

Sophia Speaks: An Integral Grammar of Philosophy

By Bruce Alderman

Since Ken Wilber first introduced the four-quadrant model in *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, it has become practically synonymous with Integral Theory itself, and for good reason. The four fundamental perspectives around which the model is organized have yielded impressive explanatory and integrative potential. Arguably, the broad applicability and appeal of these basic distinctions is attributable to their near universality: the personal pronouns, *I*, *We*, *It*, and *Its*, representing the first-, second-, and third-person singular and plural perspectives of the quadrant map, are grammatical distinctions common to most major languages. As Wilber notes, these pronouns encode within our natural languages “four major dimensions of being-in-the-world,” four ubiquitous ways of perceiving and relating to reality.

Wilber is not the first to build a philosophy around the personal pronouns, as I will explore later in this chapter. While it would be limiting and simply incorrect to describe Integral Theory as a “pronoun philosophy” in any *exclusive* sense, I would nevertheless like to hold up Integral Theory as an exemplar of this form of philosophy for the purposes of this discussion. I would like to highlight Wilber’s place in the lineage of thinkers who have reflected on and mined the pronouns for their metaphysical and epistemological implications. If anything, Integral Theory demonstrates the rich philosophical, pragmatic, and meta-paradigmatic yield of taking a common grammatical category, which is found across most human languages, as a central organizing lens or metaphor.

But in noting and celebrating the fruitfulness of such an approach, we must confront at once also its limitation: it focuses on only one of several possible grammatical categories, each

of which is arguably just as common to our human languages, and each of which may have similarly rich metaphysical yields. If employing pronouns as a central organizing principle enables us to generate a metaphysics of sentient beings or a post-metaphysical philosophy of perspectives, for instance, what might we expect to find if we were to place nouns or verbs at the center, or adjectives, adverbs, or prepositions? A broad survey of philosophy from the perspective of multiple grammatical lenses, in fact, makes it clear that many philosophical systems have been implicitly or explicitly organized around one or another of the major parts of speech. Importantly, especially for those interested in Integral Theory as a “theory for anything” or as a form of “Integral Methodological Pluralism” (IMP), the deep grammatical commitments or foci of these traditions, and their relationships to each other, are not things readily disclosed when we rely upon the pronouns alone – or even their extension to the 8 zones of IMP.

In an article advocating for a more verbal, process-oriented reading of Integral Theory, for instance, Bonnitta Roy (2006) has noted that the first-, second-, and third-person lenses at the center of the Integral model are insufficient, in themselves, to disclose the deeper metaphysical view in and through which first-, second-, or third-person research is pursued and articulated. In particular, these lenses alone cannot account for the different territories enacted by structural or process-oriented metaphysics. In contrasting her preferred "pure process" view with the commonly nounal character of substance metaphysics and structuralist orientations, she emphasizes the need to shift to a more verb-centered language. We will return to her specific arguments about this later in the chapter, when we are reviewing various verb-oriented metaphysics; for now, I would like only to note that we already have, here, the suggestion of *at least three* possible grammatical-philosophical approaches: a pronoun-centered perspectival epistemology, a noun-centered metaphysics of things or structures, and a verb-centered

metaphysics of processes or events. But, while Roy (2006) emphasizes that the structural and process views are deeper than the perspectival lenses that comprise the quadrants, and thus are not explicitly disclosed by them, I will argue that all are also related in that each employs and organizes itself around a particular grammatical category or metaphor.

In this chapter, then, I would like to review a number of the major philosophical approaches or metaphysical systems that have developed around each of six basic grammatical categories: pronouns, nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and prepositions¹. As I have already suggested above, these approaches range from various perspectival epistemologies, to substance, process, or relational metaphysics, among others. When considering these systems alongside one another, we may be led, in integral fashion, to perceive each as true but partial: as necessarily limited in scope, but still delivering important and irreducible truths. In this way, I hope to demonstrate the merit of expanding the Integral model beyond its pronoun focus, to enact a broader integrative approach employing multiple grammatical lenses. But as I will discuss below, each grammatical-philosophical system in itself can also be a site for integral theorizing: just as the pronouns can be used as a base to construct a broadly integrative model, so can nouns, verbs, or other grammatical elements. As we will see, both object-oriented (nounal) and process-oriented (verbal) philosophical systems, for instance, have already realized their own integral formulations. Thus, the six grammatical lenses or philosophemes I will introduce here can be understood from two perspectives at once: *collectively*, as true-but-partial elements of any comprehensive philosophical system; and *individually*, as unique, generative centers around which a number of philosophical models and emergent integrative meta-theories have been organized.

With these distinctions in mind, I will introduce two new terms to frame and guide our explorations: *onto-choreography* and *heno-ontology*. I will save fuller discussion of the former term until the end of the paper, when I will review the ground we have covered and will reflect on various integrative meta-theories that have been proposed, but in brief: by onto-choreography, I mean the integrative task of weighting and coordinating the grammatical elements or philosophemes into various metaphysical systems. How do these ontological elements dance together in the different philosophical models we will consider here? This question is related also to the second term I have coined, *heno-ontology*, by which I mean a meta-philosophical approach which allows for metaphysical pluralism, both across stages of development and even at the same level of development. As in henotheism, where multiple gods are recognized, but only one might be worshipped at a given time as supreme, depending on the circumstance or the proclivities of the devotee, I intend here to evoke an ambiguous field of multiple possible ontologies and integrative lenses, a chthonic matrix with a shifting absolute (which, in each ‘form’ that it manifests, may be seen to enfold in its own way certain of the qualities of the other ‘deities’). This is not an argument for the full equality of each choice of metaphysical or ontological center, however, or of the integrative models they may support. Each has its weaknesses as well as strengths, and I will review a number of them in the discussion to come. But rather than arguing for the ultimate superiority of one metaphysical or integrative model over all others, I prefer to adopt a meta-metaphysical, heno-ontological approach: a robust, speculative, experimental form of philosophical engagement which does not shy away from, but rather embraces and enacts, metaphysical pluralism.

Before beginning a selective review of philosophers and metaphysical systems associated with each of the grammatical lenses I have identified, I would like to preface this discussion with

a brief look at grammar from the point of view of cognitive linguistics. The arguments I will be developing in this chapter do not require acceptance of a particular theory of grammar, but I recommend the cognitive linguistic model for its emphases on embodiment and empirical inquiry, which are consistent with the post-metaphysical commitments of Integral Theory.

A Post-metaphysical Prolegomenon

The cognitive theory of grammar, rooted in second-generation cognitive science, rejects earlier formalist and Cartesian models of grammar as unempirical and as at odds with current neuro-scientific evidence for the embodiment of mind. As Lakoff and Johnson (1999) argue in their seminal text, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, the formalist and Cartesian assumptions behind Chomsky's influential theory of grammar, for instance, are evident in its positing of an autonomous, generative syntactical mechanism which exists independently of meaning, memory, perception, communication, culture, and embodied enactment or behavior – i.e., as a neurally instantiated but otherwise autonomous, purely formal or rational site of cognition. From a neuroscientific perspective, however, such an autonomous mechanism in the brain is a neural impossibility:

[A] completely autonomous Chomskyan “syntax” cannot take any causally effective input from outside the syntax itself. Such a “syntax” would have to be instantiated in the brain within a neural module, localized or distributed, *with no neural input* to the module. But this is physically impossible. There is no neural subnetwork in the brain that does not have a neural input from other parts of the brain that do very different kinds of things. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 480)

In contrast to the above, the cognitive neuroscientific understanding of consciousness sees cognition – and thus conceptuality, syntax, and grammar – as inherently embodied, neurally instantiated, and non-autonomous, i.e., as arising interdependently with other neural mechanisms, in and through embodied interaction with the world². Francisco Varela (2000) has summarized this orientation, sometimes described as the enactive model of cognition, with four “key points”: cognition is *enactively embodied*, *enactively emergent*, *generatively enactive*, and *ontologically complex*. In brief, what these points entail, respectively, is that 1) cognition is not a product of isolated, autonomous mechanisms in the brain (as modern Cartesian or formalist theories contend), and is not merely “in the head,” but rather arises through, and embodies, our embodied coping with the world; 2) the global cognitive subject and the local neural structures of the brain are co-arising and co-determining; 3) cognition is intersubjectively enacted, meaning self and other are also to some degree co-arising and co-determining; and finally, 4) our understanding of consciousness is not reducible to either first- or third-person descriptions, but must involve both, in constant, co-informing circulation.

One implication of the above is that thought is not identical to “language,” as some grammarians might have it, especially if we mean by language a disembodied, purely formal symbol system. Extensive empirical research has demonstrated the inseparability of cognition from sensorimotor systems of the brain, for instance, which are repurposed and deployed, via metaphorical and other extensions, to generate and support more “abstract” modes of cognition, from everyday reflection to formal philosophical thought (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). From this perspective, then, grammar must be understood, at least in part, as an enactively embodied and emergent neural system. As Lakoff and Johnson (1999) put it,

The grammar of a language consists of the highly structured neural connections linking the conceptual and expressive (phonological) aspects of the brain. This includes grammatical categories, grammatical structures, and lexical items. Since both semantics and phonology are grounded in the sensorimotor system, such a view of grammar makes good sense from the neural perspective. Far from being autonomous, grammar links these bodily-grounded systems. (pp. 498-499)

A key point of the above argument is that conceptual and phonological systems are both potentiated and constrained by embodiment, and grammar is the means by which we conjoin and coordinate these systems. Grammatical categories themselves are rooted in and grow (metaphorically) out of sensorimotor and broader social experiences, rather than being self-existing, ideal forms.

I have emphasized these points here for two reasons. First, I do not want my focus on grammar in this chapter to be understood merely as a continuation of the important, but typically disembodied and ontologically enervating, “linguistic turn” in postmodern philosophy. As I have written elsewhere (Alderman, 2012), I believe the post-metaphysical, enactive orientation of Integral Theory is consistent with the pragmatist “reversal” of the linguistic turn, which escapes the epistemological cul-de-sac of much postmodern theorizing by seeing language itself in ontic terms, as a performance of the real. In such a view, language becomes, not simply an abstract, free-floating, strictly epistemological symbol system without any ontological depth of its own, but a living performance of, and thus also a means of transformative, participatory engagement with, the world in its ontic fullness. Grammar, understood here as embodied and enactive, can thus be seen as ontologically resonant and potentially revelatory.

Second, as I will discuss in more detail in the sections ahead, the cognitive grammatical descriptions of the parts of speech – namely, as radial structures consisting of core concepts with various metaphorical extensions of increasing subtlety or abstraction – will be useful in our reflections on the types of metaphysical systems that have been built upon and around the six grammatical terms I have chosen to highlight. As I noted above, the cognitive theory of grammar is not the only one that could support or guide this exploration, but I believe it is the theory most consistent with the post-metaphysical commitments of the current phase of Integral thought, and in some cases, especially where there is not a clear philosophical precedent, Lakoff and Johnson’s (1999) descriptions of grammatical terms will help me to justify the philosophical associations I have made with one or another of these terms.

Although pronouns are not the most common of the grammatical-philosophical roots or elements I will be discussing, I will start with them, given their prominence in Integral Theory. In the brief survey that follows, I will focus primarily on personal pronouns³.

Pronounal Philosophy: Being-as-Perspective

A pronoun, in popular understanding, is a word that *stands for* or *takes the place of* a noun. This understanding is reinforced both by the etymology of the word itself – the Latin *pro-* meaning ‘in place of’ – and by the fact that pronouns grammatically mirror nouns, carrying similar number, gender, and case distinctions. In practice, a pronoun may function *anaphorically*, referring back to a noun that precedes it in a sentence; or *deictically*, in which case the meaning of the pronoun depends, in part, upon the extra-linguistic context in which it is uttered (such as when we point to ‘that’ or ‘there,’ or make reference to ‘I’ or ‘you’). In both

cases, it is commonly understood that the pronoun, whether personal or demonstrative, is a dependent or secondary term which *substitutes for* a noun.

Philosophically, however, Charles S. Peirce (1998) has challenged this view, arguing that pronouns take precedence over nouns because they carry meaning more directly:

There is no reason for saying that I, thou, that, this, stand in place of nouns; they indicate things in the directest possible way. It is impossible to express what an assertion refers to except by means of an index. A pronoun is an index. A noun, on the other hand, does not indicate the object it denotes; and when a noun is used to show what one is talking about, the experience of the hearer is relied upon to make up for the incapacity of the noun for doing what the pronoun does at once. Thus, a noun is an imperfect substitute for a pronoun. (p. 15)

For Peirce, then, nouns are secondary in that they always require a supplement (namely, the prior experience of the hearer). Pronouns point directly, and then nouns fill in and come to stand for what is revealed in this pointing. Wilber (2003b), perhaps following Peirce, has made a similar argument, suggesting that pronouns are best understood as *pre-nouns*, as “something prior to nouns that all nouns must follow” (p. 137). For both Peirce and Wilber, in their respective philosophical systems, *personal* pronouns in particular represent some of the most fundamental perspectives available to sentient beings: Firstness (I), Secondness (It), and Thirdness (Thou), in Peirce’s early metaphysics; and the first-, second-, and third-person perspectives, or the four quadrants (I, We, It, and Its), in the later phases of Wilber’s work.

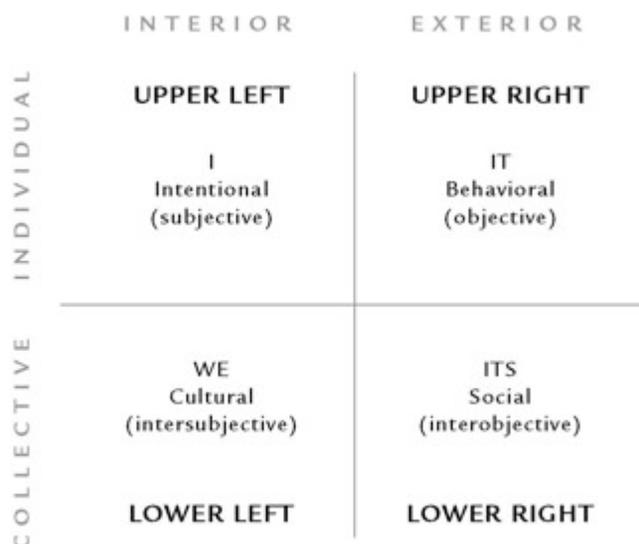


Figure 1. *The Four Quadrants*

Philosophically, the personal pronouns mark a space or clearing for perspectival enactment -- for the manifestation and experience of first-, second-, or third-person objects. They are, as Peirce and Wilber contend, universal elements of the semiotic field, defining the space in which any encounter whatsoever must take place. As Wilber (2003b) puts it, "The relations among pronouns are relations among sentient beings wherever they arise" (p. 138).

For Martin Buber, a seminal figure in the field of pronoun philosophy, the pronouns I, Thou, and It are actually fragments of, or abstractions from, two more fundamental terms or *primary words*: I-Thou and I-It. These word-pairs denote the two basic relations available to, and constitutive of, human being -- primary ontological and epistemological relations in which the pronominal elements are mutually defining. As Buber (1958) argues, when we say, "I," we never say the word alone, but always in relation to a "Thou" or an "It." The "I" in each case is different; the "I" that is spoken in relation to a "Thou," to the open, unbounded presence of another (or God), is of a different character to the "I" that is spoken in relation to an "It." The

former relationship summons us to love and care, and is fundamentally dialogical, whereas the latter tends towards distancing and objectification and is essentially monological.

Buber's model has been critiqued as reductionist and lopsided, in that it only admits two fundamental human perspectives, and it presents the second of these (I-It) as intrinsically limited and distorting – a “cripple,” as Franz Rosenzweig puts it (Batnitzky, 2000). Rosenzweig advocates instead, and at minimum⁴, for a tripartite model of interdependent pronoun relations: He-it, I-Thou, and We-It (Cohen, 1994). These additional pronominal distinctions are necessary to invoke the existential and metaphysical richness of intersubjective relations, which he believes Buber inadequately represents. But Rosenzweig nevertheless joins Buber in his emphasis on intersubjectivity and the grammar of relationship as primary sites of philosophical reflection.

Of note for our discussion here, the hyphenated pronouns of Buber and Rosenzweig do double duty, philosophically, both evoking a relational *ontology of persons*, and foregrounding constitutive or co-constructive *modes of knowing*. The former emphasis on persons places their work, as both acknowledge, in the long and sprawling metaphysical lineage of *personalism*, a philosophical tradition with ancient roots in the thought of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Gregory of Nyssa, but which came to fuller flower in Europe and America in the writings of Schleiermacher, Shelling, Kierkegaard, Mournier, Maritain, Marcel, Alcott, Browne, James, and Hartshorne, among others⁵. The latter emphasis on co-constitutive modes of knowing, or perspective, anticipates the post-modern turn (as evident, for instance, in Levinas' critical engagement with, and further development of, both Buber's and Rosenzweig's models of intersubjectivity). As we will see, both emphases find echoes in Wilber's philosophy, particularly in Wilber-IV and Wilber-V.

Detailed discussion of personalist ontology is better reserved for the next section on nounal philosophy (nouns conventionally referring to persons, places, or things), so I mention it here only briefly to highlight a tension that appears in several versions of pronounal metaphysics. On the one hand, as discussed above, the abstract deictic or indexical function of pronouns has led to a philosophical focus on person-perspectives or epistemological domains, which Peirce and others have argued actually stand *prior to* nouns. On the other hand, those who philosophize about perspectives and personal pronouns typically presuppose the same underlying thing, the same ontological basis: *persons*, i.e., those *real beings* who hold perspectives and enter into relations. A personalist insists, then -- typically in resistance to impersonal or idealist philosophical systems -- on the irreducible ontological status and value of persons. While “I” and “you,” as pronouns, are reversible abstractions or demi-abstractions – I can be a you; you are also an I – the personalist argues that these pronouns represent, are employed by, and necessarily presuppose real, ontologically distinct persons or sentient beings.

Thus, the divergent understanding of the grammatical nature of pronouns I noted at the beginning of this section – i.e., the question of whether pronouns are in some way prior to nouns, or whether they come after and substitute for them – finds expression also in pronounal philosophy, sometimes within the same philosophical system. In Wilber’s (2006) post-metaphysical philosophy, for instance, he emphasizes the priority of person-perspectives, arguing that each thing *is* a perspective before it is anything else (p. 253). By this, he means that, *whatever else* we might argue that something metaphysically is – whether a feeling, a dialogical relation, a perception, a material object or process, etc. – it is first, or always already, a first-, second-, or third-person perspective. To speak of, or encounter, a feeling or an atom, for example, is already to inhabit a first- or third-person relationship to reality. The emphasis, here,

is on epistemology, with the personal pronouns encoding some of the most common epistemological domains. At the same time, however, Wilber (2003b) also makes the following claim:

[A] universe comes into being, not when an inside is marked from an outside, or a before is marked from an after, but a group of sentient holons arise. Even quarks have prehension, which means, the first quark is not a first particle but a first person. And whatever that quark registers is not a second particle but a second person. (p. 141)

In arguing thus for the primordially of *persons*, or sentient holons, Wilber also appears to embrace a form of personalist metaphysics, albeit more broadly conceived or globally applied than is common in most traditional personalist thought. I will discuss Wilber's personalism in more detail in the next section – and will suggest that it has, in fact, much in common with the current conception of “objects” in Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) – but for now I wanted just to note this dual emphasis in pronounal philosophy. While pronouns in philosophy might function as *pre-nouns*, epistemologically, they also function *for* nouns ontologically: they articulate a relational metaphysics *of* and *for* persons or sentient beings⁶.

In the remainder of this section, I will focus on Wilber's epistemological use of the pronouns as well as several recent critiques and elaborations upon it. In contrast to Buber and Rosenzweig, who primarily explored the existential, ethical, and theological implications of pronounal relations from a Judeo-Christian point of view, Wilber aims with his four-quadrant model at more broadly philosophical and meta-theoretical ends. Following Plato, Kant, and Habermas, among others, Wilber identifies three major value spheres, three major areas of

knowledge and practice, which he associates with the first-, second-, and third-person perspectives (or I, We, and It).

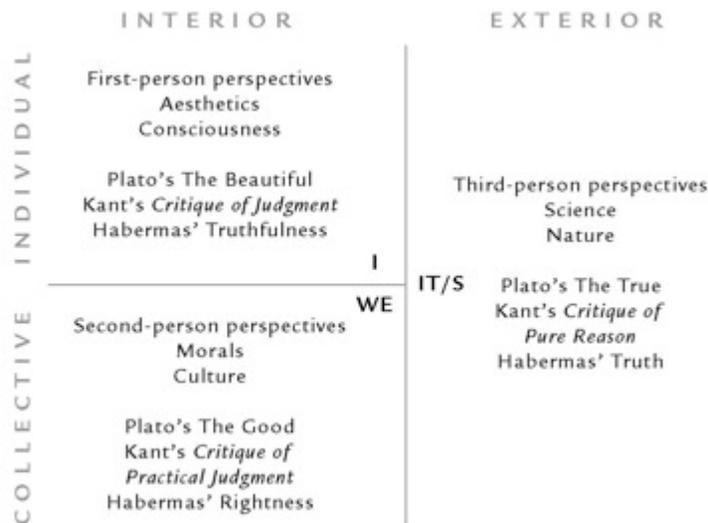


Figure 2. *The Big Three.*

In his four quadrant model (see Figure 1 above), Wilber further differentiates the exterior domain into individual and collective expressions, giving four major perspectives or dimensions of reality (subjective, intersubjective, objective, and interobjective; or I, We, It, and Its). Each of these quadrant-perspectives is associated in Wilber's work with major domains of experience, knowledge disciplines, methods of inquiry, value spheres, validity claims, modes of communication, and so on, allowing for a broadly comprehensive, meta-paradigmatic map of the major modes of understanding and interfacing with reality. Assuming most readers will be familiar with the details of Wilber's quadrant model and at least a number of its more significant applications, I will not dwell on those details here, but will just note it for the particular way it employs its four personal pronoun distinctions: as elemental lenses which, taken together, disclose a complex, integrative vision of the Kosmos.

However, while Wilber's model is indeed quite comprehensive, several critics have argued 1) that it does not adequately represent all of the major socially and theoretically significant pronoun-perspectives found in human speech, and 2) that its association of pronouns or person perspectives with the quadrants is inconsistent or problematic. For instance, the observant reader will note that the lower left (interior-collective) quadrant in the figure above is associated both with the pronoun "We" and with the second-person perspective. Wilber has justified the pairing of the first-person-plural pronoun, We, with the second-person perspective by pointing out that "We" includes "I" and "You" and therefore enfolds a second-person perspective within itself. Mark Edwards (2003) argues, however, that Wilber's convention of subsuming the "you" into the "we" fails to make room for second-person alterity -- for You as Other. This is a distinction with significant ethical weight, as Levinas might remind us, and should not be left out of a comprehensive pronounal philosophy⁷. Similarly, the convention of representing the third person only with the pronoun, It, is equally problematic for a viable ethical or social theory, as Edwards (2003) and Dean (1996) both argue. Edwards (2003) points out the obvious ethical issues that arise from identifying foreigners or those outside our cultural or communicative circles as Its (which is an identification Wilber (2003b) has made). Along similar lines, Dean (1996) critiques Habermas' use of the pronoun, It, to represent his "neutral third" observer in a communicative situation, since the third-person observer's gender is seldom a negligible, value-neutral factor in social encounters. Both argue that inclusion of the additional third-person pronouns, He and She, is essential for any robust, ethically sensitive model of human relations.

Edwards (2003) thus suggests several amendments to Wilber's pronoun model: first, separating the personal pronouns from their fixed associations with the four quadrants of

Wilber's integral holon, so that each can stand alone as its own holon; and second, expanding the number of personal pronouns to include You and He/She. He achieves the former, in part, by reinterpreting the quadrants, replacing the singular and plural dimensions of the map with agency and communion, and then treating singular and plural holons separately. With these moves, Edwards proposes a six-pronoun model (I, You, He/She/It, in singular and plural forms), where each pronoun can be rendered in quadratic/holonic form, as follows:

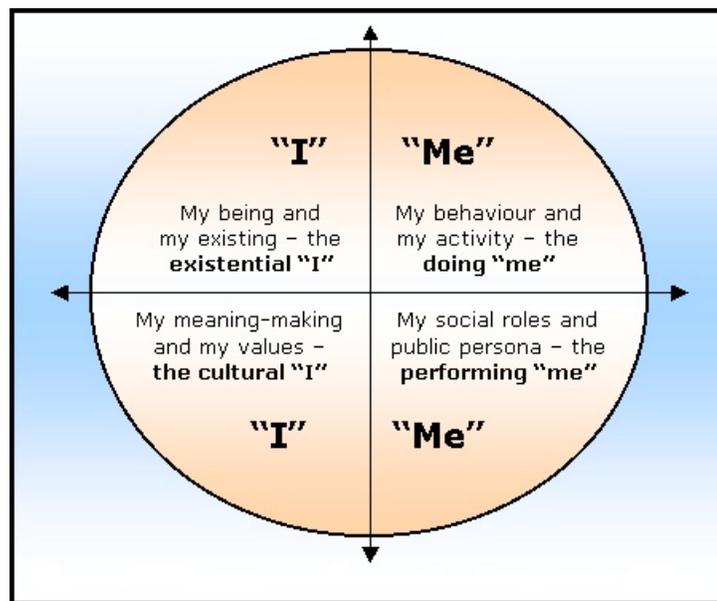


Figure 3. *Edwards' Quadratic Pronoun*

From this base, he outlines a model of 42 common perspectives or pronominal relations. While offering a number of useful new distinctions and analytical tools, however, Edwards' model has not been widely adopted, likely because it involves a significant reinterpretation of the quadrant map. His quadratic rendering of the pronoun perspectives also appears to slide inconsistently between objective and possessive forms of the pronouns for the right-hand quadrants (using "Me" or "Us" for the upper right quadrant of the I and We holonic pronouns,

respectively, but “Your” or “His/Her/Its” for the upper right quadrant of the You and He/She/It holonic pronouns).

An alternative amendment to the Integral pronoun model, which is more consistent with the current Integral map, and also more internally consistent grammatically than Edwards’ appears to be, has been proposed by Daniel J. O’Connor. Like Edwards, O’Connor (2012) separates the pronouns from their association with specific quadrants, arguing that the person perspectives and the quadrant map represent two distinct models which, while related, have been problematically conflated in Integral thought⁸. Each of the personal pronouns or person-perspectives, O’Connor (2012) points out, already contains within itself all of Wilber’s four domains as common grammatical distinctions, so it is problematic to identify the first-person perspective, for example, with just two of the four quadrants. The personal pronouns include subjective and objective (Left/Right) distinctions as well as singular and plural (Upper/Lower) ones: I, Me, We, Us; He, Him, They, Them; etc. O’Connor (2012) thus recommends a quadratic mapping of all person perspectives, in effect interfacing the Big Three and the quadrants in a more consistent way.

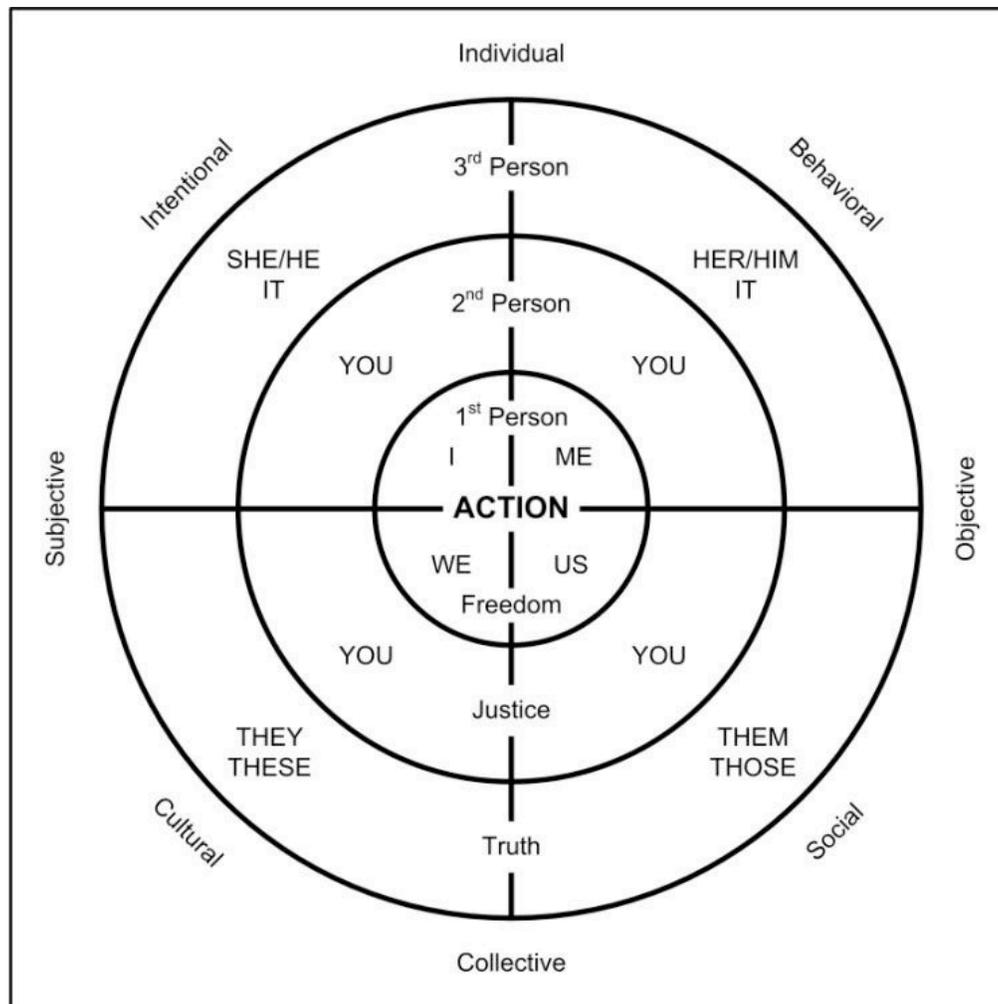


Figure 4. *O'Connor's Triadic Quadratic Perspectives.*

As the illustration above makes clear, the three perspectival lenses are overlaid on the quadrants rather than being identified with particular quadrants. Several different, fractally iterative versions of this model – in which each of the persons is conceived as its own first person, able to take second- and third-person perspectives – yield a large number of interactive and enactive perspectives, which O'Connor (2012) argues are implicit in most situations. O'Connor (2012) uses this reformulation of the quadrant map to support an integral theory of human action. By placing “action” at the center of the revised quadrant map, O'Connor in fact

presents an integration, or the beginning of an integration, of pronounal and verbal metaphysics⁹. I cannot discuss his model in detail in this brief survey of representative approaches, however; I introduce it here, along with Edwards' work, as an example of further ways the pronounal system at the center of the Integral model can be expanded or further developed.

To this end, one further approach worth mentioning briefly is Lexi Neale's model of the AQAL Cube. Neale's (2011) model is predicated on a mixture of quantum theory and an Idealist metaphysics of consciousness, which is controversial and not accepted by all Integral theorists, but his AQAL Cube merits inclusion here for its expansion of Wilber's quadrant model to include possessive and non-possessive forms of the pronouns, in addition to the subjective, objective, singular, and plural forms discussed above. He interprets the possessive and non-possessive distinctions as relating to empirical/local and intuitive/non-local forms of knowing or identity, respectively.

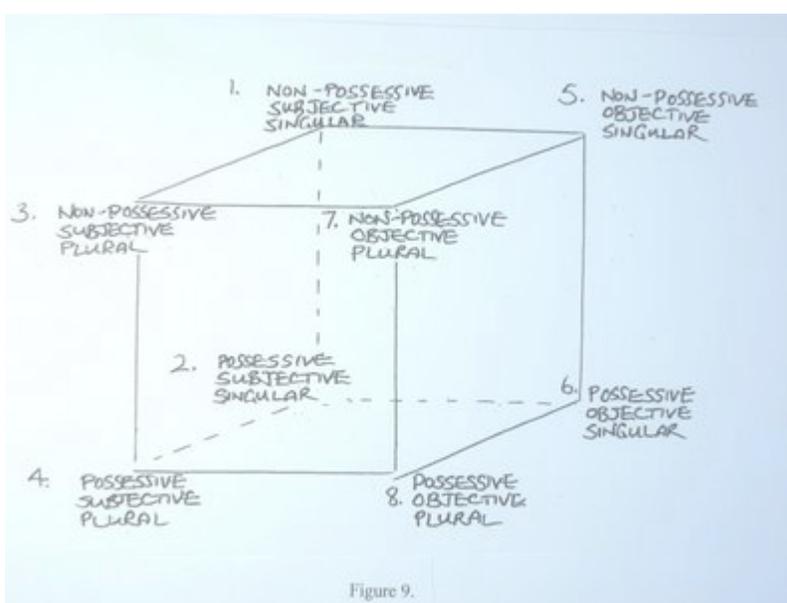


Figure 5. *Lexi Neale's AQAL Cube of Personal Pronoun Perspectives*

Like Edwards (2003), Neale (2011) uses separate diagrams for each of the pronouns, so his model is complex and lacks the parsimony of O'Connor's, but it allows for an additional level of granularity in meta-theoretical mapping that Integral theorists may find useful in certain contexts. For instance, in identifying the possessive and non-possessive forms of the pronouns with the 'inside' and 'outside' views of each quadrant that Wilber employs in his model of Integral Methodological Pluralism, Neale (2011) is able to cross-correlate the eight pronouns his AQAL Cube diagram with the eight methodological territories of the IMP map as well as eight related perspectives on personal identity.

As the above brief illustrations indicate, and as I suggested at the beginning of this discussion, a significant focus in recent Integral philosophizing has been on the use, and further development, of pronouns or person-perspectives as meta-theoretical lenses. In several instances, the pronouns have been further supplemented with other grammatical terms, such as Edwards' (2008) combined use of the interrogative adverbs *how*, *when*, and *where* with the interrogative pronouns, *who* and *what*, or Esbjörn-Hargens' and Zimmermans' (2011) use of *who*, *how*, and *what*, to form more comprehensive suites of meta-theoretical lenses.

Related to these efforts, and as a central thrust of contemporary Integral scholarship, the pronouns or person-perspectives have been used to support the recent turn in Integral Theory towards post-metaphysics, or *post-ontology*, as it is sometimes called (Rentschler, 2006). As post-metaphysical or meta-metaphysical lenses, the person-perspectives are understood as enactive operators, both giving rise to, and helping to identify and integrate, subjectivist and objectivist metaphysical systems and worldviews, for instance. Although beyond the scope of this chapter to review in any detail, the perspectival mathematics first introduced by Wilber (2003b), and further developed by Fuhs (2010), is worth mentioning in this regard. Using a

simple notational system to depict the interplay of persons or sentient holons (1p, 2p, 3p) and person-perspectives (1-p, 2-p, 3-p) in various chains of perspectival relation, from the simple to the exceedingly complex (e.g., from **1p(1p) x 2p(1/p)** to **1p(1p) x 1p(1-p) x 3p(1p) x 3p(1-p) x 2p(1p) x 2p(1-p) x 3p(1-p) x 3p(3/p)**), integral mathematics aims to represent the contextual enactment of all possible worldspaces and ontological domains. As Wilber (2003b) maintains, such a notional system is useful, at the very least, to remind us that our ontological models are not simple representations of reality as *given* – i.e., the view from nowhere – but rather are always already perspective-dependent enactments.

Further, in arguing both for the ubiquity of, and the inseparable relationship among, the person-perspectives as organizing and generative epistemological lenses or structures, Integral Theory aims to redress past forms of metaphysical absolutism, which typically have privileged one perspective-domain over all others. But while the Integral approach has been effective in identifying and countering various forms of absolutism *within* the epistemic domain, several critics maintain that it runs the risk of another error. In privileging the epistemic to the exclusion of the ontic, or else conflating the two, it may commit another, more general form of absolutism, which Speculative Realist and Object Oriented philosophers, following Bhaskar, would call the “epistemic fallacy” (Bhaskar, 2008; Bryant, 2011a). Regarding this latter error, Bryant (2011a) writes:

A critique of the epistemic fallacy and how it operates in philosophy does not amount to the claim that epistemology or questions of the nature of inquiry and knowledge are a fallacy. What the epistemic fallacy identifies is the fallacy of reducing ontological questions to epistemological questions, or conflating questions of how we know with questions of what beings are. In short, the epistemic fallacy occurs wherever being is

reduced to our access to being. Thus, for example, wherever beings are reduced to our impressions or sensations of being, wherever being is reduced to our talk about being, wherever being is reduced to discourses about being, wherever being is reduced to signs through which being is manifest, the epistemic fallacy has been committed. (p. 60)

Does Integral Theory commit the epistemic fallacy? When Wilber (2006) writes, in *Integral Spirituality*, that “all things are perspectives before they are anything else” (p. 253), this might appear to be the case. It suggests that the *being* of an object is identical with one’s *mode of access* to it. We will explore this question in more depth in coming sections. To anticipate that discussion: I believe Integral Theory can, and in some of its fuller or more robust expressions, *does*, avoid this fallacy, particularly when it employs or allies itself with a broad, speculative metaphysical palette. One of the primary aims of this chapter, in fact, is to support the further development of such a palette.

To this end, then, let us turn now to the second of the grammatical-philosophical orientations we will be reviewing: nounal metaphysics.

Nounal Philosophy: Being-as-Substance

The infant, reaching to touch her mother’s face or grasp the dangling mobile overhead, learns quite early that the world consists of bounded things. Before she is a year old, she will have begun to encode this knowledge in language – to speak the names of the important people and objects in her life. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, this primitive, embodied apprehension of discrete objects forms the basis, grammatically, for the category of nouns; and philosophically, for various metaphysical systems concerned with substance or related terms (to be discussed below).

As most grammar texts inform us, a noun names a person, place, or thing, or other syntactically related terms. In many languages, the noun is the part of speech that serves as the subject or object of a verb, or the object of a preposition, among other functions. In addition to physical entities, nouns may name subjective or abstract realities, such as ideas, states, or qualities, but these latter are regarded in cognitive linguistics as radial, often metaphorical extensions of the early perceptual-motor category of discrete objects – i.e., persons, places, or things (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). For instance, as Lakoff and Johnson (1999) illustrate, “ideas” in English are conceived metaphorically as *objects* which can be *grasped* (understood); and similar examples are given for many other abstract nouns.

A noun-centered metaphysics, then, would be a metaphysics broadly concerned with *things* – with bounded entities, both in concrete and more abstract forms. Aristotle’s metaphysics of substance is a classical example of such thinking. Philosophically, substance may be regarded in general as referring to that aspect of reality which underlies and foundationally supports or constitutes all other forms of being, such as atoms, consciousness, or the five elements (Sallis, 2000); and in a more restricted sense, substance may be understood as referring specifically to *individual objects*, which carry predicates but are not predicated of anything else (Robinson, 2004). For Aristotle, primary substances are those individual things which support, provide the ground for, and persist underneath changing qualities, actions, properties, or other predicates. In other words, primary substances are the subjects to which other forms of being are predicated, and upon which they depend. An individual person, for instance, may change her body shape, may be active or at rest, may be sick or well, and so on; but these qualities, properties, and processes cannot exist in isolation, apart from any individual substance or object (Aristotle, 1984). This characteristic of substances correlates quite closely

with one of the primary grammatical functions of nouns, as discussed above; indeed, in some languages, *substantive* is the grammatical term for nouns or words which function as nouns in certain contexts.

Aristotle distinguishes between primary and secondary substances, the latter referring both to the general *kinds* of being to which individual things categorically belong, and to the various qualities or properties of being which may be predicated of individual objects (Robinson, 2004). As Levi Bryant (2011a) points out in *The Democracy of Objects*, while Aristotle defines being in multiple ways, and focuses quite a bit in his works on the question of *kinds* or categories, his ultimate view is that the *being* of beings is individual – that reality consists most basically of discrete substances or things. Some forms of substance metaphysics identify one or a relatively small number of entities as the foundational elements of being, but Aristotle’s conception of substance lends itself, as I will discuss momentarily, to a more democratic, broadly pluralistic conception of being.

Concerning the former, there have been many such models, often taking one of two major forms: ontologies which posit a single, unbroken substance, a primal whole or divine being underneath all separate appearances, and ontologies which posit eternal or indestructible elemental components which combine to make the objects of everyday life. In ancient Greek and Indian traditions, for instance, a number of philosophers concerned themselves with identifying the basic constituent element or elements of reality, from the monistic, single-element systems of Thales (water), Anaximenes (air), Anaximander (the *apeiron*, an undefined infinite thing), Plotinus (The One), or Shankara (Brahman); to the multi-element systems of Empedocles (fire, air, earth, water) or the Indian Nyaya-Vaisesika school (earth, water, fire, air, ether, time, space, self, and mind) (Ambuel, 2000; Sallis, 2000). Other ontological models, ancient and

modern, have argued that earth, water, air and other elements are themselves composed of even deeper, more fundamental constituent parts, from the atoms of Leucippus and Democritus, to the corpuscles of Descartes, the impenetrable particles of Newton, and the atoms, quarks, and strings of contemporary physics.

While there are many significant differences among these various models, they are alike in locating the foundational being of being either in one entity or a small, selective set of them, underneath or behind the world of ordinary objects. For the early atomistic models, the fundamental component was a tiny, super-dense version of familiar physical objects (noun as *concrete thing*). But from the perspective of a neurocognitive theory of grammar, the infinite, ungraspable, primal substance of certain of the monistic metaphysical systems represents a highly abstract, rarefied extension or inversion of the ordinary object: a radial, metaphorical extension of nominal thing-thinking.

Another strategy within nounal metaphysics, adopted by Aristotle and more recently by Object-Oriented philosophers, is simply to take *individual things* (including persons) as basic, without attempting to limit being exclusively to a single privileged object or particular set of objects (Robinson, 2004; Bryant, 2011a; Harman, 2011c). From this point of view, individual particles, molecules, trees, horses, people, planets, and so on, are equally substances, with equal ontological standing. Reality does not consist of a certain *kind* of noun, in other words, such as atoms or the five elements, but rather reality itself is *nounal*: populated throughout by individual beings, at multiple scales. In this brief and necessarily cursory discussion of nounal metaphysics, I will not dwell further on Aristotelian or other ancient systems, but will focus for the remainder of this section on two contemporary models, namely Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) and Speculative Realism.

Graham Harman, the founder of modern Object-Oriented philosophy, defends the Aristotelian thesis that reality consists of individual substances. He does so, in part, by differentiating this view from some of the other nounal metaphysical systems discussed above, which he critiques as reductionist and compromising of the integrity of individual entities (Harman, 2011a). Noting that many metaphysical systems, ancient and modern, have tended to dismiss ordinary objects as unsophisticated and unworthy of philosophical attention, Harman (2011a) coins two terms to describe the array of reductive strategies that have most frequently been adopted to dispense with the common-sense entities of everyday experience: undermining and overmining. As indicated above, undermining is the approach preferred by many of the alternative nounal approaches, whereas overmining has typically been employed by those metaphysical systems which I am labeling pronounal, verbal, and adjectival.

In brief, undermining and overmining are philosophical strategies which seek to explain the appearance or manifestation of ordinary objects through metaphysical appeals to *more real* entities, processes, or relations (Harman, 2011a, 2011c). Specifically, an undermining approach suggests, reductively, that objects are simply surface manifestations, and that their true reality is located in their atomic or elemental subcomponents, for instance, or in some deeper substance or primal Oneness (Being, God, the apeiron). By contrast, an overmining approach denies that individual objects or entities really exist outside of perception, locating reality instead in dynamic processes or events, the qualitative play of experience, an ever-shifting field of relationships, mathematical laws¹⁰, and so on. Both strategies effectively put ordinary objects or entities “under erasure,” undermining their reality in favor of some preferred metaphysical strata of being.

Harman and other Object-Oriented philosophers, such as Levi Bryant (2011a), Tim Morton (2011), and Ian Bogost (2012), reject these reductive strategies in favor of a more Aristotelian view – a “democracy of objects” (Bryant, 2011a) which regards objects at all conceivable scales as worthy of the philosophical designation, *substance*. In embracing the reality and substantiality of even everyday objects of common experience, however, Harman and his philosophical compatriots are not advocating for a naïve, pre-critical realism. As a philosophical movement, OOO arises in the wake of (among other things):

- the post-Kantian, frequently anthropocentric subordination of objects to the structures of the subject;
- the related philosophical elevation of epistemology over ontology;
- the postmodern critique of onto-theology and the metaphysics of presence;
- various systems-theoretical critiques of the “naïve billiard balls” of classical, Newtonian physics; and
- Quentin Meillassoux’s (2008) critique of correlationism, the thesis that “we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other” (p. 5).

Concerning the first two points, I already addressed them to some extent in the pronoun section when I described the notion of the epistemic fallacy. OOO recognizes as valid the postmodern critique of the metaphysics of presence, which I will discuss more fully in a moment, but cries foul when ontological questions are subordinated to, or conflated with, epistemological ones (Bryant, 2011a). As I noted previously, the epistemic fallacy typically involves treating the *being* of things as identical to, or somehow dependent upon, our *mode of access* to them. In other words, and in brief, OOO accepts the idea that we partly construct or

“translate” the objects of our perception, as Kantians and post-modern philosophers maintain. But it rejects the frequently accompanying correlationist claims that 1) objects are *nothing more than*, or at least cannot be meaningfully discussed as *anything but*, human constructions; 2) that serious *ontological* reflection is therefore fundamentally naïve; and 3) that the locus of discussion should thus be shifted to the fields of linguistics, sociology, psychology, or other non-philosophical domains (Bryant, 2008). Against such assertions, object-oriented philosophers maintain that the metaphysical question of *what beings are* remains an important and valid one which can be considered, both *in spite of* and *in light of*, our epistemological limitations.

Discussion of the philosophical justification for a metaphysical system such as Object Oriented Ontology, which is multi-pronged and complex, is beyond the scope of this short summary; I refer interested readers to the texts by Harman and Bryant referenced in this section for further information. For our immediate purposes, it is more relevant to discuss one of the primary *strategies* OOO has adopted for advancing a critical object ontology in the wake of the postmodern critiques of onto-theology and the metaphysics of presence. According to these critiques, particularly as argued by Heidegger (1962) and Derrida (1976), traditional Western metaphysics has erred in privileging presence over absence. This has resulted in, among other things, the philosophical equation of the *being* of an entity with its perfect (self-)presence; belief in the immediacy of meaning; various forms of the philosophy of consciousness (Habermas, 1981); and empirical and representational theories of knowledge, which aim to objectively depict things as they are in themselves. For Derrida, this bias towards presence has influenced much of Western philosophy and theology, including many ontological theories of substance (whether of individual things, or of an onto-theological supreme being or foundational One) (Desilet, 2005). Wilber (2006) has identified such orientations under the broad heading of the *myth of the given* –

the myth that consciousness has “direct access” to things-in-themselves – and advocates instead for a pronounal, perspective-based model of enactment¹¹. OOO acknowledges these critiques, and develops its own models of enactment (as I will discuss below), but it also considers the postmodern banishment of ontology, or its subordination of ontology to epistemology, to be a significant mistake. OOO’s strategy, then, is to clearly differentiate epistemological and ontological philosophical discourses, and then to fold many of the postmodern insights *into* its model of ontology¹² (Bryant, 2011a).

According to OOO, the nature of objects as substances is to withdraw from relations, both to other objects but also to themselves. While some metaphysical models hold that objects or beings are fundamentally relational, meaning they are essentially *constituted by* their relations, as we will discuss later in the chapter, Harman (2011a) contends that such models are incapable of explaining change: if an object is wholly constituted by its present relations, it would have no reason to change. Without any hidden reserve, the universe would be a frozen tableau, the being of its objects exhausted in the immediate relational field. In contrast to these exclusively relational ontologies, and to the metaphysics of presence, OOO argues that it is the nature of substance “to withdraw from presence and to be in excess of all actuality” (Bryant, 2011a). Bryant’s (2011b) distinction between epistemological and ontological realism is useful here. Epistemological realism, a variant of the metaphysics of presence, is the claim that our maps of reality are objective representations of things-in-themselves. Rejecting such an understanding, OOO argues instead for ontological realism, which is “the thesis that entities are irreducible to our representations of them” (Bryant, 2011b). But this knowledge gap is not only located between humans and the objects we apprehend. OOO maintains it is the nature of *all* objects to

withdraw from one another, to exceed any relationships into which they may enter at a given time.

In Bryant's (2011a) scheme, which draws on the autopoietic systems theories of Maturana and Luhmann, objects do not perceive each other nakedly; they *translate* each other, and even parts of themselves, according to their unique autopoietic regimes. For Harman (2011a), objects exhibit a fourfold nature, split within by tensions between real and sensual objects, and real and sensual qualities. Harman's model differs in several important ways from Bryant's, but it shares the claim that objects do not directly touch in simple presence. They always encounter each other as sensual objects, and sensual objects exist only on the interior of real objects. Objects or substances at all scales are equally real, irreducible entities, Harman (2011a) argues, capable of affecting and translating one another, yet also withdrawing from one another. As Bryant (2011a) puts it,

...the very essence or structure of substance lies in *self-othering* and *withdrawal*. Insofar as objects or substances alienate themselves, as it were, in qualities, they are self-othering. They generate differences in the world. However, insofar as objects are never identical to their qualities, insofar as they always harbor a volcanic reserve in excess of their qualities, they perpetually withdraw from their qualities such that they never directly manifest themselves in the world. (p. 85)

Importantly, for Harman as well as Bryant, these distinctions apply equally to so-called insentient objects, such as molecules, diamonds, or cotton balls, as they do to living organisms. In these ways, both philosophers uniquely enfold quasi-panpsychic, perspectival models into their realist object ontologies. Both contend that, while objects cannot be reduced to

perspectives or representations – there is always an ontological excess, withdrawn from immediate relation –, they nevertheless always only encounter each other *as* perspectives or translations¹³, i.e., *as they are for each other*.

This depiction of objects may be somewhat reminiscent of Wilber's (2003b) panpsychic model of sentient holons. Wilber (2003b) maintains that even quarks or atoms must be regarded, in some minimal sense, as first persons – specifically, as neo-Whiteheadian first-person occasions arising amidst second- and third-person occasions. For this reason, I argued in the pronoun section that Wilber's cosmology could be regarded as a form of personalism, at least with regard to its implicit ontological commitments. As nouns are defined as *persons* as well as things, nounal metaphysical systems will typically identify either persons or things as the elemental constituents of existence. In Wilber's case, his epistemological emphasis on pronouns or person-perspectives appears to be closely attended by, and perhaps even inseparable from, a nounal ontology of persons. Unlike most traditional models of personalism, however, Wilber's category of person or sentient holon embraces many types of entity beyond the human (or the Godly) – from atoms to bacteria, and from ants to beluga whales.

Thus, while traditional personalism might be criticized by Harman (2011a) as undermining – locating the *being* of being exclusively in human beings or, more commonly, the Person(s) of God –, Wilber's nounal metaphysics is closer in spirit to that of Aristotle or OOO, granting the dignity of 'being' to a very broad range of individual entities. Between Wilber's sentient holons and OOO's withdrawn, translating objects, however, *object* is arguably the more basic concept, as it encompasses even those items Wilber would include under the categories of artifact or heap¹⁴, such as a cup or a stone. From an OOO perspective, Wilber's holons, artifacts, and heaps would be different *kinds* of object, but all would be equally objects, with all of the

hallmarks of objects: emergent realities which manifest as individual entities or units; which withdraw from themselves and from other objects; and which contribute and translate real differences in the world.

A fuller comparative analysis of OOO's objects and Wilber's holons must await a future publication. For now, it is sufficient to note that both OOO and Integral Theory have complex, well-developed models of their preferred nounal categories, whether objects or persons (sentient holons). Based on the central, even foundational, role that person perspectives play in Wilber's (2006) most recent work, I introduced Integral Theory at the beginning of this chapter as an exemplar of pronounal philosophy. But as I believe the above discussion also makes clear, an ontology of persons or sentient beings is an equally indispensable part of Wilber's overall model. Conversely, OOO places the nounal category, *object*, at the center of its philosophical system, but this is not the dull, inert object of past dualist and materialist metaphysics. It is an object which enfolds and embodies the epistemological insights of postmodernity -- a strange, inscrutable entity which withdraws from and exceeds all relation, and which self-others in translation.

The inseparability of ontology and epistemology, of body and perspective, is notable in both approaches. From the perspective of a cognitive theory of grammar, *being embodied* and *having a perspective* appear to be equiprimordial, at least with regard to the acquisition of language. While nouns are typically among the first types of words learned, often well before pronouns, they are apparently always acquired from at least one of three perspectives: that of the *agent*, the *undergoer*, or the *observer* (Feldman, 2006). Each perspective expresses an aspect of, and arises *as* and *by virtue of*, the learner's embodied coping with the world. In the context of the panpsychic or pansemiotic visions of Integral Theory and OOO, this embodied perspective

and perspectival embodiment is extended to objects and holons of all kinds and at all scales. Thus, while the being of objects cannot be reduced to or merely identified with perspective, as OOO contends, the emergence of individual substances nevertheless always entails the emergence of perspective. In Wilber's (2003b) framing, particularly the nounal inflection of it discussed here, every actual occasion or emergent holon is a four-quadrant affair.

Before concluding this section, I would like to briefly mention two recent proposals for integrative, trans-disciplinary models of research based on the principles of Object-Oriented Ontology. Specifically, Levi Bryant's (2012) *alethetics* and Graham Harman's (2011a) four-fold model of objects both aim to provide philosophical foundation for inclusive, meta-paradigmatic approaches to knowledge generation. As they have been articulated thus far, neither Bryant's nor Harman's proposals are as comprehensive as Wilber's (2003b, 2006) Integral Methodological Pluralism, nor are they as well-developed, but both nevertheless lay promising groundwork for future development.

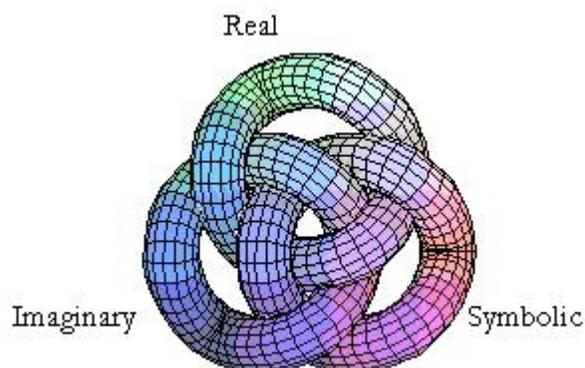


Figure 6. *Levi Bryant's Borromean Rings*

Bryant's (2012) model, based loosely on the Lacanian Borromean Knot, conceives of three interlocking (but separable) orders – the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary – that may

be related to each other in various ways and synthetically linked in various assemblages, graphically represented by a fourth ring, the sinthome. In brief, the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary represent three properties of objects which may be correlated with different knowledge disciplines or areas of philosophical focus (similar, in some regards, to the Big Three of Integral Theory: the It, We, and I, respectively). The Real represents the ontic domain, i.e. the irreducibility of objects, entities, cultures, traditions, and so on, to our representations of them; the Symbolic encompasses the semiotic and the ecological domains, including (the study of) both the systems of signs that entities use to communicate with each other and the various modes of structural coupling that comprise ecological systems; and the Imaginary is the domain of ‘interiority’ for all objects or entities – the unique phenomenal ways in which they encounter one another –, including for knowledge disciplines and cultures (Bryant, 2012). Regarding the latter, Bryant (2012) correlates this domain at the meta-paradigmatic level with various disciplines which Wilber (2006) would describe as Zone-5 modes of inquiry, and which Bryant, following Bogost (2012), calls alien phenomenology.

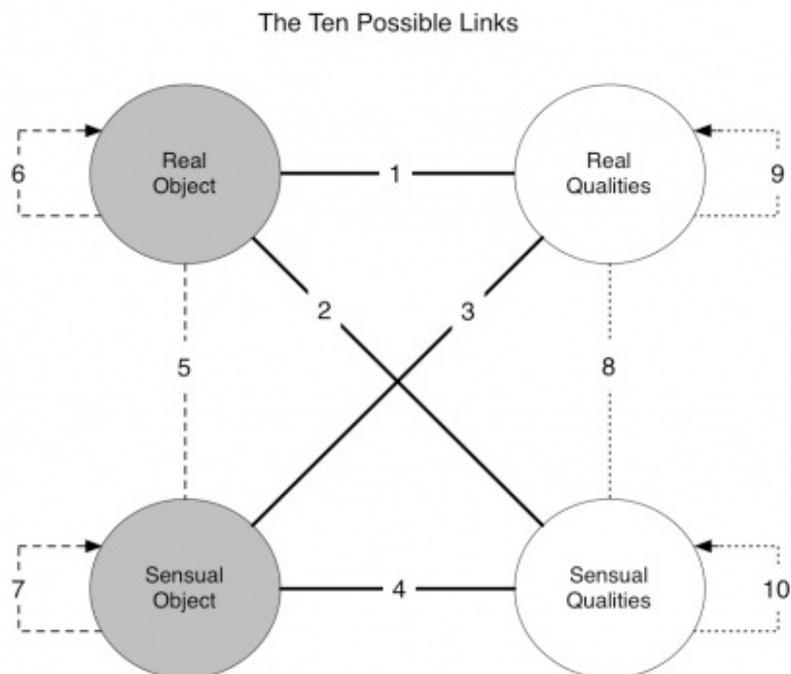


Figure 7. *Graham Harman's Quadruple Object*

Harman's (2011a) proposal thus far has only been sketchily introduced. Based on his notion of the quadruple object (consisting of real and sensual objects and qualities), his four-fold lens is similar in some respects to Wilber's quadrant model, but it presents the four "poles" or quadrants as marked by ten different generative tensions and attractions, which at the meta-paradigmatic level may allow for a more dynamic conceptualization of interdisciplinary relations. Harman (2011a) does not yet spell out how he would correlate the various dimensions of his model – the multiple types of objects with their different qualities and relations – to specific disciplines, but he suggests generally that an Object-Oriented philosophy, which insists on the irreducibility of emergent objects or entities, can provide a foundation for a democratic, non-reductive approach to our many knowledge practices and fields of inquiry.

With this brief summary of several representative expressions of nounal metaphysics and their meta-theoretical outgrowths, I would like to turn now to a discussion of a few important

philosophical movements that build, I suggest, upon a grammatical form closely related to the noun: the adjective.

Adjectival Philosophy: Being-as-Appearance

Sometimes, upon awakening in the early morning hours on a trip away from home, we may find ourselves confronted, not by immediately recognizable objects, but by various shades of light and dark, and by alien shapes that take a disconcerting second or two to organize themselves into the familiar jacket, chair, or open suitcase on the table that we had left the night before. The world, for this brief and soon forgotten moment, consists only of vague qualities or properties in chaotic flux. This is the condition, also, that has confronted congenitally blind patients who have had their vision restored through surgical intervention: the naïve eye, with cataracts removed, does not immediately yield a world of objects, but a bewildering flux of dim, inchoate qualities (Zajonc, 1993).

Such experiences may give rise to philosophical reflection on the proper relation of qualities and objects. Which come first? Do individual objects (nouns) form the ontological ground for qualities (adjectives), or are objects but convenient summary terms for various patterns of qualitative conjunction that we have learned to discern? For Aristotle, as we discussed in the last section, qualities such as bright or dark, red or green, rough or smooth, were considered *secondary substances* – necessarily *dependent* forms of being which only ever manifest within primary substances or individual objects. Such a perspective appears consonant with everyday experience. An Aristotelian or Object-Oriented thinker might ask: How could a quality such as *fast* or *intelligent* possibly stand alone, unassociated with any individual entity?

This intuition is reflected in the structure of grammar, as well, where adjectives in most major languages play a dependent role, as *modifiers* of nouns or noun phrases. In traditional grammar, adjectives have been defined as words which describe a thing's qualities, or indicate a thing's quantity or extent, or distinguish one thing from another. In more recent grammatical models, however, the latter two functions – specifying quantity or distinctness – have been reassigned to a new part of speech, the determiner, leaving the denotation of quality as the primary function of adjectives. Syntactically, adjectives frequently appear either in an attributive position, before or after nouns or noun phrases, or as predicates. In all cases, though, the function is a dependent one; the adjective cannot stand alone¹⁵.

However, while qualities for Aristotle are *secondary* substances, it is only through their respective qualities that objects or entities encounter one another. Primary substances, as the ground or support for qualities, are themselves never directly perceived. When we experience the sun, it is only in its adjectival expression that we apprehend it: yellow, round, radiant, warm, mobile, distant, sky-borne. In one sense, then, from the point of view of experience, qualities may also be regarded as primary: they are more immediately given than Aristotle's primary substances, which can only be inferred.

This split between accessible, empirically given qualities and inaccessible, non-empirical substances eventually leads John Locke and a number of subsequent philosophers to challenge and ultimately reject the notion of substance. As Bryant (2011c) summarizes Locke's critique, when we imagine substance as fundamentally non-qualitative or pre-qualitative – as distinct from all accidents or properties –, we find that we are unable to think substance at all: it becomes, at best, a blank, featureless *whatsit* underneath all qualitative displays. Conceived as a bare substratum, substance ironically loses the capacity to serve its primary metaphysical purpose: to

confer individuality to objects or entities. This is so because individual substances, being without quality in their essence, must therefore be indistinguishable from one another (Bryant, 2011a). If objects differ at all from each other, then, it is apparently only in terms of their secondary qualities or accidents.

Following this line of thinking, David Hume dispenses with the notion of substance as an unnecessary metaphysical ghost. In his analysis of the nature of the self, he finds there is no abiding substance at the center; only a bundle of passing sensations and perceptions, with the appearance of individuality or an underlying, singular essence nothing more than a product of the mind's habits of association. As Hume (1978) writes,

I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. Our eyes cannot turn in their sockets without varying our perceptions. Our thought is still more variable than our sight; and all our other senses and faculties contribute to this change; nor is there any single power of the soul, which remains unalterably the same, perhaps for one moment...There is properly no *simplicity* in [the Mind] at one time, nor *identity* in different; whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. (pp. 252-253)

The self is a summary term for the passing flux of perceptions, upon which the mind imposes order and unity. This same reasoning is applied to the ordinary objects of the world. As Harman (2011b) notes, "For Hume there are no objects, only 'bundles of qualities'. Here, the object is nothing more than a nickname for our habitual linking of red, sweet, cold, hard, and juicy under the single term 'apple'" (p. 23).

I am here describing such an orientation as adjectival: it places perceptual qualities at the center of the philosophical model. In doing so, it inverts the typical relationship between adjectives and nouns, either by seeing the latter as merely conceptual, secondarily derived summary terms for habitual groupings of the former; or by placing primary focus on the phenomenal play of qualities and bracketing out inaccessible ‘things-in-themselves’ as beyond the scope of legitimate philosophical inquiry. Kant, as is well known, adopted the latter strategy. He recognized the possible existence of mind-independent things-in-themselves, but he felt we could say nothing meaningful about them and focused instead on the manifold of perceptions and their lawful ordering by the *a priori* categories of the mind. Other philosophers following Hume, however, have adopted a more radical approach, rejecting hidden metaphysical substrates altogether and developing elaborate “bundle theories” of objects. For bundle theorists, there are no substances or bare substrata in which qualities inhere; rather, objects and entities consist entirely of conjunctions or collocations of qualities, relations, or tropes (Újvári, 2012). Some forms of bundle theory adopt a Neo-Platonic model of universals, regarding each appearance of ‘red’ as the appearance of the same universal quality; but in other forms of bundle theory, namely trope-bundle theory, each qualitative manifestation is immanent and particular (Újvári, 2012; Bensusan and Carvalho, 2011). Under the latter theory, each instantiation of ‘red’ is particular to the occasion of its appearance, bearing similarity to, but not identity with, other instantiations.

Bundle theories have occasionally been compared with some Buddhist schools of thought. Hume rejects the metaphysical duality of mind and world, and regards the self as nothing more than a bundling of transient qualities, without essence or substance (Brown, 2011). This perspective arguably bears some similarity to the Cittamātra or Mind-Only tradition in

Buddhism. Cittamātra posits one truly existent thing: the *abhūtaparikalpa*, the *imagination of the non-existent*, a non-dual flow of perceptions which can manifest itself either in deluded, subject-object experience or in enlightened, non-dual experience (Williams, 1989). As Williams (1989) summarizes the Cittamātra perspective,

Apparently external objects are constituted by consciousness and do not exist apart from it. Vasubhandu begins his *Viṃśatikā*: ‘All this is only perception [*viñaptimātra*], since consciousness manifests itself in the form of nonexistent objects.’ There is only the flow of perceptions. (p. 87)

Said otherwise, there is only the qualitative flow of appearances, with no underlying, self-existent objects or subjects. Dualistic experience, separating the world into interiors and exteriors, arises through the deluded reification of various aspects of the empty play of qualia.

While it would be limiting and inaccurate to portray Cittamātra (or most Western bundle theories, for that matter) as *exclusively* adjectival in their metaphysical commitments, I feel justified in appealing to these schools as exemplars of this particular grammatical-metaphysical orientation for the following two reasons:

- 1) their novel inversion of the conventional noun/adjective relation, and
- 2) their predilection to describe reality primarily in terms of the play of qualitative appearances or perceptions.

It should be noted, however, that while such traditions may liberate qualitative appearances from their conventional metaphysical anchoring in substances or things-in-themselves, an adjectival orientation will tend more often than not to be complemented by other

grammatical perspectives. In the case of Integral Theory, for instance, which has strong affinities both with Buddhist and Hindu non-dualist metaphysics, and with the German Idealism of Schelling and Hegel, an adjectival focus on the empty or groundless play of perceptions is recognized and embraced as valid, up to a point, but it is subordinated to the pronounal person-perspective lens. A qualitative perception is always already a first-, second-, or third-person perspectival occasion. Similarly, in those Eastern and Western traditions which focus on the adjectival play of appearances while bracketing out, or denying the validity of, nounal metaphysics, one will nevertheless frequently find an accompanying emphasis on verbal metaphysics. In other words, in those traditions which emphasize adjectives over nouns, regarding the latter as either convenient summary terms for, or naïve reifications of, the impersonal play of appearances, there is often a concurrent focus on the generative *how* of appearance (a process or verbal orientation). This is certainly true in Buddhism, where in the Yogacara and Dzogchen traditions, for instance, one finds a strong, subtly conceived process view that accompanies all discussion of the illusory play of appearance. It is to an exploration of such process orientations that we now turn.

Verbal Philosophy: Being-as-Process

A verb is a word that names an act, occurrence, or mode of being. In English, the verb forms the grammatical center of a predicate, which, to be complete, must also include a subject, or a subject and object. The subject-verb-object structure of English and similar grammars assigns the verb necessarily to an agent or experiencer: all actions or modes of being must be communicated as the actions or experiences of a subject. This pertains, as David Bohm (1980) points out, even in the case of a general process such as a rain storm: we say, "It is raining,"

attributing the action of raining to a subject ("it"), even when there is no discernible agent or "rainer" involved.

In more verb-based grammars, however, such as in Japanese or some American Indian languages, the verb or action situation receives the primary emphasis, with the subject often not indicated at all. In such grammatical systems, subjects, when they *are* included, are typically presented as associated elements of an overall, dynamic or relational situation rather than as independent causal agents initiating an action. For instance, as Ken Sakai (2013) notes in an essay comparing Japanese and English sentence structure,

In Japanese, it is preferable to express situational relationships, as if things turned out naturally. In English, human behavior is logically grasped as its center, and the word order of "Subject (as an agent) + Transitive Verb + Object" is preferred. So then, in English, what the people are doing with the situation is emphasized, while in Japanese what the situation is doing with the people is emphasized.

But in many verb-based languages, as I noted above, it is sometimes not necessary to indicate a subject or an object at all. In the Hopi language, for example, *rehpi*, meaning "flashed" (for the occurrence of light or lightning), is considered a complete sentence; there is no agent which flashes, but only the flashing (Whorf, 1956). Similarly, in Japanese, the sentence, "I am going shopping," would be translated as *Kaimono ni ikimasu*, literally meaning "Shopping (to) going" (Sakai, 2013). No subject is indicated; the semantic content of the sentence is carried entirely by verb forms and a particle.

These differences in grammatical emphasis parallel longstanding philosophical tensions between (nounal) substance- and (verbal) process-based metaphysical systems. As early as the

sixth century, B.C., Heraclitus argued for the primacy of motion and change, declaring that “all entities move and nothing remains still.” He conceived of multiple forces in balanced strife, driving the manifestation and transformation of all things. But this early form of process thinking was soon eclipsed in Western thought by the metaphysical doctrines of atomism and substance, which give primacy (as we discussed above) to individual objects or entities, and which frequently locate reality in that which is unchanging or eternal. Over the past two millennia, several other thinkers, such as Plotinus, Patrizzi, and Leibniz, have contributed to the development of the otherwise long-marginalized field of process thinking within the Western tradition, but it wasn’t until the emergence of the concept of evolution and the development of various systems sciences that process metaphysics attracted wide and sustained philosophical attention (Seibt, 2012; Macy, 1991). Some of the most prominent modern contributors to process thought include Schelling, Hegel, Peirce, Bergson, Whitehead, Hartshorne, and Heidegger.

The fundamental distinction between noun- and verb-based grammars – the question of whether nouns or verbs are primary, and consequently whether verbs must be associated with an agent – finds a philosophical echo in the Process Reducibility Thesis. According to this thesis, all processes are *owned* processes, meaning they are necessarily and always the expressions of agents or things (Rescher, 1996). On such a view, processes are real, but they are subordinate to, and ontologically dependent upon, process-transcendent substances. By contrast, while process theorists acknowledge that some processes are indeed helpfully understood as the activities or doings of an agent, they argue that 1) there are also processes which are *not* owned by any particular agent; 2) agents themselves are dependent upon, and only come into being in and through, dynamic processes; and 3) therefore processes are ontologically more fundamental than

substances or things. Rescher (1996) names temperature changes or magnetic fluctuations as examples of non-owned processes, and Bohm's (1980) rain storm provides another illustration. But the more radical claim of process philosophers, indicated in points 2 and 3 above, is that the nature of so-called substances or agents is itself processual. Individual entities or objects are, in actuality, not just the *initiators* of actions, but are themselves the products of the ceaseless and generative flow of becoming. Bohm (1980) offers the metaphor of an eddy in a stream: it has a constant, relatively stable form, but it is inseparable from the flowing movement of the water. In this view, the noun, *eddy*, refers to a stable, invariant-seeming group of processes or patterns which is isolated or abstracted (itself a process) out of a larger processual field.

In privileging process and becoming over substance, process philosophy is challenged to account for the intuition of abiding identity or sameness in the midst of change. Bohm's example of the eddy, while a suggestive metaphor for the concept of object-as-process, may nevertheless feel inadequate or incomplete as an explanation for the deeply felt intuition of ongoing subjective identity. The Buddhist process-account of the self, which sees "self" as an illusion generated by the flow of impersonal psycho-physical processes, attributes the sense of self-continuity to several related factors: the speed with which the processes take place, normally opaque to untrained awareness; the capacity of the mind to recollect past experiences or events; and the fact that momentary experiences of 'sense consciousness' are always immediately followed by moments of 'mind consciousness,' appearing to link them and thus giving them the feel of similarity and continuity (Brahmavamso, 2005). In Western process thought, one of the most sophisticated accounts of the intuition of self-continuity was developed by A.N. Whitehead. In Whitehead's view, the immediately given sense of self-identity is related, not to the existence of underlying, unchanging substances or essences, but to the

dynamic sameness of recurrent integrative processes which are fundamentally experiential in character. Because Whitehead's philosophy has been so influential in the modern development of process thought, and because aspects of his model also inform Wilber's recent work, I will spend a little time reviewing a few of its salient features.

For Whitehead (1978), reality is atomic or individual in nature, but the atoms from which it is composed are experiential events, which he calls *actual occasions*, rather than the material objects or particles of conventional scientific understanding. An actual occasion is an exceedingly transient event, perishing as soon as it arises. In its momentary arising, an actual occasion or entity reaches into the past and the future at once: it *relationally prehends* the immediately preceding moments, grasping and integrating past occasions as concrete forms which contribute to its present internal constitution; and it *creatively generates* novel, emergent features in the process of its self-realization through prehensive unification. Whitehead describes this process as *concrecence*, which is the process by which entities become what they are through their relationships to other entities, while also contributing novelty through the unique ways in which those relations are integrated. While many process thinkers prior to Whitehead have conceived of process in terms of flow and continuity, taking continuity or unbroken wholeness as a pre-given feature of processual reality, Whitehead (1978) argues, instead, for the metaphysical primacy of atomism and for the *becoming* of continuity (as opposed to the continuity of becoming). With each quantized occasion of prehensive unification, in other words, continuity is *achieved*: the present occasion enfolds the past as an aspect of its own creative self-constitution, and then passes on this achievement as an inheritance to the actual occasions that follow. This, then, is how Whitehead accounts in process terms for the feeling or intuition of continuous self-identity¹⁶. It is not given but realized, experientially and

ontologically, through recurrent occasions of prehensive unification. The process is more complex for a human being, which is a rich nexus or society of actual occasions, than it is for a simple entity such as an electron or an atom, but it is alike in kind.

Given the historical tension that has existed between process and substantialist or atomistic forms of metaphysics, it is worth saying a little more here about Whitehead's experiential atomism. As should be apparent from the above, Whitehead's "atoms," actual occasions, are thoroughly relational in nature. In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead (1978) argues several related points that underscore this fact: 1) there is no deeper reality than actual occasions; 2) an actual occasion is wholly constituted by, and wholly analyzable in terms of, its prehensions of other actual entities; and 3) an actual occasion cannot be completely abstracted from the universe and considered in isolation, since its relations are in essence coextensive with the universe. This picture of atomic actual occasions, which are internally related and complexly interdependent, differs significantly from the classical notion of wholly discrete, externally-related atoms moving through space. The latter suggests to Whitehead (1967) a vacuous, alienated "universe...shivered into a multitude of disconnected substantial things" (p. 133) – a model he rejects as being incapable of accounting for the actual (processual, co-constitutive, causal, communicative) relations that obtain among entities.

In embracing an ontology of individuals (and societies of individuals), as opposed to the various ontologies of pre-individual flux or dynamism preferred by process theorists such as Bergson, Deleuze, or Bohm, Whitehead would *appear* to have more in common, metaphysically, with the Object-Oriented Ontologists than with many of his process-oriented brethren. And Harman (2011c) and Bryant (2010; 2011a), indeed, have both cited Whitehead as an important influence on their own work. Bryant, for instance, is similar to Whitehead in his willingness to

think of objects in process terms – as an ongoing synthetic process of self-constitution, not an extra-processual, unchanging essence or substance. But Whitehead’s actual occasions differ from OOO’s objects in the thoroughly relational way that actual occasions are defined. As noted above, Whitehead contends that an actual occasion is comprised entirely of its prehensions, i.e., of its relations to other entities. Indeed, Whitehead regards it as misguided to attempt to conceive of or define an entity apart from its relations. But this is exactly what Harman (2005) and Bryant (2011a) argue must be done: for perception to be possible, indeed for change or process to be possible, an entity must exceed all perceptions or prehensions of it; it must be irreducible to its relations to other entities. I have already reviewed some of Harman’s thoughts on this issue in the section on nounal philosophy, so I will focus here on Bryant’s perspective.

In a blog entry on the affinities and differences between Whitehead’s process ontology and OOO, Bryant (2010) comments that he finds Whitehead’s three-fold model of prehension – namely, that prehension involves a *prehending subject*, a *prehended datum*, and a *subjective form* of prehension (the *way* an actual entity prehends another entity) – fully consonant with an object-oriented understanding of “inter-object relations,” including the related concepts of withdrawal and translation. Bryant (2010) interprets the third point, the subjective form of prehension, in terms of the second-order cybernetics of Bateson and Luhmann: information is always internal to autopoietic (or allopoietic) systems, intimately related to their distinctive structures, rather than a “message” that is transmitted, intact, between systems. But since information here is understood in terms of difference – a “difference that makes a difference,” selecting unique system states within prehending entities – then the prehending entity cannot be identical with its prehensions; it must withdraw from or exceed its relations to other entities.

This is where OOO differs with process ontology, Bryant argues, and why OOO would suggest, instead, a four-fold model of prehension. Whitehead defines an actual entity as nothing other than the concrescence of its prehensions, in effect identifying the subject with its perceptions or experiences. But if an object is *nothing other* than its perceptions, then it is nothing in itself. It has nothing it can bring to its perceptions – no structure – and thus no “how” or subjective form of prehension. Bryant (2010a) therefore argues that further differentiation is needed to make for a coherent model of inter-entity relations: “the subject/substance that does the prehending (the real object), the datum prehended (another real object), the subjective-form under which the datum is prehended (the organization or endo-structure of the real object), and the sensuous object (Harman) or system-state (me) produced in the prehending” (para. 8). When the prehending entity is defined as consisting only of its previous prehensions, Bryant maintains, this misses the withdrawn, mediating endo-structure of the entity which translates and gives subjective form to its emergent prehensions.

In his more recent work, Wilber has offered his own critique and four-fold amendment of Whitehead’s process model. As I intimated above, aspects of Whitehead’s work have come to play an increasingly important role in Wilber’s model. Specifically, Wilber (2001, 2003a, 2003b) has embraced the Whiteheadian concepts of prehension, concrescence, and the creative advance into novelty in his own accounts of the microgenesis and developmental unfolding of subject-object (or I-It) experience, the formative or causal inheritance of the past, and the interior dimensions of holarchical development. These concepts highlight and help to flesh out certain processual features of the Integral model. Nevertheless, Wilber regards Whitehead’s process model as limited in several important ways. It inadequately takes account of intersubjectivity (the Lower Left quadrant), for instance, and it does not address and cannot explain the non-

prehensive causal processes and dynamics of the objective (Upper Right) and interobjective (Lower Right) domains of reality (Wilber, 2001, 2003a).

Instead of taking Whitehead's model of prehension, then, as a metaphysical foundation, Wilber situates it in his own Four-Quadrant account of cosmogenesis. For Wilber (2001, 2003a), the Four Quadrants "go all the way down": every actual occasion involves subjective, objective, intersubjective, and interobjective dimensions. What this means with regard to Whitehead's model of prehension, in part, is that every momentary prehension of an object by a subject must be understood as necessarily situated in an intersubjective context or background which influences and gives form to the prehensive occasion. Similarly to Bryant above, Wilber (2001) argues that some mediating structures have *never* been past objects for the subject; they structure experience, and thus are "part" of the subject¹⁷, but they exceed *reduction* to either the subject or its prehensions. This is because subject-object prehension is, in Wilber's view, only part of the larger four-fold process or mesh of processes he calls tetra-enaction, in which intersubjectivity and interobjectivity are irreducible aspects of any occasion.

With this note, and in anticipation of bringing this section to a close, I would like to shift focus now back to the broader discussion of process metaphysics (which certainly includes but is not limited to or defined by Whitehead's philosophy). Although there is no unanimity on this point among process metaphysicians, several types of fundamental processes are generally recognized. Besides owned and unowned processes, which we discussed at the beginning of this section, Rescher (1996) identifies state-transformative processes, generative or product-productive processes, purposive or teleological processes, cognitive or epistemic processes, and communicative or informational processes. Anthony Kenny (2003) classifies processes according to three basic action types: activities, performances, and states of being (notably

similar to the terms used in the definition of “verb” at the beginning of this section). More recently, Roy and Trudel (2011) have identified five generative processes – namely, construction, development, evolution, emergence, and autopoiesis – which they define as those processes which set up or generate structures.

Regarding the latter, Roy (2006, 2010, 2011) has proposed a generative process-based reformulation of Integral Theory, which I will explore here only briefly. As I discussed at the beginning of the chapter, Roy (2006) believes that, while Integral Theory is certainly not averse to a processual view, and includes important process-oriented concepts within it (some of which I touched on above), it nevertheless subtly privileges a structuralist orientation. The quadrant map tends to highlight discrete structures, for instance, rather than the dynamic processes which generate them. Drawing on the process insights of Whitehead (1978), David Bohm (1980), Jean Gebser (1986), Christopher Alexander (2003, 2004, 2006), Jason Brown (1991, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002), and Bon and Buddhist Dzogchen thinkers (Klein and Wangyal Rinpoche, 2006; Guenther, 1984, 1989), among others, Roy (2006, 2010) shows how a process model can account for the generation of the quadrants as relatively stable relational structures out of a dynamic, processual field, and can generate new super-integrative methodological zones in a Gebserian, process-oriented version of Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP).

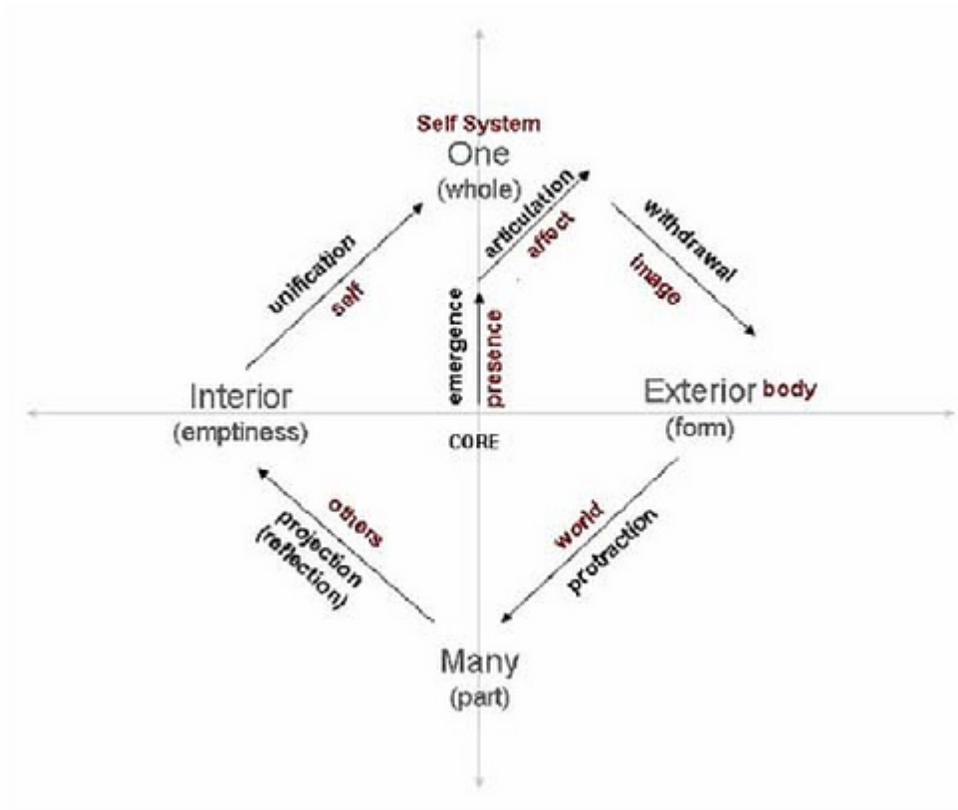


Figure 8. Bonnitta Roy's Integral Processual Model of the Self System

Although not indicated on the image above, Roy (2006) elsewhere labels the central lines of the quadrant map as *unfolding movements* in the directions of interiority and exteriority, or singularity and plurality, out of an anterior holistic field. Related to the above approach, Roy (2010) similarly arrives at several new, super-integrative methodologies – from process eidetics, to mixed discourse, to enactive naturalism, to isomorphic field theory – by teasing out and articulating the anterior wholes that give rise to the inside/outside distinctions and the corresponding 8 Zones of IMP. Specifically, each of her methodologies is derived from exploring the nature of the anterior “space” from which we switch between our conventional methodological views, such as when we switch between phenomenological and structuralist

approaches. I do not have the space here to discuss Roy's process model, which she calls ontologies, in any further detail, but I have included it here as a suggestive example of a more explicitly verb-centered integrative meta-theory.

In most cases, the generative and other types of processes mentioned above can be identified with various types of verbs: dynamic verbs, stative verbs, causative verbs, and so on. A number of process models, including those of Roy, Rescher, and Kenny, among others, posit and explore multiple discrete processes, in effect outlining a pluralist landscape of verbal metaphysics. But another strategy within process thought is to focus on various *modifications* or *modes* of a more generalized process or set of processes. This is the province of adverbial metaphysics.

Adverbial Philosophy: Modes of Being

An adverb is a word that modifies or qualifies a verb, verb phrase, adjective, or other adverb, among other functions. It is typically used to indicate the manner, time, location, or extent of an action, process, or a quality. In many languages, adverbs are formed (if they do not stand as independent words in their own right) by adding a suffix to, or otherwise modifying, an adjective. For the purposes of this discussion, I will focus primarily on the adverb's role as a modifier of verbs or other adverbs, since in the adverbial process models we will explore here, adjectives are typically replaced with adverbial expressions, as we will see.

The relationship of adverbial to verbal metaphysical models differs somewhat from the relationship between adjective and nounal approaches discussed previously. Grammatically, of course, both adverbs and adjectives play dependent roles, modifying their respective parts of speech. But in the case of the various empiricist/adjectival metaphysical systems I reviewed,

adjectives were typically privileged *at the expense* of nouns, in *repudiation* of the metaphysical category of substance. In the adverbial models of which I am aware, this tends not to be the case. An adverbial orientation is typically used, not to repudiate or replace the verbal category of process, but to complement or complete it. For this reason, I will present adverbial philosophy itself in an adverbial manner: as either a *complement to* or a *mode of* process metaphysics, rather than a fundamentally different orientation.

In the previous section, Heidegger, as the author of *Being and Time*, may have appeared conspicuously absent from my sampling of influential process philosophers. He certainly could have been included in that discussion; as Harman (2011c) notes, he stands as one of the towering thinkers of the last century, and has generally received more recognition for his contributions to process thought than Whitehead or his descendants. (He also could have been included in the noun section, incidentally, considering the influence of his equipment analysis and his 1919 concept of the fourfold on Harman’s nounal philosophy). I have included him here, however, because much of his work on the nature and process of Being is a meditation on the various *ways* or *modes* in which Being manifests. As Joanna Seibt (2012) writes,

Martin Heidegger's early and late philosophy also presents an analytic-interpretive contribution to process philosophy, without speculative formulations of metaphysical ‘laws of development,’ but with a view to the metaphilosophical and practical implications of process metaphysics. In *Sein und Zeit* (1927) Heidegger presents what could be called an ‘adverbial model’ of process metaphysics; based on an analysis of human existence (“Dasein”) Heidegger shows that what the metaphysical tradition understood as entities or factors standing in relational constellations—e.g., space, world, self, others, possibility, matter, function, meaning, time—can be viewed as ‘adverbial

modifications' of Dasein, as modes and ways in which Dasein occurs, while Dasein itself is the interactivity of 'disclosure' or 'taking as.'

In his later writings, Heidegger's focus shifts from human Being (Dasein) and its modifications, to Dasein itself as a dimension or mode – a “how” – of Being's unfolding. Related to this, Heidegger presents the history of being as a series of modes of *Ereignis*, the process of the sending and withdrawal of be-ing that has marked each epoch's understanding of Dasein's relation to reality (Guignon, 2005). Heidegger characterizes these modes of be-ing as *physis*, *poiesis*, *techne*, production, *ens creatum*, and technology: each a unique, emergent structuring of be-ing which transforms our understanding of what is and what matters (Dreyfus, 1996). These moves further develop and extend the adverbial strategy introduced earlier in his work.

Similarly, Whitehead's (1978) eternal objects inhabit an adverbial relationship to the verbal center of his model, creativity or the creative unfolding of actual occasions. In Whitehead's system, eternal objects include abstract things such as color, form, pattern, number, space, time, gravity, and so on. They are those features of reality which distinctly characterize and inform an actual entity's qualities and relations. In that regard, eternal objects are similar to the universals of conventional metaphysics: the qualities or properties of reality, physical or abstract, which can be conceptualized independently of specific actual entities or concrete occasions, but which lend entities their “definiteness” (Whitehead, 1978), such as the redness and juiciness of an apple. In Whitehead's model, however, these qualities are conceptualized adverbially rather than as the adjectival attributes of subjects. In other words, eternal objects both characterize and inform the *how* of becoming-events in and through prehensive occasions: sun-eventuating *brightly, warmly, spherically, gravitationally*.

Another way of saying this is that eternal objects represent the recurrent potential for the actualization of entities along a nearly infinite number of adverbial pathways or modal expressions: manifesting *thusly* and *thusly* and *thusly*. As Steven Shaviro (2009) puts it, eternal objects adverbially “determine and express how actual entities relate to one another, take one another up, and ‘enter into each others’ constitutions.’ Like Kantian and Deleuzian ideas, eternal objects work regulatively, or problematically” (p. 37). As such, they represent the many modal possibilities for becoming.

There is a Platonic cast to Whitehead’s discussion of eternal objects, but Shaviro (2009) argues this is best understood as an *empirico-idealism*, since Whitehead maintains that eternal objects cannot be conceived apart from their concrete instantiations and do not manifest outside of individual experience. As Whitehead (1978) writes:

An actual entity cannot be described, even inadequately, by universals; because other actual entities do enter into the description of any one actual entity. Thus every so-called ‘universal’ is particular in the sense of being what it is, diverse from everything else; and every so-called ‘particular’ is universal in the sense of entering into the constitution of other actual entities (p. 48).

Despite these qualifications, however, the concept of eternal object remains somewhat controversial among Whiteheadian scholars. While Shaviro (2009) attempts to give it a Deleuzian reading, Charles Hartshorne (1979) finds the concept (and the related notion of the *ingression* of eternal objects into particulars) still to be too close to Platonism, and advocates for a more nominalist interpretation.

An earlier example of adverbial process metaphysics is arguably found in Spinoza's philosophy, particularly in his concept of substance and its modes. While substance is normally conceptualized as a noun, it functions in Spinoza's system more like a verb (or, more properly, a gerund) (Williams, 1986). For Spinoza, substance is that one, infinite, indivisible (because infinitely divisible) Being, self-caused and eternal, of and for which all other beings are but its modes (Della Rocca, 2008; Morrison, 2007). And if all beings are necessarily dependent modes or modifications of the one infinite Substance or Being, then this relationship is best conceptualized as an adverb-verb relation rather than the adjective-noun relation typically associated with classical substance views.

This monist version of adverbial metaphysics is in contrast to Whitehead's ontology, as well as to several Eastern non-dual ontologies. For Spinoza, all beings are but accidental (non-necessary) adverbial modes or modifications of the one substance (which Deleuze reads as the "virtual") (Shaviro, 2010). For Whitehead, however, these "modes" are instead actual entities, each a site of (verbal) creativity, each capable of its own adverbial modification. Whitehead (1978) rejects Spinoza's notion of a transcendent substance, which exists on a higher or deeper plane behind all actual entities, and argues instead for a non-dualist interpretation:

God and the World stand over against each other, expressing the final metaphysical truth that appetitive vision and physical enjoyment have equal claim to priority in creation. But no two actual entities can be torn apart: each is all in all. Thus each temporal occasion embodies God, and is embodied in God. In God's nature, permanence is primordial and flux is derivative from the World: in the World's nature, flux is primordial and permanence is derivative from God. Also the World's nature is a primordial datum for God; and God's nature is a primordial datum for the World. Creation achieves the

reconciliation of permanence and flux when it has reached its final terms which is everlastingness -- the Apotheosis of the World. (p. 529)

In the non-dualist traditions of Dzogchen or Kashmiri Shaivism, a similar view is expressed: Each concrete individual is, at once, the creative (verbal) activity and the delightful (adverbial) self-ornamentation and self-determination of the supreme reality.

In each of the ontologies reviewed here, an adverbial focus on modes *complements*, rather than undermines, the central concern with (verbal) process, whether process is conceived in pluralistic, monistic, or non-dualistic terms. Adverbs give definiteness to processes, tracing infinitely varied paths towards actualization. Noting the strength of this pairing for a process approach, Rescher (1996) proposes a process semantics in which verbs and adverbs serve as the primary operators, “accomplishing whatever a semantics of individuals can manage to do with properties and relations” (p. 178). Thus, instead of saying, *The sky is blue* or *The sun is in-the-sky*, one would say, *The sky radiates bluely* and *The sun sits in-the-skyly*, replacing a “substance and property” construction with an adverbially modified verb phrase. As Rescher (1996) notes, this approach allows for a more democratic treatment of entities, as both existent and nonexistent beings can be rendered in the same way (akin to the treatment of real and imaginary objects by OOO and Actor Network Theory¹⁸).

In the second sentence example above, a prepositional phrase is rendered adverbially. In recent years, a small but growing number of philosophers have emerged who resist the longstanding tendency to hurry past prepositions on the way to substances or processes, but who prefer instead to linger with them and listen to what they have to say about being. This is the last of the grammatical-philosophical orientations we will review in this chapter.

Prepositional Philosophy: Being-as-Relation

In *Principles of Psychology*, as Bruno Latour (2011) notes, William James remarked humorously on the tendency among empiricist philosophers to limit their attention to perceptions of color and various other sensations as the essence of what is truly given in experience, and then to have to appeal to the machinations of thought to fill in the rest of the picture. But this has the effect, among other things, of rendering relations and intentional vectors as unreal – as impositions of human thought upon the world. For James (1983), this is a failure of traditional empiricism, and he calls for a more radical approach, one which recognizes that *of* and *to*, *because* and *for*, *and* and *the*, also each have their own distinct feels, their own claims to reality.

Among the parts of speech James names as meriting greater empirical and philosophical attention, he lists conjunctions, determiners, and prepositions. It is the last of these parts of speech that has captured the interest of the handful of (primarily French) philosophers we will explore here. Specifically, Bruno Latour, Étienne Souriau, Jean-Luc Nancy, Michel Serres, and Peter Sloterdijk, have appealed to prepositions as opening a field of ontological inquiry that eludes the paths normally followed by traditional empiricist and substantialist metaphysical systems.

Grammatically, a preposition is a linking word, connecting nouns, pronouns, or noun phrases to other words or phrases. Prepositions are typically used to express temporal, spatial, or logical relationships, and in so doing, often function adverbially or adjectivally within a sentence. In some languages, words with this function show up elsewhere in relation their complement, and thus may be called postpositions or circumpositions (or simply adpositions for

a position-neutral determination). In this section, I will refer to them as prepositions, as that is the grammatical term used by the authors we will be discussing.

From the perspective of the cognitive theory of grammar, prepositions are semi-complex constructions composed of several image schemes, and thus are themselves relational. For instance, the preposition "on" consists of the embodied image schemas for CONTACT and SUPPORT. This lends support to James' claim that prepositions have their own distinct feel and reality.

With the adverbial role that prepositional phrases often play, prepositional philosophy could be considered an adjunct or a special subset of adverbial metaphysics. Indeed, Bruno Latour (2011) considers the primary domain of concern opened by prepositional reflection to be the *modes of existence* that beings might occupy in relation to one another. But since prepositional phrases also function adjectivally, a prepositional orientation cannot be considered to be exclusively dedicated to a process orientation. Instead, it moves in zones of concern that touch on substances and processes equally, without absolutizing either narrative. As Latour (2011) writes:

The essential point is that the ontology of prepositions immediately takes us away from the all-too-familiar sorts of inquiry in the philosophies of being. Here, the preposition indicates neither an ontological domain, nor a region, territory, sphere, or material. The *if* or the *and* has no region. But as its name perfectly suggests, the preposition prepares the position that has to be given to what follows, giving the search for meaning a definite inflection that allows one to judge its direction or vector. (pp. 308-309)

Latour makes these remarks in the context of a discussion of the work of Étienne Souriau. Like some of the adverbial philosophers, Souriau wants to think being in a plurality of modes – to escape the metaphysical deadlock which attempts to restrict reality to just one form or mode of being, whether subject or object (or their dialectical integration) (Latour, 2011, pp. 306-307). To approach this, he proposes that we reflect, not on *being as being* for itself, as a singular underlying substance, but on being in and as otherness, as alteration, genuinely multiple or *plurimodal*. Prepositions, here, evoke for him, not accidental or secondary rearrangements of the one being, but genuinely different modes or ways of being. The actual modes of existence Souriau goes on to explore, however, are only abstractly related to prepositions, so I will turn to several other writers who address the prepositions more directly.

William James (1983) has reflected on the abundance of words prefixed with co-, com-, and syn-, among several others, as testament to the fundamental intuition of relationship and togetherness in human existence, and these reflections find a new echo in the work of Jean-Luc Nancy. In an extraordinary and somewhat enigmatically languaged little text, Nancy (2000) proposes a reformulation of ontology in the Western tradition by thinking being in the form of *being singular plural*. This is a philosophy, as we will see, that dances in and around the preposition, *with*. In juxtaposing the three terms, *being singular plural*, as he does, Nancy means to communicate their absolute co-immediacy, without remainder, and without any suggestion of the priority of one over the other. Being-one is only ever being-with-many; or, as he puts it, “A singular being is a contradiction in terms” (p. 12).

For Nancy, there is no pre-existence, no originary state other than being singular plural, which itself, in every plurisingular instance, *is* the origin. Here is how Nancy (2000) puts it:

Being singular plural means the essence of Being is only as coessence. In turn, coessence, or *being-with* (being-with-many), designates the essence of the *co-*, or even more so, the *co-* (the *cum*) itself in the position or guise of an essence. In fact, coessentiality cannot consist in an assemblage of essences, where the essence of this assemblage as such remains to be determined. In relation to such an assemblage, the assembled essences would become [mere] accidents. Coessentiality signifies the essential sharing of essentiality, sharing in the guise of assembling, as it were. This could also be put in the following way: if Being is being-with, then it is, in its being-with, the "with" that constitutes Being... Therefore, it is not the case that the "with" is an addition to some prior Being; instead, the "with" is at the heart of Being. (pp. 30-31)

In pronouncing “with” to be the essence of Being, in other words, Nancy distances himself from metaphysical narratives which posit a process of rupture or unification of originary being, but also from narratives which would posit a simple dialectical swinging between oneness and multiplicity. Being is immediately and non-dually co-being, co-essence, singular plural.

In speaking [of] the singular plural of being, Nancy has found a way to give voice, as I hear him, to the Integral concept of tetra-enaction. In speaking this way, he asks us to think the four quadrants at once, to appreciate their radical co-implication and co-origination. There aren't individuals over here and collectives over there. There is the being singular plural of every blooming object or occasion, and *with* is both the essence and the fragrance of these blooms.

Nancy pursues this ontological line of flight because he feels the crises and challenges of our age call for the discovery of new ways of being-together and being-in-the-world. In this, he has close company with the other prepositional philosophers considered here; all are concerned

by the ecological, political, and social challenges of our time, and are seeking new forms of vision that will allow us to adequately address our destructive or inattentive modes of relating to each other and to the environment.

One way of understanding Peter Sloterdijk's (2011a) *Spheres* trilogy, for instance, is as a meditation upon several related prepositions – *with*, *in*, and *between* – in the interest of moving beyond the metaphysics of individualism and substance, which Sloterdijk (2011b) contends is no longer responsive to the challenges of our age. Thus, in *Bubbles*, the first book in the trilogy, Sloterdijk (2011a) critiques the individualist cast of modern subjectivity, and sets up in its place – starting within the fragile, charged spheres of wombs, mother-child relations, lovers' bonds, therapeutic circles, and the divine Trinitarian perichoresis – an alternate psychology of intimacy, relation, and co-being. In his subsequent texts, he charts the historical rise and collapse of traditional monospheric metaphysics, lays the groundwork for a theory of globalization, and (following Jakob von Uexküll, among others) articulates a pluralist topology of fragile, interdependent, overlapping and intersecting lived spaces and relations, which he calls foam. Sounding a little like Nancy, Sloterdijk (2009) says:

All being-in-the-world possesses the traits of coexistence. The question of being so hotly debated by philosophers can be asked here in terms of the coexistence of people and things in connective spaces. That implies a quadruple relationship: Being means someone (1) being together with someone else (2) and with something else (3) in something (4). This formula describes the minimum complexity you need to construct in order to arrive at an appropriate concept of world. (p. 7)

The prepositions in his description – *in* and *with* – are not merely incidental to it; they are words he stops and lingers over throughout his works. When he says that being means someone being *together with* someone else, he is pronouncing the *with*, the *being singular plural*, of Nancy; but when he adds “with something else” and “in something,” he moves beyond the intimate dyads of the womb or the intersubjective “bubbles” of his first book, to a more explicit acknowledgement of the non-human and the fact of our inescapable situatedness in concrete spaces which have their own demands. The preposition “in” is enigmatic, he suggests, because it illuminates a paradox: we are always both “in” and “outside” at once, both dependent on having a supportive space for our own existence, and never finally established in any one space or another¹⁹ (Sloterdijk, 2009). We are fond of the freedom of openness, of being unbound, but the “in” (and here he means something concrete: a womb, a family, a house, a language, a culture, a biome, a planet) is essential: it provides immunity against the all-devouring void, the threat of non-existence, an unbounded ecstasy which would be our own undoing.

But in acknowledging our need for supportive wombs and shelters, he never wants us to forget the impermanent, provisional nature of the walls which encase and define us, and which make possible our adventures and relations in the world:

In placing the image of the bubble at the center of my reflections, I wish to underline my serious intention to further the revision of substance fetishism and metaphysical individualism. This means beginning with the most fragile, with what we have in common: that is, beginning in the breathiest space, in a thin-walled structure, which, owing to its fragile form and transparent appearance, already gives us to understand that we are supported neither by a security in foundation, and less still by an *inconcussum* or some other rocky base, whether outside or inside. It implies that we accept the

suggestion to follow a movement of flight in suspension, like a child blowing soap bubbles in the air with a straw, his/her gaze following enthusiastically its works of art until the point that these colored things burst. (Sloterdijk, 2011b, pp. 139-140)

The sentiment here is almost Buddhist: all that we see, all that defines us, all *with* and *in* and *towards which* we move, is like a bubble, a dream, a flash of summer lightning. In positing the “with,” it also takes it away; the bubble of our being-together quivers only thinly on the edge of existence. And, as we will see, in its evocation of transiency, of a life in suspended flight, it echoes, both in mood and form, the richly poetic work of Michel Serres, the final prepositional thinker on our list.

Michel Serres has arguably done more to develop and advance a prepositional metaphysics than any other thinker before him. Almost every one of his books takes a preposition as its central theme: *between*, *with*, *across*, *beside*; each of which highlights a different type of relation. Like the other thinkers we have discussed in this section, Serres is dissatisfied with, and wishes to eschew, the traditional metaphysical focus on substance or process, noun or verb. Like Sloterdijk, he prefers topology to geometry.

Serres (1995) is ultimately concerned, he says, with a philosophy of angels -- a philosophy which meditates upon those fleeting, subtle mediators that link subjects with other subjects or objects, and that dwell in the thick midst of becoming, drawing depth and integration out of the teeming flux of things. He is concerned to tell a grand narrative, in a sense, but not the kind afforded by ontotheology or monospheric metaphysics (here, he is akin to Sloterdijk). He finds the metaphysical narratives built upon a central substantive or verb to be too static and inflexible. Instead, he prefers to trace out a sky-borne, transient topography of relations – a

shifting choreography of passages and intermixtures, tendencies and co-implications, adjacencies and rapports.

Summarizing his approach in a discussion with Bruno Latour, Serres (1995) says,

Instead of creating an abstraction based on substantives – that is, on concepts or verbs (meaning on operations) or even from adverbs or adjectives modifying the substantive or the verb, I abstract *toward, by, for, from*, and so on, down the list of prepositions. I follow them the way one follows a direction: one takes it and then one abandons it. It's as though the wise grammarian who named them “prepositions” knew that they preceded any possible position. Once I have worked out the maritime map of these spaces and times that precede any thesis (meaning position), I can die. I will have done my work. (p. 106)

Of all the prepositions, he believes *on, in, and under* have received the most philosophical attention, in the form of the many metaphysics of transcendence, immanence, and substance, respectively. Serres' approach is to proceed differently, attending as well to the tracings and messages of *to, with, towards, across, through, and between*. Like Latour, for instance, he is interested in the ways that beings, animate and inanimate, human and non-human, translate and impact and reconfigure each other, *across* their various boundaries and domains; and like Nancy and Sloterdijk, he is interested in the *with* of our greater being-together, meditating on the “natural contracts” we have formed and broken with the other (human and non-human) inhabitants of our planet.

Rather than establishing anything once and for all, Serres (1995) observes, prepositions play the facilitative role of mathematical variables, proliferating everywhere, providing points of

departure and possibilities for contact and relation. True to the nature of their angelic personifiers, prepositions are, in a sense, heralds or pre-mediators of the many projects of becoming. As Steven Connor (2008) notes, prepositions, in inhabiting a non-place or a preposition, traffic in between the potential and the actual, sustained attention to which allows for deeper integration of both, as we learn to intimate, discern, and (where appropriate) invite or forestall, what is “in the wings.”

In Serres’ writings, such work is entertained at many levels at once: a visionary task which he thinks is essential for our age. In following the flight of his angels, which can alight anywhere, and which can initiate unexpected encounters or alliances at any moment, Serres (1995, 2003) allows the shuttling of his gaze over vast terrains and scales of being to slowly kindle, or incandesce, an integral vision of the teeming relations of things.

Of Heno-Ontology and Onto-Choreography

And now we come full circle. We have completed our circuit past six of the shrines that hug the sides of Mt. Sophia at the center of the world. There are more shrines here, to be sure, but these six are popular and make for a good day’s walk. Most have been attracting pilgrims for centuries. Each has its own priests and priestesses, some of whom we’ve met; its own rhetoric and art; its own inviting view. Not all are equal in power or prominence, and some have made allegiances of affinity or convenience with their neighbors. Occasionally sectarian violence breaks out, resulting in a flurry of speeches and papers. But for the most part, over the years, each has found its own way to thrive on the sides of its gracious host.

And how could they not? Who would want to do without nouns, or without pronouns? I know, because I have tried. Over twenty-five years ago, inspired by the work of David Bohm

(particularly, his verbal experiment, the *rheomode*), I attempted to create a language without any nouns or pronouns. And I was moderately successful. I found out how well I could get by with just verbs, adverbs, particles, and a few forms of grammatical inflection (including for person-perspective). It was a worthy (if impractical) exercise, and it shifted my perspective on the scope of possibility for alternate forms of meaning-making. But in the end, I abandoned the project; I came to appreciate the beauty of nouns, and no longer felt it was important to renounce them.

In this chapter, like a good henotheist, I have attempted to pay my due respects at the shrines of each of the parts of speech. And as the guide for this pilgrimage, I have tried to give fair voice to the metaphysical visions each discloses. In my heart of hearts, I do not regard them all as equal, it is true. But when I have stepped through the gates of each shrine during the course of this journey, and have listened to the songs and stories intoned therein, I must admit I have more often than not found myself beguiled, inspired, invited in.

As I noted at the beginning of this discussion, the task I have set out for myself here is a meta-metaphysical one: the invocation of multiple worldviews, multiple ontologies, not in the interest of arriving at one final synthesis, but rather of exploring and accommodating multiple possible arrangements and integrations. In a sense, my strategy in this project is similar to the one that Wilber adopted at the beginning of his career. Noticing an abundance of competing psychological and spiritual worldviews and practices, each vying with the other for ultimacy, Wilber (1977) proposed the metaphor of the spectrum of consciousness as a means of making room for them all. This was Wilber's first enactment of the principle of non-exclusion, of *anekantavada*. In my case, I decided to explore the parts of speech as metaphoric lenses for various ontological and epistemological systems when I began following a long, and seemingly intractable, debate among several Whiteheadian and Object-Oriented philosophers. I could see

that they were arguing at roughly the same level of sophistication and depth, but their views were fundamentally different. One side privileged verbs, the other nouns, even though they could think in each other's terms. This insight, and a later encounter with an essay by Latour (2011) on prepositions, inspired me to explore this topic in earnest.

So, where has this journey brought us? What ground have we covered thus far? The following table lists the major metaphysical systems associated with each of the parts of speech, as well as some of their prominent representatives. For a shorthand designation, I will refer to the basic grammatical-metaphysical orientations we have covered as the Six Views.

Part of Speech	Sign ²⁰	Metaphysical Orientation	Representative Thinkers	Semantic Form ²¹
Pronoun		<u>Being-as-Perspective</u> Dialogical and Perspectival Epistemologies and Ontologies	Buber, Rosenzweig, Peirce, Habermas, Wilber	3p: The sun is shining in the sky. 2p: O sun in the sky, how you shine! 1p: I, Sun, am shining in the sky.
Noun		<u>Being-as-Substance</u> Substance Metaphysics, Object- Oriented Ontology	Democritus, Aristotle, Descartes, Newton, Harman, Bryant, Wilber	The Sun is shining in the Sky.
Adjective		<u>Being-as-Appearance</u> Idealism, Bundle Theory, Trope Theory, Cittamātra	Berkeley, Hume, Modern Bundle & Trope Theorists, Vasubandhu	Round-bright- yellow in great blue.
Verb		<u>Being-as-Process</u> Process Metaphysics (Ancient and Modern)	Heraclitus, Plotinus, Hegel, Bergson, Whitehead, Hartshorne, Rescher, Roy	Sunshining where sky-manifesting.
Adverb		<u>Modes of Being</u> Modal Process Metaphysics	Heidegger, Whitehead, Spinoza, Dzogchen, Kashmiri Shaivism	Sunly shining in- the-skyly.
Preposition		<u>Being-as-Relation</u> Relational Metaphysics, Modal	Latour, Souriau, Nancy, Serres, Sloterdijk	Sun-in-the-sky, shining- throughout.

		Metaphysics, Spherology		
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Table 1. *The Six Views: The Parts of Speech as Metaphysical Lenses*

Unlike Wilber's spectrum model, which integrated traditions by ordering them along a developmental continuum, I am not presenting the parts of speech in a fixed hierarchical relationship. Several of the parts of speech, it is true, have been regarded as naturally subordinate, but as we have seen, a number of the ontological systems that derive from them have been created by inverting such relationships. Further, although we can recognize certain hierarchical relationships among several of the approaches explored in this chapter -- Whitehead's (verbal) process philosophy and Wilber's (pronounal) perspectival post-metaphysics, for instance, can both be regarded as philosophical advances over the classical (nounal) metaphysics of the thing-in-itself or the (adjectival) metaphysics of appearance --, this picture is complicated by the fact that many of the different grammatical-philosophical lineages appear to exhibit their own lines of development and forms of integral organization. As I have discussed in the preceding sections, pronounal, nounal, verbal, and prepositional views have each been used to develop new trans-disciplinary, integrative models of their own. For these reasons, the table above is better compared to the quadrant map, with the various components treated as interactive elements which may be variously privileged or emphasized according to the philosophical tradition.

It is important also to note here that the list of philosophers in the chart above primarily reflects the use to which I have put them in this discussion: as instructive exemplars of one of the six grammatical-metaphysical orientations explored in this chapter. This does not mean,

however, that any of these thinkers should be regarded as worshipping exclusively at the shrine(s) to which I have assigned them. For instance, as we have seen, although Heidegger's philosophy is an excellent example of an adverbial approach, it is not exclusively so: it has also inspired and informed various verbal and nounal metaphysics. Similarly, while Wilber has made pronouns the centerpiece of his integrative approach, his model encompasses nounal, verbal, and (via tetra-enaction) even adverbial elements as well. Thus, a further distinction suggests itself: the parts of speech may function philosophically, not only as primary metaphysical orientations, but as philosophical elements or philosophemes. I have used the terms somewhat interchangeably in the preceding discussion, but now a clearer definition becomes possible. When we take the parts of speech individually, as the primary guiding ontological orientations or commitments of various philosophical systems, we can refer to them as the Six Views. When we take them collectively, as constitutive *elements* in any overall philosophical system, we can refer to them as philosophemes.

Regarding the former, there is no question that those metaphysical systems which do orient around a particular view will nevertheless incorporate and hierarchically arrange many of the other elements according to their preferences – either by showing how one part derives from the other, or how one is perhaps even only an illusion or appearance generated by the other. A verbal approach may demonstrate how nouns are derivative from verbs, for instance, and may take adverbs for a close partner; or a nounal approach may do the reverse, subordinating the verb and taking the adjective as its helper or its shadow. For the prepositionalists, subject and object are both derivative, and verbs must follow the flows that prepositions make available. This is why I have spoken of heno-ontology: most of these systems acknowledge the *existence* of the other grammatical ‘gods’ (denying or ignoring one or two of the others, perhaps, but never all),

but they ultimately exalt and pledge allegiance to only one among them. This is why I have also introduced the word, onto-choreography: each approach uniquely choreographs these different elements or modes of being, letting one part take the lead in this model, another in that one²².

To summarize, then, and starting at the most general level first, I believe the model we have explored in this chapter can be approached from four closely related angles. First, the parts of speech can be used as metaphorical lenses to identify and analyze the central ontological or metaphysical commitments of various worldviews, and to classify and situate these worldviews in relation to each other. This is the most basic orientation I have presented here, which I am referring to as the Six Views. Second, as the six parts of speech considered here are constitutive elements in most of the grammars of the world, the metaphysical concepts to which they correspond may be similarly regarded as universal intuitions – each one an important element of an overall understanding of reality. While most metaphysical traditions tend to privilege one or more of the grammatical-metaphysical elements above the others, as we have already discussed, the other elements are nevertheless recognized and find some place in the overall economy of the worldview. I am referring to these as the Six Elements or the Six Philosophemes. Third, considering that most metaphysical traditions do tend to privilege a particular grammatical-metaphysical element over others, it is likely that they will have enacted it and unfolded it with a greater degree of sophistication and subtlety than those traditions for which that element is secondary or tertiary. From an Integral viewpoint, then, we would likely benefit by adopting a meta-metaphysical orientation and learning to move in and out of these worldspaces, mastering the various languages, models, modes of analysis, and so on, unique to each one (including, and even especially, those that have developed metaphysical orientations that we tend to under-privilege in our own traditions). Lastly, the different grammatical ordering of these elements

within the various metaphysical traditions, where one part of speech might be a central organizing lens in one case and merely an adjunct feature of another, suggests a practice of reflexive circulation of the elements – turning the kaleidoscope to see what is yielded when this piece is central, or that. Onto-choreography is the practice of circulating and coordinating these elements.

How do these reflections bear on Integral Theory? What do we have to gain from interfacing a model such as this with the Integral map? I will review several of the possibilities here, and will save a fuller discussion for a future publication.

Firstly, following Bonnitta Roy's (2006) insight, the primary lenses upon which Integral Theory relies – the person-perspectives – are not sufficient in themselves to disclose the metaphysical underpinnings of the views that inform our perspective-taking. Our enactive frameworks and modes of interface with the world are not person-perspectival alone. This is not news to an Integralist, of course. But I believe the grammatical-philosophical lenses outlined here constitute modes of meaning-making and perceptual organization, even of implicit, embodied ontological commitment, that are important to name and to highlight.

For instance, as discussed previously, the quadrant map can be conceptualized and employed from either a structural or processual – nounal or verbal – orientation. In light of the model of the Six Views introduced here, however, we might further consider how the quadrant model could be informed by, and used in relation with, any one of the parts of speech we have reviewed in this chapter.

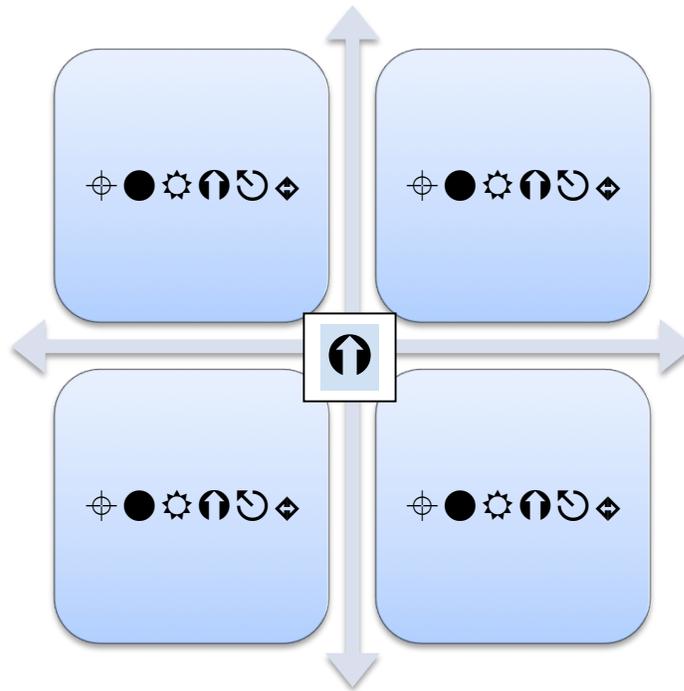


Figure 9. *AQAL and the Six Views or Elements*

For ease of reference, I am using the signs introduced in Table 1 above to represent the Six Views and their corresponding ontological elements or categories. The sign at the center of the map represents the primary ontological view or orientation within which the person-perspectives are being enacted, whether verbal (as above), nounal, prepositional, or otherwise. And the series of signs in each quadrant is intended to indicate various aspects of being – perspectives, objects, phenomenal experiences, processes, and so on – that can be viewed or investigated from each of the four person-perspectives. In this way, the parts of speech can be interfaced with the Integral map either in the form of *primary orienting view*, informing the enactment of the model itself, or as *constitutive aspects or elements of being* that can be investigated within each perspectival enactment. This would be one example of the practice of an integral onto-choreography²³.

As a simple illustration of what this might look like in practice, let's consider a prepositional version of the quadrant map. As Serres (1995) has noted, prepositions are like mathematical variables. One immediately promising application of the prepositional orientation would be to interface it with AQAL and the Integral pronouns. As we currently use the quadrant map, it is as if the I, We, It, and Its arise in neutral, empty space together. Buber's hyphen suggests the same. But when the person-perspectives – whether I-and-Thou or I-We-It-and-Its – arise, they arise already in a kind of relation, a space of vectors, flows, inclinations, pressures, gaps. What is the nature of their togetherness? This can be explored and evoked with the use of prepositions: I *with* Thou, I *under* Thou, I *over* It, I *into* It, We *over* I, I *for* (or *against*) Me, and so on. Each clearly different. The figure below graphically represents the relations and vectors among several first-person perspectives in an actual occasion.

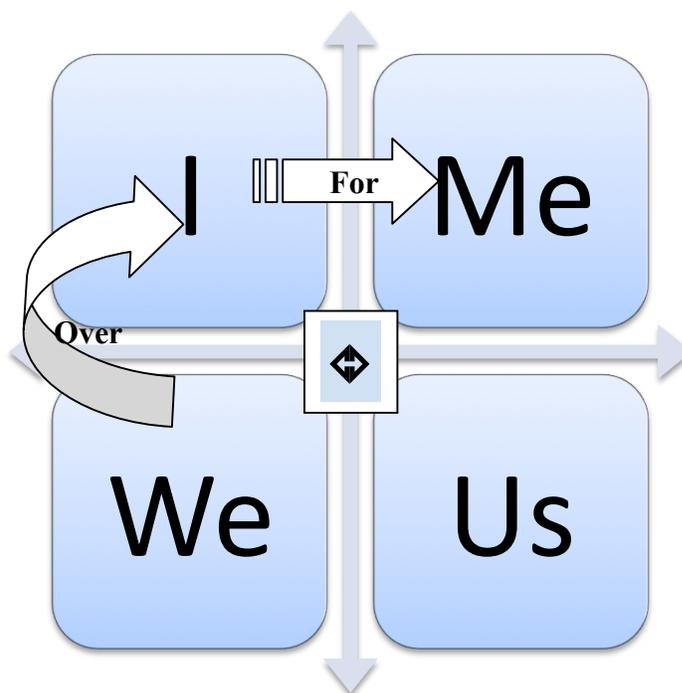


Figure 10. *Prepositional Analysis of the 4 Quadrants*

The configuration of perspectives here suggests an occasion, or series of occasions, in which the I experiences itself as subordinate to the We, but in a way that is *for* or *in the service of* the self (as “Me”). By changing the “for” to “against,” however, we can model an instance of shaming, or the experience of an oppressive pressure to conform. If we would like to map more complex relational configurations across multiple perspectival domains, we could use the prepositions in conjunction with the AQAL Cube model or O’Connor’s Triadic Quadratic Perspectives.

Secondly, although Integral Theory is not *exclusively* a pronounal or perspectival system, as I have discussed above, I believe the Integral model will nevertheless be enriched by more explicitly acknowledging its place in the history of pronounal philosophy, ancient and modern. Doing so will provide Integral thinkers with a deepened sense of lineage, and will encourage Integral practitioners to draw more frequently from the rich well of philosophical and theological thought on this topic. The current quadrant model is useful and elegant in its simplicity, but there are a number of ways it could be made more robust, more logically consistent, more ethically sensitive, and even more deeply rooted theologically or spiritually, as I suggested above.

Lastly, at the level of meta-theory, we have seen that a number of the philosophical movements associated with one or another of the parts of speech have developed, or are in the process of developing, integrative meta-theories of their own. The emergence of a diversity of integral-stage philosophical models is, in fact, something Integral Theory itself leads us to expect, with its post-metaphysical embrace of ontological pluralism and its inclusion of “All Types” in the AQAL model. The types ensure a diversity of forms of expression and modes of being at any stage. The approach taken in this chapter is consonant with, and builds upon, these

aspects of Integral Theory, with the Six Views model providing one means of conceptualizing a pluralist ontological typology. Work remains to be done to demonstrate more precisely how each of the philosophemes explored here manifests across multiple stages of development, and how some elements may even converge and become “entangled” at higher stages of expression. For the purposes of the suggestion I am making here, however, it is sufficient to acknowledge simply that they do so – that nounal, verbal, and other grammatically based philosophical models find expression across multiple stages of development (from Aristotle to OOO, for nounal; from Heraclitus to Whitehead, for verbal; etc). At postmodern and integral stages, this takes the form of various trans-disciplinary, integrative, and meta-paradigmatic projects – alternately flowering, as we have seen, in pronounal, nounal, verbal, or prepositional soils. The Six Views model thus provides a means, not only to classify and compare metaphysical systems, but to encourage and support an integral pluralist orientation towards such integrative meta-theories, and to bring these systems into greater generative dialogue, creative tension, and potential collaboration.

To the extent that we allow this to happen, I believe we are attending well to the voice of Sophia.

End Notes

1. Traditional grammar identifies eight parts of speech in English, but modern grammarians tend to regard this classification system as inadequate. Recently, an expanded model of the English parts of speech has been proposed: nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, determiners, prepositions (or adpositions), conjunctions, subordinators, complementizers, sentence connectors, degree modifiers, particles, and interjections. For this chapter, I am using only six of the major parts of speech, partly for the purposes of parsimony, but also because the six grammatical functions I have selected are common to most major languages (with a few exceptions, which I will discuss) and they are also the ones most commonly associated with major philosophical approaches.
2. Chomsky himself, in a paper published several years after *Philosophy in the Flesh*, appears now to embrace a view similar to the one argued by Lakoff and Johnson, i.e. that the faculty of language should no longer be considered as a wholly autonomous neural mechanism, but rather as interconnected with, and dependent upon, other non-linguistic systems in the brain (Hauser, Chomsky, & Fitch, 2002).
3. For a fuller discussion of pronouns in philosophy, see Tse-Wan Kwan (2010).
4. Rosenzweig also discusses four-part and five-part models of pronoun relations (which articulate various forms of relation between God, humankind, and creation). The four-part relation is He-it, I-Thou, I-Thou, and We-It, and the five-part relation is He-It, I-Thou, I-Thou, I-Thou, and We-It.
5. In Eastern philosophical traditions, one of the clearest examples of personalist metaphysics is found in Ramanuja's *vishishtadvaita*, or qualified non-dualist, philosophy (Williams and Bengtsson, 2011).
6. This dual emphasis is consistent with Wilber's (2003b, 2013) insistence on the nonduality or inseparability of epistemology and ontology.
7. See Schwartz (2010), p. 232 with notes, as well as his "Tetra Call of the Good" in the present volume.
8. Wilber also acknowledges that the quadrants and the person-perspectives are independent, so O'Connor's critique should be read as applying primarily to the short-hand identifications that Wilber has frequently and consistently made.
9. O'Connor (2012) mentions in an end note, in fact, that a full enactive map would include not only verbs and pronouns, but nouns, adjectives, and adverbs as well.

10. See Edward Berge's (2010) extensive discussion and critique of certain mathematically based models of hierarchical development, which he argues appear to rely, per Lakoff (2010), on false (disembodied, abstract, objectivist) reasoning, and thus to perpetuate the metaphysics of presence (which we will discuss in detail later in this section).

11. As Desilet (2005) and others have argued, however, while Wilber rightly criticizes the myth of the given underlying perennial philosophical and other metaphysical models, Wilber's notion of the Causal ground of being, as the Originary One lying behind, giving rise to, and pervading all apparent forms and perspectival enactments, still appears to be a form of onto-theology.

12. See Bryant's (2011d) "The Time of the Object" for a discussion of how Derrida's notion of *différance* can provide conceptual resources for rethinking substance in terms of radical withdrawal and temporality.

13. See Bryant (2010 – Even More Vitale) for his thoughts on why he prefers the word *translation* to *perspective*.

14. See Wilber (1995) for a discussion of the distinction between holons and heaps, and Bryant (2011a) discussion of autopoietic and allopoietic objects.

15. An archaic, non-grammatical definition of the word, adjective, is *dependent* or *unable to stand alone*; as in, "The queen's lapdog is an adjective creature; it wouldn't survive two weeks on its own."

16. There is some debate among Whitehead scholars as to whether Whitehead would count societies or *nexūs* of actual occasions – such as complex organisms which consist of many microscopic actual occasions – as actual entities in themselves; I am here following F. Bradford Wallack's interpretation, which holds that Whitehead applies the term "actual entity" as much to the mid-sized objects of ordinary experience as he does to atoms or particles.

17. Wilber and Bryant also both agree that such mediating structures, whether understood intersubjectively or as an object's endo-structure, can be influenced and changed by the experience of the subject, without necessarily ever becoming "object" for the subject.

18. See Graham Harman's (2009) *The Prince of Networks*.

19. This can be related to OOO's notion of withdrawal, which holds that no entity is ever wholly determined by or bound to its relations with other objects (including ecologies, cultures, etc).

20. A brief explanation of the six signs: I have selected the circle with a cross for pronoun because it is evocative both of the four quadrants and of a targeting site, both of which are associated with "perspective." The black circle for the noun is intended to suggest the withdrawn or subterranean substance of beings. The image for adjective, the sun, represents the radiant self-othering of beings in the form of perceptual qualities and phenomenal appearances.

The symbol for process is intended to evoke dynamism or creativity arising into form. The sign for adverb is a little more complex: the marked circular space suggests a mode, pattern, or archetypal form informing the patterned unfolding of becoming or action, in the form of the emerging arrow. Finally, the sign for preposition, the two arrows within the diamond, represents relationality.

21. Following Nicholas Rescher's (1996) recommendation for a process semantics built on verbs and adverbs, which I discussed in the section on adverbial philosophy, I have offered (in a playful spirit) examples of semantic forms for each of the Six Views. I intend for these examples to be taken primarily as poetic evocations of implicit metaphysical sensibilities, rather than as recommendations for new forms of philosophical languaging. The reader may note that the 3rd-person pronounal expression and the nounal expression are the same. This was for convenience of expression, however. The 3p expression should not be regarded as being restricted to a nounal formulation, as the three pronounal person-perspectives could be used, in fact, to frame any of the other semantic forms (a 123p of nounal, verbal, adverbial, or other expressions). In this way, both pronouns and prepositions seem to occupy a special role, as prepositions also can be used to pre-position (or relationally inform) any of the other constructions.

22. A Serres-inspired prepositional model could be used to discern and trace out the onto-choreography of the parts of speech within a metaphysical system – how the parts of speech constellate and coordinate within each visionary space.

23. Following a familiar convention in Integral Theory, we could conceive of an alternative form of 3-2-1 practice: the 3-2-1 of integral onto-choreography. This would entail the coordinated practice of several of the possibilities discussed above: 1) using the distinctions and concepts introduced in this chapter to engage in third-person classification, comparison, analysis, and/or construction of various metaphysical and integrative systems; 2) using the Six Views model and language to facilitate second-person dialogue and debate with and among existing philosophical systems, whether classical, modern, or postmodern/integral; and 3) engaging in first-person experiential or contemplative exploration of the enactive potential of each of the models and worldviews with which we interact.

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