

SPIRITUALITY AND CULTS: AN EXPERIENTIAL ANALYSIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Figure 1: The Anthony Typology	7
Figure 2: The Wilber Integral Model	8
Figure 3: The Bonewits Cult Danger Scale	10
Introduction: Notes	12 An
Experiential Integral Tri-Perspective Analysis Of Modern Religions	13
Scientology	13
Est	17
The Unification Church	22
Divine Light Mission	26
Gurdjieff	30
Eckankar	35
Self-Realization Fellowship	39
A Course In Miracles	43
Conversations With God	47
Avatar	51
Reiki	55
Neopaganism	60
Tikkun	64
Kripalu Yoga Center	68
Omega Retreat Center	71
Twelve Step Support Groups	75
AFF	79
Summary Of Results And Concluding Statement	83
New Age Spiritual Organizations: Notes	89

INTRODUCTION

The motivation for writing this paper was initially directly related to my involvement with Ken Wilber's extensive philosophical organization "Integral Institute", for possible use in the integral study of new religions thru Integral University. Ken Wilber's Integral Four Quadrant model, which I will refer to as encompassing the realms of Intentional, Behavioral, Cultural, and Social, will be a prime ingredient in what I refer to as my "experiential analysis.". The Intentional and Behavioral quadrants comprise the inner and outer dynamics within the individual, and the Cultural and Social quadrants can be thought of as the inner and outer dynamics of the individual in relation to his/her society. Wilber's Integral Four Quadrant model is described in detail in most of his more recent books [1]. In addition, I will be making use of the analysis of new religious movements given by Dick Anthony and Bruce Ecker, referred to as the Anthony Typology, and described in their 1987 book "Spiritual Choices", which is edited by Dick Anthony, Bruce Ecker, and Ken Wilber [2]. I will also be utilizing the Cult Danger Evaluation Frame rating scale given by Isaac Bonewits in his 1971 book "Real Magic" [3], which will serve as a quantitative comparison of all the religious groups I will be discussing. However, although these philosophical research tools will be made use of, the basis of my analysis will remain my own subjective experience with the new religious movements that I am writing about, which I will refer to as either modern religions or new age spiritual organizations. I believe that there is a rich and meaningful kind of learning about both the beneficial as well as the dangerous ingredients inherent in modern religions that is available only thru delving into one's personal experiences. As I have been a longtime explorer of modern religions as my own personal journey of spiritual seeking, my main purpose is to convey to people what I have learned thru my personal experiences, and I refer to the analysis I am undertaking in this way as an "experiential analysis."

In this paper I will be incorporating my personal experiential learnings into a philosophical model that I greatly admire and respect, which is Ken Wilber's Integral Four Quadrant model. I strongly encourage you to pursue your study of any of the modern religions I am describing that interests you, by engaging in your own experiences (when appropriate and relatively safe) and thru reading further about them in books that are nowadays easily available, a number of which I list in the New Age Spiritual Organizations Notes. The modern religions that have had the most major impact upon me are Scientology, Avatar, Neopaganism, Conversations With God, and Reiki. Other modern religions that I have experienced and will be discussing include The Unification Church (The Moonies), Divine Light Mission, est, Gurdjieff, Eckankar, A Course In Miracles, and Self Realization Fellowship. I will also be applying my tri-perspective analysis to five organizations that although are generally not considered to be modern religions per se, may prove to be a highly valuable comparison with the modern religious groups that I will be analyzing. These

five groups are Tikkun, which is an extremely liberal, inclusive, and peace oriented primarily Jewish organization; Omega Retreat Center, which is a well known new age retreat center in New York State, Kripalu Yoga Center, which is a spiritually oriented yoga and retreat center in western Massachusetts, Twelve Step Support Groups, which are worldwide emotional/spiritual peer support groups based upon the philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous, and AFF (American Family & Friends), which is a worldwide cults awareness and information organization. I would like to make it clear that all statements expressed in this paper regarding new age spiritual organizations or modern religions are merely my own opinions; based primarily upon my experiences in these organizations.

When I use the term “cult” I am referring to a gradient scale of a number of different characteristics, as described by many authors, and I am specifically using the description by Isaac Bonewits in “Real Magic” (please see Figure 3). It is not a matter of whether a particular modern religion is or is not a cult, but of where this modern religion places in what I will refer to as the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale. In this way a relatively objective description can be made of the characteristics we will take to mean a high level of cult danger. Although the Bonewits Cult Danger scale, Anthony Typology, and Wilber Integral Model will all be utilized in this tri-perspective analysis, I find that these three perspectives are addressing very different viewpoints in regard to describing the cult dangers of modern religions. Essentially I find that both the Anthony Typology and Wilber Integral Model are more based upon a comprehensive theory than the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale (the Wilber Integral Model being tremendously comprehensive). However, the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale is exceptionally useful and organic for the purpose of giving a concrete illustration of the actual behaviors that take place in the modern religions being described. For all three perspectives that I am using, I make the qualification “relatively objective” because although I am utilizing concrete rating scales in regard to specific behaviors of a modern religion, I am still relying upon my own experiential framework at the foundation, which is of-course my own subjective experience. This combination of subjective experience and objective analysis is very much at the basis of Wilber’s Integral Theory Model, and is at the cornerstone of what he describes as a “higher order science” in one of his earlier books, “Eye To Eye” [1]. Lastly, although Wilber’s Integral Model is intimately related to the Four Quadrant perspective of inter-connecting the Intentional, Behavioral, Cultural, and Social domains in the form of an Integral Transformative Practice (or ITP) [4], it only makes sense to me to compare the modern religions I am writing about in regard to their high level, Four Quadrant ITP potential if they have a sufficient number of positive characteristics to begin with, and do not rate as a serious cult danger, especially on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale. For otherwise I am afraid that their four quadrant ITP potential amounts to nothing more than what mathematicians like to refer to as the “empty set.” In what follows I will briefly describe the three models that I will be using: the Anthony Typology, the Wilber Integral Model, and the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale.

3)

The Anthony Typology is an eight cell matrix that represents interaction amongst three dual

characteristics of new religious movements (in the terminology of Anthony, Ecker, Wilber; see Figure 1). These three dual characteristics are Monistic/Dualistic, Technical/Charismatic, and Multilevel/Unilevel. A brief summary of these terms are as follows (c.f. [5] for more information). “The distinction between monistic and dualistic world views corresponds to a distinction between Eastern and Western religions. In Monistic world views, all individuals are inherently one with the Godhead and will ultimately enjoy that condition consciously. Dualistic world views, however, maintain that not all individuals ultimately achieve salvation; one must qualify by surviving a competitive salvational ordeal or selection process. Those who do not will receive eternal damnation.” In regard to the Technical/Charismatic dimension, Anthony and Ecker describe the distinction as follows: “These categories indicate the nature of a group’s practice. In Technical groups, techniques--any repetitive mental or physical processes that can be taught through explicit articulation and instruction--are the basis of seeking spiritual transformation. Common examples include most forms of meditation (such as mantra meditation and visualization meditation), chanting, hatha yoga, and pranayama (breath yoga). In charismatic groups, spiritual attainment is sought primarily through direct, personal relationship with the leader. Because the leader is regarded as a direct link with or embodiment of divine authority, knowledge, and love, contact with such a person is itself considered transformative, particularly sustained contact involving devotion, love, remembrance, attention, and obedience.” Regarding the Multilevel/Unilevel dimension: “These terms describe a group’s sensibilities regarding the nature of spiritual transformation and attainment....Unilevel groups err toward trivializing and misreading the nature of genuine spiritual transformation.....groups with unilevel sensibilities confuse the attainment of authentic spiritual transcendence or realization with the attainment of mundane psychological satisfaction, inducement of special inner sensations or moods, commitment to a certain set of beliefs.....Multilevel groups do not confuse mundane and transcendental consciousness and so foster genuine spiritual inner development-----even the lower levels of true spiritual transformation involve a radical, permanent change in the sort of being that one perceives and feels oneself to be. One experiences that one’s existence is independent of the physical body, for example.” For Anthony and Ecker, the most serious cult dangers are in the cell which represents Unilevel/Dualistic/Charismatic, in which they include Unification Church, Synanon (authoritarian anti-drug program popular in the 1970s), and People’s Temple (Jonestown tragic mass suicide/murder in the 1970s). On the other end of the spectrum, they expect generally favorable characteristics to be most common in the cells Monistic/Multilevel/Charismatic and Monistic/Multilevel/Technical. It is interesting that a number of the gurus in these categories (for example Da Free John, also known by Adi Da and other names), Chogyam Trungpa, Baba Muktananda, Meher Baba, Sri Chinmoy, etc.) have been the source of much negative publicity regarding both their authentic spiritual practices as well as their ethical practices, especially in the cases of Trungpa and Da Free John/Adi Da [6].

4)

It is also interesting that both Anthony and Ecker are devotees of Meher Baba, and the Charismatic

dimension is considered by them to be of the highest context if an authentic guru can be found. Suffice it to say that I do not agree with them on this point, as I believe there are numerous problems and pitfalls with the Charismatic dimension, but I still find the Anthony Typology to be both informative and useful, in context and combination with other schemes.

Ken Wilber's Integral model is a very different kind of scheme from the Anthony Typology, as Wilber's Four Quadrant Integral model is designed to be all encompassing, and comes quite close to achieving its purpose, in my opinion. However, as Wilber himself points out in his essay in "Spiritual Choices": "The Spectrum Model," which is his early precursor of his Integral model that focuses upon the Intentional (individual) and Cultural quadrants, is highly consistent with the Anthony Typology in regard to describing the cult dangers of what they refer to as new religious movements. The primary relationship of Wilber's Integral Model to a description of the cult dangers of new religious movements can be simplified by a generalization of Wilber's three general categories: pre-rational, rational, and trans-rational in the Intentional and Cultural domains. The generalization I have in mind is to add a fourth category in-between pre-rational and rational, which I will call "pseudo-rational." This new category is essentially not at all new in Wilber's original model, as it can be viewed as the mythic level of consciousness, which Wilber places in-between the magical level and the rational level, and would include our dominant religious institutions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, etc. I would particularly like to be able to describe the modern religions that I have experienced as engaging in this kind of mythological thinking, though in a seemingly quite modern--or even "scientific" manner. However, the level of consciousness I am referring to is anything but scientific; in some cases it can be considered "pseudo-scientific," and in general I will refer to it as

"pseudo-rational." Wilber discusses his ideas about confusing the pre-rational and trans-rational levels of consciousness in his essay "The Pre-Trans Fallacy" in "Eye To Eye" [1], and he describes in much more detail the specific stages of archaic, magical, mythic, rational, psychic (or vision logic), subtle, causal, and non-dual in many of his books [7]. In his more recent work he also describes levels of development in the Behavioral (individual) as well as Social dimensions, which interact with the Intentional and Cultural dimensions to comprise Wilber's Tour de Force Integral Four Quadrant model.

In regard to the most useful aspects of Wilber's Integral model for our purposes, we will use my generalization of Wilber's more simplified model, i.e. the pre-rational/pseudo-rational/rational/trans-rational spectrum to describe the levels of consciousness of the groups that I will be discussing.. Wilber also describes in his essay in "Spiritual Choices" the likelihood that a positive authentic group, in addition to being trans-rational or "transformative," and not pre-rational (and I will take the liberty of adding "not pseudo-rational"), will anchor its "legitimacy" in a tradition as opposed to a sudden rise to power and prominence, and has an authority that is "phase-specific," meaning that the guru is a guide and mentor and

has the goal of transferring his/her (mostly "his") authority to others, once the appropriate high level of consciousness is achieved by others [8]. In regard to Wilber's more current Four Quadrant Integral model, as previously stated I will be making use of the ideas behind the four quadrant personal integration of an ITP (Integral Transformative Practice) as described in the book "The Life We Are Given" by George Leonard and Michael Murphy as well as by Wilber in "A Theory Of Everything" [9] and some of his other more recent books, to further evaluate the cult dangers of the modern religions that I have experienced. However, I will once again emphasize the stipulation that this ITP analysis only makes sense if the modern religion has a high enough rating on all three models to begin with. For example, after reading the Scientology section, you may ask yourself the following question: how well integrated is a Scientologist in regard to truly being part of the culture in which he/she lives aside from his/her specific Scientology involvement? Finally, in regard to a description of Wilber's four quadrant levels of the spectrum in his Integral model, I have taken the liberty of adding on the higher levels in the Intentional (individual) quadrant, as Wilber does not generally list these in his books (see Figure 2).

We now come to what will be pragmatically the most useful scheme to describe the cult dangers of the modern religions I will be discussing, which is Isaac Bonewits' Cult Danger Evaluation Frame which I will refer to as the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, as described in his book "Real Magic" (see Figure3). This is a rating scale from 1 to 10 (1 is lowest and 10 is highest) for 15 characteristics of cults, including items such as internal control, dogma, recruitment, sexual manipulation, censorship, endorsement of violence, etc. There have been numerous articles and books written in the field of cult studies in the past 30 years [10], and many rating scales have been utilized to engage in research about cults. However, I find Bonewits' cult danger scale to be quite simple to use, and I believe it immediately gets to the heart of the matter in regard to the dangerous cult characteristics of a modern religion. "Real Magic" is by no means an anti-cult book; it is a classic book in the movement of Neopaganism, which is one of the modern religions I have written quite favorably about [11]. I find it refreshing to utilize a cult danger scale in a book that does not have its primary purpose to expose the cult dangers of new religious movements. At any rate, I believe that the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale will be extremely useful in giving us an organic and concrete illustration of the cult characteristics of the modern religions I am describing, and I will be arriving at a cult danger "number" for each one of the modern religions I describe, based upon the average rating number across the 15 cult characteristics on this scale. It is quite possible that a modern religion can be in one of the "safer" cells of the Anthony Typology, such as Multilevel/Monism, or be placed on the trans-rational level in Wilber's Integral Model, and yet display a number of serious danger rankings in the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale. From what I have read and seen about Da Free John/Adi Da [12], I would say that Da Free John/Adi Da is a good illustration of this occurring, although certainly Da Free John/Adi Da would fail Wilber's criteria of anchoring his legitimacy in a tradition as well as being engaged in a phase-specific

6)

authority. But both the Anthony Typology and Wilber Integral Model give us useful theoretical models of

how a study of the cult dangers of modern religions can be approached. Used in conjunction with a model such as the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, we have a dynamic interplay of criteria to measure in a relatively objective way the cult dangers of modern religions.

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MULTILEVEL MONISTIC TECHNICAL

MULTILEVEL DUALISTIC TECHNICAL

MULTIILEVEL MONISTIC CHARISMATIC

MULTILEVEL DUALISTIC CHARISMATIC

-

UNIILEVEL MONISTIC TECHNICAL

UNILEVEL DUALISTIC TECHNICAL

UNILEVEL MONISTIC CHARISMATIC

UNILEVEL DUALISTIC CHARISMATIC

FIGURE 2: THE WILBER FOUR QUADRANT INTEGRAL MODEL

QUADRANT 1: UPPER LEFT
INTERIOR-INDIVIDUAL
(INTENTIONAL)

QUADRANT 2: UPPER RIGHT
EXTERIOR-INDIVIDUAL
(BEHAVIORAL)

PREHENSION	ATOMS
IRRITABILITY	MOLECULES
SENSATION	PROKARYOTES
PERCEPTION	EUKARYOTES
IMPULSE	NEURONAL ORGANISMS
EMOTION	NEURAL CORD
SYMBOLS	REPTILIAN BRAIN STEM
CONCEPTS	LIMBIC SYSTEM
CONCRETE OPERATIONAL	NEOCORTEX (TRIUNE BRAIN)
FORMAL OPERATIONAL	COMPLEX NEOCORTEX
VISION-LOGIC	SF1
PSYCHIC	SF2
SUBTLE	SF3
CAUSAL	(SF1, SF2, and SF3 are postulated as
NON-DUAL	higher order exterior structures)

(continued on next page)

QUADRANT 3: LOWER LEFT
INTERIOR-COLLECTIVE
(CULTURAL)

PHYSICAL
PLEROMATIC
PROTOPLASMIC
VEGETATIVE
LOCOMOTIVE
UROBORIC
TYPHONIC
ARCHAIC
MAGIC
MYTHIC
RATIONAL
CENTAURIC

QUADRANT 4: LOWER RIGHT
EXTERIOR-COLLECTIVE
(SOCIAL)

GALAXIES
PLANETS
GAIA SYSTEM
HETEROTROPHIC ECOSYSTEMS
SOCIETIES WITH DIVISION OF LABOR
GROUPS/FAMILIES
TRIBES (FORAGING)
TRIBAL/VILLAGE (HORTICULTURAL)
EARLY STATE (AGRARIAN)
NATION STATE (INDUSTRIAL)
PLANETARY (INFORMATIONAL)

NOTE: In Wilber's model there is a generic correspondence between the interior and exterior quadrants for the individual and collective domains respectively; however, this correspondence is not meant to be an exact one-to-one correspondence, but rather a general indication..

FIGURE 3: THE BONEWITS CULT DANGER SCALE

1. INTERNAL CONTROL: amount of internal political power exercised by leader(s) over members
2. WISDOM CLAIMED: by leader(s); amount of infallibility declared about decisions.
3. WISDOM CREDITED: to leaders by members; amount of trust in decisions made by leader(s).
4. DOGMA: rigidity of reality concepts taught; of amount of doctrinal inflexibility.
5. RECRUITING: emphasis put on attracting new members, amount of proselytizing.
6. FRONT GROUPS: number of subsidiary groups using different name from that of main group.
7. WEALTH: amount of money and/or property desired or obtained; emphasis on members' donations.
8. POLITICAL POWER: amount of external political influence desired or obtained.
9. SEXUAL MANIPULATION: of members by leader(s); amount of control over the lives of members.
10. CENSORSHIP: amount of control over members' access to outside opinions on group, its doctrines or leader(s).
11. DROPOUT CONTROL: intensity of efforts directed at preventing or returning dropouts.
12. ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE: when used by or for the group or its leader(s).
13. PARANOIA: amount of fear concerning real or imagined enemies; perceived power of opponents.

(continued on next page)

11)

FIGURE 3 (continued)

14. GRIMNESS: amount of disapproval concerning jokes about the group, its doctrines or leaders(s).

15. SURRENDER OF WILL: emphasis on members not having to be responsible for personal decisions.

RATING SCALE

LOW

HIGH

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12)

INTRODUCTION: NOTES

- 1) See for example "Sex, Ecology, Spirituality" (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), "Integral Psychology" (Boston: Shambhala, 2000), "A Brief History Of Everything" (Boston: Shambhala, 2000),

- “The Eye Of Spirit” (Boston: Shambhaala, 2001), “A Theory Of Everything” (Boston: Shambhala, 2001), “Eye To Eye” (Boston: Shambhala, 1983, 2001).
- 2) Edited by Dick Anthony, Bruce Ecker, Ken Wilber, “Spiritual Choices” (New York: Paragon House, 1987).
 - 3) Issac Bonewits, “Real Magic” (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weisner, 1971, 1989).
 - 4) See George Leonard & Michael Murphy, “The Life We Are Given:” (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1995) for a detailed description of an Integral Transformative Practice.
 - 5) See “Spiritual Choices: Part I: The Anthony Typology: A Framework for Assessing Spiritual and Consciousness Groups”, by Dick Anthony and Bruce Ecker.
 - 6) See Geoffrey Falk, “Stripping The Gurus” (www.angelin.com/trek/geoffreyfalk/blog/blog.html, 2005) for a particularly scathing expose of these groups and many others.
 - 7) See for example all the books mentioned in note [1].
 - 8) See “The Spectrum Model” chapter in “Eye To Eye” for more explanation regarding the meanings and distinctions between “legitimacy” and “authenticity,” “translation” and “transformation,” etc.
 - 9) See note [1] and note [4] for these book references..
 - 10) See for example Margaret Singer & Janja Lalich, “Cults In Our Midst” (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), Steve Hassan, “Combating Cult Mind Control” (Rochester, Vermont: Park Street Press, 1988, 1990), Steve Hassan, “Releasing The Bonds” (Somerville, MA: Freedom Of Mind Press, 2000), Nori Muster, “Betrayal Of The Spirit” (Chicago, University Of Illinois Press, 1997, 2001), Michael Langone (editor), “Recovery From Cults” (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1993).
 - 11) See my essay “On Neopaganism” in Paganet News Journal, Beltane 2004 issue..
 - 12) See for example “Stripping The Gurus” (note [6]).

I will now analyze Scientology, the religion created by L. Ron Hubbard based upon its precursor of “Dianetics” in 1950, in regard to the measurement vehicles of the Anthony Typology, the Wilber Integral Model, and the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, based upon what I have learned about Scientology from my own experiences with them in the 1970s, as described in my book “Modern Religions: An Experiential Analysis And Expose” [1]. The interested reader can easily find out more information about Scientology [2].

To begin with, in the Anthony Typology Scientology is placed in the Monistic/Unilevel/Technical cell, with overlap into the Monistic/Unilevel/Charismatic cell. However, based upon my own experiences with Scientology I do have some concerns about both of these classifications. This classification scheme does become rather vague and not especially illustrative for a number of reasons. Scientology claims to be open to all people, and they certainly proselytize to the world--quite successfully for that matter. But they also very much belong in an Us vs. Them category of Scientology vs. non-Scientology, one illustration of which can be seen by their term “wog,” an abbreviation meaning “wise old gentleman,” used as a derogatory condescending label for a non-Scientologist [3]. Scientologists all have the potential to go “Clear” and ‘OT” (Operating Thetan) [4], whereas non-Scientologists are doomed to live their lives governed by their “reactive minds” and chained by their “engrams.” Does this not seem like the makings of a modern religion that smacks of Dualistic in the extreme? Which is it--Monistic or Dualistic? Perhaps the choice of category itself is the problem here, as Anthony and Ecker concede when they initially place Scientology in the Technical cell--stating that there is also overlap in the Charismatic cell. And they are quite correct, as along with the overpowering and overwhelming amount of Scientology technical materials there is the awe inspiring continuous presence of Scientology founder and guru L. Ron Hubbard, whose picture is all over the Scientology surroundings, constantly watching over each and every Scientologist in his/her Scientology endeavors. Until his death in the mid 1980s, Hubbard would furnish the whole Scientology organization with continuous detailed memos full of instructions on how a Scientologist should behave in both personal as well as Scientology ways. Yes--extremely high technology and extremely high charisma--these are the hallmarks of Scientology. And I certainly do agree in general with Anthony and Ecker that Scientology belongs in the cell of Unilevel as opposed to Multilevel, signifying that what one experiences from Scientology is not authentic spirituality, but rather a psychological catharsis that is on a lower level than true spiritual realization. However, although I would not argue with this general classification, in all fairness I must question exactly where one can draw the line here. As much as I have written about the dangers of

(14)

Scientology (c.f. [1]), I cannot honestly claim that it is not possible for someone experiencing a cathartic release of engrams in the process of “auditing” (Scientology growth therapy) [5] to experience a more spiritual state as well. My main point is that at least for the case of Scientology, something more concrete and revealing than the Anthony Typology is needed to accurately describe its cult dangers.

In examining the Wilber Integral Model for Scientology, the first question is where exactly is Scientology in the pre-rational/pseudo-rational/rational/trans-rational continuum? Certainly Scientology engages the rational mind in an impressive display of heightened intellectual activity (c.f. [1], [2]). However, is this embracing of the rational mind truly what Wilber refers to when he writes about the logical/rational level of consciousness? Free logical/rational inquiry is epitomized by the extensive high level logical thought processes exhibited by mathematicians, scientists, philosophers, lawyers, etc. When it comes to having ideas other than those espoused by Scientology, from my experience there is a Scientology ruling that these ideas are not allowed to be expressed, and are even monitored by the Hubbard E-Meter, a type of Scientology lie detector and auditing physiological machine [6]. So does Scientology engage on the rational level of consciousness? In my experience, although Scientology is rational up to a point, it goes rather backwards to more primitive mythological levels of consciousness. Some of the descriptions of the OT.post-Clear levels do sound to me like quite far-fetched science-fiction accounts of stories of other galaxies, but unfortunately many people spend thousands of dollars to gain these levels of experience [7]. As I understand it, the essential way to distinguish between pre-rational and trans-rational is to determine if the rational mind is fully engaged and “transcended” [8], or instead bypassed and regressed into a lower level of consciousness. I contend that it is this lower regression quality that Scientology practices, but to be generous and give Scientology the benefit of the doubt for its undeniably strong focus upon the mind, I shall put Scientology in the pseudo-rational category and not the pre-rational category. The overwhelming success which Scientology has experienced throughout the world in the first half century of its existence may be substantial evidence that many people do not view Scientology as a pre-rational level of consciousness (of-course a Scientologist does not view Scientology as a pseudo-rational level of consciousness either). But for any free mind who has been through and out of Scientology, I believe it is quite evident that Scientology is a very obvious example of what I have defined to be a pseudo-rational level of consciousness. In regard to Wilber’s other criteria, I believe the picture is even more clear. In my opinion, the legitimacy of Scientology is something that was invented by L. Ron Hubbard and not part of any continuing tradition. The name “Scientology” itself suggests modernism in its very core. And Wilber’s category of phase-specific authority is quite obviously completely violated in the case of L. Ron Hubbard and Scientology. L. Ron Hubbard’s writings are the gospel of Scientology, beginning with his first book that launched Dianetics in 1950: “Dianetics: The Modern Science Of Mental Health” (c.f. [2]). Hubbard died in the 1980s, but he is now worshipped as a bona-fide perfect human being in the company of Jesus and Buddha [9].

15)

When we examine Scientology in regard to the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, the picture finally becomes quite concrete. As I promised in the Introduction, we shall emerge with an actual mathematical number to describe the cult dangers of Scientology and to compare it to the cult dangers of the other modern religions that I am writing about. Of-course this is based upon my own ratings of Scientology, which is based

primarily upon my subjective experiences with them in the 1970s, but it will at least give us a sense of how a more objective concrete description of the cult dangers of a modern religion can be made. Based upon my own experience and knowledge of Scientology, here are my ratings; once again the ratings are from 1 to 10 with 1 the lowest and 10 the highest; see figure 3 for a verbatim description by Bonewits of his “Cult Danger Evaluation Frame” listed in “Real Magic” (page 215).

Internal Control	10
Wisdom Claimed	10
Wisdom Credited	10
Dogma	10
Recruiting:	10
Front Groups	8
Wealth	10
Political Power	7
Sexual Manipulation	5
Censorship	10
Dropout Control	8
Endorsement Of Violence	5
Paranoia	10
Grimness	10
Surrender Of Will	7
TOTAL	130
AVERAGE	8.67 (our average ratings will all be approximated to two decimal places)

We thus have our first numerical cult danger score. Scientology comes in at the extremely high cult danger rating of 8.67, though a few words of explanation may be in order for how I rated Scientology in some of the categories. All the “10” ratings clearly demonstrate my perceptions of Scientology in these categories. The “8” rating for Dropout Control refers only to those dropouts who do not publicly voice their complaints about Scientology; for dropouts who go public with exposes, the rating is 10+. In regard to

16)

the “5” rating on sexual manipulation, although I am not aware of any blatant sexual manipulations in Scientology, it is drilled into Scientologists that a non-Scientologist needs to be converted, especially one whom you are married to (once again from my own experiences with Scientology). In regard to Endorsement of Violence, actual physical violence is not something that has been concretely linked to Scientology, only alluded to and investigated. However, mental violence in regard to lawsuits, harassment,

spreading of false rumors with the intent of destroying a person's reputation as well as mental health, etc. (from my own experiences as well as readings about Scientology) would be a 10+. Surrender Of Will is also a tricky category, as Scientology certainly supports its celebrity stars in continuing and extending their careers, such as John Travolta and Tom Cruise, as this strongly serves to benefit Scientology. However, the common practices of Scientology in my involvement in the 1970s was to encourage Scientologists to join staff and serve 2.5 and 5 year contracts, in which surrender of will to Scientology and L. Ron Hubbard was very much at the crux of what transpired (c.f. [1], [2]) (once again from the perspective of my own experiences). In regard to the "8" rating for Front Groups, Scientology does have a number of front groups, such as Hubbard business colleges and the Scientology take-over of the Cults Awareness Network (from what has been reported in AFF), but there are modern religions that I believe promote the front group orchestration even more fully, such as the Unification Church. I would make a similar statement comparing the Unification Church to Scientology in regard to Political Power; however, there are forms of political power, such as Scientology's attacks upon the profession of psychiatry, in which they most certainly deserve a 10+ rating (in my opinion). But enough said about Scientology, as we shall now proceed to our second modern religion for relatively objective analysis, which is Werner Erhard's est (officially spelled with small letters) organization, prominent in the 1970s and 1980s.

17)

EST

I did the est training in New York City in 1977, a few months after I left Scientology. Werner Erhard had himself explored Scientology, and we can find a number of ingredients of Scientology in the est training, as I describe in my est essays in "Modern Religions" [10], and can be found in more depth in a

number of other books [11]. est was one of the early successful LGATs (Large Group Awareness Trainings), and this new age large group format has become increasingly more common in recent years [12]. In “Spiritual Choices” there is a recorded interview with Werner Erhard [13], quite a rare occurrence from what I understand. In this interview there is much friction and differences of opinion between Erhard and his more open-minded interviewers, as Erhard highlights the philosophy of est, maintaining that virtually everyone who does the est training experiences “enlightenment” as a result of the two weekend est training, in the company of 250 to 300 strangers in hotel ballrooms. The form of this enlightenment experienced is the realization that you are already perfect exactly as you are, and there is nothing you need to attain or seek in life in order to become happy.

In the Anthony Typology est is placed primarily in the Unilevel/Monistic/Technical cell, but this placement is not at all strict, as the authors also show that est could be in the Multilevel/Monistic/Technical cell (which is one of the two most favorable cells, according to Anthony and Ecker). The editors of “Spiritual Choices” certainly have mixed feelings about est, as they discuss in their commentary after the Werner Erhard interview. Essentially their conflict revolves around the question of does est give people the experience of authentic spirituality, or does it merely promote the psychological well being feeling along with a reinforcement of worldly attainment. I can well understand their conflict, as I myself felt quite conflicted after doing both the est training and two thirds of a graduate est seminar in San Francisco [10]. Once again, as in the case of Scientology, est does not seem to fit conveniently into any one category. I would have to agree with the editors of “Spiritual Choices” that there were aspects of est that focused upon authentic spirituality as well as aspects that focused upon more ordinary psychology and worldly concerns; i.e. aspects that were Multilevel and aspects that were Unilevel. I would also agree with the editors that est was essentially Monistic and not Dualistic; i.e. est was truly open to all people and did not seem to act in the extreme Us vs. Them condescending superior manner in which I described Scientology, which was the reason I argued for Scientology being in the Dualistic cell. In regard to the Technical/Charismatic distinction, I find the picture to be more complicated than Anthony and Ecker have described. est is placed in the Technical cell, and it is true that there is certainly a heavy concentration of psychological processes and stimulating philosophical material presented in the course of the two weekend est training. However, it is also true that Werner Erhard was a magnetically charismatic guru figure to his est followers [14]. Putting all this together we find that est can be described in the context of Multilevel as well as Unilevel, and

18)

Technical as well as Charismatic. It seems that as in the case of Scientology, it is necessary to look at our other models in order to gain more understanding of the cult dangers of est.

In regard to the Wilber Integral Model, I would certainly place est in a less negative category than Scientology. From my own experience of having done the est training, I must say that est does engage in completely utilizing the rational mind (to the point of mental exhaustion, intentionally and skillfully

orchestrated by the est trainers) and then supercedes the rational mind with the experience that goes beyond the rational [15]. This was my own experience after the second est weekend when I completed the est training. Whether all 250 people taking part in the est training actually experienced this “beyond rational” state as Erhard claims, is something we will never know, as the original form of est ended in the 1980s. I certainly am doubtful of this claim, but it still must be recognized, in my opinion, that est does focus its intentions relatively high on Wilber’s pre-rational/pseudo-rational/rational/trans-rational continuum (with my own addition of “pseudo-rational” added to Wilber’s original abbreviated continuum). I would put est somewhere in-between the rational and trans-rational levels of consciousness. In regard to Wilber’s criteria of anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, once again this is a difficult question to answer. Erhard certainly paid tribute to the traditions of the East, especially that of Buddhism, but his origination of est is chock full of modern jargon and a high level sales pitch [16]. All things considered, the end result packaging of est has very little similarity to any tradition whatsoever, even though one could argue that the underlying themes of est do go back to Eastern philosophy and spirituality. As far as Wilber’s category of phase-specific authority is concerned, there was no indication of Erhard ever intending to step down from his guru role and give his authority to high level est leaders in the est organization. Indeed when Erhard finally did step down from his active guru role in est, he did so thru dissolving the whole est organization out of financial pressures. We thus certainly do get quite a mixed message for est in the Wilber Integral Model as well as in the Anthony Typology. In one sense est seems to have been truly engaged towards the trans-rational level of consciousness, but there were also causes of alarm in regard to the controlling guru aspects of its leader and originator, Werner Erhard.

We now examine est in the context of our more concrete evaluation: the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale. Once again, the evaluation scores on the 15 characteristics utilized are based upon my own experience, this time with est in the late 1970s. Based upon my experience, I will assign the following ratings to est.

Internal Control	5
Wisdom Claimed	5
Wisdom Credited	8
Dogma	9
Front Groups	3

19)

Recruiting	8
Wealth	7
Political Power	3
Sexual Manipulation	2
Censorship	1
Dropout Control	2

Endorsement Of Violence	1
Paranoia	1
Grimness	1
Surrender Of Will	5

TOTAL 61
AVERAGE 4.07

I must say that I am somewhat surprised that est has not gotten a less favorable numerical rating by me on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale. But as I look over the ratings I gave est on the various characteristics and compare them with Scientology, it is clear to me that what we have here is a relatively benign organization in regard to serious cult dangers. An average score of 4.07 is not conveying that there are no cult dangers, but that these cult dangers are relatively mild (see “Concluding Survey And Discussion Of Results” at the end of this paper for a more detailed interpretation of the average score rankings). From my experience with est, there were never any hints of violence, paranoia about studying other disciplines, or inhibitions of jokes and lightness about the est material. My highest ratings show the dogma of est’s whole philosophy that in two weekends everyone would become “enlightened” in a hotel ballroom, the high esteem and guru fascination that est followers displayed for Werner Erhard, and the rather obnoxious emphasis put on bringing “guests” to the est seminars that I experienced in the “Be Here Now” graduate est seminar [16]. Surrender of Will, Internal Control, and Wisdom Claimed all received intermediate ratings of “5,” demonstrating that there were certainly cult dangers of getting overly-enmeshed in the est organization and influence of Werner Erhard, but that these dangers were not nearly as severe as the dangers involved in Scientology. I was not aware of Front Groups per se in est, other than perhaps smaller groups being involved in the Hunger Project, which was essentially the one major political focus that I was aware of est being involved in. Although est did place a strong emphasis on recruiting new people to take the est training, I was not aware of any focused activity to prevent or return dropouts, other than the general recruiting strategy to attract all people to est. Werner Erhard certainly became very wealthy thru his mass marketing LGAT est training, but the individual costs for taking the est workshops were not something

20)

I could say were unreasonable in comparison to the costs of other new age workshops that were commonly available at the time. In fact I would say that the costs of doing est workshops were virtually “cheap” in comparison to Scientology as well as to Avatar [17]. One of the current leaders of the American Family & Friends (AFF) cults awareness organization [18] is an ex-est workshop facilitator who had been heavily involved with the est organization for a number of years. This AFF leader certainly considers est to have been a major cult involvement for her, and I am by no means discounting her experience by the relatively mild cult danger score I have come up with for est on the Bonewits Cult Danger

Scale. However, putting all three evaluation models together, it certainly does appear to be the case that there were some cult dangers in est, but in the grand scheme of things these cult dangers were not particularly alarming.

Given that all three of our cult evaluation models have demonstrated some positive characteristics of est (or at least a lack of severe cult danger characteristics), I would like to conclude this analysis of est by briefly examining the potential that est might have offered for engaging in an ITP, i.e. a four quadrant Integral Transformative Practice [19]. As already pointed out in my discussion of est in the Wilber Integral Model, est did focus upon the levels of consciousness beyond rational. This focus upon levels of consciousness beyond rational appears to me to show positive potential for the individual Intentional practice of an ITP. The est practice of “going into your space” and “be here now,” as well as their focus upon personal experience, is very consistent with the meditative and contemplative traditions described in the book “Transformations Of Consciousness” [20]. However, it also must be emphasized that in the essays by Brown and Engler in this same book, and especially in the book “Cults In Our Midst” by Margaret Singer and Janja Lalich (see [10] in Introduction Notes), it is cautioned that the benefits of meditation can easily be turned into detrimental effects for individual meditators, particularly when the meditation is done in a large group atmosphere as opposed to the time honored Eastern tradition of meditating under the individual tutelage of an esteemed meditation master who has meditated and studied for many years. At any rate, when it comes to the Cultural and Social quadrants of Wilber’s Four Quadrant Integral model, it is quite clear that est was primarily focusing upon persuading people to take further est seminars and becoming increasingly more involved with the est organization [21]. Although est did not particularly try to take away people’s lives outside of est, neither did they particularly encourage people to develop themselves in their wider extended potential in the four quadrants. There was virtually no emphasis put upon the individual Behavioral dimension, other than the occasional outdoor vigorous hiking retreat offered as a special kind of est seminar. Thus although est does not appear to have portrayed serious cult dangers, neither does it appear to have portrayed any particularly beneficial Integral Transformative Practice. Indeed it was quite possible for est graduates to become self-indulgent in their own introspective perhaps initially trans-rational processes, while gradually allowing Werner Erhard and the est organization to take up more and more of

21)

their Cultural and Social quadrant activities. I do believe that this is what happened to a large number of est graduates, and this is why there was certainly cult dangers present in est. But in comparison with Scientology as well as in comparison with our next modern religion to be analyzed, Reverend Moon’s Unification Church, in my opinion est is most definitely in the “mild” cult danger category. .

THE UNIFICATION CHURCH

Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church became both popular and notorious in the 1970s, and was at the forefront of the controversy over "deprogramming" of Unification Church members (widely known as "Moonies"). Deprogramming involved trying to persuade members to leave the church through kidnapping them against their will in order to help them see how brainwashed they were by the extremely detrimental cult tactics of Reverend Moon and his organization. Steve Hassan, who is recognized as one of the world's leading cult experts and cult counselors, is an ex-Moonie who was successfully deprogrammed

in this way, and he describes his experiences in fascinating detail in both of his books [22]. There are many books and exposes readily available about the Unification Church [23]. The church, with Reverend Moon still its supreme ruler, is extremely wealthy and powerful, and politically active today. The Unification Church owns a major newspaper in Washington D.C., has enjoyed favorable personal relations with United States presidents, and there are suspicions of illegal associations with various military organizations and financing of weapons to combat communism in various parts of the world. It certainly is relevant at this time to examine the cult dangers of the Unification Church, and we shall once again begin with the Anthony Typology.

Unlike the cases of Scientology and est, Anthony and Ecker display no ambiguity about which cell to place the Unification Church in. The Unification Church is placed in the most serious cult danger cell: Unilevel/Dualistic/Charismatic. I am in substantial agreement with Anthony and Ecker in regard to their placement, though my agreement in this case is based upon what I have read and heard about the Unification Church over the past few decades in addition to my own personal experience with them in the 1970s, as described in my Unification Church essays in “Modern Religions.” Essentially the Unification Church, thru the authoritarian decrees and writings of Reverend Moon [24], engage in a belief that Reverend Moon is actually the Second Messiah, and it is necessary to accept Reverend Moon as your supreme “father” in order to achieve peace in this lifetime, go to heaven, etc. To succeed in this mission, much social and political ramifications take place. The crux of the spiritual basis of the church, which I do believe is completely warped and not at all authentic, is distilled into mundane long hours of tedious street working activities, such as selling flowers and candy bars, etc. [25]. The other side of this disturbing picture is the fabulous wealth that Reverend Moon himself lives in, his evasion of government income taxes for which he spent a year in jail, his regimented caste system of Unification Church members based upon country and origin (Korea first, Japan second, etc.), his alleged criminal/military illegal activities, etc. [26]. In summary, lack of authentic spirituality describes the Unilevel classification; continuous proselytizing to accept Reverend Moon as the heavenly father with the devil corrupting everyone else describes the Dualistic classification; and complete non-rational or pseudo-rational faith in Reverend Moon as the Second Messiah

23)

describes the Charismatic dimension. Yes--Anthony and Ecker have every reason to be concerned about the cult dangers of the Unification Church, although they do not see these cult dangers as likely to end up in extreme tragedy, such as the mass suicides and murders that occurred in the People’s Temple in Jonestown in the 1970s, primarily because they claim the Unification Church does not see the world as its enemy but rather as merely ignorant of the one and only spiritual truth and in need of being converted.

When we look closely at the Unification Church thru the Wilber Integral Model, it is clear that the Unification Church is operating at a level of consciousness below rational. From my own experience with listening to the Unification Church lectures and having read Reverend Moon’s main book “Divine

Principle”

(c.f. [24], I would say that there is most definitely an appeal made to initially convince people thru their reasoning capacity of the truth of which Reverend Moon claims [27]. However, the historical parallels made use of to lead to the conclusion that the Second Messiah is walking the Earth today, is from Korea, and is in fact none other than Reverend Moon himself is an illustrative example of the pseudo-rational level of consciousness, in a similar way to much of the apparent science fiction and pseudo-psychological doctrines of Scientology. Of-course it is well known that the Unification Church also engages in a great deal of highly manipulative emotional bonding activity such as “love bombing,” etc. in order to recruit people into their church [28] In regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, in one sense it can be viewed that

Reverend Moon represents a longstanding tradition of Korean spirituality. However, the specific way in which Reverend Moon has devised his Second Messiah scheme and placed himself as the supreme leader of the world is way past the continuity of any authentic tradition, regardless of whatever spiritual Korean ancestors Reverend Moon may claim to have had. As far as phase-specific authority is concerned, Reverend Moon is now in his eighties, and is as much in control of the Unification Church as he was when I first encountered them almost 30 years ago. There are no “phases” here and no concrete plan to turn authority over to others. When Reverend Moon dies I imagine the Unification Church will continue its influence thru the leadership of one of the higher ups in the organization, but this is not at all what Wilber means when he talks about phase-specific authority. Putting these pieces together, we find that the Unification Church is operating at the pseudo-rational level of consciousness, is not anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, and does not engage in phase-specific authority. We thus see that the alarm of the cult dangers thru the Wilber Integral Model reinforces the high level of cult danger concerns from the Anthony Typology.

We now examine the cult dangers of the Unification Church from the perspective of the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale. The ratings that follow are taken from both my own personal experience with the Unification Church in the 1970s as well as all that I have learned about them over the years.

24)

INTERNAL CONTROL	10
WISDOM CLAIMED	10
WISDOM CREDITED	10
DOGMA	10
RECRUITING	10
FRONT GROUPS	10
WEALTH	10

POLITICAL POWER	10
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	8
CENSORSHIP	8
DROPOUT CONTROL	6
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	5
PARANOIA	8
GRIMNESS	10
SURRENDER OF WILL	10

TOTAL 135

AVERAGE 9.00

Once again I am somewhat surprised at the outcome of the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale quantitative results, as I did not expect the Unification Church to rate even higher than Scientology regarding their level of cult dangers. But the evidence speaks for itself; for 10 of the 15 cult characteristics I gave the Unification Church the highest rating of “10.” There is no doubt about their supreme cult dangers regarding their many front groups, recruiting, dogma, political power, surrender of will, etc. To explain my other ratings, although the sex lives and marriages of Unification Church members are directly controlled by Reverend Moon and the Unification Church leaders, my rating of “8” reflects the fact that unlike some other notorious gurus, I do not believe that Reverend Moon has engaged in explicit sexual relations with his followers [29]. My ratings of “8” on Censorship and Paranoia reflect the fact that although there is an extreme paranoia over communism per se and the influence of the “devil” as represented by alternative viewpoints to that of Reverend Moon, there is also a willingness to go out in public to confront this and engage in dialogue at conferences--both Unification Church sponsored conferences and others, such as AFF conferences. My rating of “6” on Dropout Control reflects my understanding that although the Unification Church will try to prevent and return dropouts to a significant extent, I do not believe that they

25)

resort to the extreme financial ruin legal tactics to accomplish this in comparison to the well publicized disclosures about Scientology [30]. In regard to my rating of “5” for Endorsement Of Violence, there are certainly serious concerns and suspicions about Reverend Moon’s association with violent international military groups (c.f. [28]), but as I am not aware of actual concrete proof of this it seems appropriate to give a moderate rating in this category. But the end result is definitely cause of extremely serious concern regarding the high level of cult dangers of the Unification Church, as all three of our evaluation models reinforce each other in this regard. Certainly there is no way we can entertain the notion of a Four Quadrant Integral Transformative Practice for Reverend Moon’s Unification Church. Perhaps our next modern

religion, Guru Maharajji's Divine Light Mission, will fare better.

26)

DIVINE LIGHT MISSION

Guru Maharajji's Divine Light Mission is a modern religion that I became acquainted with thru the proselytizing excitement of my boyfriend friend Richie [31], and this modern religion is still in existence today. Anthony & Ecker place Divine Light Mission in the Unilevel/Monistic/Charismatic cell, which indicates they have a significant concern regarding cult dangers in the Anthony Typology. The most obvious part of this three-way classification is the Charismatic dimension [32]. As I describe in my Divine Light Mission essays in "Modern Religions," there is essentially no logical rational reason to accept Guru Maharajji as the lord and savior of the universe. This is completely a function of Maharajji's personal

charisma, although it is rather mind baffling how the 14 year old plump Indian kid who came on the American scene in 1971 managed to enthrall thousands of relatively intelligent young adult Americans to follow him. At any rate, I wholeheartedly agree with Anthony & Ecker that Divine Light Mission belongs in the Charismatic cell. In regard to the Unilevel dimension, this is certainly a reasonable choice, though not quite as obvious to me as the Charismatic dimension choice. Margaret Singer in her book “Cults In Our Midst” [33] describes how gurus engaging in such physical demonstrations on group members as pushing on the eyeballs and pressing on the ears, resulted in the group members seeing visions and hearing sounds that were explained to them as being “Divine Light” and “Divine Harmony.” This is where the name “Divine Light Mission” originally comes from, and the physiological explanations for these supposedly “divine” experiences is part and parcel of the Unilevel dimension. However, just to be open-minded and to engage in the benefit of the doubt, I will consider the possibility that thru the disciplined practice of meditation, a devotee of Guru Maharajji (known as a “Premi”), also may be experiencing a more authentic form of spiritual practice, and this may cross over into the Multilevel dimension. In regard to the Monistic classification, once again I will concur with Anthony & Ecker. Although there is a fair amount of proselytizing efforts being made by Premis to their family and friends, Divine Light Mission by no means engages in the bitter “Us vs. Them” mentality that we have seen in both Scientology and the Unification Church. The initiation experience of “Receiving Knowledge” is looked upon as a highly spiritual and special experience, but people who do not have this experience are not viewed with animosity and condescension [34]. Putting Divine Light Mission in the Monistic cell seems to be a fair classification. Thus from an analysis via the Anthony Typology, it appears that Divine Light Mission may have some cult dangers to be concerned about, but that these cult dangers are in the low to moderate range, mild by comparison to Scientology and the Unification Church, perhaps somewhat comparable to those of est.

When we examine Divine Light Mission in the context of the Wilber Integral Model, the immediate observation is that there is very little rational thought going on here. The way that Maharajji becomes the guru to his devotees is not by means of pseudo-rational logical explanations, as in the cases of Scientology

27)

and the Unification Church. Rather, the mind is looked upon as being a misguided means of understanding the world’s “real” phenomena, and it is therefore stressed that the mind must be set aside in favor of the heart to experience authentic spiritual realization [35]. Therefore I must place Divine Light Mission on the pre-rational level in Wilber’s pre-rational/pseudo-rational/rational/trans-rational continuum. However, it is important to keep in mind here the distinction between “pre-rational” and “trans-rational,” which is essentially that “trans-rational” makes full use of the rational mind and then “transcends” it—or in Ken Wilber’s language “transcends and includes” it, whereas “pre-rational” never involves the rational mind to begin with [36]. In regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, here we have a much more favorable classification than any of the modern religions we have thus far encountered: Scientology, est, or the Unification Church. For Guru Maharajji does come from a long line of Hindu spiritual masters, an age-

old tradition that insured the blessed divinity of Guru Maharajji from the time that he was born (although this family tradition was quite shattered when Maharajji married an American girl at age 19). Indeed this is how he managed to begin his spiritual guru career in American at age 14. In regard to Wilber's third category, phase specific authority, we return to a "no phase" observation, as Guru Maharajji's leadership and complete control of Divine Light Mission is a life-long matter that I believe would be inherited by one of Maharajji's children. Putting these observations together, we have a modern religion that is operating on the lowest level of Wilber's level of consciousness continuum and does not at all engage in phase-specific authority, but does anchor its legitimacy in a tradition. The complete bypassing of the mind together with a life-long leadership role does bring forth a serious degree of cult dangers to consider. However, the anchoring of its legitimacy in a tradition tends to lessen some of these cult dangers, as there is a bona-fide historical religious tradition to follow that would hopefully put some limits on the extremity of unethical individual behavior that a number of gurus seem to engage in [37].

Finally, thru the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale we are able to see in a more concrete way how these low to moderate cult dangers as suggested by both the Anthony Typology and Wilber Integral Model came into play. From my experience with Divine Light Mission in the 1970s, here are my numerical ratings on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale.

Internal Control	6
Wisdom Claimed	10
Wisdom Credited	10
Dogma	10
Recruiting	5
Front Groups	6
Wealth	7

28)

Political Power	2
Sexual Manipulation	2
Censorship	2
Dropout Control	2
Endorsement Of Violence	1
Paranoia	2
Grimness	3
Surrender Of Will	8

TOTAL 76

AVERAGE 5.07

As expected, we see that Divine Light Mission, with an average score of 5.07 on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, although somewhat higher than est in regard to cult dangers, is not on the high cult danger end of the spectrum--especially in comparison to Scientology and the Unification Church. The complete authority and high regard in which Guru Maharajji is held by his devotees is represented by the "10" ratings in Wisdom Claimed, Wisdom Credited, and Dogma. Intermediate ratings of "5" and "6" for Recruiting, Internal Control, and Front Groups reflect that there is a fair amount of emphasis put in these realms, but it does not reach the excessive proportions that we have already encountered elsewhere. Although Guru Maharajji is extremely wealthy and lives in luxury, his "7" rating is not higher than this because as far as I know, Divine Light Mission does not procure its wealth thru the donations or course purchases, etc. of its ordinary members. The high rating of "8" for Surrender Of Will reflects the loss of personal identity on the part of a Premi, and the transferring of this identity to that of Guru Maharajji. However, it does appear to me that the use made by Divine Light Mission of this surrender of will to Guru Maharajji is relatively non-detrimental (in comparison with the major representatives of high cult dangers) and therefore I did not give Divine Light Mission an even higher rating in this category. The remaining categories were all given low ratings of "1," "2," or "3," and in many cases a "2" was given instead of a "1" only to allow for the possibility of activities going on that I am not aware of. But in summary, we see that Divine Light Mission, although possessing a number of definite cult danger aspects, is not on the high cult danger end of the scale in comparison with some other modern religions that we have considered. On the other hand, Divine Light Mission does appear to be of a significantly higher cult danger risk than est, and we will therefore consider Divine Light Mission to have a Moderate level of cult danger. Once again there does not seem to be sufficient integral positive characteristics here to describe Divine Light Mission in regard to being

29)

an Integral Transformative Practice. This brings us to the last modern religion that I have experienced in the 1970s for which we will apply our experiential integral tri-perspective analysis: the occult school of George Gurdjieff.

GURDJIEFF

George Gurdjieff was undoubtedly one of the most interesting, creative, and multi-talented leaders of a modern philosophical/spiritual group that the world has ever known. Unlike most of the modern religions that I am writing about, Gurdjieff originated his philosophy and gathered a following in the first half of the twentieth century, traveling throughout holylands in the East in search of primordial wisdom. His teachings became popular in the United States particularly thru the book “In Search Of The Miraculous” by P.D. Ouspensky [38], and various Gurdjieff schools became established in the 1960s and 1970s; the Gurdjieff movement is still quite popular in new age circles today. These Gurdjieff schools were considered to be “occult schools,” practicing esoteric teachings that were not easily obtainable other than by taking part actively in a Gurdjieff group. My own experience of briefly taking part in a Gurdjieff group is described in my Gurdjieff essays in “Modern Religions.” My intuitive evaluation of the Gurdjieff schools,

which from now on I shall simply refer to as simply “Gurdjieff,” is somewhat along the lines of est, in the sense that there are some definite dogmatic cult dangers, but in the whole scheme of things these cult dangers are comparatively mild, and there are also positive benefits to being involved in a Gurdjieff group. But let us begin our tri-perspective analysis and see how everything fits together.

To begin with, Anthony & Ecker place Gurdjieff (which they refer to as “The Gurdjieff Work”) in the Multilevel/Technical/Dualistic cell. At first glance this is somewhat surprising to me to see Gurdjieff placed in the Dualistic cell, as out of the four modern religions that I have thus far written about, only the Unification Church is also placed in the Dualistic cell by Anthony & Ecker (recall that Anthony & Ecker put Scientology in the Monistic cell even though I disagreed and took the liberty of placing Scientology in the Dualistic cell). However, as I consider Anthony & Ecker’s reasoning in this placement, it does accurately describe the dynamics of a Gurdjieff group. Essentially Anthony & Ecker claim that there is much severity and harshness in the atmosphere of a Gurdjieff group, where each group member is working on his/her self adamantly to surpass the ordinary sleep state of the machine like “normal” person, thereby attaining the heightened integrated spiritual state of awareness known as “no. 4 man,” surpassing the separate states that are preoccupied with the body, emotions, and mind.[39] In the process of this severe working on oneself, anyone who is considered to be on one of the lower levels of experience is looked down upon and challenged in a quite ferocious encounter group setting, to overcome their weaknesses and deal successfully with the material world in order to finally transcend it. This severity and harshness to those who are not considered to be on the higher levels of the Gurdjieff work, together with a haughty condescension toward the “normal” people not engaging in the Gurdjieff work, does merit the placement of Gurdjieff into the Dualistic cell, and I will go along with Anthony & Ecker on this point.

In regard to their placement of Gurdjieff in the Technical category, I will also essentially agree, as the

31)

dominant focus of a Gurdjieff group is certainly upon the techniques of working on yourself, the severe direct encounter with the other group members, and the required body work that accompanies all the focus on the mind and emotional self-discipline. However, it is also the case that the “teacher” of the Gurdjieff group holds the group together by his/her presence and effect of awe upon the group members, which certainly has some interplay with the Charismatic dimension [40]. In regard to the Multilevel classification, although the deeper focus of a Gurdjieff group is to promote an authentic spiritual awareness, Anthony & Ecker do point out that there are definite dangers of a Gurdjieff group falling into Unilevel temptations. Essentially this is because much of the Gurdjieff work involves dealing with the mundane world in order to eventually surpass it, and it is not uncommon for Gurdjieff aspirants to become stuck in this mundane world and never reach the higher spiritual states. We thus see that the picture from the Anthony Typology in regard to evaluating the cult dangers of Gurdjieff is not at all a clear one. We have the negative cult danger cell of Dualistic operating with the generally beneficial characteristics cell of

Multilevel, plus the fact that the classification itself is not particularly strict or concrete, either from Anthony & Ecker's perspective or my own perspective.

When we turn our attention to the Wilber Integral Model, the picture becomes somewhat more clear. To begin with, I would say that Gurdjieff is operating on a similar level of consciousness to that of est, i.e. somewhere in-between the rational and trans-rational levels on the continuum. Gurdjieff's mental acrobatics are impressive, even if there are places I do believe he goes way overboard in assuming the truth of, such as his complicated and expansive notions about Astrology, for example [38]. However, unlike Scientology or the Unification Church, I do not see Gurdjieff's philosophy as being based essentially on false or

pseudo rationality. Gurdjieff's focus of working on yourself to integrate your mind with your body and emotions, and to eventually reach a place of transcendence and authentic spiritual awareness most certainly puts Gurdjieff in the higher consciousness levels in Wilber's scheme of things. In regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, Gurdjieff himself spent many years building his philosophy from esoteric traditions within Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Sufism, and Zoroastrianism [38]. The philosophy and teachings he emerged with represents his own creative assimilations, but it is also true that the basics of the Gurdjieff philosophy are anchored in a number of religious traditions. In regard to phase-specific authority, I do not think that Gurdjieff had any plans of stepping down from his leadership role toward his followers. However, neither do I think that Gurdjieff had any kind of grandiose schemes to convert the world to his philosophy, such as is the case with Scientology and the Unification Church (with my occasional reminder that this is all in my own opinion). Rather, Gurdjieff's philosophy was meant only for the relatively few super-capable

(in Gurdjieff teachers' estimation) people who had the ability and motivation to go beyond the ordinary sleep state that most people lived their lives in. Certainly the cult dangers here do not reach into the masses in the way that the other groups I have written about have done. This is why Gurdjieff is considered

32)

“Occult Philosophy,” even though there may be not much left today in our modern technological society that is “occult” anymore. But in considering the cult dangers of Gurdjieff via the Wilber Integral Model, these cult dangers seem to me most certainly to be relatively mild.

Let us now examine Gurdjieff in the context of our numerical ratings from the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale. Here are my ratings, once again from my experience in the 1970s with Gurdjieff, as described in my Gurdjieff essays in “Modern Religions.”

Internal Control	6
Wisdom Claimed	5
Wisdom Credited	5
Dogma	9

Recruiting	3
Front Groups	5
Wealth	5
Political Power	2
Sexual Manipulation	2
Censorship	5
Dropout Control	2
Endorsement Of Violence	2
Paranoia	2
Grimness	8
Surrender Of Will	4

TOTAL 65

AVERAGE 4.33

As my intuitive feelings predicted, Gurdjieff does have some relatively mild cult dangers attached to it, and is quite comparable to est in this regard. The cult danger highest ratings I assigned to Gurdjieff were a “9” for Dogma and an “8” for Grimness. The intermediate ratings of a number of “5”s, and one “6” represent the wide variability of many Gurdjieff groups being in existence without one central authoritarian figure directing the large group of Gurdjieff aspirants. There are a number of front groups that bring people into the Gurdjieff school, such as the Theatre Of All Possibilities described in my essay “Occult School” and the performance of “sacred dances” described in my essay “Eden West” (c.ff. [41]). However, I do believe

33)

that there is not anywhere near the extreme emphasis put upon front groups that one would find through diligently investigating this phenomenon in the Unification Church and Scientology. Internal Control, Censorship, Wealth, Wisdom Claimed, and Wisdom Credited similarly are largely a function of the severity of a particular Gurdjieff group and teacher. For example, I was quite disturbed at the \$200 a month fee charged to be part of the Gurdjieff group at the Theatre Of All Possibilities, and I was quite relieved to hear that the Eden West Gurdjieff group charged no fee at all to engage in the Gurdjieff work [41]. In general though I think it is more common for Gurdjieff groups to operate under a strict authoritarian Gurdjieff “teacher” who does exert a fair amount of control over members’ lives, though not nearly to the extremes of the Unification Church or Scientology. From my own limited experience in a Gurdjieff group, there was no pressure whatsoever put upon me to remain in the group; it was only “my” sense of partial regret that I felt upon deciding to not continue in the Gurdjieff work (c.f. [40]). The remaining categories all have very low

cult danger ratings of “2,” except for a rating of “3” for Recruiting and a rating of “4” for Surrender Of Will. The rating of “3” for Recruiting is based upon the bringing in of the public thru artistic performances, as I have described my own experience of being approached by an attractive young woman on a bus with an offer to see a free play [40]. The rating of “4” for Surrender Of Will represents the dual aspects of Gurdjieff groups of encouraging individual personal responsibility and effective decision making on the one hand, while on the other hand there is an authoritarian Gurdjieff group leader who is in charge of making decisions that significantly effect the lives of the members of the Gurdjieff group. The only reason the “2” ratings are not “1”s is because of the many diverse Gurdjieff groups in existence, allowing for the possibility that there are groups that do engage in negative behaviors such as violence, sexual manipulation, etc. But the summary of our numerical ratings on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale does support the essentially mild level of cult danger concerns that we found from the Wilber Integral Model, and the Anthony Typology does not contradict this evaluation.

In regard to applying the ideas of an Integral Transformative Practice (ITP) to Gurdjieff, one aspect of the Gurdjieff work does stand out as a significant reason to at least make an attempt at this kind of analysis. This aspect is the reliance on bodywork that is a central part of the Gurdjieff work. I was attracted to the bodywork on the acting stage in the Theatre Of All Possibilities, as well as to the “Tarzan Grunts” of the sacred dances I saw at Eden West [41]. This focus upon the body is part and parcel of Gurdjieff’s way of assimilating the body state into the mind state and emotions state to form the higher spiritual level aware individual. But this focus upon the body also becomes significant as an integrated spiritual practice that considers the body to be an important part of its overall development work. This is certainly an effective balance of the two upper quadrants in Wilber’s Four Quadrant Integral Model, the individualized Intentional and Behavioral quadrants [42]. In terms of the two lower quadrants, representing the Cultural and Social domains, there is primarily the context of the Gurdjieff group itself. A Gurdjieff group member is part of a

34)

a close knit social group that is constantly engaging in many hours of challenging, assertive, confrontive encounter group work. There are certainly cultural mores to be followed, as well as social patterns of interaction. I don’t think that Gurdjieff group members are particularly discouraged or prevented from taking part in wider groups of their interest, but it is also true that much of their free time (and sleep) is taken up in these Gurdjieff groups. Once again, in a somewhat similar way to est, there are ingredients here that hint at the possibilities of an Integral Transformative Practice, but the essentially dogmatic nature of a Gurdjieff group together with all its social expectations, make this kind of an ITP into something much less meaningful than either Wilber or Leonard & Murphy were writing about.

And this concludes our experiential integral tri-perspective I analysis of the modern religions which I experienced in the 1970s, while in my twenties. We resume next after a 15 year break, with the modern religion of Eckankar, which I experienced thru my involvement in a romantic relationship in 1995.

ECKANKAR

Eckankar is a modern religion that was founded in 1965 by Paul Twitchell. In Twitchell's books [43] he claims that Eckankar has a long line of spiritual masters in a tradition that is thousands of years old. However, this claim of long-lasting history has been repudiated by the research of David Lane that became publicly available in a popular book in the early 1980s [44], demonstrating that much of what Twitchell wrote about was filled with plagiarism, false statements about the history of Eckankar, and false statements about himself. Although this did cause quite a stir in the Eckankar community and induced a number of Eckists to leave the organization, Eckankar is still a prominent new age spiritual organization that has thousands of followers throughout the world. My own introduction to Eckankar happened by way of a romantic relationship, as I describe in my essay "On Eckankar" in "Modern Religions." In this part of the paper we will continue the tri-perspective analysis we have been doing for the modern religions that I

experienced in the 1970s, and we will now see how this analysis holds up for Eckankar.

From this point on we are now on our own in regard to the Anthony Typology, as Anthony & Ecker do not discuss any of the remaining modern religions that I am writing about, some of which did not come into existence until after “Spiritual Choices” was published in 1987. From my own perspective, I can see placing Eckankar in two difference cells in the Anthony Typology, namely the Multilevel/Charismatic/Monistic cell and the Multilevel/Technical/Monistic cell. It should be noted that both of these cells are considered to be the cells with the most favorable authentic spirituality non-cult characteristics. I do believe that the prime motive of Eckankar is the authentic spiritual quest in the form of experiencing one’s soul; this is certainly a Multilevel context. Eckankar focuses upon peace, love, and harmony; and there is very little animosity or condescension toward others who have a faith different from Eckankar; thus we are in the Monistic cell as opposed to the Dualistic cell. In regard to the Charismatic vs. Technical dimension, here the distinction is much less clear. As I recall the pictures of Harold Klemp, the current “Living Eck Master”, all over my ex-girlfriend’s house [45], I remember how important it was to an Eckist to feel the cohesiveness and spiritual bond with the Living Eck Master; thus the Charismatic dimension. However, it is also true that Eckankar has specific teachings and exercises, largely revolving around sound vibrations with meditation, to enable a person to establish his/her experience of soul connection; thus the Technical dimension. However, in either the Charismatic or Technical dimension we are still in quite a relatively safe cell in the Anthony Typology as far as cult dangers are concerned. We shall need to look elsewhere to find cult dangers in Eckankar.

When we examine Eckankar in the Wilber Integral Model, we are once again struck by the problem of where to put Eckankar in the levels of consciousness continuum. At first glance it may appear that Eckankar is operating somewhere in-between the rational and trans-rational levels, in a similar place to that

36)

of est and Gurdjieff. However, after surveying the research of David Lane [44], it appears that much of the original writings by Eckankar founder Paul Twitchell was fabricated, resulting in people joining Eckankar under false pretenses. Although the crux of Eckankar centers around the experience of “soul travel” (i.e. leaving your body), it is still true that many people initially became interested in Eckankar thru reading Twitchell’s books. Taking this into consideration, it seems most appropriate to place Eckankar in the pseudo-rational level of the continuum. In regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, we have the same issue at stake. Twitchell claims a long-lasting historical religious tradition going back thousands of years. Lane claims this long-lasting tradition is complete fabrication, with Eckankar being little more than the creative invention of Paul Twitchell [44]. My own personal inclination is to agree with Lane here, and therefore I will conclude that Eckankar does not anchor its legitimacy in a tradition, at least not a tradition that has a significant degree of historical truth attached to it. In regard to phase-specific authority, since 1965 there have been three Eck Masters. Paul Twitchell died in 1971, at which point Darwin Gross took

over the Living Eck Master role, until he was dishonorably discharged in 1981. From 1981 until the present time, the Living Eck Master role has been maintained by Harold Klemp. This is meant to be a life-long position, and there is no "phase" to the authority of a Living Eck Master. Putting these ingredients of the Wilber Integral Model together, we can now see prospective cult dangers much more clearly than we could see from the Anthony Typology. The falsifications and misrepresentations of Eckankar by Twitchell do raise some red flags for us in regard to possible cult dangers.

Based primarily upon my personal Eckankar experience for a year and half in the mid 1990s, here are my ratings of Eckankar on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale.

INTERNAL CONTROL	2
WISDOM CLAIMED	9
WISDOM CREDITED	9
DOGMA	10
RECRUITING	4
FRONT GROUPS	2
WEALTH	2
POLITICAL POWER	1
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	1
CENSORSHIP	3
DROPOUT CONTROL	2
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1

37)

PARANOIA	5
GRIMNESS	5
SURRENDER OF WILL	5

TOTAL 65

AVERAGE 4.33

We thus see that Eckankar has the exact same overall score on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale as Gurdjieff, and we shall put Eckankar also in the mild cult dangers category. However, the particular scores for Eckankar are quite different from those of Gurdjieff. Eckankar has very high scores of "9" and "10" on the items focused directly on the guru phenomenon, namely Wisdom Claimed, Wisdom Credited, and Dogma. On the other hand, Eckankar has a number of very low scores of "1" and "2" in the areas of

Internal Control, Front Groups, Wealth (membership costs are relatively inexpensive), Political Power, Sexual Manipulation, and Violence. Intermediate scores of “5” are given for Paranoia, Grimness, and Surrender Of Will. Censorship and Recruiting are given respective scores of “3” and “4,” which are not causes of significant alarm. Indeed the only cause of serious alarm seems to be the extreme focus of total divinity given to the Living Eck Master. From my own experience, I would say that the Living Eck Master of the past 23 years, Harold Klemp, appears to be an essentially benevolent peaceful guru to his followers. However, it is not difficult to see how a less ethical Living Eck Master could influence and control Eckankar followers in a much more detrimental fashion. This complete reliance upon the guru in the form of the Living Eck Master is what I find to be the most serious cult danger of Eckankar. But it must also be acknowledged that as of this point in time, Eckankar has not gone into anything even remotely approaching the glaring negative cult activities of the Unification Church or Scientology (i.e. negative cult activities from my experiential tri-perspective analysis).

Thus in all fairness, it seems that it would be appropriate to see how Eckankar fares as an Integral Transformative Practice. Of-course the first obstacle is the question of do we have an authentic spiritual practice to begin with here. Giving Eckankar a major benefit of the doubt, from my own experience I will say that regardless of the fact that many people may have become Eckists based upon false information, there is still authentic spirituality in the sound vibrations and meditation exercises. We shall therefore consider these exercises to be of authentic spiritual value in Wilber’s Intentional quadrant. However, we do not have any particular body oriented activities in Eckankar to include in the Behavioral quadrant. In regard to the Cultural and Social quadrants, we primarily have Eckankar meditation and spiritual meeting groups, Eckankar literature, and Eckankar conferences. In short, the Cultural and Social quadrants are completely

38)

taken up with Eckankar itself. Like a Four Quadrant ITP for est and Gurdjieff, a Four Quadrant ITP for Eckankar leaves much to be desired. We may not have major cult dangers to be concerned about here, but neither do we have an effective form of an Integral Transformative Practice. Lets move on to one of the five new age spiritual organizations that I first encountered in the summer of 1997; Self-Realization Fellowship.

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP

Summer of 1997 was the launching pad of my second stage of explorations of modern religions. My exploration of Self-Realization Fellowship began with my reading of the popular new age book “Autobiography Of A Yogi” by Self-Realization Fellowship founder and guru Paramanahansa Yogananda [46]. Like Gurdjieff, Self-Realization Fellowship began in the first half of the twentieth century, and has remained popular in new age circles today. My own experience is that Self-Realization Fellowship appears to be fairly innocuous regarding cult dangers, but let’s begin our tri-perspective analysis and see what we come up with.

In the Anthony Typology the first placement that occurs to me is the Monistic cell as opposed to the Dualistic cell. Through the instructional practice of Kriya Yoga, Self-Realization Fellowship members are encouraged to attain heightened spiritual peaceful states. However, there does not seem to be an Us vs. Them mentality, and all people are viewed as deserving of peace and love, regardless of whether or

not they are followers of Yogananda. In regard to the choice of the Technical or Charismatic cell, once again we have quite the toss-up here. The “energization” part of the Kriya Yoga exercises are certainly quite technical, involving the tensing and releasing of many particular body parts. However, there is also a tremendous emphasis upon identifying one’s self not only with Yogananda, but also with the direct line of his ancestors, including Krishna as well as Jesus Christ. A typical Self-Realization Fellowship meditation shrine has six pictures to meditate upon. Yogananda, his three direct lineage gurus, Krishna, and Christ [47]. Yogananda was very much the benevolent adored guru to his followers, and his mystique has been successfully continued for nearly half a century since his death. Thus Self-Realization Fellowship has at least as much--if not more--reason to be placed in the Charismatic cell as it does to be placed in the Technical cell. In regard to the Multilevel vs. Unilevel distinction, there is not much doubt in my mind that Self-Realization Fellowship is operating on the Multilevel dimension. Yogananda brought his spiritual practices and beliefs to the United States from India, and he seems to have kept the highest levels of his spiritual practices intact. We thus see that we have the exact same placement in the Anthony Typology for Self-Realization Fellowship as we had for Eckankar; namely Multilevel/Charismatic/Monistic or Multilevel.Technical/Monistic, representing the best possible cell placement regarding being free of serious cult dangers. Although I had concerns about assuming these positive implications too easily for Eckankar, which did become somewhat unraveled thru the perspectives of the Wilber Integral Model and the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, I feel more comfortable in the case of Self-Realization Fellowship that the Anthony Typology cell placement is fairly representative of the positive aspects of this modern religion. As we proceed with our other two evaluations, we shall see if this optimistic viewpoint is warranted.

For the Wilber Integral Model once again we need to decide where to put a modern religion--in this case

40)

Self-Realization Fellowship--on the levels of consciousness continuum. In “Autobiography Of A Yogi” there are many events described that seem quite preposterous to me; from the 500 year old guru Babaji who often appears as a young man in the hills of the Himalayas, to the claimed ability of some Yogi adepts to appear at two different locations at the same point in time, etc [c.f. [46]]. However, the crux of the actual practice of Kriya Yoga is essentially a meditation, going along with a packet of “lessons” to practice affirmations leading toward a deeper more peaceful and spiritual state of consciousness (c.f. [47]). I will give Self-Realization Fellowship the benefit of the doubt that their program of spiritual elevation thru this combined Yoga, meditation, and affirmations is essentially a legitimate spiritual practice. Although I believe that many of the claims in “Autobiography Of A Yogi” are greatly exaggerated and fabricated, I do not view the essential foundations of this modern religion as being based upon the artificial creations of the founder/guru, as I believe was the case in Eckankar. Although Yogananda is certainly greatly revered with much devotion by Self-Realization Fellowship members, this is of a much more mature and independent quality and very different from the totally mindless (in my opinion) Lord Of The Universe mentality that we have seen in both the Unification Church and Divine Light Mission. Therefore I shall give Self-Realization

Fellowship the benefit of the doubt and utilize the same placement in Wilber's level of consciousness continuum as I did for est and Gurjieff; namely in-between the rational and trans-rational levels of the continuum. In regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, we now have a bona-fide long historical and cultural tradition handed down to us, with Yogananda maintaining much respect and allegiance to his Eastern lineage and heritage. However, once again we see there is no "phase" here for phase-specific authority. Yogananda was a life-long guru, and his successor Daya Mata has kept her leadership role in Self-Realization Fellowship for nearly half a century. However, at least in comparison with other modern religions and other gurus, the leadership of Self-Realization Fellowship does appear to me to be essentially benevolent. I make this statement in spite of the dissatisfied accounts given by some ex-members of Self-Realization Fellowship who have experienced living in Self-Realization Fellowship ashrams for a period of time [48]. Once again it is a matter of viewing things in a relative manner; compared to Scientology and the Unification Church we do not seem to have much cause here to be concerned about cult dangers (in my opinion).

To complete our tri-perspective analysis of Self-Realization Fellowship we will now engage in the ratings for the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, basing these ratings upon my own experience with Self-Realization Fellowship in the 1990s.

INTERNAL CONTROL	5
WISDOM CLAIMED	8
WISDOM CREDITED	10

41)

DOGMA	8
RECRUITING	3
FRONT GROUPS	2
WEALTH	3
POLITICAL POWER	2
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	1
CENSORSHIP	1
DROPOUT CONTROL	1
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	1
GRIMNESS	3
SURRENDER OF WILL	7

TOTAL 56

We thus have our lowest average score on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale that we have yet seen. However, there are still some high individual cult danger scores that need to be understood. The score of “10” on Wisdom Credited reflects the essentially total reliance and worship that Self-Realization Fellowship members have upon the teachings of Yogananda. The scores of “8” on Wisdom Claimed and Dogma reflect the high degree of belief by Yogananda in his own pronouncements, but also allow for some flexibility and humility in this guru’s nature. The score of “7” on Surrender Of Will reflects the easy readiness many followers have to give up their own individual will to their feeling of identification with and devotion for Yogananda and the other Self-Realization Fellowship gurus, although not quite to the extent of Divine Light Mission followers, and certainly not to the extent of Unification Church followers. The intermediate score of “5” for Internal Control represents the distant control of members thru intensified and prolonged individualized meditation activities, as members identify themselves with both Yogananda and Self-Realization Fellowship. There are a number of scores of “1,” reflecting my strong sense that Self-Realization Fellowship is essentially free of some of the worst cult dangers, such as Sexual Manipulation, Violence, Censorship, etc. Self-Realization Fellowship does enjoy wealthy luxurious surroundings in its central location thru gifts and voluntary donations from its wealthier members. However, the expense for the ordinary Self-Realization Fellowship member is quite reasonable to receive the Lessons [c.f.[47]], and to attend retreats and conferences. All things considered, based upon our analysis in all three

42)

perspectives, I am inclined to give Self-Realization Fellowship a relatively neutral rating regarding cult dangers. In other words, although I do not consider Self-Realization Fellowship to be a particularly beneficial authentic spiritual growth organization, neither do I have much concern that there are any significant cult dangers here.

We can certainly try out a Four Quadrant ITP (Integral Transformative Practice) for Self-Realization Fellowship. If one accepts all the quite extravagant claims in “Autobiography Of A Yogi” with a grain of salt (c.f.[46]), then the experience of Yoga, meditation, and affirmations thru Kriya Yoga can indeed be a reasonable spiritual discipline in the Intentional quadrant of Wilber’s Four Quadrant Integral Model. There is a danger though of becoming overly immersed in these meditation exercises, and a number of authors have addressed the dangers of engaging in meditation to an excessive degree [49]. Although Kriya Yoga does involve a physical focus on the body, this is not what I believe warrants a significant balancing activity in the Behavioral quadrant. The emphasis upon the inner spiritual domain may very well be rather lopsided in

Self-Realization Fellowship. In regard to the Cultural and Social quadrants, thru the Self-Realization Fellowship retreats and conferences there is much opportunity to interact with others who have a similar

state of mind regarding their desire to attain high spiritual states thru the practice of Kriya Yoga as well as enhancing peace in the world. There is encouragement in Self-Realization Fellowship to allow your higher spiritual state to emerge in the world and contribute to enhanced possibilities for world peace. We thus see that although there are certain lacks in the ITP potential, most notably in the Behavioral quadrant along with an excessive emphasis upon meditation and individual subjective states, we do have some potential here for an Integral Transformative Practice, especially if the Behavioral quadrant is addressed by some other means, and one is cautious to not engage in the meditative activities beyond what is conducive to one's overall development as a spiritual being. Our next modern religion to examine, Course In Miracles, I will venture to guess may have an overall similar evaluation to that of Self-Realization Fellowship.

43)

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

A Course In Miracles is considered to be the information “channeled” by Helen Schucman in the 1970s thru an entity that gradually emerges thru her channelings as a combination of the Holy Ghost and Jesus Christ. The textbook for A Course In Miracles is over a thousand pages of deep difficult esoteric reading with much Christian biblical overtones [50]. However, the more simple basic message of A Course In Miracles is the attainment of inner spiritual peace thru experiencing “miracles,” which in this context are essentially transcendental states of being along the lines of the trans-rational levels of consciousness in the Wilber Integral Model. At any rate, this is my own perspective of A Course In Miracles, from having read the entire textbook plus their bi-monthly journals for a few years, and having participated in a number of Course In Miracles discussion groups. The Course In Miracles organization sponsors yearly worldwide conferences and other retreats, in what appears to be quite a similar way to Self-Realization Fellowship. Let us see in our continued tri-perspective analysis if A Course In Miracles can also be designated as a “Neutral” modern religion, as we have categorized Self-Realization Fellowship, relatively free of any serious cult dangers.

In the Anthony Typology it is quite clear to me that A Course In Miracles does belong in the Multilevel cell. The focus of A Course In Miracles is certainly the attainment of authentic higher level spiritual experience. Although it is difficult to understand this focus from reading the Course In Miracles text directly, one of the most current popular new age writers and teachers, Marianne Williamson, has translated the essential messages of A Course In Miracles in her own words, and has reached many more people than the original versions of A Course In Miracles was able to do [51]. The success and popularity of A Course In Miracles does not appear to me to be a function of the charisma of any guru who has directed the movement. Helen Schucman hardly had the personality to be considered any kind of a guru, and the subsequent leaders of the Course In Miracles organization do not appear to be acting in a guru capacity. There are numerous spiritual meditation and affirmation exercises in the Course In Miracles textbook (actually one for each day of the year); there is no doubt that A Course In Miracles is in the Technical cell. In regard to the Monistic/Dualistic dichotomy, clearly A Course In Miracles is open to all people without prejudice or condescension, and “forgiveness” is considered to be one of their most fundamental spiritual principles. We thus see that A Course In Miracles, being placed in the Multilevel/Charismatic/Monistic cell in the Anthony Typology, is in the most favorable cell regarding being relatively free of cult dangers.

As we now examine A Course In Miracles from the perspective of the Wilber Integral Model, as we remarked above we immediately see that A Course In Miracles is somewhere along the lines of the trans-rational level of consciousness in the Wilber continuum. However, it is also true that there is much Christian biblical context in which this trans-rational focus is given, much of which is quite foreign to

44)

me personally. Although the essential deep message behind the words did reach me, I would say that the Christian biblical context and words takes away from the genuine transcendental message it is based upon. Putting this all together, I would place A Course In Miracles in-between the rational and trans-rational levels of consciousness in Wilber’s continuum in a similar way to what we have seen for est, Gurdjieff, and Self-Realization Fellowship. In regard to the context of anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, we certainly have a rich historical religious tradition of Christianity here. There may be innovative and even radical interpretations of Christianity in A Course In Miracles, but the historical foundations of Christianity are still very much present. As far as phase-specific authority is concerned, unlike all the modern religions we have thus far explored, we finally encounter a modern religion that does appear to be operating under phases of authority. Helen Schucman herself was not at all a controlling guru figure, and the subsequent leaders of the Course In Miracles organization have not taken on this role either. There has not been one central figure who controls this organization, but rather a number of people who lead Course In Miracles workshops, write popular new age books based upon A Course In Miracles principles, and contribute regularly to the Course In Miracles journal. The authority in A Course In Miracles does seem to be phase-specific both in the amount of time different people devote to the leadership of A Course In Miracles as well as to the variety of people involved in different roles of leadership in the organization. We thus see

that A Course In Miracles fares extremely well in the Wilber Integral Model in addition to the Anthony Typology.

We now examine A Course In Miracles thru the perspective of the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, based upon my own knowledge of and experience with A Course In Miracles in the 1990s and 2000 [52]. The following are my Bonewits Cult Danger Scale ratings.

INTERNAL CONTROL	2
WISDOM CLAIMED	10
WISDOM CREDITED	5
DOGMA	10
RECRUITING	3
FRONT GROUPS	2
WEALTH	2
POLITICAL POWER	2
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	3
CENSORSHIP	1
DROPOUT CONTROL	1
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	1

45)

GRIMNESS	3
SURRENDER OF WILL	7

TOTAL 53

AVERAGE 3.53

We see that A Course In Miracles has an even lower cult danger number on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale than that of Self-Realization Fellowship. However, there are two scores of “10” in these ratings for the categories of Wisdom Claimed and Dogma. This reflects the total belief of Helen Schucman that what she wrote in A Course In Miracles was “channeled” from up above and therefore must be followed as it was given to her. However, the “5” score for Wisdom Credited reflects the fact that although the Course In Miracles material is considered by Course In Miracles followers to be sublime wisdom, there is not a particular guru who is credited with having this sublime wisdom (other than Jesus); certainly not Helen Schucman herself. Much of the emphasis of A Course In Miracles is upon surrendering your personal will and self to the “Holy Spirit,” but once again there is not a particular person acting as guru to

surrender yourself to (once again, other than Jesus); thus I rated Surrender Of Will as a “7.” The remaining scores are all relatively low scores of “1,” “2,” or “3.” The “3” score in Sexual Manipulation represents an emphasis upon spiritual attainment and “holy encounter” that could have an effect upon one’s sexual relationships, though quite possibly in a beneficial way. Putting our three perspectives together, we see that A Course In Miracles has received the best ratings on each of the three perspectives in our analysis for any of the modern religions we have thus far encountered . Certainly A Course In Miracles appears to be relatively free of cult dangers and to be at least in the Neutral category regarding being a favorable new age spiritual organization; however, there are also critical and skeptical viewpoints concerning A Course In Miracles [53]. Let us see if A Course In Miracles has any reasonable ITP potential in the Wilber Four Quadrant Integral Model.

Clearly the Intentional quadrant of the Wilber Four Quadrant Integral Model is the dominant focus of A Course In Miracles. The extent of deep meditative spiritual exercises with exact words for affirmations to repeat to yourself many times throughout the day is quite accentuated, to say the least. For many people this kind of recommended structure may be useful and welcome, although it is certainly not my own chosen path of spiritual development. But let us be flexible here and give A Course In Miracles a satisfactory rating in the Intentional quadrant of Wilber’s model. However, it is quite obvious that there is a serious lack in the Behavioral quadrant in A Course In Miracles. Indeed there is virtually no emphasis whatsoever placed upon the body in a Course In Miracles. The body is portrayed as being the lower level accessory to the spirit, and

46)

is second only to the “ego” as being full of danger that can detract one from authentic spiritual pursuits. The body can be controlled by the spirit and put to beneficial use, but there is hardly a respect and appreciation here for the body that is central to the philosophy of an Integral Transformative Practice. In regard to the Cultural and Social quadrants, A Course In Miracles fares somewhat better, as there is a cultural emphasis placed upon doing good in the world, forgiving others, and contributing toward world peace. The Social quadrant is primarily engaged thru participating in Course In Miracles small study groups, and going to the larger Course In Miracles conferences. Involvement in other social groups is not at all discouraged in A Course In Miracles, but the central idea of an ITP regarding extensive balancing of activities in the Intentional, Behavioral, Cultural, and Social quadrants does not appear to be particularly well represented in A Course In Miracles. We shall thus leave A Course In Miracles in “Neutral” territory alongside Self-Realization Fellowship, in-between modern religions that possess significant cult danger characteristics and new age spiritual organizations that are primarily beneficial to overall spiritual development. However, this Neutral category should by no means be taken for granted, as we investigate our next two modern religions that are based upon a very similar philosophy: Conversations With God and Avatar.

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD

Conversations With God was originated by Neale Donald Walsch in the early 1990s as a popular new age book of the same title, followed within the next few years by the remaining two books in the initial Conversations With God trilogy [54]. Walsch has written a number of "With God" books since then [55] and has established a worldwide Conversations With God organization with a number of different subsidiary organizations [56]. After having read Walsch's major books I experienced being with Walsch in a Conversations With God conference in Oregon that included nearly a thousand people. I ended up having quite mixed views of Walsch himself, but I concluded that Conversations With God was not a dangerous cult [56]. Let us now see how my experiences and views of Conversations With God translate into our current tri-perspective analysis of modern religions.

The essential messages of Conversations With God are that all your answers are "within," and that "you" can "choose" what you want to experience in life through looking deeply into your own self, which for Walsch takes the form of having a literal conversation with God. In my Conversations With God essays in "Modern Religions," I do give Walsch the benefit of the doubt to being sincere in his beliefs. Therefore when we examine Conversations With God in the context of the Anthony Typology, I would place Conversations With God in the Multilevel cell, representing the assumption that this modern religion (or

synonymously new age spiritual organization) is based upon high level authentic spiritual realizations. In regard to the Technical vs. Charismatic dimension, once again the category becomes rather blurred. Certainly there is much technical advice by Walsch in his books regarding going deeply inward, the idea of there being no right or wrong, individual choice and intention, highly evolved beings from other planets, God being within you, etc. However, after attending the Humanity's Team conference (a subsidiary organization of the Conversations With God Foundation) and seeing Walsch in action with large groups of people and his effect upon them, I must place Conversations With God in the Charismatic cell [56]. In regard to the Monistic/Dualistic dichotomy, it is clear that Conversations With God belongs in the Monistic cell, as its whole current emphasis is upon transforming the world thru eliminating hierarchies in religious beliefs of right and wrong [57]. In summary, we see that Conversations With God, being placed in the Multilevel/Charismatic/.Monistic cell, is in a generally favorable cell regarding potential cult dangers. However, the Charismatic cell in which we placed Conversations With God may very well be a red flag that needs to be addressed in our other two perspectives.

For the Wilber Integral Model, based upon our analysis for the Anthony Typology, we will once again give Conversations With God the benefit of the doubt and place it in-between the rational and trans-rational levels of consciousness in Wilber's continuum, as we have done with a number of other modern religions that we have thus far explored. However, in regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition,

48)

Conversations With God has virtually no tradition whatsoever to fall back upon. Walsch makes the statement that traditional religious beliefs and practices are not only irrelevant but also can be quite dangerous and destructive [57]. Walsch advocates forming a completely new perspective in understanding and experiencing God, a perspective that is not based upon any historical religious traditions [58]. As far as phase-specific authority is concerned, once again we see that there is no phase here. Walsch runs the Conversations With God organization in what I consider to be a benevolent authoritarian manner. He is most definitely a guru figure to his followers, and he does not appear to have any intentions of phasing out his total authority in the Conversations With God organization. I will also say that in my opinion, he has not abused his power and authority in any kind of serious negative way, but of-course this kind of abusive guru danger is always present, and is an obvious cause of concern [56].

We shall now give Conversations With God our ratings on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, based upon my 2003 experience at the Conversations With God Humanity's Team conference in addition to my previous learnings about Conversations With God.

INTERNAL CONTROL	2
WISDOM CLAIMED	8
WISDOM CREDITED	7
DOGMA	8

RECRUITING	4
FRONT GROUPS	4
WEALTH	4
POLITICAL POWER	5
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	2
CENSORSHIP	2
DROPOUT CONTROL	2
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	3
GRIMNESS	1
SURRENDER OF WILL	3
TOTAL	56
AVERAGE	3.73

49)

Once again we come up with a relatively low score on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, actually the same average score as that of Self-Realization Fellowship. We also see that there are no ratings for Conversations With God greater than “8.” The two ratings of “8” are for Wisdom Claimed and Dogma, representing the fact that although Walsch does have strong powerful beliefs in the validity of his ideas being told to him personally by God, he is also somewhat flexible in his interpretation of these ideas [56]. The trust and admiration for him from his followers is quite high, but my “7” rating for Wisdom Credited shows that this trust and admiration does not go past reasonable limits in regard to listening to everything Walsch says without thinking for oneself. There are a number of intermediate ratings of “4” for Recruiting, Front Groups, and Wealth, and “5” for Political Power, representing that there is a fair amount of emphasis in these categories, but does not reach inappropriate or excessive proportions. For example, there was a definite push when I was at the Humanity’s Conference for people to seriously consider signing up for the Leadership program, the “fast track” option being done in three months for a cost of \$12,500. In my opinion this is an exorbitant sum of money for three months of training, but there was not undo pressure put upon us to sign up for the Leadership training or any of the other Conversations With God workshops or retreats, which was in marked distinction from both Scientology and Avatar [59]. The remaining categories all have relatively low ratings of “1,” “2,” or “3.” Although much of the Conversations With God philosophy is based upon taking responsibility for your actions and for your life, there is also the aspect of surrendering yourself to your higher power or “God.” Walsch is quite the theatrical comedian on stage, and my rating of “1” for Grimness reflects this lightness and humor which Walsch brings to his retreats as

well as to his writings. There is no endorsement of violence whatsoever, and no obvious sexual manipulations, though the Walsch philosophy of complete individual freedom could have sexual overtones regarding being bi-sexual or even multi-sexual in romantic relationships. Walsch also displays some serious concerns about the dangers of traditional religions that do not share his views of non-hierarchy and openness, reflected in my “3” rating for Paranoia. However, all things considered we seem to once again have a modern religion here that is in Neutral territory regarding being susceptible to cult dangers vs. being a “favorable” new age spiritual organization. As I concluded in my last Conversations With God essay [60], Neale Donald Walsch does have a strong ego and charismatic personality, but Conversations With God is not a dangerous cult.

Given that we once again have a Neutral classification for our tri-perspective analysis of a new age spiritual organization, let us see if Conversations With God can be considered to be a legitimate ITP in Wilber’s Four Quadrant Integral Model. As we have seen for a number of other modern religions examined in this way, the Multilevel and trans-rational contexts of Conversations With God certainly appear to fulfill a quality place in the Intentional quadrant of Wilber’s model for an Integral Transformative Practice. In regard to the Behavioral quadrant, although there are not specific practices advocated in Conversations With God, there is an emphasis upon being in the world in a harmonious balanced way, especially thru expressing

50)

yourself in loving sexual ways with others. Thus the body is by no means ignored in the context of a spiritual practice in Conversations With God. As far as the Cultural and Social quadrants are concerned, I must say that Conversations With God demonstrates the most extensive and forceful focus on these quadrants that we have thus far seen. In addition to all the Conversations With God study groups, retreats, and conferences, the Conversations With God subsidiary organization Humanity’s Team has the goal of changing the world for the better thru striving for world peace regardless of religious beliefs or perspectives. There is much emphasis upon working with prison inmates, underprivileged populations-- both in our own country as well as in third world countries, and in general with virtually all segments of social structure: education, law, politics, ecology, business, medicine, etc. [57]. Yes--the Cultural and Social quadrants emphasized in Conversations With God are indeed quite impressive. Aside from the rather limited focus on the Behavioral quadrant, I would say that Conversations With God does appear to have some solid potential for people to engage in a bona-fide Integral Transformative Practice. Deep meditation and self-analysis can be interpreted as a conversation with God or as simply the experiences of higher self along the lines of many spiritual writers [61]. One can certainly add one’s own Behavioral quadrant activities such as yoga, Tai Chi, dance, etc. to round out an effective Conversations With God ITP. However, it is also important to not forget the dangers that we have seen from both the Anthony Typology and the Wilber Integral Model. This is one time that the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale does not adequately reflect the red flag of the guru phenomenon dangers, since in comparison to other gurus and leader of new

age spiritual organizations with serious cult dangers, Neale Donald Walsch cannot be considered to be a serious threat to individual freedom and ethics. However, the Charismatic cell placement in the Anthony Typology and the lack of anchoring of its legitimacy in a tradition and phase-specific authority in the Wilber Integral Model do remind us that Conversations With God is run in an authoritarian charismatic new age way by one powerful magnetic person, and it is important to monitor this one person's continued presence and activity in Conversations With God. We shall find that it is even more important to keep this kind of careful monitoring in mind as we examine our next new age spiritual organization, whose philosophy is very similar to that of Conversations With God and began a few years earlier; I am referring to Avatar. .

51)

AVATAR

Avatar is a new age spiritual organization founded in the late 1980s by Harry Palmer, and has a somewhat similar philosophy to Conversations With God in regard to a person being able to “choose” what he or she wants to experience in life. Avatar successfully markets itself by promising to enable people to learn how to actualize their dreams and gain a heightened experience of being alive. I had reached the level of “Assistant Avatar Master” and spent over \$8,000 to gain this dubious honor [62]. As I describe in my Avatar and Conversations With God essays in “Modern Religions,” Avatar gives much more cause for alarm regarding cult dangers than does Conversations With God. Thru our tri-perspective analysis we shall see which perspectives of our analysis accurately reflect these cult dangers.

In the Anthony Typology, I would once again have to utilize the Multilevel cell placement. I do believe that there is a bona-fide spiritual experience available in Avatar, described as going into “source,” from where the inner power to make substantive changes in your life is cultivated. The “Feel-Its” exercises, Creation affirmations, and Dis-Creation initiation [63] are all dealing with authentic spiritual states that belong in the Multilevel cell. There are a number of deep impactful techniques learned in Avatar that are fairly simple to apply [64]. Although Avatar founder Harry Palmer is certainly viewed as a guru to Avatar members, and through his personal charisma induces people to spend exorbitant sums of money on Avatar [65], I would still place Avatar in the Technical cell because of the enormous focus of the primary spiritual

drills and exercises. In regard to the Monistic/Dualistic choice, clearly Avatar does not discriminate in an Us. vs. Them mentality, and is open to all people doing the Avatar training. I would place Avatar in the Monistic cell on this basis, which puts Avatar in the most favorable cell in the Anthony Typology: Multilevel/Technical/Monistic. However, I contend that as we have seen before, there is something missing in this Anthony Typology placement, and hopefully we will discover what is missing as we go through our two other perspectives.

In the Wilber Integral Model, once again based upon the Multilevel placement in the Anthony Typology we seem to have a level of consciousness that is in-between the rational and trans-rational levels in Wilber's continuum. Some of the exercises and drills may be less than totally authentic for some people, but all things considered I do find Avatar's techniques that are designed to bring forth an authentic spiritual state to be quite effective [63]. However, when it comes to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition we have a similar situation to what we had in Conversations With God. There is no tradition to fall back upon; Avatar is Harry Palmer's creation from new age bits and pieces that he experienced in life (including Scientology). Similarly, there is no phase-specific authority, as Palmer takes on a similar benevolent authoritarian guru role to his Avatar followers as Neale Donald Walsch does to his Conversations With God followers. There are no plans to phase out Harry Palmer's complete control of the Avatar organization. We thus see that in

52)

the Wilber Integral Model the cult dangers picture for Avatar is not quite as rosy as it appears to be in the Anthony Typology. However, we still very much need to see the specifics of the cult dangers of Avatar, and hopefully we shall see this thru the perspective of the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale.

My ratings on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale are based upon my involvement in Avatar from 1997 thru 2001.

INTERNAL CONTROL	5
WISDOM CLAIMED	9
WISDOM CREDITED	9
DOGMA	10
RECRUITING	6
FRONT GROUPS	1
WEALTH	10
POLITICAL POWER	1
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	2
CENSORSHIP	5
DROPOUT CONTROL	5
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	7

GRIMNESS	5
SURRENDER OF WILL	5

TOTAL 81

AVERAGE 5.40

Avatar's score of 5.40 on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale is the third highest score we have seen thus far, only Scientology and the Unification Church having higher scores (although both Scientology and the Unification Church do have significantly higher cult danger ratings than Avatar does on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale). On this basis it certainly does appear that Avatar presents a moderate degree of cult danger concerns, in a somewhat similar capacity to that of Divine Light Mission. Avatar has ratings of "10" in two categories: Dogma and Wealth, and ratings of "9" in two categories: Wisdom Claimed and Wisdom Credited. There is no deviating from the exact ways that Palmer set forth for his exercises to be done [64], and no differences of opinion tolerated regarding Palmer's philosophical views. However,

53)

Palmer does not claim to be an all knowing "perfect master" and his followers do not see him in this totalistic way either; rather he is a more human guru, therefore deserving of ratings of "9" rather than "10" in the Wisdom Claimed and Wisdom Credited categories. However, when it comes to Wealth there is no doubt that Avatar deserves the top score of "10." All roads lead eventually to the Avatar "Wizards" course in Florida, a 13 day course that costs \$7,500 plus all the extras for hotels, food, and transportation. And the expensive prices of the Avatar courses (the cheapest is the first 9 day course for \$2,300 plus the above extras) is heavily marketed to anyone who shows preliminary interest in Avatar or who graduates from the initial Avatar training course or the Avatar Masters' course [65]. Relatively high scores of "6" or "7" and intermediate scores of "5" were given in the categories of Internal Control, Recruiting, Censorship, Dropout Control, Paranoia, Grimness, and Surrender Of Will. When you complete the Avatar Masters' course you are required to sign a lengthy contract stating, among other things, that you will not divulge any Avatar secrets. Avatar does take legal action against ex-members who make public their negative views of Avatar. Recruiting is a full-fledged business activity, and Palmer's book "The Masters' Handbook" is primarily a marketing tool for Avatar Masters who want to find their own paying Avatar students [64]. When one appears to drop out of the Avatar scene, both personalized mailings and phone calls are made to try to bring this person back to Avatar. Influence and control of Avatar members' lives is frequently done for the purpose of persuading Avatar members to sign up for their next level Avatar courses (each course has a course fee of at least a few thousand dollars plus the extras (c.f. [62])). Questioning of financial Avatar matters or disagreeing with particular Avatar exercises is looked upon with suspicion by Avatar leaders and is grounds for not granting a successful completion certificate of higher level Avatar courses [65].

Although taking personal responsibility for life is focused upon in Avatar, surrendering your will to “source” is considered to be of fundamental importance. Although on a major part of the Avatar drills there is much joking and laughter going on as part of the drill, this joking and laughter must stay in its proper place and not be addressed toward disagreeing with the Avatar structure or philosophical principles, in order to be successful on an Avatar course. Avatar is run completely as a business, and Harry Palmer makes no pretenses about covering up his marketing strategies and course prices. I am not aware of any Front Groups in Avatar, endorsement of violence, or interest in political power (all of which received ratings of “1”). Sexual Manipulation received a rating of “2,” as the focus upon individual choice and freedom may have an effect upon decisions in regard to one’s romantic and sexual involvements.

All things considered, we can see from the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale that Avatar’s cult dangers cannot be ignored. We have here a very expensive new age spiritual organization with a highly organized and effective recruitment and marketing strategy. Although the leader/guru has not gone over the edge in terms of blatantly destructive practices for his followers, the dogma, recruitment focus, and high prices of Avatar courses are in themselves enough reason to be very much on guard with this new age spiritual organization.

54)

The philosophy of Avatar may be in some ways similar to that of Conversations With God, but the similarity ends there. Avatar has been described as “the new est,” and there is truthfulness in this description. We see another LGAT (Large Group Awareness Training Program) at work here, as we have seen in est, and one that also focuses upon individual freedom and choice, but has no reservations about charging big bucks for their courses right away. What is alarming is how successful Avatar has been in getting people to pay these big bucks for their courses, myself included. Needless to say, we will not be examining Avatar’s potential for engagement in an Integral Transformative Practice. But it is also true that there is a world of difference between Avatar and Scientology or the Unification Church in terms of degree of cult dangers. For our next new age spiritual organization, Reiki, I believe we will also find a world of difference from Avatar regarding degree of cult dangers, but in the direction of having significantly less cult dangers and moving closer to being a “Favorable” new age spiritual organization.

REIKI

Reiki has various interpretations to it according to one's orientation, ranging from the universal energy rediscovered by Mikao Usui in Japan in the early 1920s and "channeled" by way of "attunements" thru his lineage, to the continuity of Tibetan hands on healing methods over thousands of years [66]. However, the interpretation that I choose to bring to Reiki is far more modest and simple. From my own experience with Reiki, as I have described in my Reiki essays in "Modern Religions," I view Reiki as "meditation with touch" [67]. This may sound like a rather mundane way of describing the Eastern mystical context of universal energy for which Reiki is known. But it has the advantage of not attributing false or unsubstantiated claims to Reiki, simultaneously maintaining the healing spiritual benefits that deep meditation coupled with the sensitive laying on of hands can bring forth. As I have experienced peacefulness, relaxation, and personal insightful awareness repeatedly when being given this kind of "meditation with touch," I expect that Reiki will fare comparatively well in our tri-perspective analysis. There are loose associations of Reiki practitioners linked thru Reiki sharing sessions as well as the internet. This Reiki association can be considered a new age spiritual organization, and the emphasis on the spiritual state experienced thru Reiki, together with the Reiki precepts and techniques handed down from Reiki founder Usui [68], certainly justifies Reiki to be viewed in the context of a modern religion. Let us begin our tri-perspective analysis and see if we finally end up with a modern religion that we can place in the "Favorable" category, on the other side of cult dangers.

In the Anthony Typology it is quite clear that Reiki belongs in the Multilevel cell, as the central emphasis in Reiki is on receiving the universal healing energy, which we may think of as experiencing a heightened sense of awareness thru deep meditation and generally the laying on of hands. However, it is

also quite common for Reiki practitioners to not actually touch the person but rather lay their hands within a person's "energy fields," or even put their intention into giving distant healing, generally using specific Reiki symbols that have been given to them in their "attunements" [69]. The impact on people receiving Reiki in these ways can be interpreted via subtle sensitivities or psychic connections, as well as through "expectations" or the "self fulfilling prophesy." However, no matter how one chooses to interpret the experience of receiving this kind of meditation with (or without) touch, it seems quite clear that we are talking about an authentic spiritual experience here that belongs in the Multilevel cell. In regard to the Technical or Charismatic cell, although there is certainly a mystique and a guru phenomenon associated with Usui, I believe that the emphasis upon the techniques of giving attunements, hand positions, symbols, Reiki precepts, and various other specialized techniques places Reiki in the Technical cell. There is no doubt in my mind that Reiki belongs in the Monistic cell as opposed to the Dualistic cell, as Reiki practices love and harmony to all people, and the emphasis upon receiving a Reiki attunement is not done in a condescending hierarchical way

56)

in regard to those who have not received these attunements [70]. We thus once again have a classification representing the most favorable cell in the Anthony Typology: Multilevel/Technical/Monistic. However, there are also aspects of Reiki that may not be completely as idyllic as Reiki appears to be in the Anthony Typology, and this is where our other two perspectives will serve us well.

In the Wilber Integral Model, once again we are comfortable approaching the trans-rational level of consciousness based upon our Multilevel cell placement from the Anthony Typology. However, the tremendous variety of Reiki orientations and the rather farfetched claims by many of these orientations will persuade us to keep to the same continuum level placement that we have often been making, in-between the rational and trans-rational levels of consciousness [71]. It is interesting to compare Reiki to Divine Light Mission, in the sense that in order to "Receive Knowledge" in Divine Light Mission one must first accept Guru Maharajji as Lord of the Universe [72]. But one can receive Reiki healings and attunements regardless of whether or not one believes in the universal energy transmission perspective of Reiki or any other Reiki perspective. This is one reason that I have put Divine Light Mission on the pre-rational level of consciousness while I am placing Reiki on a much higher level of consciousness in the continuum. In regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, the picture becomes much more blurry, as it depends upon what orientation of Reiki we are using. Certainly the Tibetan Reiki orientation basing its continuity on an unbroken lineage for thousands of years is very much steeped in anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition. This is much less the case for the traditional Reiki heritage that stems from Usui's "rediscovery" of Reiki in the 1920s, although even this perspective involves the context of Reiki being an ancient universal energy that was always available. However, there are also much more exotic and closer to science fiction versions of Reiki that have little or no historical tradition associated to them [71]. As far as phase-specific authority is concerned, once again the picture gets somewhat blurry. Focusing upon the Reiki lineage from the time

of Usui (the other Reiki orientations have very little factual information for us to say much about), we can view this as initial phase-specific authority, basically because Usui only lived around five or six years after his revelation Reiki experience. His direct lineage evolved in a few different directions, and a number of individuals took on leadership roles in Reiki. Aside from Usui, who can be considered the primary Reiki guru but a short-lived one who seems to have been an essentially progressive uplifting teacher, we do not have any absolute authority figure in Reiki, but rather different phases where various individuals have taken on Reiki leadership roles. We thus see that Reiki also fares quite well in the Wilber Integral Model, the slight red flag perhaps being the lack of historical legitimacy in a tradition for followers of Usui and especially for the more modern ad hoc Reiki groups.

We now complete our tri-perspective analysis of Reiki thru our ratings on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, based upon my experiences in Reiki from 1997 thru 2004.

57)

INTERNAL CONTROL	3
WISDOM CLAIMED	9
WISDOM CREDITED	9
DOGMA	8
RECRUITING	3
FRONT GROUPS	3
WEALTH	5
POLITICAL POWER	2
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	2
CENSORSHIP	3
DROPOUT CONTROL	1
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	3
GRIMNESS	3
SURRENDER OF WILL	7
TOTAL	62
AVERAGE	4.13

I must say that I am somewhat surprised that Reiki did not receive more favorable ratings on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale. Let us examine some of these ratings and see what they might mean. The

highest ratings of “9,” “8,” “7,” and “5” occur respectively in the categories of Wisdom Claimed, Wisdom Credited, Dogma, Surrender Of Will, and Wealth. The beliefs in the universal Reiki energy and the transference or channeling of this universal energy thru attunements and healings are quite rigidly adhered to, with a great deal of reverence being given to the Japanese Reiki founder Usui. However, there also seems to be a certain degree of humility in the personality of Usui, as well as differences of opinion and discussion amongst Reiki practitioners regarding some historical details; for this reason our Wisdom Claimed and Wisdom Credited categories received ratings of “9” instead of “10,” and Dogma received a rating of “8.” There is a strong emphasis upon leaving behind the rational mind and entering the Reiki flow, which can certainly be considered a surrender of will, but this surrender is not given to any particular individual but rather to the universal Reiki energy (which I interpret as the person’s deepest layer of self); thus I rated the Surrender Of Will category as a “7.” There are some Reiki masters who charge very large sums of money to

58)

give people attunements, as much as \$10,000 for the Masters’ attunement, but for the most part receiving three levels of Reiki attunements to become a Reiki master will run around a thousand dollars, or perhaps a few hundred more. This still seems quite high priced to me, given that from my perspective people are paying this thousand dollars plus for simply “meditation with touch” (or without touch). Reiki healings are generally given for similar fees as massage and counseling, and there do exist Reiki masters who offer all their services for very small fees and occasionally even for no charge [73]. All things considered, I gave the Wealth category the intermediate rating of “5.” The remaining categories all have relatively low ratings of “1,” “2,” or “3;” most of the “3” ratings are not “1”s or “2”s primarily because of the variety of modern ad hoc Reiki groups that bring in both outlandish ideas as well as harsher perspectives toward other Reiki practitioners with different points of view [74]. It should also be noted that a number of states in this country have put rather severe legal restrictions on Reiki. There may be valid reasons why Reiki practitioners in these states feel a degree of threat from their society. But in summary, if there are lingering cult dangers in Reiki they are certainly on the quite mild side. In fact, I will give Reiki the benefit of the doubt, given its positive ratings in the Anthony Typology and Wilber Integral Model, and place Reiki in the Neutral category regarding cult dangers vs. favorable practices. I believe that the high cult danger ratings in the categories of Wisdom Claimed, Wisdom Credited, and Dogma are effectively tempered by the relatively low cult danger ratings in the categories of Recruitment, Censorship, Dropout Control, Paranoia, Grimness, etc.

Given that we are placing Reiki in the Neutral category for cult dangers, we can certainly examine its potential for an ITP in the Wilber Four Quadrant Integral Model, from our Reiki perspective of “meditation with touch.” In our meditation with touch perspective it is clear from the Multilevel cell placement in the Anthony Typology and the in-between rational and trans-rational consciousness level placement in the Wilber Integral Model, that Reiki has high quality spiritual activity to offer in Wilber’s

Intentional quadrant. In regard to the Behavioral quadrant, we have a similar situation to that of Conversations With God, in that one would need to add one's own working with the body to balance out the Reiki meditation state. Some of the more modern ad hoc Reiki orientations may actually incorporate more of this Behavioral quadrant thru activities such as "Reiki Dance," but this is by no means a common occurrence in Reiki. In regard to the Cultural and Social quadrants, we see a much more comprehensive and balanced approach. Reiki advocates peace in the world thru giving people the healing Reiki energy. This extends both to Reiki sharing groups as well as to the general public in all kinds of social structures, most especially in hospitals and childbirths [75]. There are Reiki practitioners who went to Ground Zero in New York City after 9/11/2001 to give Reiki to the firemen working in the rubble, and Reiki practitioners who went to Russia to give Reiki to Russian people who could not afford to pay for Reiki. There is a healthy and inspiring balance of the individual receiving the Reiki energy and then giving it to others in a

59)

variety of cultural and social contexts. We thus find, as we did in the case of Conversations With God, that Reiki does appear to have positive potential for an ITP, especially if a balancing physical activity is engaged in for the Behavioral quadrant. However, Reiki is definitely not my own chosen path of spiritual practice or ITP (and neither is Conversations With God for that matter), as the traditional beliefs of Reiki that I have taken many pains to reinterpret are extremely rigid, from my own perspective. Our next modern religion to examine from our tri-perspective analysis, Neopaganism, is much closer to heart for me personally, and may very well prove to be our first modern religion that we can legitimately place in the "Favorable" category.

NEOPAGANISM

As I have described the nature of my experiential integral tri-perspective analysis in the Introduction, my goal is not to give a comprehensive objective portrayal of the groups that I am writing about. The tri-perspective analysis I have embarked upon is my way of organizing, analyzing, and quantifying my own personal experience in 17 new age spiritual organizations. It is in this spirit that we will apply our tri-perspective analysis to Neopaganism, i.e. based upon my own experiences with Neopaganism from 1997 thru 2004. My Neopaganism essay in “Modern Religions” [76] captures the gist of my experience, but there have been other Neopagan workshops and festivals that I have attended, and they have not all been as positive as the Starwood festival which I wrote about in my essay,. However, most of my experiences with Neopaganism have been personally fulfilling and engaging while being free of manipulation and coercion. I do believe that Neopaganism belongs in the “Favorable” modern religion category, clearly on the other side of cult dangers. But then again, I had these expectations for Reiki, only to find that Reiki barely made it into Neutral territory. This is where the benefits of an experiential integral tri-perspective analysis make itself strongly known, as we begin our tri-perspective analysis of Neopaganism.

There are numerous philosophies and perspectives in the earth based spirituality Neopagan movement [77], and my own definition of Neopaganism refers simply to “people in modern times who consider themselves to be practicing Paganism with present day adaptations” [78]. My experience of Neopaganism is taken primarily from all the workshops, rituals, and bonfires I have attended thru the Starwood, Rites Of Spring, and Twilight Covening festivals and workshops. There was one other weekend Pagan gathering, near where I live in Maine, that I participated in. This weekend gathering was not a positive experience for me, as I found it to be rather crass and lacking depth, not at all what I consider to be an authentic spiritual experience. Thus when it comes to deciding whether to put Neopaganism in the Multilevel or Unilevel cell in the Anthony Typology, it is not an automatic or easy decision to make. The truth is that it can go in

either direction, based upon what a person is seeking and which particular Neopagan group a person experiences. There is plenty of worldly fun and entertainment at the Starwood Pagan festival [76,78], but there is also opportunity for deeper spiritual experience. For me, the dancing around the nightly bonfires had all the ingredients to furnish me with an altered state of consciousness, as did a number of the rituals of Starwood, Rites Of Spring, Twilight Convening, plus a few afternoon and evening Pagan events that I attended in California with my son. Putting all this together, I feel justified in placing Neopaganism in the Multilevel cell in the Anthony Typology, with the understanding that the Multilevel potential is there for those who are seeking it. In regard to the Technical vs. Charismatic choice, this is much easier. I have found very little guru directed activity in my exploration of Neopaganism, and the practices of meditation, dance, drumming, yoga, massage, breathwork, etc. clearly place Neopaganism in the Technical cell.

61)

Similarly, there is no doubt that Neopaganism belongs in the Monistic cell as opposed to the Dualistic cell. Neopaganism is open to all people and all religions, and does not alienate itself or act condescendingly toward those who think differently. Of-course not every Neopagan lives up to these standards completely, but for the most part this has been the crux of my experience with Neopaganism for the past seven years. We thus see that Neopaganism, like the past few modern religions we have analyzed, is in the most favorable cell in the Anthony Typology: Multilevel/Technical/Monistic.

As we become more accustomed to our tri-perspective analysis, it becomes clear that the Wilber Integral Model level of consciousness that accompanies the Multilevel cell in the Anthony Typology is likely to fall in-between the rational and trans-rational levels of Wilber's continuum. In the case of Neopaganism, the variety of worldly vs. spiritual kind of experiences available certainly give this in-between rational and trans-rational placement appropriate justification. In regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, once again this is not an easy question to answer. Some Neopagans very clearly trace their heritage back to the Celts or Druids or other early Pagans. On the other hand, some Neopagans make no pretenses about their religion being made from scratch in the 20th century, such as the Church Of All Worlds, founded by Oberon Zell, being based upon Robert Heinlein's popular science fiction novel : "Stranger In A Strange Land" [79]. There is no clear answer here, and once again we can only say "it depends on who you are asking." In regard to phase-specific authority, here we can comfortably say that whatever authority is exercised in the Neopagan community is quite phase-specific. There is no central guru or authority figure in Neopaganism, and the local authority figures in Pagan covens and gatherings, i.e. the priests and priestesses, generally alter their leadership based upon which rituals are being done. We thus find quite a loose flexible social structure for a modern religion or new age spiritual organization; certainly the most flexible and least authoritarian group we have thus far explored.

We now give our ratings for Neopaganism on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, based upon my experience with Neopaganism from 1997 thru 2004.

INTERNAL CONTROL	3
WISDOM CLAIMED	1
WISDOM CREDITED	4
DOGMA	2
RECRUITING	2
FRONT GROUPS	2
WEALTH	1
POLITICAL POWER	1
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	3

62)

CENSORSHIP	1
DROPOUT CONTROL	1
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	5
GRIMNESS	1
SURRENDER OF WILL	3

TOTAL 31

AVERAGE 2.07

Clearly we have a horse of a different color here. The Bonewits Cult Danger Scale has furnished us with a good deal of certainty that Neopaganism belongs in the “Favorable” modern religion category, clearly on the other side of cult dangers. This is reinforced by the Anthony Typology as well as the Wilber Integral Model, and Neopaganism’s score on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale puts it strikingly in a class by itself in comparison to any of the other modern religions we have explored. There are no ratings above “5,” the highest rating of “5,” for Paranoia, reflects the realistic danger that Neopagans feel in our society at the way their religion is misrepresented and negatively thought of, being unfairly linked with Satanism, etc. The next highest score of “4,” for Wisdom Credited, reflects the general respect and trust that many Neopagans do feel toward their workshop and ritual leaders, though this is a respect and trust that is realistic and earned. The ratings of “3” for Internal Control, Sexual Manipulation, and Surrender Of Will demonstrate a degree of influence of Wiccan and Pagan priests and priestesses in covens, a not uncommon occurrence of Polyamory, i.e. having more than one sexual partner as a way of life, and a temporary surrender of will to nature and ancestors in the context of an altered state of consciousness. The remaining scores are all “1”s and “2”s, and it is noteworthy how different these ratings are for Neopaganism compared to nearly all the other groups we have explored, in the categories of Wisdom Claimed, Dogma, Recruiting, Wealth, Political

Power, Censorship, Dropout Control, and Grimness. Yes--we finally have encountered a new age spiritual organization that we can safely say is free of cult dangers, at least in regard to the context of my own experience with Neopaganism over the past seven years.

In regard to Neopaganism's potential for an ITP in Wilber's Four Quadrant Integral Model, the most immediate quadrant that stands out to me is actually the Behavioral quadrant. Neopaganism is exceptionally strong in focusing upon the body, in terms of dance, drumming, yoga, martial arts, massage, Tai Chi, etc. The Intentional quadrant certainly has the potential of being expressed in a constructive manner, but once again this is entirely dependent upon the aspirations of the individual person. Meditation and altered states

63)

of consciousness are very much part of Neopaganism if one chooses to partake of these experiences. In regard to the Cultural quadrant we have a widespread Pagan source of community, once again for those who seek it. There is much opportunity to partake of many different Pagan communities all year round, all over the world. The Social quadrant goes hand in hand with the Pagan cultural community, especially nowadays with our modern technology and Internet access. However, this Cultural and Social Pagan community orientation does not necessarily go beyond the Pagan community itself. Neopagans may certainly decide to engage themselves in Social causes beyond their Pagan communities, and many of them do, but this kind of going beyond the Pagan community is not particularly emphasized in Neopaganism. Unlike the world peace oriented social emphasis of both Reiki and Conversations With God, there is no comparable social ethics or practices like this in Neopaganism. The freedom of the individual is considered to be sacred, and organizing into social groups to accomplish "good" things for the world is not considered important or even necessarily appropriate in Neopaganism. I see this Cultural and Social perspective as being rather loose and lacking, especially given the grave perils our world is currently living in. I would therefore say that there is certainly reasonable potential to engage in a beneficial ITP through Neopaganism, but one would need to formulate one's own Cultural and Social practices beyond the Neopagan community, as well as focus upon the higher level spiritual context that can be found in Neopaganism. We thus see that even though Neopaganism most certainly is in the land of Favorable modern religions, it might have gone too far in the realm of focusing upon the individual without taking into account the urgent needs of the society in which the individual lives.

For the remainder of this paper, we will examine five more new age spiritual organizations, each one of which I have found to be beneficial and personally meaningful in different ways. Our main purpose in these final explorations is no longer specifically to describe a group's cult dangers, although we will continue with our tri-perspective analysis for purposes of continuity and comparison, and actually one of these five new age spiritual organizations that I have found to be personally meaningful does end up with a classification in the Mild cult danger category. But our more fundamental purpose is to bring forth an extensive philosophical exploration of new age spiritual organizations from an experiential integral

perspective. This experiential integral perspective looks at all of life and describes phenomenologically what it sees. What are the ingredients of new age spiritual organization that can give people support in their life journeys and stimulate authentic spiritual insights and meaning in their lives? The next new age spiritual organization we will examine can be described as a modernized form of Judaism, but without the “chosen people” syndrome; this is the modern religion of Tikkun.

64)

TIKKUN

Tikkun is a modern primarily Jewish peace oriented organization founded by Michael Lerner in the late 1980s. I first became acquainted with Tikkun from reading Michael Lerner’s book “Spirit Matters” in 2002 [80], and I attended a one day Tikkun workshop in Massachusetts that same year, followed by a five day Tikkun conference in 2003 in Washington D.C. that was focused upon peace in the Middle East. At both events I was quite impressed with the self-assured and effective but yet modest leadership of Michael Lerner, who is a Ph.D psychologist as well as a rabbi, and the peace oriented inclusive idealistic Jewish philosophy which Tikkun represented [81]. Tikkun is a highly political organization, and we ended up in the halls of congress in Washington D.C., speaking to our U.S. senators and congressmen about a Tikkun platform for peace in the Middle East, focusing upon a combined Palestinian/Israeli state. However, for the purposes of our experiential integral tri-perspective analysis of new age spiritual organizations, although I have no doubt that Tikkun is free of cult dangers, it remains to be seen if Tikkun can qualify as a favorable modern religion and offer an effective Integral Transformative Practice in Wilber’s Four Quadrant Integral Model.

The first question that must be decided upon is where to put Tikkun in regard to the Multilevel/Unilevel choice in the Anthony Typology. At first glance it may seem that of-course Tikkun belongs in the Multilevel cell, as most of the modern religions we have examined have ended up in the Multilevel cell, even some of the ones with a modest degree of cult dangers attached to them. From reading “Spirit Matters” one certainly gets the message from Michael Lerner that Tikkun wants to embrace both the spiritual as well as the material world, merging spirituality into business, politics, law, education, medicine, etc. However, after attending the Washington D.C. Tikkun conference I must say that I found this element of spirituality in Michael Lerner’s writings to be severely lacking in actual practice. The focus was almost entirely on the social/political arena, and there was virtually no time set aside for meditation and spiritual nourishment, in spite of what was described in “Spirit Matters.” I therefore must conclude from my own experience of Tikkun that we have a courageous, dedicated, and idealistic organization that I have much

agreement with personally [82], but I am not able to say that Tikkun offers an authentic spiritual practice per se when it comes down to how they set their priorities in their workshops. Based upon these considerations I must place Tikkun in the Unilevel cell. In regard to the choice between the Technical and Charismatic cell, although Michael Lerner is certainly quite influential and has his own personal Jewish brand of charisma, the extensive philosophical principles upon which Tikkun is based and represented in various articles in the Tikkun journal (c.f. [81]), appeal predominantly to the liberal and intellectually minded person. Tikkun reaches people thru logic and reason, focusing upon their sacred convictions of peace in the world and in Israel thru being open to all people and all faiths, eliminating the “chosen people” doctrine of Judaism. I will therefore place Tikkun in the Technical cell. In regard to the Monistic/Dualistic choice, here we have an

65)

easy decision as Tikkun’s basic philosophy is non-judgmental openness to all people in a tremendously extensive and liberal minded perspective of Judaism; certainly Tikkun belongs in the Monistic cell. We thus see that Tikkun has the placement of Unilevel/Technical/Monistic in the Anthony Typology.

In regard to the Wilber Integral Model, as we saw in the Anthony Typology we have a similar choice to make in placing Tikkun on the appropriate level of consciousness in Wilber’s continuum. Certainly Tikkun is at the height of rationality, exhibiting extreme logic and intelligence in all of its philosophical premises and arguments. However, can we justify placing Tikkun on a level beyond rational, i.e. in-between the rational and trans-rational levels of consciousness? For the same reasons as our Unilevel placement of Tikkun in the Anthony Typology, I must place Tikkun on the rational level of consciousness in the Wilber Integral Model. In regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, here we can give a resounding affirmative as Tikkun is based quite heavily upon Jewish foundations, even though many aspects of Judaism are liberally interpreted and/or radically transformed. In regard to phase-specific authority, once again I will answer in the affirmative. From my own experience, Michael Lerner is an authentic teacher figure, but has no desire or need to be in lifelong control of Tikkun. There are currently three co-chairs of Tikkun, including

Michael Lerner [83], and I believe that it is quite possible that in a few years all of these Tikkun leadership roles will be taken on by others. We thus see that in both the Anthony Typology and the Wilber Integral Model, Tikkun fares quite well, with the exception that a bona-fide authentic spiritual focus is talked about and written about, but was not present from my own experiential perspective.

We now examine Tikkun from the perspective of the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale; my ratings are based primarily upon my experiences at the Tikkun conferences that I attended in 2002 and 2003.

INTERNAL CONTROL	4
WISDOM CLAIMED	6
WISDOM CREDITED	4

DOGMA	6
RECRUITING	4
FRONT GROUPS	4
WEALTH	3
POLITICAL POWER	10
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	1
CENSORSHIP	1
DROPOUT CONTROL	3
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	6

66)

GRIMNESS	3
SURRENDER OF WILL	1

TOTAL 57

AVERAGE 3.80

I am somewhat surprised that Tikkun's rating on the Bonewits Cult Danger scale is not lower than it is, but we see that Tikkun's rating is comparable to that of Self-Realization Fellowship, A Course In Miracles, Conversations With God, and Reiki, all of which were placed in the Neutral category, in-between modern religions with cult dangers and favorable modern religions. The rating that particularly stands out for Tikkun on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale is the "10" rating for Political Power. Tikkun's tremendous focus upon influencing U.S. senators and congressmen to support Tikkun's Middle East peace platform, and the various political figures—including 2004 Democratic Presidential aspirant Dennis Kucinich—who spoke at the Tikkun banquet, demonstrate the intensive social/political focus of Tikkun. The upper level intermediate scores of "6" for Wisdom Claimed and Dogma represent Tikkun's strong liberal minded philosophical peace oriented beliefs, although there is also plenty of dialogue and discussion in Tikkun regarding the specifics of these beliefs. The score of "6" in Paranoia represents the strong fear of the influence of traditionally minded pro-Israeli lobbyist organizations, as well as the fears of alienating Jewish people with different points of view. The lower intermediate scores of "4" for Internal Control, Wisdom Credited, Recruitment, and Front Groups demonstrate a moderate level of cohesiveness in the Tikkun organization but not excessive allegiance to its leaders, with a fair amount of recruitment efforts to bring other people into Tikkun, thru a variety of group activities that may or may not utilize the name Tikkun. The scores of "3" for Wealth, Dropout Control, and Grimness demonstrate a small but not insignificant level of membership fees, frequent mailings to keep Tikkun members in the organization, and a healthy

respect for the organization but one that does allow for humor. The score of “1” for Surrender Of Will highlights the extreme focus on purely rational decision making, and the scores of “1” for Endorsement Of Violence, Sexual Manipulation, and Censorship testifies to the high level of ethical responsibility in Tikkun. It is clear from our tri-perspective analysis that although Tikkun is a strong minded liberal cohesive organization, there is relatively no cult dangers attached to it. From the lack of authentic spirituality based upon my own experience with Tikkun, together with its neutral level score on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, I will place Tikkun in Neutral territory--in-between the Favorable and Mild Cult Danger categories of modern religions.

In regard to Tikkun’s potential for an ITP in Wilber’s Four Quadrant Integral Model, the lack of authentic spirituality is an obvious sign that there will be problems here. In addition to Tikkun not being

67)

represented well in Wilber’s Intentional quadrant, there is also little body oriented activity in the Behavioral quadrant. There was a bit of Jewish dance activity at the Washington D.C. Tikkun conference that I attended, but the focus on the individual, Intentional or Behavioral, is sorely lacking from my own experience. Where Tikkun shines is in the social and political arena, which translates into the Cultural and Social quadrants in Wilber’s model. Here we have a multitude and rich variety of opportunity for all kinds of involvement in social and cultural causes and groups, both within Tikkun, in our society, and in the world. If one were able to sustain one’s own balanced spiritual practice--both in the Intentional and Behavioral quadrants, perhaps one could maintain an effective ITP while benefiting from the tremendous Cultural and Social quadrant potential involvement with Tikkun. However, this does seem like quite the stretch to me, and far too easy for the individual Intentional and Behavioral quadrants to get swallowed up by Tikkun’s extremely active Cultural and Social quadrants. Thus I am not able to conclude that Tikkun fares particularly well for its ITP potential in Wilber’s Four Quadrant Integral Model. Let us see how all of this fits together in our next candidate for another favorable new age spiritual organization in addition to Neopaganism; our next candidate is Kripalu Yoga Center.

KRIPALU YOGA CENTER

Kripalu Yoga Center originated in the early 1970s as a disciplined guru centered yoga retreat center; the name Kripalu is based upon the name of the Indian guru to whom the yoga center was dedicated, Swami Kripalvanandji. The history of Kripalu is quite interesting, as the founder of Kripalu, Yogi Amrit Desai, who was a disciple of Swami Kripalvanandui, became involved in sexual liaisons with members of the Kripalu community, which was completely contradictory to the philosophy of Kripalu that this leader represented

However, unlike many other spiritual communities that tolerate and excuse ethical misconduct on the part of their leaders, Kripalu took the initiative of demanding that their leader leave Kripalu [84]. This resulted in Kripalu expanding their network into a variety of new age course offerings in addition to their Kripalu style of yoga, with a democratically based leadership that has functioned both effectively and ethically for the past twelve years. I have participated in two Kripalu workshops, one in 1998 and one in 2004, and my tri-perspective analysis of Kripalu will be based upon my Kripalu workshop experiences [85].

To begin with, I am quite comfortable with placing Kripalu in the Multilevel cell in the Anthony Typology. Kripalu never loses its authentic spiritual focus, as the Kripalu teachers emphasize that the essential basis of Kripalu yoga is its spiritual essence. This spiritual essence is reinforced by deep meditation while practicing the yoga postures, silent meal time in the mornings, and a generally quiet contemplative atmosphere throughout the Kripalu surroundings. The transformation from guru leadership to democratic group leadership plus the high level instructional yoga practices certainly place Kripalu in the Technical cell as opposed to the Charismatic cell. Kripalu has a genuine orientation to helping all people find their true spiritual path, and very much represents the Monistic cell as opposed to the Dualistic cell. We thus see that Kripalu is placed in the most favorable cell in the Anthony Typology: Multilevel/Technical/Monistic.

In regard to the Wilber Integral Model, Kripalu is our first modern religion or new age spiritual organization that I can place squarely in the trans-rational level of consciousness in the Wilber continuum.

The spiritual emphasis in Kripalu is quite profound, and those who attend Kripalu workshops generally find their deeper spiritual selves emerging. Kripalu does not compromise itself with materialistic perspectives, but keeps its focus on the spiritual state that transcends the mind while simultaneously acknowledging the mind as one of our important and worthwhile attributes. This is why I will place Kripalu on the trans-rational level of consciousness in Wilber's continuum. Although Kripalu does have its own particular spiritually based style of yoga, its general yoga tradition has a long Eastern heritage, and I do believe that Kripalu satisfies Wilber's criterion of anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition. Kripalu's democratic leadership insures that it engages in phase-specific authority. We thus see that Kripalu has excellent ratings on both the Anthony Typology as well as the Wilber Integral Model.

69)

We now examine Kripalu's ratings on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, based upon my experiences with Kripalu in 1998 and 2004.

INTERNAL CONTROL	1
WISDOM CLAIMED	5
WISDOM CREDITED	5
DOGMA	5
RECRUITING	3
FRONT GROUPS	1
WEALTH	3
POLITICAL POWER	1
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	1
CENSORSHIP	1
DROPOUT CONTROL	1
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	1
GRIMNESS	5
SURRENDER OF WILL	5
TOTAL	39
AVERAGE	2.60

From the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale we see that Kripalu rates very low in regard to cult dangers, second only to Neopaganism in the modern religions that we have thus far examined. Kripalu's highest

rating is “5,” which I have given for the categories of Wisdom Claimed, Wisdom Credited, Dogma, Grimness, and Surrender Of Will. Kripalu has a firm spiritual philosophy of yoga that is at the basis of all its activities, but this spiritual yoga based philosophy is not rigid or authoritarian, but open to constructive changes thru discussion and practice by its practitioners. This spiritual focus does encourage people to engage in deep meditation where one may very well experience the feeling of surrender of will, but there is also much grounding experiences available at Kripalu, especially the combined dance and yoga activity called “dancekinetics” [85], to keep this meditative surrender of will from becoming too excessive. Kripalu does have a somewhat serious and subdued atmosphere, but this is a function of the inner spiritual focus rather than a serious harsh nature of any of the Kripalu leaders. The ratings of “3” for Recruitment and Wealth

70)

show a mild and reasonable recruiting effort resulting in a comfortable financial arrangement for both Kripalu and its workshop participants. The remaining categories all have ratings of “1,” representing a highly ethical and non-coercive new age spiritual organization. On the basis of Kripalu’s excellent ratings on the Anthony Typology and the Wilber Integral Model, and its quite favorable rating on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, I will place Kripalu in the Favorable new age spiritual organization category, alongside of Neopaganism.

In regard to Kripalu’s potential for an effective ITP in Wilber’s Integral Four Quadrant Model, I believe we have found our most promising possibility for an Integral Transformative Practice. Kripalu yoga is a bona-fide spiritual meditative practice that encompasses both the Intentional and Behavioral quadrants in Wilber’s model in a balanced harmonious way. The emphasis on the body in practicing yoga postures is central to a yoga practice, but in Kripalu yoga an equal emphasis is given to the inner spiritual state. Kripalu has reached out to communities and workplaces all over the world, especially thru its Kripalu Yoga Teacher Training program. Kripalu has part of its mission to spread the spiritual discipline of yoga throughout the world, and it engages in various work barter and scholarship programs to help accomplish its mission.

I will say that thru becoming involved in Kripalu’s outreach focus in a variety of areas, one has much potential to be in community with others, embracing the Cultural and Social quadrants in Wilber’s model. We thus find that Kripalu offers an effective means of Integral Transformative Practice in Wilber’s Four Quadrant Integral Model. Our next new age spiritual organization to consider, Omega Institute, is in many ways similar to Kripalu, but without the centrality of Kripalu’s spiritual yoga focus. It will be interesting to see if Omega Institute is able to join Kripalu in the category of Favorable new age spiritual organization.

OMEGA RETREAT CENTER

Omega Retreat Center is one of the most popular and extensive new age retreat centers in the world. Numerous and various personal growth, healing, physical well-being, spirituality, etc. workshops are offered on a continuous basis throughout the year, especially during the Spring, Summer, and Fall months [86]. Omega began in the early 1970s, as did Kripalu, but unlike Kripalu, Omega has always operated without the presence of any particular guru figure or any one particular model of spiritual practice as its central basis.

I have done five weekend workshops at Omega in the 1990s and 2000s, and our tri-perspective analysis of Omega will be based upon my experiences at these workshops.

Our first criteria of Multilevel vs. Unilevel cell placement in the Anthony Typology is by no means as easy a decision to make as it was for Kripalu. Omega certainly has the exploration of authentic spirituality at the core of many of its workshops as well as in its central philosophy. However, my experience at Omega does not reflect the kind of pure spiritual essence atmosphere in the way that I have described Kripalu. Omega is much more of a new age “vacation” atmosphere and less of a new age spiritual retreat atmosphere than Kripalu, from my own experience. When I am at Omega, it feels to me like I am with people who are generally quite successful in society and looking for the highs of a get-away weekend in a new age context. In comparison, when I am at Kripalu, it feels to me like I am in an atmosphere that truly encourages people to alter their lives in authentic spiritual directions, minimizing the focus upon materialistic and society success. There are certainly exceptions to these general descriptions of both Kripalu and Omega, but in terms of my own experience with the dominant mindset of Omega, I must place Omega primarily in the Unilevel cell in the Anthony Typology. Certainly Omega caters to personal growth, holistic healing, physical well-being, creativity and artistic development, etc. But in regard to the deeper levels of authentic spirituality, I do find Omega to be lacking in terms of my actual experience with the people who generally

attend the Omega workshops. On the other hand, many of the Omega workshop leaders and a number of the workshop participants do exhibit a similar authentic spiritual state of consciousness to that of Kripalu, and it can be argued that Omega deserves a secondary Multilevel cell placement. In contrast to the challenge of the Multilevel vs. Unilevel cell placement, the other two cells in the Anthony Typology will be much easier to pinpoint for Omega. There are no gurus or cherished leaders at Omega; Omega undoubtedly belongs in the Technical cell as opposed to the Charismatic cell. Omega is a fine example of catering to all people without prejudice or condescension, and certainly belongs in the Monistic cell as opposed to the Dualistic cell. We thus see that Omega has the dominant classification of Unilevel/Technical/Monistic with the secondary classification of Multilevel/Technical/Monistic in the Anthony Typology, reflecting the somewhat less than authentic spiritual atmosphere generated by many of the people who attend Omega workshops.

72)

In regard to the Wilber Integral Model, we have a very similar problem to consider in terms of where to place Omega in Wilber's levels of consciousness continuum. However, the inclusion of the secondary Multilevel cell placement in the Anthony Typology indicates that Omega does place beyond the rational level of consciousness, though certainly not squarely in the trans-rational level in the way that Kripalu did. We shall place Omega in-between the rational and trans-rational levels of consciousness, as we have done for a number of new age spiritual organizations that we have examined. In regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, once again this is not an easy question to answer. In one sense Omega focuses upon the tradition of Eastern meditation and contemplation, going back thousands of years. However, there is no particular tradition or heritage that Omega is based upon, but rather Omega has been formulated as a new age mixture of many spiritual and personal growth disciplines, both Eastern and Western. In terms of how I view Wilber's criteria, I must say that I do not believe that Omega anchors its legitimacy in a tradition, certainly not in the sense of Kripalu's yoga tradition, Tikkun's Jewish tradition, or Neopaganism's Pagan tradition, etc. For Wilber's third category of phase-specific authority, we can immediately respond in the affirmative, as Omega chooses its leaders in a democratic temporal fashion with virtually no danger of any person assuming excessive authority. We thus find that Omega does have generally favorable ratings in both the Anthony Typology as well as the Wilber Integral Model, but that these ratings are not quite as impressive as they have been for either Kripalu or Neopaganism.

We now examine Omega on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, based upon my workshop experiences at Omega in the 1990s and 2000s

INTERNAL CONTROL	2
WISDOM CLAIMED	5
WISDOM CREDITED	5
DOGMA	3

RECRUITING	4
FRONT GROUPS	1
WEALTH	5
POLITICAL POWER	1
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	1
CENSORSHIP	1
DROPOUT CONTROL	1
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	1

78)

GRIMNESS	1
SURRENDER OF WILL	3

TOTAL 35

AVERAGE 2.33

We find that Omega has an extremely low score on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, lower than even Kripalu, second only to Neopaganism in terms of being safe from cult dangers. Like Kripalu and Neopaganism, Omega has no ratings higher than “5.” Omega’s “5” ratings for Wisdom Claimed and Wisdom Credited reflect their solid Eastern/Western personal growth and spirituality basis, but without significant dogmatic or rigid proportions, evidenced by their lower “3” rating for Dogma. The “5” rating for Wealth represents the successful materialistic business enterprise that Omega immerses itself in, complete with new age cruises, etc., but their successful finances do not stem from exorbitant workshop fees and do not result in the extreme wealth of its leaders. Omega does have a solid program of Recruiting thru its extensive and attractive seasonal catalogues and featured workshop descriptions [86], on a somewhat higher level than Kripalu, which accounts for my “4” rating, and this Recruiting activity very much contributes toward Omega’s financial well-being. There are some workshops at Omega where Surrender Of Will is experienced to some extent, but there is also much social grounding at mealtimes and other activities, which accounts for my “3” rating. My “2” rating for Internal Control allows for the occasional possibility of extended contact with workshop leaders past the workshops, though this is by no means a common or strong feature of the Omega experience. All the other categories received ratings of “1,” and we thus see from the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale that Omega is a highly safe and respectable new age spiritual organization in terms of any cult dangers for its participants. Though its authentic spiritual context is not at the level of either Kripalu or Neopaganism, in my opinion Omega does bridge the gap of going

beyond the Neutral classification in regard to cult dangers, and deserves to be placed in the category of Favorable

new age spiritual organization.

In terms of Omega's potential for an ITP in Wilber's Four Quadrant Integral Model, I believe that we have reasonable potential for an effective Integral Transformative Practice, but one that does require a significant degree of individual effort to go beyond what Omega specifically offers. Both the Intentional and Behavioral quadrants are well represented in Wilber's model. Recall that my description of lacks of authentic spirituality at Omega were not based upon my experiences with the workshop leaders but rather with many of the workshop participants. The workshop leaders at Omega for the most part do offer a genuine opportunity for authentic meditative spiritual practice, and this is well balanced with a variety of

74)

body oriented activities including yoga, massage, Tai Chi, dance, tennis, etc. However, in regard to Omega's ITP potential in the Cultural and Social quadrants, we do not have anything like the solid and extensive cultural/social emphasis of Kripalu or the intensive social/political emphasis of Tikkun. Omega caters much more to the individual than it does to any cultural or social involvements. However, there is certainly the opportunity to become engaged in the Omega community, both as a frequent workshop participant (if your finances allow for it) as well as through joining the Omega staff [86]. Beyond the Omega community, Omega participants would need to take their learning experiences from being at Omega workshops and build upon this through their own cultural extensions into social groups that have a connection to their Omega experience. I do not believe that this is something which happens very often or easily for people, and for this reason I will say that Omega's ITP potential is definitely lacking in the Cultural and Social quadrants of Wilber's model. Omega does have a tendency to cater to what has been referred to as "new age narcissism" [87]. However, it is also true that Omega offers a balanced rich variety of experiences for the individual in the Intentional and Behavioral quadrants, and it is certainly quite possible for the individual to form his/her own community connections in the Cultural and Social quadrants to engage in an effective Integral Transformative Practice.

We have thus far found three new age spiritual organizations that we have been able to place in the Favorable category, on the other side of cult dangers: Neopaganism, Kripalu Yoga Center, and Omega Retreat Center. However, it remains to be seen if either of our two remaining new age spiritual organizations in our tri-perspective analysis will furnish us with another "Favorable" example, as we examine our next new age spiritual organization: Twelve Step Support Groups.

TWELVE STEP SUPPORT GROUPS

We come now to a rather unusual new age spiritual organization and modern religion: Twelve Step Support Groups. These groups originated in the middle of the 20th century with Alcoholics Anonymous, but gradually extended itself to a variety of Twelve Step groups using the identical format, including groups for codependency, Alanon (for family and friends of alcoholics, codependents, etc.), sex and love addiction, etc. [88]. The Twelve Step groups that I am most familiar with are the groups that focus upon codependency, which can be defined as being overly affected by the feelings and behaviors of another person to the point of giving up fundamental parts of your own self [88]. Keeping with the main theme of this book, I will therefore be basing our tri-perspective analysis upon my experiences with the Codependency Twelve Step Support Groups, including Alanon groups. The groups that I have participated in have been primarily in the Belfast, Maine area in the 1990s and 2000s. There is a very definite spiritual ingredient in the Twelve Step process, as “letting go and letting God” is a primary motto that describes the basic principles of these groups, whether it be focused upon alcoholism, codependence, love and sex addiction, or any other addictive type of behavior [88]. Let us now see how Twelve Step Support Groups fare in regard to cult dangers under our tri-perspective analysis.

In my own experience, the focus upon spirituality in the Twelve Step Support Groups is essentially both authentic and central to the whole program. The way in which this spirituality is tapped is through a combined form of prayer and meditation, but in a non-doctrinaire manner that is left entirely up to the individual regarding what meaning spirituality and God has for him/her. I therefore feel quite comfortable that Twelve Step Support Groups belong in the Multilevel cell in the Anthony Typology. There is relatively very little control exercised by Twelve Step Support Group members, as the whole format is designed to prevent any individual from becoming a continuous leader in the program. There are individuals who tend to monopolize the amount of personal sharing that takes place in these groups, but the 12 steps of the program are always adhered to, no matter what type of Twelve Step Support Group is taking place [88].
Certainly

Twelve Step Support Groups belong in the Technical cell as opposed to the Charismatic cell in the Anthony Typology. The whole Twelve Step Support Group movement opens itself to anybody and everybody to take part in these groups, with a sincere empathy toward the plight of people who are suffering and have not engaged in Twelve Step Support Groups. There is no doubt that Twelve Step Support Groups belong in the Monistic cell in the Anthony Typology. We thus see that Twelve Step Support Groups are placed in the most favorable cell in the Anthony Typology: Multilevel/Technical/Monistic.

As we examine Twelve Step Support Groups in the context of the Wilber Integral Model, we immediately see from our Multilevel cell placement in the Anthony Typology that we are dealing with a level of consciousness beyond rational in Wilber's continuum. However, there is much variety in the authenticity

76)

of individual Twelve Step Support Group members' spiritual experiences, and what I believe is most appropriate is to place Twelve Step Support Groups in-between the rational and trans-rational levels of consciousness in Wilber's continuum. In regard to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, here we most definitely have very little to hold onto. The tradition upon which Twelve Step Support Groups is based is primarily that of Alcoholics Anonymous, which can hardly be seen as a longstanding tradition in the way in which Wilber is viewing this category. Perhaps one can stretch this somewhat and also use Christianity partially as a tradition, as there are occasional biblical references and a generic Christian moral focus to the whole program [88]. However, it is pretty obvious that Twelve Step Support Groups do not have a firm longstanding tradition that anchors its legitimacy, certainly not in the way that some of the other modern religions we have explored do have.. As far as Wilber's category of phase-specific authority is concerned, here we are safe to conclude that Twelve Step Support Groups have an extremely effective program in preventing anyone from entering into a position of authority that is not both limited and temporary. We thus see that although Twelve Step Support Groups fare reasonably well in the Wilber Integral model, they do not have the same flying colors that they have in the Anthony Typology. Perhaps there are some lurking cult dangers hidden in Twelve Step Support Groups after all, and we shall see if our third perspective from the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale uncovers anything here.

The following ratings are from my experiences of participating in codependency and Alanon groups in the Belfast, Maine area in the 1990s and 2000s.

INTERNAL CONTROL	5
WISDOM CLAIMED	8
WISDOM CREDITED	5
DOGMA	10
RECRUITING	2
FRONT GROUPS	1

WEALTH	1
POLITICAL POWER	1
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	6
CENSORSHIP	1
DROPOUT CONTROL	1
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	8
GRIMNESS	8
SURRENDER OF WILL	8

83)

TOTAL 66

AVERAGE 4.40

As I hinted might be the case, the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale does indeed demonstrate some mild cult danger signs for Twelve Step Support Groups. There are four ratings of “8” for Wisdom Claimed, Paranoia, Grimness, and Surrender Of Will, and a rating of “10” for Dogma. The basic philosophy and doctrines of Twelve Step Support Groups are completely dogmatic, basing their ideas and format on the beliefs and principles stemming from Alcoholics Anonymous, with no deviations or differences of opinion being considered in regard to the philosophical framework of the groups. Although there are no formal leaders or gurus, the Twelve Step Support Group members who have been regularly attending these groups for many years are quite convinced about the truth of the groups’ philosophical principles, and earn a healthy respect from newer members, though not in an unfaltering guru kind of way, as shown by my rating of “5” for Wisdom Credited. The oath of anonymity is a highly serious and required agreement made at the beginning and end of every Twelve Step Support Group meeting, and is based upon a high degree of paranoia regarding what the “outside world” may think of someone who attends these groups. There is much emotional outpourings in these groups, and although light socializing is common before and after the actual groups meet, the basic principles and philosophy of Twelve Step Support Groups are considered sacred and not to be joked about. Surrender of Will, as the phrase “let go and let God” implies, is an essential part of the whole program, but the person is also expected to take responsibility for his/her actions, which does somewhat temper this surrender of will. Sexual Manipulation has an upper intermediate rating of “6,” conveying that much of the group sharing is revolved around the topic of sex, and there are strong though sometimes subtle influences to withhold from being sexual in one’s life until one does enough work on one’s self. In a similar way, there is a fair amount of influence in the life choices that Twelve Step Support Group members make, which is conveyed by my “5” rating for Internal Control. There is very little direct

recruitment efforts made, although there are often basic times and locations for Alcoholics Anonymous and Alanon meetings given in the local papers, which is why I gave Recruiting a “2” rating as opposed to a “1” rating. The rest of the categories all received “1” ratings, as Twelve Step Support Groups are extremely inexpensive financially (a dollar donation is requested at each meeting), and there is virtually no dropout control, censorship, endorsement of violence, political power, and front groups. All things considered, I do not think that Twelve Step Support Groups present any serious cult dangers, but there seems to be enough indications of concern to place it in the Mild Cult Danger category, along with est, Gurdjieff, and Eckankar. I can recall some people attending five or six Twelve Step meetings a week, replacing practically all their significant social interactions by these meetings. Yes—there is most definitely

78)

some level of cult danger here, although there is no powerful unethical dangerous guru attempting to control the lives of Twelve Step Support Group members. The cult dangers are mild, but there does not appear to be much balancing out of the acknowledged authentic spiritual element, aside from participating in the Twelve Step Support Groups themselves. For this reason, I do not believe that Twelve Step Support Groups have much to offer in regard to an Integral Transformative Practice in the context of the Wilber Four Quadrant Integral Model.

As we approach the end of the new age spiritual organizations we are tri-perspectively analyzing, our last group is also a rather unusual inclusion, as it is a group that has its central mission that of studying the dangers of cults themselves; this group is known as AFF, an abbreviation for “American Family & Friends.”.

Surely a group that studies the cult dangers of other groups cannot have any characteristics of cults themselves? Let us proceed open-mindedly and see what our final tri-perspective analysis reveals about AFF.

AFF

AFF, the spiritual cults awareness and information network founded in 1979 that is an abbreviation for American Family & Friends, is admittedly a stretch to be included in this book as a new age spiritual organization or modern religion. However, I believe it will be instructive to examine AFF in our tri-perspective analysis, taking into account the factor that AFF in no way claims to have any spiritual component per se in its organization. Although this is certainly a legitimate reason for excluding AFF in our study, there is also an argument that perhaps an organization whose main purpose for existing is to promote awareness of cult dangers of other organizations should have some kind of spiritual foundation itself in order to justify their assessment of authentic vs. cultish levels of spirituality in other organizations. This is indeed the case with Ken Wilber's Integral Institute organization, as Wilber's Integral Model has been tremendously useful to us in our tri-perspective analysis, and Wilber's levels of consciousness is a primary part of the spiritual foundations upon which Integral Institute has been built [89]. Our tri-perspective analysis of AFF will be based upon the associations that I have had with this organization over the past year, particularly the five day cults awareness conference that I attended in Edmonton, Canada in June, 2004 and my interactions with various AFF leaders concerning the publications of some of my writings. [90].

Based upon what we have already acknowledged concerning the intentional lack of any central spiritual component in AFF, we must place AFF in the Unilevel cell in the Anthony Typology. From my own experience of being at the AFF cults awareness conference in 2004, it was very obvious that there was generally a strong reluctance for AFF members to embrace any kind of organizational spiritual component, as their fears of organized spirituality leading to cult involvement was very real to them. There was an openness by AFF leaders for me to co-facilitate a future AFF workshop for people to discuss their own individual post-cult spiritual lives, but this still is entirely different from AFF having a genuine spiritual component as part of their philosophy. AFF is very much a scholarly philosophical organization with many workshops and books about cults available [91]. The leaders of AFF are in their positions for temporary

time periods, and there is no doubt that AFF belongs in the Technical cell as opposed to the Charismatic cell in the Anthony Typology. Although AFF is essentially open to all people and for legal reasons has had no choice but to allow members of spiritual organizations widely recognized as dangerous cults [92] to attend their public conferences, there is also an ingredient of condescension toward people who are presently members of spiritual organizations that possess significant cult characteristics. There is a definite anti-cult philosophical basis in AFF, which I happen to share personally, and there is much variability in the level of acceptance vs. animosity toward people who are still actively involved in new age spiritual organizations with strong cult characteristics. For this reason I must give AFF a dual placement that can go either in the Monistic cell or Dualistic cell in the Anthony Typology. We thus see that AFF can be put in two possible

80)

categories in the Anthony Typology: Unilevel/Technical/Monistic or Unilevel/Technical/Dualistic. The Unilevel/Technical/Dualistic cell is considered to be one of the most alarming cells for possible cult dangers in the Anthony Typology.

As we consider AFF in the context of the Wilber Integral Model, it is quite clear that AFF is operating completely at the rational level of consciousness in Wilber's continuum, for the same reasons that AFF has been placed in the Unilevel cell in the Anthony Typology. When it comes to anchoring its legitimacy in a tradition, there is not a whole lot we can offer. Although I very much admire and respect AFF's philosophical framework, intelligence, and courage in promoting cults awareness, there is certainly no longstanding tradition that it is based upon. Perhaps one can think of the tradition of freedom and democracy in America, but this is stretching things beyond what I believe Wilber was referring to for this category. As far as phase-specific authority is concerned, here we are completely safe to say that people who are in positions of authority in AFF have attained their influence in a democratic way, and that these positions of authority are most definitely temporary and phase-specific. But we must admit that AFF is not winning any awards for being free of cult dangers from its ratings on either the Anthony Typology or the Wilber Integral Model. Lets see if something can be salvaged as we examine AFF from the perspective of the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale.

My ratings for AFF on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale are based upon my associations in 2004 with AFF for the period of one year, and in particular from my experiences at the June, 2004 AFF cults awareness conference in Edmonton, Canada.

INTERNAL CONTROL	5
WISDOM CLAIMED	8
WISDOM CREDITED	5
DOGMA	8
RECRUITING	2

FRONT GROUPS	1
WEALTH	1
POLITICAL POWER	3
SEXUAL MANIPULATION	2
CENSORSHIP	2
DROPOUT CONTROL	1
ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE	1
PARANOIA	10

81)

GRIMNESS	3
SURRENDER OF WILL	1
TOTAL	53
AVERAGE	3.53

I must admit that I am more than a little relieved to see that AFF has a reasonably low score on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale. AFF's score of 3.53 on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale is the same score as A Course In Miracles, which is the lowest score on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale of all the groups placed in the Neutral category, in-between the placements of Mild Cult Dangers and Favorable modern religions. We shall thus place AFF in this same Neutral category, along with A Course In Miracles, Self-Realization Fellowship, Conversations With God, Reiki, and Tikkun. Certainly the most striking rating for AFF in the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale is the rating of "10" for Paranoia. There is no doubt that AFF is extremely fearful regarding the threat and power of its perceived enemies, which are the modern religions and new age spiritual organizations that have strong cult characteristics. This is a fear that I myself very much share, as I have already made quite clear in my tri-perspective analysis of Scientology [93]. I think this fear is very real and completely justified, and it is the reason for the "10" rating in the category of Paranoia. The "8" ratings for Wisdom Claimed and Dogma reflect the strong anti-cult philosophical stance at the basis of the AFF organization, which again is a stance that I share personally with AFF. There are intelligent insightful cogent arguments set forth by brilliant professionals in AFF to present this stance (c.f. [10] in the Introduction Notes), but I also must objectively give high ratings in the Wisdom Claimed and Dogma categories to represent this AFF perspective, although the philosophical arguments of these AFF leaders are still open to discussion of other points or view, which is why these ratings are not higher than "8." The "5" ratings for Internal Control and Wisdom Credited reflect the moderate degree of influence on AFF members of its leaders who write the anti-cult books, an influence that does make a strong impression, but from my

own reading of these books and attending workshops by their authors, does not manipulate people or cater to any kind of undo attention or guru effect. The remaining categories all have “1,” “2,” or “3” ratings; the “3” ratings for Political Power and Grimness reflect a relatively small but existing interest in legal matters regarding the gaining of rights for people fighting cults, and a healthy respect for AFF leaders with an appropriate and reasonable degree of humor. There is very little actual recruitment, though if one does find the AFF website there is much information and promotion to buy AFF books, subscribe to the AFF newsletter and journal, and attend AFF conferences (c.f. [90] for AFF website information). There is virtually no censorship, although some people (for example, Scientologists) may consider AFF’s perspective

82)

that the Cult Awareness Network (CAN) as of 1996 has become a Scientology sponsored organization and should be regarded as a dangerous organization, is a form of censorship. However, personally I am quite thankful to AFF for publicizing this knowledge, and I am most happy to join AFF in their work to promote awareness of modern religions and new age spiritual organizations that may have dangerous cult characteristics. But we see that AFF, although I do believe they have avoided the temptation to enter into any significant cultish behaviors themselves in their promotion of cults awareness of other organizations, does not have genuine spiritual foundations of their own as an organization. For this reason AFF does not offer any kind of reasonable Integral Transformative Practice in Wilber’s Four Quadrant Integral Model. However, AFF does offer a wonderful opportunity to engage oneself in the cultural and social quadrants of Wilber’s model thru working to spread awareness of cult dangers throughout our social institutions, and this is an opportunity that I personally am in the process of developing. With this in mind, let us now summarize what we have learned in regard to the relative cult dangers and favorable aspects of the 17 modern religions or new age spiritual organizations that we have done our tri-perspective analysis on.

NOTE: As of February, 2005 AFF has changed its name to ICSA, which is an abbreviation for International Cultic Studies Association.

SUSMMARY OF RESULTS AND CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Before giving the summary of all the experiential data that we have accumulated concerning the cult dangers of various modern religions and new age spiritual organizations, I would briefly like to describe the philosophical basis upon which I will be interpreting my results; this is in the context of what I refer to as an “experiential analysis.” This philosophical basis is described both brilliantly and simply by Ken Wilber in his books “Eye To Eye” and “The Marriage Of Sense And Soul” [89]. In “Eye To Eye” Wilber defines three modes of knowledge, which can be described simply as the eye of the senses, the eye of reason, and the eye of contemplation. The eye of the senses refers to direct scientific knowledge of the world that can be perceived with our senses and the scientific extensions of our senses, such as microscopes, telescopes, etc. The eye of reason refers to the logical activity of the mind and includes the realms of logic, philosophy, mathematics, etc. The eye of contemplation refers to immediate spiritual experience, awareness, or illumination thru meditation, prayer, or any activity of life that results in a transcendental state of awareness. Wilber goes on to astutely describe how these three eyes of knowledge have been misused to represent one another, with disastrous consequences for our modern society. In particular he focuses his attention upon the “narrow science” view that incorporates all knowledge primarily into the eye of the senses, with leeway given to the eye of reason only in the form of mathematics. In “The Marriage Of Sense And Soul,” Wilber makes the impactful argument that if we move toward “deep science” in place of “narrow science,” then the enormous gap in modern society between science and religion could be effectively merged.

In order to accomplish this feat, Wilber defines science in general as encompassing the three stages of instrumental injunction, direct application, and communal confirmation (or rejection). What Wilber means by these stages is first the actual practice or experiment, second the direct experience or apprehension of the data, and third the checking of the results with others who have adequately completed the injunction and

apprehension strands. Thus a scientific experiment must be capable of duplication with identical results before it is regarded as scientific knowledge. A proof in mathematics must be corroborated by a community of capable mathematicians before it is accepted into the mathematical literature. And the crucial point for the prospective merger of science and religion is that the same must hold true for spiritual experience. In other words, spiritual experience needs to go through these three stages of Wilber's generic science formulation, and if and only if it succeeds in doing this it can be construed as "deep science." The first stage involves engaging in the actual experience or practice, whether it be yoga, prayer, Zen, Scientology auditing, Reiki attunements, etc. The second stage accumulates the insights and awareness of the first stage experience, and in the third stage we compare our results with others who have been thru the first two stages in this realm. Wilber proposes that science extend its domain to incorporate the study of spirituality and religion in this way, and that religion eliminate its mythological beliefs that have no deep science basis of

84)

truth, embracing its authentic spiritual experience through the three stages of deep science confirmation. If this model is applied to the eye of contemplation, as it has begun to be applied in recent years in the developing fields of parapsychology and transpersonal psychology [94], then Wilber's proposed merger of science and religion is indeed an idealistic notion that has possibilities of making itself known in our concrete modern world [95].

It is in this context of "deep science" that I have embarked upon my experiential integral tri-perspective analysis. What I mean by "experiential analysis" in this context is the immersion in the eye of contemplation, followed by the reasoning capacity applied to all of the sensory, mental, and transcendental realms in the new age spiritual organizations and modern religions that I have experienced. With this in mind, here is a summary of the results that I have found. For ease of presentation I will make use of the following abbreviations.

Anthony Typology:	Mu: Multilvel	U: Unilevel
	T: Technical	C: Charismatic
	Mo: Monistic	D: Dualistic

Wilber Integral Model:	PrR: pre-rational
	R: rational
	Psr: pseudo-rational
	TR: trans-rational
	R/TR: in-between rational and trans-rational

- L: anchors its legitimacy in a tradition
- NL: does not anchor its legitimacy in a tradition
- P: phase-specific authority
- NP: no phase-specific authority

Bonewits Cult Danger Scale: the two decimal number between 1 and 10 refers to the average score on the 15 categories of the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale.

For a number of the modern religions there is more than one possible category placement in the Anthony Typology or the Wilber Integral Model, which will be simply illustrated with the preposition “or.” We will abbreviate our three perspectives as follows:

85)

- AT: Anthony Typology
- WIM: Wilber Integral Model
- BCD: Bonewits Cult Danger Scale

For our first modern religion, Scientology, we explain these abbreviations in detail as follows:

Scientology:	AT:	U/T/D or U/C/D or U/T/Mo or U/C/Mo
	WIM:	PsR NL NP
	BCD:	8.67

This conveys the ambiguity of Scientology in the Anthony Typology as having the four possible cell placements of Unilevel/Technical/Dualistic or Unilevel/Charismatic/Dualistic or Unilevel/Technical/Monistic or Unilevel/Charismatic/Monistic. In the Wilber Integral Model, Scientology is on the pseudo-rational level of consciousness in Wilber’s continuum, does not anchor its legitimacy in a tradition, and does not engage in phase-specific authority. Its average score on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale of 8.67 is extremely high, signifying very serious concerns of cult dangers.

Using this same classification scheme, the summary of data for our remaining 16 modern religions are as follows:

est	AT:	U/T/Mo or Mu/T/Mo or U/C/Mo or Mu/T/Mo
	WIM:	R/TR NL NP
	BCD:	4.07

The Unification Church:	AT:	U/C/D		
	WIM:	PsR	NL	NP
	BCD:	9.00		
Divine Light Mission:	AT:	U/C/Mo or Mu/C/Mo		
	WIM:	PrR	L	NP
	BCD:	5.07		
Gurdjieff:	AT:	Mu/T/D or Mu/C/D		
	WIM:	R/TR	L or NL	NP
	BCD:	4.33		
				86)
Eckankar:	AT:	Mu/C/Mo or Mu/T/Mo		
	WIM:	PsR	NL	NP
	BCD:	4.33		
Self-Realization Fellowship:	AT:	Mu/C/Mo or Mu/T/Mo		
	WIM:	R/TR	L	NP
	BCD:	3.73		
A Course In Miracles:	AT:	Mu/C/Mo		
	WIM:	R/TR	L	P
	BCD:	3.53		
Conversations With God	AT:	Mu/C/Mo		
	WIM:	R/TR	NL	NP
	BCD:	3.73		
Avatar:	AT:	Mu/T/Mo		
	WIM:	R/TR	NL	NP
	BCD:	5.40		
Reiki:	AT:	Mu/T/Mo		
	WIM:	R/TR	L or NL	P or NP
	BCD:	4.13		

Neopaganism:	AT:		Mu/T/Mo	
	WIM:	R/TR	L or NL	P
	BCD:		2.07	
Tikkun:	AT:		U/T/Mo	
	WIM:	R	L	P
	BCD:		3.80	
				87)
Kripalu Yoga Center:	AT:		Mu/T/Mo	
	WIM:	TR	L	P
	BCD:		2.60	
Omega Retreat Center:	AT:		Mu/T/Mo	
	WIM:	R/TR	NL	P
	BCD:		2.33	
Twelve Step Support Groups:	AT:		Mu/T/Mo	
	WIM:	R/TR	NL	P
	BCD:		4.40	
AFF:	AT:		U/T/Mo or U/T/D	
	WIM:	R	NL	P
	BCD:		3.53	

In regard to interpreting this data, it seems clear that we have a generic classification that can be described in the five categories of High Cult Danger, Moderate Cult Danger, Mild Cult Danger, Neutral, and Favorable, which will be abbreviated respectively as H, Mod, Min, N, F. Based upon the above data, it seems reasonable to me to make the following classification:

- H: Scientology, The Unification Church
- Mod: Divine Light Mission, Avatar
- Min: est, Gurdjieff, Eckankar, Twelve Step Support Groups

N: Self-Realization Fellowship, A Course In Miracles, Conversations With God, Reiki, Tikkun, AFF

F: Neopaganism, Kripalu Yoga Center, Omega Retreat Center

Of-course these classifications are not airtight in all cases; for example, we have seen that Reiki could have gone into Min or N, Omega could have gone into N or F, etc. But given that this whole experiential analysis is based upon my own personal experiences in all of these modern religions, i.e. my first two stages of Wilber's "deep science," it is quite clear that in my experience there is a sharp differentiation regarding the cult dangers of many of the new age spiritual organizations that I have experienced. In regard to the feasibility of engaging in an Integral Transformative Practice thru these modern religions, it is also quite

88)

clear that approximately half of them have some reasonable ITP potential; namely the modern religions in the Neutral and Favorable categories. Who are the winners and losers in this experiential analysis? The data speaks for itself, and from my tri-perspective analysis based upon my personal experiences in these new age spiritual organizations we can see the extremes of cult dangers that I have experienced in Scientology and The Unification Church vs. the highly beneficial spiritual support network that I have experienced in Neopaganism and Kripalu Yoga Center. But all the data and interpretations that I have been able to accumulate and formulate for these modern religions are truly based upon my own personal experiences in them for a period of 30 years. This is Wilber's first stage of "deep science," and Wilber's second stage of deep science is what I have formulated as an experiential analysis applied to these 17 new age spiritual organizations. I welcome Wilber's third stage of deep science in the context of further experiential research to open up discussion about the effectiveness of the particular experiential integral tri-perspective analysis that I have utilized. .

NEW AGE SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS: NOTES

- 1) Elliot Benjamin, "Modern Religions: An Experiential Analysis And Expose"
(Swanville, Maine: Natural Dimension Publications, 2005; available by contacting
ben496@prexar.com).

Scientology Notes

- 2) See for example Paulette Cooper, "The Scandal Of Scientology" (New York: Tower, 1971); Robert Kaufman, "(Inside Scientology)" (New York: Olympia, 1972); Russell Miller, "Bare Faced Messiah: The True Story Of L. Ron Hubbard" (Great Britain: Penguin Books Ltd., 1987); Bent Corydon & L. Ron Hubbard Jr., "L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah Or Madman" (Sebaucus, NJ: Lyle Stuart, 1987); Joe Atack, "A Piece Of Blue Sky: Scientology, Dianetics, And L.Ron Hubbard Exposed" (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1990); plus current Scientology news and materials at various cults awareness websites; in particular American Family & Friends (AFF): www.csj.org, and Freedom Of Mind Resource Center: www.freedomofmind.com. There are also generic Scientology books by L. Ron Hubbard that are readily available at local bookstores; for example "Dianetics: The Modern Science Of Mental Health" (Los Angeles: The American Saint Hill Organization, 1950, 1975); "Scientology: The Fundamentals Of Thought" (Los Angeles: Bridge, 1983, 1999), "Scientology: A New Slant On Life" (Los Angeles: Bridge, 1988, 1997), etc.
- 3) See "A Comparison Of Scientology And Judaism" in "Modern Religions" (c.f. note [1] above)
- 4) See Chapter 4 in "Modern Religions" and/or the Scientology books listed in [1] above for detailed descriptions of all the Scientology terms used here.
- 5) See my essay "Sample Dianetic Auditing Process And Concluding Statement" as well as "Excerpts From "The Maturation Of Walter Goldman"" in Chapter 4 of "Modern Religions" for illustrative accounts of preliminary level Scientology auditing.

- 6) See my essay "The Misunderstood Word" in Chapter 4 of "Modern Religions" for a rather humorous account of this.
- 7) See "A Piece Of Blue Sky" and "Inside Scientology" (book information listed in [1] above) for some particularly vivid accounts of past-life far out auditing experiences.
- 8) See any and all of Ken Wilber's writings on transcending and including lower "holons" into higher holons, and in particular his essay "The Pre/Trans Fallacy" in "Eye To Eye" (book information in [8] of Introduction Notes).
- 9) See my essay "Scientology In The 21st Century" in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions."

90)

Est Notes

- 10) See Chapter 3: "Encounters With Some Modern Religions In The 1970s" in "Modern Religions."
- 11) See for example Adelaide Bry, "Est :60 Hours That Transform Your Life" (New York: Avon Books, 1976; Steven Pressman, "Outrageous Betrayal: The Real Story Of Werner Erhard, From Est To Exile" (Emeryville, CA: St. Martins Press, 1993); Carl Frederick, "Est: Playing The Game The New Way" (New York, Synergy International Of The Americas, Limited; 2003).
- 12) See my Avatar essays in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions" and the section on Avatar in this paper for a current example of a successful and financially demanding LGAT.
- 13) See "The est Training: An Interview with Werner Erhard" in "Spiritual Choices" (book information in [2] of Introduction Notes).
- 14) See my essay "On Werner Erhard" in Chapter 3 of "Modern Religions" for a glimpse of Werner Erhard's charismatic guru effect on his est followers.
- 15) See my est essays "Est: Part I: The Human Zoo" and "Est: Part II: The Message Of The East" in Chapter 3 of "Modern Religions."
- 16) See my essay "Est: Part III: On Religion and Big Business" in Chapter 3 of "Modern Religions."
- 17) See my respective essays on Scientology and Avatar in Chapters 4 and 2 of "Modern Religions."
- 18) See the section in this paper on AFF for more information about this organization.
- 19) See the Introduction for the definition of an ITP.
- 20) Edited by Ken Wilber, Jack Engler, and Daniel P. Brown, "Transformations Of Consciousness" (New Science Library; Shambhala: Boston, 1986); see in particular the essays by Brown and Engler.
- 21) This increasing involvement and deceptive form of est intimacy was the motivation behind my essay "Est: On Pseudo-Intimacy" in Chapter 3 of "Modern Religions."

Unification Church Notes

- 22) See “Combating Cult Mind Control” and “Releasing The Bonds” (book information in [10] of Introduction Notes.
- 23) See for example Irving Louis Horowitz, editor, “Science, Sin, And Scholarship: The Politics Of Reverend Moon And The Unification Church” (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1978); Alan Tate Wood & Jack Vitek, “Moonsruck: A Memoir Of My Lif In A Cult” (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1979); Barbara Underwood & Betty Underwood,
- 91)

“Hostage To Heaven: Four Years In The Unification Church By An Ex-Moonie And The Mother Who Fought To Free Her” (Portland, OR: Clarkson N. Potter, 1979); Josh Freed, “Moonwebs: Journdy Into The Mind Of A Cult” (Toronto, Ontario: Dorset Publishing, 1980); Steve Kemperman, :”Lord Of The Second Advent” (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1981);Erica Heftmann, (The Dark Side Of The Moonies” (Australia: Penguin Books, 1982); Nansook Hong, “In The shadow Of The Moons” (New York: Little Brown, 1999).

- 24) See in particular “Divine Principle” (New York: The Holy Spirit Association For The Unification Of World Christianity, 1973)
- 25) See the aforementioned books by Steve Hassan in [22] as well as my essay “An Ex-Moonie Speaks” in Chapter 3 of “Modern Religions.”
- 26) See the Unification Church references in Steve Hassan’s book “Releasing The Bonds” (book information in [10] of Introduction Notes)
- 27) See my essay “On The Unification Church” in Chapter 3 of “modern Religions” for the details of this reasoning argument.
- 28) See any of the Unification Church references in [23] and my essay “An Ex-Moonie Speaks” in Chapter 3 of “Modern Religions.”
- 29) See Geoffrey’s book “Stripping The Gurus” (book information in [6] of Introduction Notes) for a particularly disturbing extensive description of the commonality of this kind of sexual violation occurring by many gurus.
- 30) See any of the Scientology references listed in [1] above.

Divine Light Mission Notes

- 31) See my Divine Light Mission essays in Chapter 3 of “Modern Religions.”
- 32) See for example Jeanne Messner, “Guru Maharaj Ji And The Divine Light Mission” in Charles V. Glock & Robert N. Bellah, editors, “The New Religious Consciousness” (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1976); Ronald Enroth, “Divine Light Mission” in “Youth, Brainwashing, And The Extremist Cults” (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977);

James V. Downton, Jr., "Sacred Journeys: The Conversion Of Young Americans To Divine Light Mission" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); David V. Barrett, "Elan Vital" in "The New Believers" (London: Cassell & Co., 2001).

- 33) "Cults In Our Midst," pg. 136 (for book information see [10] in Introduction Notes).
- 34) See my Divine Light Mission essays in Chapter 3 of "Modern Religions" and the above references in [32] for more information about Receiving Knowledge.

92)

- 35) See in "Modern Religions." "Letter From Richie" in Chapter 3, the section "Alienation" in "Excerpts From "The Maturation Of Walter Goldman"" in Chapter 4, and the above references in [32] for descriptive accounts of this "heart over mind" experience.
- 36) See Wilber's essay "The Pre/Trans Fallacy" in his book "Eye To Eye" (book information in [8] of Introduction Notes for an extensive formulation of the Pre/Trans Fallacy. See also "Ken Wilber In Dialogue," edited by Donald Rothberg & Sean Kelly (Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books, 1998) for some alternative views to the Pre/Trans Fallacy.
- 37) Once again see Geoffrey Falk's book "Stripping The Gurus" (book information in [6] of Introduction Notes) for many disturbing accounts of the unethical behavior of a number of gurus.

Gurdjieff Notes

- 38) P.D. Ouspensky, "In Search Of The Miraculous" (New York: Harcourt, 1949); see also books written by Gurdjieff, the most popular of which are "All And Everything: Beezlebub's Tales To His Grandson" (New York: Dutton, 1950; Arkana, 1992) and "Meetings With Remarkable Men" (New York: Dutton, 1969). Informative Gurdjieff books by other authors include Thomas & Olga de Hartmann, "Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff" (New York, Penguin Arcana, 1972); Kathleen Riordeen Speeth, "The Gurdjieff Work" (Los Angeles, Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1976); Jacob Needleman & George Baker, editors, "Gurdjieff Essays and Reflections On The Man And His Teachings" (New York, Continuum Press, 1996).
- 39) See my Gurdjieff essays in Chapter 3 of "Modern Religions" for a further account of this description of "working on oneself" as discussed by Anthony & Ecker.
- 40) See my Gurdjieff essays in "Modern Religions," in particular my essay "Occult School."
- 41) See my Gurdjieff essays "Occult School:" and "Eden West" in "Modern Religions."
- 42) Gurdjieff's integration of the body with the mind and emotions also has parallels with the "Centaur" level of consciousness as described by Ken Wilber in his books listed in [1] of Introduction Notes.

Eckankar Notes

- 43) See for example Paul Twitchell, "Eckankar: The Key To Secret Worlds" (Minneapolis, MN: Eckankar Publications, 1969, 1987); see also any of the books by current Living Eck Master Harold Klemp; for example "The Language Of The Soul" (Minneapolis, MN: Eckankar Publications, 2003).

93)

- 44) David Lane, "The Making Of A Spiritual Movement: The Untold Story Of Paul Twitchell And Eckankar" (Del Mar, CA: Del Mar Press, 1983); see also R.E. Olson, "Eckankar: From Ancient Science Of Soul Travel To New Age Religion" in T. Miller, Editor, "America's Alternative Religions" (Albany, N.Y.: S.U.N.Y. Press, 1995).
- 45) See my essay "On Eckankar" in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions."

Self-Realization Fellowship Notes

- 46) Paramahansa Yogananda, "Autobiography Of A Yogi" (Los Angeles: Self-Realization Fellowship, 1946, 1993).
- 47) See my essay "On Self-Realization Fellowship" in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions."
- 48) See in particular Geoffrey Falk's description of his own experience in a Self-Realization Fellowship ashram in "Stripping The Gurus" (book information in [6] of Introduction Notes)
- 49) See for example the chapters by Engler, and Engler & Brown in "Transformations Of Consciousness" (book information in [20] of above Notes).

A Course In Miracles Notes

- 50) Foundation For Inner Peace, "A Course In Miracles" (New York: Penguin Books, 1975, 1996).
- 51) Marianne Williamson, "A Return To Love" (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993, 1996).
- 52) See my essay "On A Course In Miracles" in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions."
- 53) For a skeptical and critical view of A Course In Miracles see the section on A Course In Miracles in Martin Gardner, "Weird Waters & Fuzzy Logic: More Notes Of A Fringe Watcher" (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1996).

Conversations With God Notes

- 54) Neale Donale Walsch, "Conversations With God: An Uncommon Dialogue: Book 1" (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1995); "Conversations With God: An Uncommon Dialogue: Book 2" (Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Co., 1997); Book 3 published by

same company in 1998.

- 55) See for example “Friendship With God: An Uncommon Dialogue” (New York: Putnam & Sons, 1999); “Communion With God” (New York: Putnam & Sons, 2000); “The New Revelations: A Conversation With God” (New York: Atria Books, 2002);
- 94)

“Tomorrows’ God: Our Greatest Spiritual Challenge” (New York: Atria Books, 2004);
“Conversations With God For Teens” (Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Co, 2001)

“The Little Soul And The Sun” (a children’s book) (Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Co., 1998).

- 56) See my Conversations With God essays in Chapter 2 of “Modern Religions” and my essay “On Conversations With God” in AFF E-Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2004, <http://cultinfobooks.com>
- 57) See in particular “The New Revelations” (book information in [56] above).
- 58) See “The New Revelations” as well as “Tomorrow’s God” (book information in [56] above).
- 59) See my Scientology essays and Avatar essays in Chapters 4 and 2 of “Modern Religions.”
- 60) See my essay “Humanity’s Team: Part II” in Chapter 2 of “Modern Religions.”
- 61) See for example any of the books by Ken Wilber in [1] of Introduction Notes, Roger Walsh, “Essential Spirituality” (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999); Deepak Chopra, “How To Know God: (New York: Harmony Books, 2000); C.G. Jung, “Modern Man In Search Of A Soul” (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1933).

Avatar Notes

- 62) See my Avatar essays in Chapter 2 of “Modern Religions.”
- 63) For some examples of these techniques see Harry Palmer’s books “Living Deliberately” (Altamonte Springs, Florida: Stars’ Edge International, 1994) and “Resurfacing” (Altamonte Springs, Florida: Stars’ Edge International, 1994).
- 64) See Harry Palmer’s book “The Avatar Masters’ Handbook” (Altamonte Springs, Florida: Stars’ Edge International, 1997) for an illustration of Avatar’s business promotion practices.
- 65) See in particular my Avatar essay “Assistant Avatar Master” in Chapter 2 of “Modern Religions.”.

Reiki Notes

- 66) There are many books on Reiki currently available; see for example Bodo J. Beginski &

Shalila Sharanmon, "Reiki: Universal Life Energy" (Mendocino, CA: Life Rhythms, 1988); William Lee Rand, "Reiki: The Healing Touch" (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, 1991, 2000); Diane Stein, "Essential Reiki: A Complete Guide To An Ancient Healing Art" (Freedom, CA: Time Crossing Press, Inc., 1995); Libby Barnett, Maggie Chambers, Susan Davidson, 95)

"Reiki Energy Medicine. Bringing The Healing Touch Into Home, Hospitals, And Hospice" (Rochester, Vermont: Healing Arts Press, 1996); Hiroshi Doi, "Modern Reiki Method For Healing" (Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada: Fraser Journal Publishing, 2000).

- 67) See in particular my last Reiki essay in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions: "Reiki: Meditation With Touch.
- 68) See in particular Hiroshi Doi's book "Modern Reiki Method For Healing" (book information in [66] above).
- 69) See my Reiki essays in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions."
- 70) See my first Reiki essay in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions," "On Reiki Healing".
- 71) For examples of some of these "farfetched" Reiki claims, a survey of Reiki on the internet will bring forth a number of rather unusual Reiki beliefs, involving reincarnations of Usui and various sprits and angels as well.
- 72) See my Divine Light Mission essays in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions."
- 73) See my essay "On Becoming Involved With A Reiki Master" in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions."
- 74) To give an example of one of these "harsher perspectives," there is a well known Reiki master who has trademarked her own brand of Reiki attunements and legally threatens other Reiki masters who have studied with her and received her attunements, and then go on to utilize what they have learned from her in combination with their own practices in their work with their own Reiki clients.
- 75) See in particular the book " Reiki Energy Medicine. Bringing the Healing Touch Into Home, Hospitals, And Hospice" (book information in [66] above).

Neopaganism Notes

- 76) See also my essay "On Neopaganism" in Paganet News Journal, Beltane edition 2004, Virginia Beach, VA: www.paganet.org
- 77) Some of my own favorite books about Paganism and Neopaganism are the following: Isaac Bonewits, "Real Magic" (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1971, 1989); Starhawk, "Spiral Dance: A Rebirth Of The Ancient Religion Of The Great Goddess"

(San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1979, 1989); Margot Adler, "Drawing Down The Moon" (New York: Penguin Group, 1979, 1986); Marion Zimmer Bradley, "The Mists Of Avalon" (New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 1981, 2001); Donald Michael Kraig, "Modern Sex Magic" (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1988); Gavon Frost & Yvonne Frost, "The Magic Power Of White Witchcraft (Paramus, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999);

96)

Phyllis Curot, "Book Of Shadows: A Modern Woman's Journey Into The Wisdom Of Witchcraft And The Magic Of the Goddess" (New York: Broadway Books, 1998); Phyllis Curot, "Witch Crafting: A Spiritual Guide To Modern Magic" (New York: Broadway Books, 2001).

78) See my essay "On Neopaganism" in Chapter 2 of "Modern Religions."

79) For information about the Church Of All Worlds see <http://www.caw.org>

Tikkun Notes

80) Michael Lerner, "Spirit Matters" (Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Co., Inc., 2000).

81) See the Tikkun journal: "Tikkun: A Bimonthly Jewish Critique Of Politics, Culture & Society" (San Francisco: www.tikkun.org) as well as Michael Lerner's book "Healing Israel/Palestine: A Path To Peace And Reconciliation" (San Francisco: Tikkun Books, 2003)..

82) See my essay "Current Spiritual Involvement: 2004/2005" in Chapter 5 of "Modern Religions."

83) The current co-chairs of Tikkun are Michael Lerner, Cornell West (Black intellectual leader and author of "Race Matters" (New York: Vintage Books, 1994, 2001), and Susannah Heschel.

Miscellaneous Notes

84) See "Stripping The Gurus" (book information in [6] of Introduction Notes) for more information

about the history of Kripalu as well as a number of fascinating accounts of unethical behavior on the part of various well known gurus.

85) See the Kripalu journal "Kriplu Center For Yoga & Health" (Lenox, MA: www.kripalu.org) for a description of the Kripalu workshops offered, with all financial costs, logistics, etc..

86) See the Omega journal; information can be found at www.eomega.org (Rhinebeck, New York) for workshop descriptions with all financial costs, logistics, etc.

87) See Ken Wilber's books "A Theory Of Everything" (Boston: Shambhala, 2001) and "Boomeritis" (Boston: Shambhala, 2003).

- 88) See for example Melody Beattie, "Codependent No More" (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1987, 1992); Melody Beattie, "The Language Of Letting Go" (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1990); Pia Mellody, "Facing Codependence" (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989); Pia Mellody, "Facing Love Addiction" (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992); Co-dependents Anonymous, Inc., "Co-dependents Anonymous" (Phoenix, AZ:

97)

Codependents Anonymous, Inc., 1995); The Augustine Fellowship, Sex And Love Addicts Anonymous, Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc., "Sex And Love Addicts Anonymous" (Norwood, MA: The Augustine Fellowship, Sex And Love Addicts Anonymous, Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc., 1986, 1999).

- 89) See also Ken Wilber's books "Eye To Eye" (Boston: Shambhala, 2001) and "The Marriage Of Sense And Soul" (New York: Broadway Books, 1998), as well as my essay "Current Spiritual Involvement: 2004/2005" in Chapter 5 of "Modern Religions."
- 90) In particular my essay "On Conversations With God" (website information in [57] of Chapter One Notes), and my submission of a condensed version of my Avatar essays in Chapter 2 to the AFF E-Newsletter. I have also received feedback on a draft of this book from a few AFF leaders, and Nori Muster, author of "Betrayal Of The Spirit: My Life Behind The Headlines Of The Hare Krishna Movement" (book information in [10] of Introduction Notes) has written a book review for "Modern Religions" that will appear in the AFF journal Cultic Studies Review; information available at www.cultinfobooks.com
- 91) See [10] of Introduction Notes for a small sample of some of these books written by AFF leaders.
- 92) Scientology, The Unification Church, and Hare Krishna were all well represented at the 2004 AFF cults conference in Edmonton, Canada.
- 93) See also my Scientology essays in Chapter 4 of "Modern Religions," in particular my postscript essays "Scientology On Trial" and "Scientology And Fear".
- 94) See for example Ken Wilber, Jack Engler, Daniel P. Brown, editors, "Transformations Of Consciousness" (Boston: Shambhala, 1986); Stanley Krippner, "Song Of The Siren: A Parapsychological Odyssey" (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1977); Roger Walsh & Francis Vaughan, editors, "Paths Beyond Ego" (Los Angeles: Tarcher, 1995); Tony Schwartz, "What Really Matters: Searching For Wisdom In America" (New York: Bantam, 1995).
- 95) See the Integral Institute website (www.integralinstitute.org) for Ken Wilber's current efforts in regard to bringing the merger of science and religion into the realm of possibility in our society.

