodern stage. However, as we now attempt to transcend postmodernism we can also begin the work of discerning and determining which forms of spirituality are most effective at raising consciousness, improving the human condition, and revealing spiritual truth. But we're just beginning, I think, to go beyond polite spiritual pluralism and it's a little too soon for us to declare any one form of religion as essentially "right" to the relative exclusion of the others.

Going back to your question about this critique that I offered from the traditional stage, they're saying that by separating science, philosophy, and religion, you're losing a lot of the benefits of religion that can be used to form an organizing principle for a society, which it does, at the traditional stage. So as in medieval Christianity or in any of the pre-modern societies, the reality frame is exactly the same as the religion's teaching about reality. Traditionalists would criticize forms of spirituality that allow for pluralism, that separate the philosophy from religion and disempower religion from a traditional perspective as the dominant truth in the society. Now, of course, my response to that critique is that in order for us to move beyond the traditional stage—in order to go beyond the mythic where there is no separation of, for example, church and state—then a degree of disempowering of religion, a differentiation of the value spheres as Max Weber was kind to point out to us, is a necessary step for the development of civilization. Perhaps some time in the future, when humanity has evolved to the point where we can have a world theology or an agreement about spiritual truth that is fully transcendent and can be universally agreed upon, that would be tremendous. But I don't think we're at a point in history where there is one particular theology that is strong enough to unify us. Any theology that had to be coercive in unifying people wouldn't be unifying in the first place. That's just a particular aspect of what I might imagine as a traditional critique of the integral work.

**Q:** *Correspondingly, there is a modernist critique related to the metaphysics of the integral reality frame not being subject to falsifiability. How does that challenge get addressed?*

**A:** Karl Popper, prominent 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher of science, came up with a criterion for valid knowledge which he calls "falsifiability." That is, if you can imagine a scenario

under which a proposition could be proved false, then it's valid knowledge. If you can't imagine a scenario in which it could be proved as false, then it doesn't count as valid knowledge. The trouble is that while this defines what is and isn't science, it's highly reductionist in the sense that there is an implication that only science can deliver valid knowledge. My response to that is to evoke the idea of broad empiricism, which was first advanced by William James the pragmatist philosopher—he called it radical empiricism. And Wilber has modified and refined it into what he calls “broad empiricism.” It shows that some of the same methods for creating an empirical agreement in science can be extended to include things that are not necessarily accessible to scientific investigation, but are nevertheless “falsifiable” in a broadly empirical sense, because, although philosophical or spiritual propositions may not be materially falsifiable, others who are at a similar level of development can actually have a similar experience, which makes these kind of propositions broadly empirical. Wilber has done a good job of showing how broad empiricism can be a way of answering the critiques of falsifiability.

*Q: These would be the integral multiple methodologies.*

**A:** Integral methodological pluralism is what Wilber calls it. I think these ideas are generally valid, but regarding some of Wilber's latest writing found in *Integral Spirituality*, as well as some of the latest turns that his theory has taken, I don't find all of those details as useful as some of the other more sturdy and basic aspects of integral philosophy. I can see that integral methodological pluralism may have its uses, and might be valid in certain academic contexts, but I don't find these ideas to be a particularly exciting development from my perspective. I'm not harshly critiquing these ideas; I'm just not seeing them as all that useful.

*Q: It comes up for me in thinking about how to work with PhD. students on doctoral dissertations related to using integral theory and perspective in doing research.*

**A:** What I like most about Wilber's methodological pluralism is the unification of the structural and the phenomenological approaches to consciousness. That's the part that I think is a worthy addition to integral theory in a sense that structuralists can see things that can't be seen from a phenomenological perspective. In other words, you can meditate and you're never going to discover the spiral through meditating. However, with structuralism by itself, unless you're acquainted with the insides of these structures that you're studying, you're never going to get a true sense of what they are. Understanding that we need a phenomenological approach from the inside and a structural approach on the outside to adequately map and understand these stages of consciousness I think is a valid point and one I would agree with.

*Q: What about the critique of the integral reality frame from the postmodern perspective—the argument that it's all Eurocentric dominant male thinking—that it's too cerebral and too concerned with “the truth” instead of many truths.*

**A:** We're going through each of these critiques which I offer of the integral reality frame, the first being traditional, which I mentioned; the second being the modernist critique,

which is the reductionistic approach; then there's the postmodern critique; and finally I offer a "postintegral" critique of the integral reality frame. So with respect to the postmodern critique, I think there are basically two kinds: one is the critique of the integral reality frame from the perspective of postmodern philosophy—deconstructionist critical theory; and then there's another critique from postmodern culture in general, which is the one you were mentioning regarding the complaint that "it's too masculine" or "it's too Eurocentric" or whatever.

From an integral perspective, we can see how the postmodern worldview—and I'm using "postmodern" as a defined term—isn't just deconstructionist academic critical theory. We're talking about the overall worldview that comes after modernism, the one that has emerged in the developed world as a sort of antithesis to modernism. This worldview is known by many terms, including the "cultural creatives" and the "post-materialists."

In integral parlance there is a growing agreement that the word "postmodern" is the word we want to adopt as the defining term for this stage. That is, from an integral perspective, we can see that there is an evolutionarily appropriate move that goes beyond modernism and traditionalism and which takes the form of an antithesis. In other words, postmodernism is anti-modern and anti-Western to a degree. And there is an imprint of that antithesis that is seen in many aspects of postmodern thinking. Again, this is evolutionarily appropriate; the move away from the pathologies of modernism was achieved by pushing off against those problems, by moving to an antithesis. For example, the move that took human civilization from traditional consciousness to modernist consciousness was embodied in the slogan, "Liberty, equality, fraternity." It was sort of a political rallying cry for democracy. Then in turn, the move away from the established structures of modernism was achieved or symbolized by the slogan, "Turn on, tune in, drop out." Despite its semi-humorous quality, this rallying cry did serve as a potent invitation to reject the pathologies of modernism. So if you look at postmodern politics, it's kind of a politics of protest. It's a politics that defines itself in relation to the shortcomings, the pathologies, and the crimes of modernism— including colonialism, oppression and exploitation, we could go on listing the problems of modernism—but overall we can see how postmodernism made the important move of breaking away from those problems.

However, this postmodern worldview is now in a place where it's gone as far as it can go, even though there will be people entering into the postmodern worldview for the rest of our lives. It's a structure of history that people will pass through as they develop culturally. But what we're interested in now is taking an evolution a step further beyond postmodernism and going to the stage of synthesis where we're no longer defined merely in terms of an antithesis to what's wrong with modernism.

As we try to create a synthesis that carries forward the best of all these previous worldviews, while also pruning away the worst, we can see that from a postmodern perspective, integralism looks very much like modernism. And when modernists see integral, to them it appears postmodern. These stages have a tendency to see everyone

who is outside of their worldviews as being suspect. So the postmodern critique of the integral worldview is that it's basically just rehashed modernism. Therefore, it's still complicit in the crimes of modernism. But from an integral perspective, we can recognize those attacks, those critiques from a postmodern perspective. We can also overcome them by recognizing that postmodernism is not the end of history and that there are certainly many positive developments of the modernist and traditional stages. At this point in history, in order to move forward, we need to recognize and acknowledge those positive aspects and integrate them into a transcendent whole that can use all the important truths that have come from the rise of the postmodern worldview. So we include those truths but also simultaneously transcend them through this new worldview that we're creating.

**Q:** *That opens directly on the door of integral politics, but I want to go somewhere else first. That has to do with what I think is a very creative way of reframing the notion of lines of development. You have argued that there are three organizing principles of the various aspects of being in the world. That has to do with will, cognition and emotion. These are really overlapping concepts that have things in common with each other, with the interpersonal and the idea of self being somehow the linchpin of these three modes of consciousness.*

**A:** In my analysis of the lines of development within consciousness I start with Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences. Then I bring in Daniel Goleman's work on emotional intelligence. Then I try to show how we not only have emotion and cognition, but that there is another sphere of knowing which I identify as volition, or free will. So each one of these spheres—feeling, thought and will—are important metastructures that organize our consciousness.

Within each one of these domains there are a variety of lines of development, which overlap and comprise the various ways that humans can be smart or emotionally intelligent. The old idea of "IQ" can be taken as a measure of overall cognitive intelligence. And now we have the idea of "EQ," which has become popular since Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence* came out in the 90's. EQ thus refers to emotional intelligence and one's general emotional ability. Then I add to that the idea of "VQ," or values intelligence. This fills out all the potential lines and organizes them into a holarchy.

Part of the way I came up with this understanding was following my philosophical intuition. Again, I have always identified myself as an ally and supporter of Ken Wilber. I'm definitely standing on his shoulders and can't say how grateful and indebted I am to his work. At the same time, one of the things that has motivated me to try to make my own contribution to integral philosophy has been my differences with Wilber. That is, although we agree on most aspects of integral philosophy, our disagreements are the most interesting. This is how philosophy has always evolved—a great philosopher makes some major progress and then other philosophers try to show how that's not necessarily wrong but how it can be improved.

So regarding the lines of development, Wilber began teaching this subject through his psychograph model, which first appears in his 1999 book, *Integral Psychology*. Then in the past few years he has elaborated on it and explained how there are all these multiple lines of development, which actually develop independently. Wilber cites the case of the “Nazi doctor” who is highly developed in the cognitive line, a highly educated scientist, but who is also very stunted in the moral line, because he’s a Nazi. So I agreed with that—I think there are different lines of development and different types of intelligence, so that all made sense to me.

But my philosophical intuition was piqued when Wilber wrote that the “values line”, or the “worldview line” that is really the line of the spiral of development, is just one among several dozen lines, and that these lines are “apples and oranges.” That struck me as being not entirely true. That is, I agree with Wilber that there isn’t a single line—as was maintained by Piaget, who just thought he was getting at development overall—and I think that’s a valid critique of many aspects of developmental psychology, that there is no singular line of development within consciousness. There are actually multiple lines, and developmentalists haven’t done a very good job of identifying and coming to grips with that.

However, my humble critique of Wilber is that he goes from a critique of this “line absolutism” to the other extreme, which I would characterize as a kind of “line relativism” where we just have all these unrelated lines. Even though each of these lines develops in its own kind of holarchical stage-like system, Wilber hasn’t recognized—or at least hasn’t described in his work thus far—how these independent lines are organized by a larger overarching system.

If the lines are indeed holarchical structures, then the overall structure of the holarchy that we see throughout evolution would suggest that there are some higher level holons that transcend and include these various different lines. So in Chapter 9 of my book I first explain why I think the values line is somehow more important than other lines, and how the values line isn’t just “one among several dozen.” I explain why the values line has a more important role in determining our psychic or culture center of gravity.

Chapter 9 begins by examining what developmental psychologists have said and then what Wilber has said about the subject. Then I offer some critiques that show problems with Wilber’s psychograph model. I then advance my own theory, which involves the recognition that these lines of development are organized within a larger enveloping system of feeling, thought, and will as a sort of master systemic pattern of consciousness. That is, when we see how the spiral influences many different aspects of our will, the sphere of volition within our consciousness, then we can begin to see how it is generally more significant than, say, bodily kinesthetic intelligence or the emotional ability to be empathetic. Those are lines that can develop independently, but I would say for most people these kinds of intelligence are less significant than their core values. So when we recognize the very important role that values play in orienting our attention and determining our intention, and when we see that our values come largely from our worldview, our position on the spiral of development, we begin to see why “the values or

worldviews line” is so important in determining the internal location of our consciousness overall.

However, this is obviously a complicated subject, and it’s best described in a written argument. It’s difficult to reproduce it completely here in an interview.

**Q:** *I have a couple of questions in relation to that. I’m wondering about the location or choice of subcategories. For example, you just mentioned “empathy,” and it doesn’t show up on the diagram. Another one might be “resilience” that didn’t show up. I’m wondering if there was a guiding set of principles other than sorting things into cognitive-emotional-volition values variables that caused you to place things in one circle versus another?*

**A:** That’s a great question. The diagram in my book that shows the sub-lines within the overall categories of feeling, thought, and will is drawn partially from Howard Gardner, partially from Daniel Goleman, and partially from Clare Graves, Robert Kegan, and James Mark Baldwin. However, as I explain in the book, if you’ll allow me to quote: “Figure 9-4 is presented for the limited purposes of suggesting how the intersubjective structure of the spiral of development influences a variety of lines of development within the overall sphere of human volition. This simplified diagram is not intended as an exhaustive chart of all possible sub-spheres or lines of development within human consciousness.” So the diagram in my book is just a snapshot showing some of the sub-lines. The number and size of the categories could be different with every person.

Now, regarding the sub-lines found within the overall *Sphere of Cognition*, as I said, I’m building on the work of Howard Gardner, who is a very prominent developmentalist. He teaches at Harvard and he has done quite a lot of empirical work to discover what he calls “the eight intelligences” within “cognition as a whole.” His criteria is: “What does society value and what is the culture willing to reward?”

This research was advanced in Gardner’s book that came out in 1999 called *Intelligence Reframed*. Gardner is arguing against IQ as a sort of a monolithic line. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, educators used a test to determine the “quotient” of a person’s intelligence, and IQ was seen as a measure of being smart or dumb across the board. So Gardner has devoted a large part of his academic career to dispelling that myth and showing that there are different kinds of intelligences. It makes perfect sense. You can see that a gymnast has one type of intelligence and a great mathematician has another kind, so we can’t judge “smart” or “dumb” across the board. By using Gardner’s eight intelligences in my sphere of cognitive development, I’m being true to his work and using him as a foundation of that aspect of the model.

Within the overall *Sphere of Emotion*, again I use the work of Goleman in the identification of the sub-lines, who has become well respected in society and whom Gardner talks about approvingly. Indeed, Gardner recognizes emotional intelligence, but says that he wants to be formal in his definition of these eight intelligences, so he doesn’t



want to define emotional intelligence as a formal intelligence; he wants to call it “emotional sensitivity”. Nevertheless, in the book, *Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman does describe different types of emotion—sadness, anger, joy, etc.—and I list those in Figure 9.4. However, there’s nothing exclusive about the list that’s in that circle in Figure 9.4. It’s just some types of emotion that have been recognized by the social sciences, but they are not suggested to be exhaustive. You would want to do more empirical research if you were going to try to definitively identify the specific lines of development that are within the affective or emotional sphere as a whole.

All I’m doing is recognizing that there are different types of emotion—the experts agree. And there are different kinds of cognition—again, the experts agree. And in addition to the modes of emotion and cognition, both Goleman and Gardner (as well as other developmentalists) agree that the *Sphere of Volition* or free will is also a mode of consciousness that is distinct from both feeling and thinking. However, Goleman, Gardner and other authors in this field tend to shy away from the sphere of volition, because it’s not really accessible to science. Just like biologists shy away from consciousness because it’s *in* the body but not really *of* the body, these developmental psychologists tend to shy away from volition because is not really accessible to scientific investigation the way the physical parts of the body are. Human free will is a kind of transcendent form of consciousness that can’t really be contacted or explained by science. Social scientists are thus somewhat embarrassed by it, because it’s inherently metaphysical.

Free will—the idea that human beings are responsible for their actions, and that their will represents an “uncaused cause,” that our will can somehow move around the particles in our brain and cause our bodies to move without being predetermined—this can’t be explained from the mechanistic materialistic worldview. The human will is thus supernatural in that sense. So there has naturally been quite a bit of effort by materialist philosophers and scientists to try and explain that free will is an illusion, and that ultimately, all human choices are predetermined.

Of course, I reject that and I see free will as central to a spiritual understanding of the universe. Our role in the cosmic economy is really made effective by the fact that we do have freedom of choice, that we do have real free will. Indeed, this is how we participate directly and creatively in the evolutionary process—our free will allows us to act as agents of evolution. Yet, this is an inherently spiritual concept. But even though science can’t deal with spiritual issues, philosophy can. That’s why I make free will and values really the cornerstone of my understanding of integral philosophy.

**Q:** *All of this comes to play in the context of your treatment of integral politics, which ultimately leads you to a model of integral world federation. Would you care to say anything about what it is that is integral from your point of view in terms of politics. How do you approach that?*

**A:** We can see that every one of these worldviews—these historically significant worldviews that are identified by the integral perspective—emerges as a new octave of

values. That is, each one has new truth, new beauty, and new ideals of morality. And the values of every one of these worldviews have been forged in the crucible of politics. So, for example, when we move from warrior consciousness to traditional consciousness, one of the ways that traditional consciousness is able to make progress and improve the human condition is the way that it replaces the chaotic and warlike world of warrior consciousness—warring tribes, etc.—with a political system that brings some level of peace.

With every form of traditional consciousness, East or West, the political system that goes with it is feudalism. Now feudalism is something we'd like to transcend—it's something to be looked down upon now as a primitive political structure—but it was a definite improvement over what came before it. It brought some form of law and order, even though it was oppressive and classist.

Then when modernism emerges, it likewise has new truth, new beauty, and new ideals of morality that are embodied in the transcendent political form of organization called democracy.

Thomas Jefferson really understood democracy at the beginning; it was clear to him that without a degree of modernist consciousness within the population, democracy would be dysfunctional. He could see that not everyone in the democracy needed to have a modernist center of gravity, but a certain proportion did, so that they weren't in a conformist, traditional worldview where they were willing to be obedient sheep. They had to take responsibility for their own government, not tolerate corruption and be willing to put in the effort to try to create a government by the people. So democracy showcased the values of modernism and showed its moral superiority. The evident moral superiority of democracy over feudalism really served as a beacon of goodness that helped recruit people into the modernist worldview and make it successful.

Then, with the rise of postmodernism, we can also see the crucible of politics being very important. In the sixties, people were recruited and attracted into the postmodern way of seeing things by its higher ideals of morality. They could see that its political agenda of peace in Vietnam and civil rights was an exemplification of a worldcentric morality that transcended the more ethnocentric views of these earlier worldviews.

So now with the rise of the integral worldview, it is going to take its place in the timeline of human history as a historically significant stage. And it will have its own transcendent form of human politics. If we just look at the evolution of human politics, we can see that in 1,000 B.C., it's estimated that there were 600,000 countries or sovereign political entities. And over time, these 600,000 political entities have been consolidated into larger and larger groupings. So although there have been periods of regression or stagnation, there are now about 193 countries. And now we see with the European Union (EU), and other types of federations of countries, that the direction of evolution in human politics is toward larger and larger conglomerations. And this is made particularly possible with the advent of democracy.

I certainly see the EU as a positive political development. We can see how it has done a lot of good in terms of uniting Europe, making it one political entity, making things more economically prosperous through the advent of a single currency and the reduction of trade barriers. We can see that by pushing power up and having an overarching federation that reduces competition amongst European countries, that has allowed power to be pushed down. For example, Scotland has now been given a degree of autonomy that it didn't have before the EU. It's because of the EU that England was able to divest a certain degree of power over Scotland. The same thing happened in Spain. Since Spain has become part of the EU, Catalonia as a province of Spain has been given far greater autonomy than it enjoyed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

So it is clear to me that as the integral stage takes its place along the timeline of human history, it too will bring its own transcendent form of political organization that will showcase its higher morality. Just as modernism and democracy co-created each other, so too will the rise of integralism eventually bring forth a system of democratic global law, although I doubt I'll live to see it.

But I want to quickly add that as we see this process developing, we can also see that these stages of political organization are dependent upon the corresponding internal development of consciousness. So for example, when you try to bring democracy to Iraq, because you have a population centered in pre-modern consciousness, democracy becomes highly dysfunctional. Until Iraqis can develop a larger degree of modernist consciousness within their population, then democracy will continue to be problematic. Because of their traditional, ethnocentric level of internal development, it's difficult for them to participate in a multi-ethnic nation state, which is the democratic form.

So before there can be a functional form of world federation, we will need to have a greater degree of integral consciousness in the world. This is why the main focus of integral politics right now is on building the integral worldview here at the beginning.

**Q:** *Using the lens that you're describing now—I'll let people go to the book to find your model for world governance—could you talk about what is happening in the American political system today in terms of the presidential race?*

**A:** Overall, integral politics is the political agenda that goes with the integral worldview. And this agenda is now being worked out, agreed upon and negotiated among people who have an integral perspective. I'm arguing that as the integral worldview matures it will produce a transcendent form of human political organization that will come in the form of a limited democratic world federation.

Again, I think that the ultimate goal of world federation is inseparable from integral politics, in the same way that the politics of modernist consciousness is inseparable from democracy. However, I can say that integral politics can do a lot of work prior to the long-term goal of some kind of global democracy by making immediate progress on the domestic front—politically here in the U.S., in the years ahead. And there are both short-term things that integral politics can do and long-term things. The long view helps inform

the short-term view. They work together. However, integral politics is something that's just emerging now. I'm not claiming to have the final and authoritative view of what it is. I'm interested in entering into dialog with other integralists like yourself about what integral politics can become.

And I should say that there are some people who have a general center of gravity in the integral worldview who are more oriented toward Republican candidates than to the Democratic ones. Just because you're an integralist doesn't mean that you're necessarily going to be a leftist. However, I do think that because you can't really get to the integral stage without transcending and including the values of postmodernism, then this is going to have an effect on your political views. That is, if you aspire to be integral, but you don't have empathy for postmodern values, then you're not going to be authentically integral. You're going to be a sophisticated modernist. But if you do hold the requisite degree of postmodern values, then this makes it difficult to be too conservative politically, even though you may see certain issues where the conservatives have a better argument.

However, regardless of who is elected president in 2008, because of the current profile of the American body politic, that person will be a tool of the system to a large degree. Because of the state of evolution of consciousness in America, and because it is a democracy, the next president won't be able to just lead us all into the integral age, because to govern effectively, the next president has to remain identified with the modernist values system. Modernism represents over 50% of the American population and I think all the presidential candidates have a modernist center of gravity. Some are more influenced by traditional values; some by postmodern values, but overall, they're all modernists.

The only political candidate who could be recognized as having a center of gravity in postmodernism would be Dennis Kucinich. Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton or even John McCain can certainly make meaning from an integral perspective. They can see that there is traditional and modernist consciousness, but again I think their center of gravity, at least from my perspective, is still in the modernist stage.

So at this point in history the real opportunity to make political progress from an integral perspective won't be found in the realm of presidential politics. Our opportunity to make the most political progress will be more in the realm of raising consciousness and helping make progress culturally by helping move America's cultural center of gravity forward in history in a way that then allows the federal government to follow suit. If we can get people to evolve their consciousness, then we can help break the logjam of the culture war. And this will help America to become less politically stagnant, and it will thus help the federal government to move forward as consciousness moves forward. As we raise consciousness in the American culture, we'll begin to see elected leaders who embody integral values more.

**Q:** *There are so many different levels and dimensions of society in which that can be happening. Whether you're talking about the worlds of entertainment, sports, politics or educational systems, it's truly a society-wide effort. Is that what you're suggesting?*

**A:** Definitely. When I give my presentation on integral politics, one of the things I emphasize is that the postmodern worldview, because it arose in this stance of antithesis, as I described earlier, is presently acting as a kind of cork in the bottle. In other words, because postmodernism is so anti-modern and anti-traditional, this tend to make these other earlier worldviews rather defensive. And this defensiveness kind of pins people in place culturally. For example, many people who are centered in the traditional or modernist stages perceive the environmental movement as a strictly postmodern issue. And so because postmodernists have contempt for many of the important values for traditionalism and modernism, some modernists and traditionalists repay the favor and exhibit contempt for important postmodern values. And this tends to make postmodernism's ardent support for the environmental issues—issues that everyone should ultimately care about—somewhat of a liability within American politics overall.

So now, the best way that the integral worldview can help make political progress in the short-term is by helping a portion of those with a postmodern center of gravity move up to an integral center of gravity and help un-stop the cork. If more and more postmodernists come to better appreciate the enduring and foundational values of modernism and traditionalism, this will help make postmodern concerns seem less anti-American or anti-modern. As we carry forward some of the values of traditionalism and modernism into the integral worldview, we'll find that we can carry forward many of the traditionalists and modernists themselves into a new era of progressive agreement.

**Q:** *For example, we're seeing religious leaders increasingly expressing concern about the environment and our care of the world.*

**A:** Thomas Friedman argues that “green should be the new red, white and blue.” He argues that to be concerned about the environment is to be patriotic. Even though this concern for the environment originated with postmodernism, Friedman is now trying to show that environmentalism is a value that can be appreciated by every stage, he wants all Americans to agree that saving the environment from the destruction of global warming is something we can all get behind. And building the political will for that is something that the integral worldview can make great progress in, because it can help heal some of the wounds of the culture war by providing a progressive synthesis that isn't as anti-modern as postmodernism. It can demonstrate what is actually a “more progressive” form of politics than what passes for progressive politics today. That is, integral politics is more progressive than postmodern politics because it carries forward all the worldcentric and environmental concerns and values of postmodernism, but does so in a way that better integrates and builds political will with these other earlier stages of modernism and traditionalism.

Put differently, postmodernism's basic solution is to get everyone to become postmodern. And if everyone woke up tomorrow and realize that “we are all one

people,” and that this postmodern perspective is the most advanced, then that would indeed create the kind of political will we need to solve many of our problems. But because we can see in history and in the evolution of consciousness that it’s unlikely that the majority of America is going to wake up tomorrow and become postmodern, we can see that we have to find a way to make political progress that addresses people in the stage they are at and works with the values that they have.

The integral political perspective really brings a lot of new insights and abilities to help move America’s cultural center of gravity forward in history. And this can go a long way toward building the political will that it’s going to take to solve the crises of global warming and other problems.

On the subject of integral politics I should add that many people see Barack Obama as the savior—he’s kind of the projection screen for everybody’s hopes—and while I’d love to see more hope and unification in politics, I also see people holding onto this Kennedyesque fantasy of a leader of our culture. But that time in history has passed. Kennedy was president before the emergence of the cultural structures of postmodernism, before the radical partition that occurred in the sixties. So now that we’ve seen the differentiation of these stages more distinctly in our culture, now that consciousness is more spread out between traditional, modernist, and postmodern, I don’t think we want to regress to the point where one person can provide the kind of cultural leadership for America as a whole, in the way that Kennedy did. Consciousness has evolved since then, the horse is out of the barn. We need to find agreement in a way that doesn’t require that we regress to a unified modernism or somehow find a mushy middle where we can all agree. We can take an integral and developmental perspective which brings in this vertical dimension that can see these stages emerging through time and can find a way to integrate the stages that doesn’t just involve a kind of centrist position that just compromises on every issue.

To conclude integral politics, let me say that although the next president will be limited in what he can do, I’d like to see the next president bring in integral advisors—maybe not at the cabinet level, but at least some folks on their staff who can give them an integral analysis of the issues, especially foreign policy issues. Once you can see this inner perspective of consciousness, there are really a lot of insights and solutions that appear. My next book is going to be focused on that; the working title is *Global Politics and the Physics of the Internal Universe*. My plan is to take this integral perspective and apply it to various issues around the world, as I did in the interview in the last issue of *What Is Enlightenment?*, called “Integral Politics Comes of Age,” which I highly recommend to your readers, and which is available to read on-line at [wie.org](http://wie.org).

**Q:** *Have you sent a copy of your book to any political candidates for the presidency?*

**A:** I actually made inquiries with the Clinton foundation. Because Bill Clinton has read Wilber, has endorsed him and said good things about his work, I wanted to send my book to Bill Clinton. So I made my inquiry through channels and I got the response just a few days ago from his organization. They provided his personal address and invited me to

send my book directly to him, but they added that he is very busy and may not be able to respond.

(laughter)

So in addition to Bill Clinton, whoever emerges as the democratic candidate will also receive a copy of my book. But there are obviously hundreds of authors that are doing the same thing, and so I don't expect that it will necessarily have much of an impact. Ultimately, the way we'll get the attention of political leaders is to get the attention of the greater culture. And so as we emerge as a force in the media and in the culture at large, we'll get their attention in that way, rather than just by sending them a book. I'll do it nonetheless, though, since it's a good gesture.

**Q:** *I wish you all the luck in the world with that effort.*

(laughter)

**A:** Thank you Russ. I appreciate this interview.