

# APPENDIX IV

## BALD NARCISSISM: THE DIS-INTEGRATION OF KEN WILBER

On June 8 of 2006, Ken Wilber posted a very revealing entry on his [blog](#), exhibiting something of a “Wyatt Earp” complex. (That is, as an underappreciated gunslinger/sheriff/savior, out to save the Wild West according to his own version of the Kosmic Law.) From that embarrassing rant:

In short, it’s just ridiculous to say that I try to hide from this criticism, I live on it!.... This is what second tier does automatically anyway, it takes new truths wherever it finds them and weaves them into larger tapestries. It can’t help doing so! If I find one, I am ecstatic! So mark this well: Only a first-tier mentality would even think that one would run away from good criticism.

Wilber, however, does indeed run away from competent, thorough criticism like vampires flee from the sunlight. Mark that well. You do not need to be first-, second-, or nth-tier to see that; all you need to be able to do is recognize competent research when you see it, and then note kw’s derogatory response to (or freezing-out of) that. You will not, though, find anything resembling the same academic competence in kw’s own writings, which is exactly

why he needs to so hysterically marginalize people who can think and research at least several orders of magnitude more clearly and thoroughly than he has ever been able to do.

More from the “compassionate bodhisattva”:

And even a bald bastard with ambition, I might add, instead of even being able to lay blame where it in fact belongs, which is on its own sorry-ass, first-tier, lame-brain case of arrested development, a two-bit, no-fit, nobody-quoting, self-promoting, gas-floating, over-bloating, no deposit, lame composite, really lost it, never had it, wanna bees, felled at the knees, first-tier fleas, flick ‘em off his back and never look back: “Holy mackerel! let’s go get a slurpee,” says lonesome rider, Wyatt Earpy.

If the self-promoting kw really thinks that critics such as Meyerhoff don’t quote sources (“nobody-quoting”), he may well have confused truly excellent, properly referenced scholarship, with his own method of “research” (i.e., make things up and then hope as hard as you integrally can that nobody goes back to check the original sources to catch you violating the truth). Or, perhaps he means that the scholars who are quoted against him are “nobodies” relative to His Integral Self. Either way, he is pathetically wrong.

You will notice that nowhere in that rant does Wilber address the reality that a large percentage of the criticisms which he brushes off as being “first-tier” are taking him to task for having *provably misrepresented* the purported “established facts” in the fields which he claims (falsely) to be integrating. Whether or not developmental studies are in “complete disarray,” Wilber has brutally misrepresented the purported agreement regarding, for example, Piaget’s stages of psychological development. There is no way around that fact; so, not surprisingly, all kw can do in response is to claim that he understands the relevant fields much better than his harshest critics do ... thus apparently licensing him to utterly/unprofessionally misrepresent the ideas in those same fields ... and thus actually showing, for anyone who wishes to see, that he either hasn’t understood them or is deliberately and dishonestly misleading his readers.

If you can see agreement in fields where it provably does not exist, you are not second/third-tier, you are delusional.

I am not going to keep responding to the lunatics, nuts, fakes, and frauds.

But, into which group do I fit? Lunatic, nut, fake, or (well-footnoted) fraud? Or maybe a “perv” instead? (Keep in mind that both Huston Smith and James Fadiman endorsed my own **first book** with far greater enthusiasm than they have ever given publicly to any of Wilber’s own dismally failed attempts at scholarship.)

If, then, you have ever been bothered at all by my “tone,” you owe it to yourself to be at least as bothered by kw attacking his critics at least as colorfully and with far less rational basis for doing so.

[P]erhaps I should mention that I am at the center of the vanguard of the greatest social transformation in the history of humankind ... using [my] Zen sword of prajna to cut off the heads of critics so staggeringly *little* that [I have] to slow down about 10-fold just to see them.

One is reminded of Albert Einstein’s comment that “only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I’m not sure about the former.”

More from Wilber’s blog:

The whole kit and caboodle of recent criticism just reeks of Nietzschean *resentiment* [*sic*—in plain English, resentment, deep and long and ugly resentment.

However, a concerned reader observes:

KW’s blog was really creepy in a genuinely pathetic way.... By the way, he not only misspelled *ressentiment*, but it appears that he’s consumed by it:

*Ressentiment* (as a term imported by many languages for its philosophical and psychological meaning only) is not to be considered interchangeable with the normal English word ‘resentment,’ or the normal French word ‘ressentiment.’ While the normal words both speak to a feeling of frustration directed at a perceived source, neither speaks to the special relationship between a sense of inferiority and the creation of morality. Thus, the term ‘Res-

sentiment' as used here always maintains a distinction. (from [Wikipedia](#))

Also, note that the fact that “*ressentiment* ... **is not to be considered interchangeable with the normal English word ‘resentment’**” means that Wilber’s “translation” of that into “plain English” is flatly wrong. (“**Resentment**” is actually an [obsolete] word, too; but it has nothing to do with Nietzsche.)

From the same dismal blog, this is a partial listing of Wilber’s fertile imaginings regarding the purported shortcomings of persons such as myself, who dare not only to have no use for his addled philosophy but to further point out, in reasoned detail, why his half-baked conjectures make so very little sense:

lunatic and cacophonous ... so deranged as to be laughable ... suck my dick ... level of scholarship is so mediocre ... worthless ... you morons ... lame criticism ... painfully sluggish critics, dragging their bloated bellies across the ground at a snail’s pace of gray dreariness, can frankly just eat my dust and bite my ass ... nonsensical ... neither true nor false but empty ... criticism so deranged you just stare at it wide-eyed and dumbfounded ... criticism so absolutely loopy you just stare in disbelief for minutes, pie-eyed, slack-jawed, say whaaaaaat? ... numb-nut young Turks and no-nut old Turks, many of whom have studied [my] work for up to 3 full hours....

As a wise man recently noted, all that one would have to do is just read that blog by kw (and nothing else) to see why Wilber is losing respect even from those academics who used to think he deserved his high standing in the transpersonal/integral community. Indeed, kw’s childish response *makes him look much worse, in his character, than any criticism of him by others could ever have done.*

Further, consider that Wilber himself cannot have spent much more than “3 full hours” studying [David Bohm](#)’s work before stupidly imagining himself to be in a position to trash it for purportedly not meshing with his transpersonal fantasies. Certainly, he hasn’t spent even three full nanoseconds actually *understanding* Bohm’s ideas.

Also, with regard to kw’s feelings, voiced in the same blog, of being “libel[ed] and slander[ed]”: A defamatory statement about a person can only be libelous (in print) or slanderous (in speech) *if it is untrue.* (You have to know these sorts of things when you are

standing up to the various alleged cults in the world and their watchful lawyers.) **A true statement cannot be libelous.** So, Wilber has not been libeled. Not by me, at least. Because I can defend everything I have ever written about that dishonest and/or professionally incompetent fool. And it is all backed up with solid references and reasoning to a degree which nothing he has put into print has ever been.

So, Wilber evidently knows roughly as much about **libel law** as he does about every other field through which he so astonishingly bumbles.

Where you from, son? What the fuck you been thinking? You hitting that weed again man, doing them drugs overtime?

A final thought:

If you have to “rape and pillage” the details in any field in order to get them to “fit” with your grand theorizings—as Wilber has done throughout his entire career, and without which intellectual abuse there would not be any AQAL or the like—you *are not integrating anything*. Conversely, when people see details to which you (kw) are “legally blind,” and correspondingly reject your supposed “integrations,” it is not because they are seeing *less* than you are, but rather because they are seeing *more*.

Ironic, to be sure. Yet, to anyone who, unlike kw, doesn’t imagine himself to be the center of the integral universe, or who isn’t so in awe of the (delusions of) grandeur of his Bald Integral Hero that he can’t think straight, that should be clear as day: If you pay proper attention to details and to simple, competent research, you cannot be “integral.” Because it is exactly that attention to detail and broad knowledge-base which proves that things do not fit together—and most probably never will—in anything resembling the fashion which kw foolishly pretends they do. And then, because you will not accept Wilber’s detail-ignoring claims, you can only be “first-tier.” So, if kw finds himself more slack-jawed than usual in reading the most damning criticisms of his “work,” that may well be just his involuntary reaction to writings and authors who can understand and incorporate proper details into their own work.

Wilber is royally fooling himself if he imagines that any of the recent criticisms by myself, Meyerhoff, or Andrews, for example, are based in envy, lack of “second-tier” perspective, or resentment deriving from his ill-gotten “success.” Anyone who wants to bullshit through his teeth in presenting fairy-tale realities which have

no real hope of being true is indeed on a well-traveled road to “success” in this world. But there are still those of us who would rather get our recognition the honest way. If you are even a competent undergraduate student with a conscience, there is next to nothing for you to “envy” in Ken Wilber’s work or character: you already have more of what makes a decent human being in you than kw will ever even want to recover from his own wasted life. All you can really learn from the likes of him is what *not* to do with your life, and how *not* to behave in attempting to make a name for yourself.

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Wilber on the purported shadow-projection of critics of his ideas on “boomeritis”:

It reminds me of the laboratory tests showing that the most active heterosexual crusaders against gay porn actually show more arousal levels when shown gay porn than straights do.

However, a concerned reader again observes:

KW’s summary sounded highly implausible—I just couldn’t imagine that “the most active heterosexual crusaders against gay porn” would volunteer to participate in a study where they would watch gay porn. So I did some research and discovered a summary of the study at [skepdic.com](http://skepdic.com) which included a link to the 1996 [journal article](#).

My conclusion was that kw stepped in it thrice in one sentence!

First, the subjects were not “the most active heterosexual crusaders against gay porn.” In fact, they were male college student volunteers drawn from Psychology Department Research Subject Pool at the University of Georgia who scored:

- exclusively heterosexual on a modified version of the Kinsey Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale
- homophobic on the Index of Homophobia (which measures the “dread’ an individual experiences when placed in close quarters with a homosexual”)

Second, kw contrasted the “the most active heterosexual crusaders against gay porn” to “straights.” In fact, all of the subjects in the study, both homophobic and nonhomophobic, were self-identified “straights” (having reported “only heterosexual arousal and experiences” on the modified version of the Kinsey Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale).

Third, kw offered just one explanation—latent homosexuality. In fact, the authors of the study offered three competing explanations for the arousal of the homophobes:

- “response discordance where verbal judgments are not consistent with physiological reactivity”
- the homophobes were latent homosexuals—the homophobia is evidence of “a threat to an individual’s own homosexual impulses causing repression, denial, or reaction formation (or all three ...)”
- “viewing homosexual stimuli causes negative emotions such as anxiety in homophobic men ... [which] has been shown to enhance arousal and erection.... [A] response to homosexual stimuli is a function of the threat condition rather than sexual arousal per se..... [S]exual arousal to homosexual stimuli by homophobic individuals is a function of anxiety.”

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On June 11 of 2006, Ken Wilber published “**Part II**” of his previous diatribe, claiming to have only posted the earlier rant as a “test.”

First, from one of his fans, as quoted in that follow-up piece:

NEVER in over two years have I witnessed anything like this. THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU [KW] ARE REALLY LIKE. I repeat, I have NEVER seen you act like this.

Bauwens and Dallman, however, have long ago seen that side of kw. He has shown enough of it in his mistreatment of the late **David Bohm**, too, all of which is in black and white by his own hand.

I can’t help but wonder how Wilber reacted when he first learned that Frank Visser would be publishing Meyerhoff’s debunking of his (kw’s) work, online. More or less exactly as child-

ishly and petulantly as he behaved in his earlier rant, I would guess.

Sometimes the most compassionate thing one can do is to cut down dangerous and terrorist egos.

Is that what we are now to Wilber's loyal followers? "Terrorist" egos? Being cut down "compassionately"? For trying to warn people that Wilber's teachings and community are not what they appear to be? Ask me why I have compared the behavior of cult followers to that of "patriotic" Americans following 9/11 and preceding the war on Iraq.

I read Meyerhoff's MS a couple of years ago. There were some interesting points here and there, but even these I assumed you would be capable of rebutting with little problem. [Why would you assume that? On what possible grounds? And why would kw publish this letter, when it really only shows how little actual questioning his friends and followers are capable of?] I said as much to him, but then asked: What is the point of writing this document? If Wilber is as misguided as you think, why would any press bother publishing the MS? In other words, if the target is so pathetic, what's the point? And if you have turned the target into a straw man [he hasn't, that is Wilber's job, e.g., with regard to Bohm], then again—what's the point of publishing the document? (As you note, Meyerhoff can't get this turkey published.) I then asked him: What is YOUR, Meyerhoff's, alternative contribution? What do YOU have to bring to the party?

Whoever wrote that has no business having a professional opinion in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, or philosophy. Or publishing, for that matter. Whatever happened to the inherent worth in separating true ideas from false ones, even just in the pure pursuit of knowledge?

The point of putting these debunkings of Wilber's work into print is to do what one can to prevent others, not merely from wasting their time on Wilber's fabrications, and not merely from meditating to the point of developing clinical psychoses when they think they're working toward psychological stage-growth, but also from throwing their lives away on the likes of Adi Da and Andrew Cohen, based on Wilber's foolish endorsement of them. If one were

working “for” the integral movement, that same attitude would be called “compassion.” Here, however, it gets you branded as a “petty fucker” (see below).

*Details are not “petty,”* nor does taking a “50,000-foot view” release you from the obligation of squaring your overarching principles with an honest representation of each and every detail. It was exactly because of the confirmation (to within experimental accuracy) of the predictions of Einstein’s theories that he and his ideas became famous; without that precise validation, no one would even know his name today, much less care about the elegance of the core ideas underlying those theories. In the integral world, by contrast, you can screw up on details, and even actively misrepresent them, as much as you like, and the clueless followers in that field will only defend your reasons for doing so, rather than taking you to task for that academic dishonesty and/or incompetence.

Plus, in fields of real scholarship, there has always been room for persons who merely gave harsh criticisms of the prevailing ideas, even without being able to offer better alternatives themselves—never mind that, in the integral world, having an alternative will only be held against you, via the claim that in tearing kw’s ideas down you are just trying to get your own work noticed. (Note that, while my own first book was again endorsed more enthusiastically by both Huston Smith [Wilber’s close friend] and James Fadiman than any of kw’s books have ever been feted by them, I have since completely disowned the same book. So, I *could* very easily bring an alternative contribution to the “integral tea party,” I’ve just learned far too much about the skeptical objections to transpersonal claims in the past few years to *want* to be at that gathering.)

If people are going to sincerely buy into our approach, even if the ideas beautifully stand on their own (as they do) [no they don’t], they’ll do their due diligence. Especially those in the United Nations community or those seriously involved in corporate strategy and considering changing their approach.

Meyerhoff has done an appropriate level of “due diligence,” in going back to the original sources which kw claims support his view, to prove that they regularly do not. How has he been treated by the integral community for doing so? And, how many people who get interested in kw’s ideas would even be able to find the time, much less the interest, to do the same? All they can do is

trust that the community wouldn't let incompetent or dishonest work rise to the top. Big mistake. And you think the politicians in the UN, or our world's corporate executives, are going to do even one-tenth of that work, as opposed to just looking at the roster of "big names" endorsing the fallacious integral ideas, and then proceeding in the confidence that "a hundred thousand Wilber fans can't be wrong"? Of course they won't. Those are people who cannot look past an "executive summary" to the details in the first place. Give kw and Co. credit for one thing, at least: They have picked a logical, and easy, target.

the rule of criticism, imo, is first understand the point of the person whom you are criticizing. frank visser's site, for example, explicitly disagrees with that.

When you can prove that the principles on which a theory is founded are false (or grossly misrepresented), you actually don't need to separately debunk its conclusions. If the premises are wrong, the conclusions will be wrong, too. (Of course, by pure coincidence and probabilities, a quack such as Wilber may still manage to get a few conclusions right—as even Velikovsky did.)

KW:

I got several calls from spiritual teachers around the country, and they all said almost exactly the same thing: "I wish I had the nerve to do this." That was a very common response, and many teachers went on to lament the "green swamp" their own *sanghas* seemed to be, "and what can I do about it?"

What do you figure the odds are that at least one of those sympathetic calls was from Andrew Cohen? The "green swamp," after all, wants democracy and dialog in what is inherently a dictatorship. "What can I do about it?" Indeed: Any guru would like nothing better than to suppress that "talking back."

KW:

you don't like us, you hate us, you hate I-I, you hate wilber, you hate this and you hate that—we heard you loud and clear. And we saw you. And now we know each other, don't we? **But was that you or your shadow responding?**

Personally, I have zero tolerance for being deceived simply because I don't go around bullshitting others; I ask nothing from them, in that regard, that I haven't previously demanded from myself. As recently as three years ago, I was still considering donating money to the Integral Institute; it was only in documenting Wilber's provable and gross misrepresentations of David Bohm's work that I began to sour on him, and since then to find his "work" shot through with the same bald cluelessness, which can only qualify as either academic dishonesty or professional incompetence. If you can look at that simple following-of-the-evidence and see only projection or hatred ... well, yikes. "What We Are, That We See."

From the Fans of Ken:

I trust the meta-vision you see of human and social evolution, and if this posting as is serves the Kosmos, then so be it....

I couldn't list all your third-tier reasons for this, but I deeply know that Integral resonates with, and works for, those who are ready for it. It is a truth that doesn't need a prop to stand.

Of course, Wilber must be "third tier," uniquely able to judge the effect of his actions on the Kosmos. That should have been obvious by now. Just like Adi Da is the only seventh-level sage. The first thing any spiritual leader must learn is that you must always keep at least one step (in purported spiritual evolution) ahead of the followers.

If you find professional incompetence, academic dishonesty, and/or unconscionable manipulation in Wilber's work, that has nothing necessarily to do with tiers/altitude, shadow-projection, or the like. You are much more likely simply seeing it for what it really is.

When a bullshit artist tries to tell you that you are "first-tier" and shadow-projecting simply because you won't stand for being manipulated or misled, or that his blog "includes an excellent, useful explanation of why these critiques are invalid" (no, it doesn't really), or that "second tier would get it, and that is who it was meant for"—well, "fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me."

Yes I was pissed off about IU hosts being referred to as minions ... fuck the crazy critic.

First “terrorist egos,” and now “crazy,” too. And you wonder why I regard the Wilberian community as a cult?

Personally, I have never publicly referred to Wilber’s close followers as “minions.” But, truth be told, that is exactly what I regard them as being. Their thoughts as included on the “I was only kidding” blog by kw have only confirmed that for me.

[D]oes telling a group of mental masturbators that they’re off the mark actually legitimize them in a way? If their intent is simply (!) to fantasize, they are unlikely to have the decency to be embarrassed at being caught once again with their pants down around their knees.

First, does the integral community not realize that they are seen by skeptics as being every bit as “crazy” and unworthy of legitimization, as they now view kw’s critics? No, of course they don’t realize that. But it is nevertheless true.

And beautiful, how they reduce cogent criticism to the status of fantasy, while elevating their own transpersonal fantasies and outright delusions to the status of “reality.” Myself, Meyerhoff, Andrews, and other solid critics have nothing to be “embarrassed” about, if the previous “lacking in substance” blog entry by kw is the best that he can offer in terms of trying to prove us to be “mental masturbators.”

And again, it is Wilber who is sophomorically miming masturbation in public, and considering that to be funny. Where is his “decency”? Or his sense of embarrassment *at being caught, repeatedly, with his own “pants down,” blatantly and unconscionably fabricating information?* Or his understanding of humor, or of group dynamics/laughter, for that matter?

KW again:

Part of the lesson—for you, for me, for any of us—when it comes to integral (second tier, vision-logic, centaur, turquoise) in today’s world especially relates to the difference between what Trungpa Rinpoche called compassion and idiot compassion.

Quoting the alcoholic fraud **Chögyam Trungpa**. Nice. “Decency,” indeed. How many lives did *that* drunken, abusive, “compassionate” Buddhist dictator ruin?

The best response actually came from Wilber’s close friend, Stuart Davis:

it's fantastic, it's overdue, and i feel it is appropriate and proportionate in tone and content. i laughed out loud half a dozen times, and it's right on the money. how fucking LONG are you supposed to sit back without comment while these toxic, petty fuckers make preposterous attacks on work that's ten years old? and only one in a hundred even knows what the fuck they're talking about, because like it or not YOU'RE RIGHT TO SAY it is a cross-altitude issue. these green shits take pot shots at 2nd tier morning, noon, and night, and they are literally not capable of registering the content, the locations, the addresses, the altitude of 2nd tier. it's insane, and i'm relieved to see you calling a spade a spade in this way.

Speaking of psychological shadows....

And, even work a decade old is certainly worth debunking, particularly for how the provable dishonesties and/or incompetencies in it reflect on the character of its author, and for how the same shortcomings suggest the (un)likelihood that his current work will stand up to future criticism.

Plus, Davis genuinely **believes** that the "Dagon" (*sic*) tribal people received their purported knowledge of astronomy from extra-terrestrials.

And Wilber proudly puts all of that pandering into print, without so much as a twinge of realization as to how it looks to the real world. But then, any other cult leader or quack with a small, loyal following would have done exactly the same thing, just as proudly and just as opaquely.

KW:

I should mention that when IU opens we will be having specific classes, for those who want, where we analyze various forum responses for their altitude, their levels and lines, and their shadow elements.

Of course, nothing bonds an in-group like laughing together at the flaws in their out-group critics, who just cannot see things as clearly as they, the "special ones," do.

all we have to do now is send people to that blog and watch their response. if it freaks them out, it's unlikely they would do very well in any type of second-tier work. so at least we

know. the thing is, K loves these people, I've seen him work with them because he'll work with anybody.

“All for the Non-Dual Love of Ken.”

And through all of that, has Wilber offered any cogent, intelligent response to any of his recent critics ... never mind to David Lane's critique from 1996? No, of course not. What he has posted could rather just as well have all been a deliberate smoke screen, to distract from the real issue. That is, to obscure the fact that his ideas consistently do not stand up to any kind of thorough questioning—a point which is hardly mitigated by him trotting out a few anonymous “experts” who daftly imagine the contrary.

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Frank Visser gave his own **response** to kw's rant:

[T]elling the audience Meyerhoff's book got rejected by publishers is a bit low: wasn't *The Spectrum of Consciousness* rejected 33 times?....

Wilber writes: “Have you noticed that the people who complain the most about the concept of boomeritis almost always have the worst cases of it?” So what about the number #1 crusader against boomeritis himself? Looks like he has a particularly bad case of it. Even jokingly mentioning “I am at the center of the vanguard of the greatest social transformation in the history of humankind” is telling. Sure, it's a joke. Or is it? Why mention?....

Wilber mentions the mind-body problem, for which he has presented an interesting solution of his own. Why is there a complete radio silence in the philosophy of mind about this theory? (David Chalmers was kindly willing to add two of Wilber's papers on this topic to his online repository *when I asked him to do so*, but he filed it somewhere under “Miscellaneous”). What does that tell us?....

I will not get caught in this game of praise and condemnation, so reminiscent of cultic milieus I have been in before. Instead, I will tirelessly go on publishing writings which I consider helpful in understanding integral philosophy. I may be wrong, I may be right—but that's not the issue. [T]he issue is that there should be an open, public forum where all voices can be heard. That's why Integral World is valuable.

There was, of course, a time when **Wilber** himself gave at least lip service to something approaching the latter idea:

What does matter, as Kierkegaard so rudely reminded us, is that only by investing and speaking your vision with *passion*, can the truth, one way or another, finally penetrate the reluctance of the world. If you are right, or if you are wrong, it is only your passion that will force either to be discovered.

Apparently in Wilber's world, though, that principle only applies to "theorists," not to critics.

And personally, I take kw's placing of himself at the "vanguard of the greatest social transformation in the history of humankind" as an accurate statement of his narcissistic delusions regarding his own value to the world. It's fully in line with his self-promoting use, within his own books and websites, of quotations from "experts" as to how brilliant and important he and his work allegedly are (as I've collected at the start of the **Norman Einstein** chapter, here).

And by the way: My first book was rejected by 125 publishers in the U.S., U.K., and India. The quality of a book, after all, is barely relevant to whether or not it is published by a traditional press. What matters is, pure and simple, whether it's going to sell. Anyone who has had any contact at all with the publishing industry knows that.

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Michel Bauwens of the P2P Foundation posted several excellent responses to Wilber's "planned meltdown."

### **On the logic of cultism at the Integral institutes:**

Being integral is increasingly being defined as: "agreeing with Ken Wilber." This is the only critique being accepted within the movement. And basically it takes the form of: yes you are a genius, but wouldn't you consider that xxx. Such a form of self-denigrating critique is the only one acceptable, and it can only serve to strengthen the edifice and the influence of the master....

[Even without Firmage's money, and Don Beck's reinforcement of kw's narcissism] the totalizing edifice and the particular personality of Wilber would in all likel[i]hood have evolved in this way eventually....

Can there be any hope for such a movement? In my opinion: none whatsoever. The point of no-return has long passed.

### Ken Wilber is losing it:

[Wilber's rant and *Boomeritis*, plus, I would add, kw's telephone interviews as featured on Integral Naked] sounds like the expression of a man desperately in need of confirmation by the young, attempting to be "cool," but not quite knowing how to do it, and revealing his own immaturity in the process....

At one point in our lives, we may seek a system of systems that may put to rest of fears of paradoxes and contradictions, showing how different truth claims can nevertheless be all true at some higher level of integration. But at another point in your life, if you are not intellectually and spiritually lazy, you have to learn again to live with the uncertainty of knowledge, and then, frankly, any reliance of a total edifice a la Wilber becomes counterproductive.

Personally, I agree strongly with nearly all of the points made in both of those fine postings.

Visser then published a truly excellent "companion article" to his own response to kw. From **Sorry, It's Just Over Your Head**:

I read many responses to Wilber's part I, and the only person who speaks as if he might actually feel anything remotely like actual "hate" toward Wilber is Geoffrey Falk, and I think that calling Falk "hateful" would require us to read more into Falk's way of expressing himself than may be there. But let's say for sake of argument that Falk hates Wilber and II.

I cannot quarrel with any of that. But, of course, we should always leave open the possibility that I, too, have been deliberately trying to "push the buttons" of Ken and his followers, shouldn't we? You know, in addition to obviously enjoying saucily "calling a spade a spade" when it comes to leaders and followers with whom one sadly cannot reason, so one might as well (generally justifiably) insult them (after having first proved them to be in the wrong) and hope that something gets through in all that.

So, love or hate the hatred (or "skillful love"?) with which I express myself, it makes no difference to the validity of the criticisms

I've made of kw's ideas (and character). And really, without those solid critiques, which the Wilberian world cannot counter even were they disposed to responding cogently rather than reflexively (i.e., the knee-jerk "you're green" thing), would kw have been pushed to his (*very damaging* to I-I's grandiose "mission" in the world) "divine meltdown"? Perhaps ... but perhaps not. (I don't want to take too much "credit," since Meyerhoff's outstanding work seems to be bothering kw much more than mine, at least by name.)

It is an open question as to whether or not I personally "hate the sinner" in any of my irreverent ("Eighth Deadly Sin") criticisms of our world's gurus and pandits. But I certainly "hate the sin," no question about that! Anyone who tells me half-truths or worse to try to get me to cave to his ideas, in religion or otherwise, has picked the wrong person to try to deceive. **SRF** was the first organization to find that out the hard way.

So, as the former/late Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau once said, "the universe is unfolding more or less as it should."

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An anonymous blogger posted a fantastic **analysis** of Wilber's guru-like "card-playing," in his claims that his recent behavior has constituted a skillful teaching, that people fail to see that only for not having evolved to his high level, and that the objections to that "teaching" are based simply on his critics' psychological projections.

Folks, outlining how and why this is classic cultic behavior is too elementary to even go into. Just pick up any book on the subject, or go read about the true root of all this: Adi Da....

In the end, Ken is trying to silence critics/outsideers by asking that they simply STOP, which is all he really wants at this point. He asks that they take a moratorium on judging others, on loathing and condemning him. Notice that none of this addresses anything of any real substance; it's just an attempt to bring it to an end, with him still on top as the teacher. He is the game-master, after all. In real academic and/or spiritual circles (or within an adult community) such cards are considered completely and totally out of bounds. They only work in guru and cultic environments. Ken, PLEASE, you are the one who needs to STOP.

Is there anyone at II with the courage to tell him this?....

The herd mentality that Wilber should concern himself with is the herd mentality he encourages in his young followers, the groupthink, the in-group versus out-group dynamic, the loading of the language with jargon and psychobabble, the arrogance, narcissism, and grandiosity.

It is truly wonderful that all of that cultic behavior is becoming so clear, through kw's own actions, that only people in complete denial could fail to see it.

**More** from kw:

I want to be hated for the real me! I am perfectly capable of generating massive irritation all by myself—I don't need your shadow to do it. So please do me the honor of hating the real me!

Yes, that is precisely what I have been doing, though the “hating” thing is still an open question.

Okay, jokes aside: Let's forgive and forget the past, and start afresh. And let's see who honestly wishes to deal with this, and who wants to continue gun-fighting their own shadows....

Both sides could use a little confession, repentance, and forgiveness. I can say that, right here and now, I fully forgive any and all hurt that has been inflicted on me by unfair and unwarranted accusations, criticisms, and condemnations. With full heart, I sincerely mean that.

The provably dishonest and/or professionally incompetent Wilber “forgives” his critics. Particularly the ones whose criticism is clearly warranted and inarguably valid, but which he can only deal with by absurdly pretending that he is being misunderstood by first-tier “morons” who have treated him unfairly.

And this man is the president of a **university**.

And, how generous of Wilber to offer his “forgiveness” to others ... *without asking, nay begging, for the same from them!* That is integral narcissism, in spades. (One is reminded of **Salieri**, at the end of *Amadeus*, blessing others in his newfound role as the patron saint of mediocrity.)

I really wish kw were joking about all that: The degree to which the Integral Emperor has become detached from reality, here, is truly astonishing. The eleventh of the integral Bullshit-

Herding Pictures: Door ajar. Light extinguished on porch. Nobody home.

Helen Titchen Beeth on kw:

Try as I might, having seen you and sat in your aura, (I was at the very first ITP—as it was then—seminar in December 2004—asked you a question about Europe) and heard your voice, I just have not been able to accept all the outraged finer feelings expressed on the London Integral list....

Remember back when kw was in the habit of ejaculating all over himself in endorsing Adi Da? He, too, had experienced only a few *darshans* or the like in the presence of Da Avatar. He has learned nothing since then, has he? Except to pull the same tricks himself, in presenting an appropriate “public face” when potential converts are watching.

Andrew Cohen will surely end up as one of Wilber’s few loyal friends when all is said and done—their reported dysfunctionalities are far too similar for them to not stand side-by-side against the evil, projecting, “green” world, until the end. Why, even the current issue of *What Is Enlightenment?* magazine, presciently, is largely devoted to the life’s work and Great Insights of their “favorite integral prophet.”

You knew it was just a matter of time until kw got anointed as a “prophet,” right?

\* \* \*

Wikipedia has this to say on the subject of **narcissism**:

While in regression, the person displays childish, immature behaviors. He feels that he is omnipotent, and misjudges his power and that of his opposition. He underestimates challenges facing him and pretends to be “Mr. Know-All.” His sensitivity to the needs and emotions of others and his ability to empathize with them deteriorate sharply. He becomes intolerably haughty and arrogant, with sadistic and paranoid tendencies. Above all, he then seeks unconditional admiration, even when others with more objective views perceive that he does not deserve it. He is preoccupied with fantastic, magical thinking and daydreams. In this mode he tends to exploit others, to envy them, and to be explosive.

That, of course, matches Wilber point-by-point. From his recent childish blogging, to his misjudging of his most cogent critics as “morons” compared to his own “brilliance,” to his know-it-all nature, to his insensitive “forgiving” of others (and simultaneous failure to ask for forgiveness himself) when he is clearly the one in the wrong, to his haughtiness and arrogance, to his paranoid (i.e., disproportionate to reality) feelings of being loathed and condemned, to his obvious need for undeserved unconditional admiration, to his certainty, from his own misinterpreted experiences, that paranormal phenomena and mystical winds exist—implying the magical ability of *his* thoughts to influence the world around him—and through to his unconscionable manipulation and exploitation of others to ensure his own “greatness.”

Completely consistent with that same diagnosis, Matthew Dallman has independently noted, of Wilber:

I have ... never met a more self-absorbed person....

Any real teacher is someone abundant in their help; in my experience, and according to accounts of several long-time associates, Wilber helps no one unless it serves to help him and his reputation....

It also turned out that what I thought was a think-tank [i.e., the Integral Institute] was, in reality, a company, which went on to produce products like any company would. Those products include self-help DVDs, for-pay websites promising exclusive access to him, as well as expensive seminars and experiential workshops. Essentially, the whole thing is to sell Wilber, even if advertised otherwise.

And to what may kw look forward, in his own “psychological development”?

A personality disorder arises only when repeated attacks on the obstacle continue to fail—especially if this recurrent failure happens during the formative stages (0-6 years of age). The contrast between the fantastic world (temporarily) occupied by the individual and the real world in which he keeps being frustrated (the grandiosity gap) is too acute to countenance for long. The dissonance gives rise to the unconscious “decision” to go on living in the world of fantasy, grandiosity and entitlement.

Of course, Wilber is blessed to not have to retreat into complete fantasy in order to live all that out: He has already created the “reality” of the Integral Institute in which to act out his delusions of greatness and entitlement (to unconditional admiration, etc.).

Len Oakes wrote an entire book (*Prophetic Charisma*) on the typically narcissistic personality structure of cult leaders. What we are seeing with kw these days is just par for the course and would, as Bauwens has noted, have happened eventually even without the recent “critical” provocation: Wilber was always an “institute” waiting to happen.

\* \* \*

On June 22, 2006, in the third installment of his “Wyatt Earp” series of blog postings, Wilber gave his best, yet still embarrassingly limping *arguments*, as to why his Integral Institute is supposedly not a cult:

Based on a year-long study of his and many other experiences, a study supported by the Center for the Study of New Religious Movements in Berkeley, we arrived at this 3-variable, 8-box grid, which has continued to be highly accurate in spotting and predicting cultic behavior, because it is based, not on making judgments like “it doesn’t allow criticism” (which is meaningless), but rather on several non-judgmental variables that have been found empirically to be associated with behavior that injures groups and individuals. (This stops people who don’t like a movement from labeling it cultic by coming up with checklists of things they don’t like, which are just tautological.) It was, and is indeed, a landmark publication.

[Well, a lot has happened over the past twenty years in the cult-studies field and elsewhere; what was (wrongly) regarded as being insightful then, hasn’t necessarily stood the test of time—you may have seen that pattern before with Wilber’s writings. Who in the cult-studies field actually uses the ideas in kw’s co-written *Spiritual Choices* today? No one that I’m aware of; I cannot recall having ever even seen the book cited, and have read it only because it is part of kw’s “canon” of supposedly “landmark” works.]

**I am glad to report that both the structure and beliefs of Integral Institute fall in the box (out of 8**

**boxes) that, in the past, has had the lowest number of cultic behaviors.**

I-I is not charismatic [but, you can be just as tightly bound by infallible teachings as by a charismatic leader; just ask any Catholic]; its teachings are not based on your relation to a person but on your relation to an idea [but see the above], namely AQUAL. If you also happen to like or love me, I very much appreciate it, but that's not what we do. We do not teach relationships to me, but rather how to learn, use, criticize, and apply AQUAL. And it's important to realize that **AQUAL is simply one version of integral**. There are all sorts of other integral philosophies, integral forums, and arenas where somebody can play if they reject our approach, and I support the existence of those other forums and always have.

Yes, you are welcome to go and “play” with some other guru or organization if you cannot take the heat at I-I, or if you are simply too unevolved to understand the Great Work they imagine themselves to be doing. “So long, Failure. You never even existed here.” Ask **Matthew Dallman**: “I was the first composer featured on that site, but any reference to me was removed after I resigned from IU.”

Of course, I already have a whole chapter in STG pointedly titled “**Spiritual Choices**,” debunking the false claims to excellence of Wilber’s book of the same name. So, have the “8 boxes” of Wilber and his co-authors really “continued to be highly accurate in spotting and predicting cultic behavior”? Not even remotely. From STG, as published well over a year ago:

Incredibly, most of the “enlightened” individuals and ashrams included herein would have been considered to fall close to the “safest” of the categories in the typologies of Dick Anthony (1987), et al., via the *Spiritual Choices* book. That is, nearly all of the spiritual teachers we have met thus far (not including the leaders of the Hare Krishnas, Moonies, or Jim Jones) were:

- Monistic rather than dualistic—i.e., working toward realizing a state of inherent conscious oneness with all things, as opposed to placing God as inexorably separate from creation and approachable only through a unique savior such as

Jesus, with the failure to follow the appropriate savior leading to eternal damnation (exceptions: none)

- Multilevel—i.e., having a “distinct hierarchy of spiritual authority,” in gnosis versus teachings versus interpretations (unilevel exceptions, which “confuse real and pseudo-transcendence of mundane consciousness,” include Findhorn, Scientology, Rajneesh and TM [notwithstanding that the Maharishi’s teachings themselves are rooted in the Vedas]), and
- Non-charismatic—i.e., emphasizing techniques of spiritual transformation (e.g., meditation), rather than relying on a personal relationship between disciple and teacher as the means of evolution/enlightenment of the former (exceptions: Ramakrishna, Meher Baba, Neem Karoli Baba, Adi Da, Muktananda, Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, Jetsunma, Cohen, and Sai Baba and Chinmoy to lesser degrees)

Trungpa, Satchidananda and Zen Buddhism were all explicitly placed in Anthony’s “safest” category—of “multilevel, technical monism.” In his second-safest grouping (“multilevel, charismatic monism”) we find Meher Baba, Neem Karoli Baba, Muktananda, Chinmoy and Adi Da.

If those are “safe” spiritual leaders and communities, though, one shudders to think what “dangerous” ones might look like. One’s jaw drops further to find that, as late as 2003, Wilber has still been recommending *Spiritual Choices* to others as a means of distinguishing “safe” groups from potentially “problematic” ones. That such recommendations are coming years after the central thesis (as documented above) of the text has been wholly discredited in practice, is astounding.

Foiled by the arguments of Anthony, et al., I myself had endorsed *Spiritual Choices* at one point in a previous work. Obviously, however, my opinion of that book and of its authors’ ideas has matured significantly since then. Indeed, by this point I very much regret that previous naïvete on my part, particularly when it is coupled with ideas such as the following, from the same group of “experts”:

[Tom] Robbins and [Dick] Anthony's own contribution [to *In Gods We Trust* (1982)] includes a superb introduction—perhaps the best single chapter in the anthology; a complete and devastating critique of the brainwashing model; and an insightful report on the Meher Baba community (Wilber, 1983b).

The relevant meager, twelve-page, utterly simplistic chapter on brainwashing, however, is anything but a “complete” critique, much less a “devastating” one. Whatever one may think of the brainwashing and mind-control debate, how could a five-thousand word treatment of that complex subject possibly be “complete”? Entire books have been written from both sides of the controversy without exhausting it; entire Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication designations exist for the subject! Even if the short paper in question were the greatest ever written, *it could not possibly be “complete”!*

For myself, I have found the chapter in question to be utterly unimpressive. Indeed, it shows near-zero understanding of the psychological factors influencing one's “voluntary joining,” and later difficulty in leaving, such environments. There is nothing whatsoever “devastating” about the text, whether one agrees or disagrees with Anthony's overall perspective....

For a revealing example of Anthony's own wilber-esque attempts at critiquing other scholars' ideas, see Zablocki (2001).

If Wilber cannot even intelligently evaluate Andrew Cohen's community, well after the publication of both the *Mother Of God* and *Enlightenment Blues* exposés, not to mention the *WHAT Enlightenment??!* blog, is it any surprise that he cannot (or will not) see his own cult-leader behaviors in their real light?

Further, it is well-known that destructive cults also form around political and psychological leaders. In those cases, the “important” dichotomies of monistic vs. dualistic, and of multilevel vs. unilevel, are completely absent. That is, Wilber and Anthony's “matrix” reduces to simply whether the group follows techniques of spiritual transformation (e.g., meditation), or relies on a personal relationship between disciple and teacher! So, in any non-spiritual context, their “landmark” contributions there reduce to merely *two boxes*. Talk about binary, black-or-white thinking!

Even if the matrix worked in terms of reliably evaluating spiritual communities (it doesn't), it would be all-but-useless in any of the other contexts in which one needs to evaluate whether or not a given group is a destructive cult. That is truly pathetic, and should be a glaring indication that the criteria given by Wilber and Anthony for spotting potentially destructive spiritual groups have little relevance to reality.

And talk about tautologies—Wilber using his own past theorizings to “prove” that his current community is okay! As if those previous theorizings (by himself and the utterly misled “cult-apologist” **Dick Anthony**) weren't created from within exactly the same psychological blinders which have produced his current community!

*If* “it doesn't allow criticism” is a meaningless criterion for defining what a cult is, then how about “it doesn't allow persons to make competent, thorough and valid criticisms of its leaders' teachings or character, which the leaders cannot refute, while still permitting the questioners to remain members in good standing of the community”?

More from Wilber:

After part 1 was up (and before part 2 was put up), one individual posted statements urging everybody to contact some of the universities that I-I is in partnership with, telling them that they should re-consider whether that is the kind of partnership they wanted.

I wasn't the person explicitly advocating that course of action; but I do fully support the idea.

KW again:

But notice this. Ordinarily you would tell somebody that their capacity to love is wonderful, something to be nurtured and increased. The more they love, the better. EXCEPT if they love me. If they feel any sort of love for me and say so, then they are a cultic idiot. So apparently if anybody loves me, they are sick.

If, after becoming aware of Meyerhoff's and my own work (etc.) in exposing Wilber for the manipulative fool that he is, you *still don't get what kw is up to*, well, then yes, I cannot see any other conclusion than that there must be powerful factors in your own psychology blinding you to that reality—and those are indeed some

of the same factors which get people into, and life-long stuck in, even the worst recognized cults. And if, after having had it demonstrated to you that a person's "philosophy" is filled with "half-truths and lies," and that even with those gross and inexcusable violations of truth it cannot manage to be self-consistent, you still continue to accept that worldview as being valid ... well, in any other field of knowledge you certainly would not be regarded as thinking clearly or competently.

Nevertheless, those of us who have been through cults **ourselves** don't generally refer to other people, who in the absence of proper debunking of the leaders may simply be as gullible as we once were, as being "cultic idiots." (In the cult-studies field, with its emphasis on coercive persuasive, a.k.a. "brainwashing," they would *never* refer to followers in that way.) I have indeed used the phrase "integral idiots" to describe followers of Wilber who go out intent on teaching (or censoring) me, for example, without having first done their research; hell, I have even referred to the same people as "dumb FOKs" (Fans of Ken). But that is very different from viewing anyone as being a "cultic idiot" simply for "loving" Wilber.

If you can love a raging narcissist, who by all believable reports will "love" you back only so long as you are useful to him, more power to you. But even then, don't get suckered into his "theories," because as soon as you go back to primary sources to verify their supporting claims, it all falls apart, and the dishonesties and/or professional incompetence of their author become obvious for anyone with eyes to see.

By all means "love the sinner" if you can. But far too many of the individuals who have recently been fawningly expressing their "love" for kw are, I think, also "loving the sin," i.e., lapping up the bullshit and cultic manipulation in which Wilber has been overtly indulging, and correspondingly being utterly unwilling or unable to evaluate that critically, and see it for what it really is. Overall, that is indeed extremely cultic behavior, both on the part of the leader and his followers.

As anyone familiar with Wilber's work knows, the *context* in which such fawning "love" is expressed matters immensely; kw "skillfully" omits that fact from his above "analysis." The problem is not that his followers "love" him and openly express that sentiment in spite of his glaring character flaws and the near-worthlessness of his "theories." Rather, the worrisome thing is how they feel the need to gushingly express how they were moved to

tears by his great and “compassionate” teaching methods in the very midst of being blatantly manipulated, with that unsettling reaction being presented as proof of their own “second-tier,” “saved” status in the unquestioning community. And yes, when “love” is expressed in that context it is indeed disturbingly cultic.

All of that is a far cry from Wilber’s simplistic, sadly manipulative and narcissistically paranoid framing of the issue as being “if anybody loves me, they are sick.” But then, kw didn’t get to where he is today by paying attention to nuances, did he? Indeed, his theories could not exist were he to competently and honestly represent the details of their component disciplines and perspectives.