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Introduction

> Consider that the [conflict] in which you find yourself is *not* the inconvenient result of the existence of an opposing view but the expression of your own incompleteness taken as completeness; *value* the [conflict], miserable though it might feel, as an opportunity to live out your own multiplicity.[1]

"What!?" you may be saying to yourself, "I just paid good money for this book and you're telling me to *value* my conflicts!? I'm trying to get *rid* of them, for crying out loud! This world has too damn many conflicts! What kind of nuts are you, anyway?"

We will tell you, dear reader, that if you suspend your incredulity for the time that it takes to actually make your way through this book, you will find your thinking transformed about conflict. A brash and bold pronouncement, perhaps, but having seen how an All Quadrant All Level (AQAL)[2] approach to conflict has transformed our own lives and work, we are confident that, at the very least, you will come away with a different understanding of conflict, and maybe even of yourself in conflict as well. A different understanding leads to a different response, and a different response can open the door to more and different possibilities, and more possibilities can include the recognition of our own evolving selves. That recognition alone—of our own *evolving* selves—opens up untold possibilities for understanding, engaging, and, yes, valuing conflict for its transformational potential. This book is our best effort at showing how.

The two of us, Nancy and Richard, have been working together for many years—teaching, writing, and researching an AQAL approach to conflict. Our relationship is grounded in conflict, embraces conflict, and is a lively source of conflict! It is also a wonderful synergy of inspiration and mutual support and appreciation for each other's biggest selves and best thinking. This book is both a product of and an ongoing catalyst for the inspiration and transformation that an integral approach to conflict offers. We hope it is infectious.

Richard: When I started tracking Ken Wilber's work in 1990, I didn't know at the time how much his thinking and writing—how much *he*—would

become such an important part of my professional and personal life. Although I had followed the evolution of his thinking for several years, it wasn't until *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality* was published in 1995 that I realized that his contribution to the development of integral theory[3] (later to become known as AQAL) revolutionized my understanding of conflict and how to constructively intervene in them. I have been involved in the conflict field for twenty-five years[4] as a practitioner, educator, researcher, and writer, all of which I love. People who know me well would say that it has been more than work, that it is the heartbeat of my intellectual and professional life, that it is woven into my personal life, which has been rich with conflict, and is one of the laboratories for my professional life. When I first got involved in the conflict field in the 1980s, I felt as though I was catching a powerful wave of change that offered new hope for understanding and intervening in conflict. Today I find the conflict field struggling to evolve its vision, to create another wave forward. The seemingly unbridled enthusiasm and optimism that surrounded the conflict field in the 1980s and 1990s has eroded, and it has been replaced with an uneasy feeling that the conflict field has not realized its full potential to contribute to constructive conflict resolution at the community, national, or international levels. Bernie Mayer, catching the heartbeat of the conflict field probably better than anyone else, noted in *Beyond Neutrality*[5] that the conflict resolution field is in crisis, the roots of which are located in the field's failure to seriously engage its purpose in profound and powerful ways; he notes that the consequence is a public that has not embraced the field; and he notes that this is a crisis the field must face, adapt to and grow, or simply cease to exist as an independent field of practice. In his most recent book, *Staying with Conflict*,[6] Mayer explicitly recognizes the need for practitioners to question their assumptions about enduring conflict[7] when he says,

> Perhaps the hardest challenge enduring conflicts present to conflict professionals is that they ask us to alter the assumptions we have about conflict and the narratives we construct to explain our approach.

While Mayer is referring specifically to enduring conflicts, he has arrived at the same destination that we, the authors, have—to the conviction that we must challenge our assumptions about conflict and how we engage it. Explicitly questioning the assumptions that guide our action opens the space for different kinds of opportunities for conflict engagement. The ideas in this book have been incubating for twenty-five years and are a response to these concerns.

Nancy: Coming to the conflict field through the back door, as it were, I began my intellectual and professional life as an adult developmental psychologist. Back in the early '80s, while working on the staff of the Insight Meditation Society (a Buddhist retreat center) in Massachusetts, I came across Wilber's book, *No Boundary.* Intrigued by the idea that the distinctions we make between things and people, on every level, could be so fundamentally

arbitrary, I set out on a journey, which continues today, of exploring how we humans create boundaries between ourselves and each other. Two years later at Harvard, I met Dr. Robert Kegan and his theory of constructive-developmental psychology, and I found my intellectual home. My intrigue, fed by Kegan's explicit and exquisite lens focused on the very thing I was already wrestling with, inspired a dissertation on psychological boundaries. As a process of relationship, psychological boundaries reveals the evolving story of how we construct and re-construct our sense of self and other in an ongoing dialectical dance; how we define "me" and "not-me;" and how we experience and negotiate distance and closeness in all of our relationships. Without even realizing it, I was studying conflict and what it means, and why we don't like it. As I see it, there is nothing more fundamental to conflict, on any level, than the threat to or violation of our own sense of identity and boundaries. An AQAL perspective brings into sharper focus how boundaries and identity are not just psychological phenomena, but are the creators of powerful webs of connectedness in every level and aspect of our lives—from the land we live on to the color of our skin to our cultural heritage to our spiritual practice.

Bringing an AQAL perspective to conflict analysis and engagement creates a powerful three-dimensional view of conflict—from the most subtle internal, intra-personal conflict to the most explosive, violent, deeply rooted ethnic conflicts, and everything in between. An AQAL perspective also shows us how conflict is an essential, evolving, and vital force in our lives. Without it, we stagnate and do not grow. With too much of it, we retreat and do not grow. Conflict creates our identities, and our identities create our conflicts—in an ongoing evolutionary process that does not end.

This book presents our deepest inspiration, our best thinking and, most importantly, our love for humanity and our planet, as an invitation to you, our reader, toward ever more inclusive and powerful ways to understand our human need for conflict and for life-affirming ways of engaging it. The ideas in this book are born from decades of application and experience in the conflict field. Richard is the immediate past Chair of two Graduate programs—in Conflict Analysis and Engagement, and in Leadership and Change[8] at Antioch University[9] that were AQAL-informed; Nancy was a developmental coach and professor in both programs. Having been involved in the conflict field for over twenty-five years, Richard is a senior facilitator, mediator, educator, and developmental coach.

Tracking Wilber's work for over two decades, and working through Diamond[10] with his partner, Sylvia McMechan, he has been guided by Wilber's integral thinking in hundreds of interventions—from small to large scale. From the Canadian north to the south, in the United States, in African states to South Pacific states, Integral theory has been applied. Wilber's Integral theory has informed our thinking and acting for over twenty years, including many intense sustainability conflicts in British Columbia Canada involving First Nations forestry development, ground-fish, salmon, prawns and roe-on-kelp fisheries, and in the River Conflict, which we introduce in chapter 2.

Why Write This Book?

You might still be wondering about the need for this sort of book—over the last thirty years the conflict field has grown and enjoyed a lot of success. As the world and its conflicts become more complex, however, we wonder what the next level of success looks like. The conflict field's *raison d'être* has always been to construct a bridge from destructive conflict to hope—to a seemingly impossible set of insights and positive interactions, in order to understand the causes of conflict and to develop intervention approaches that will reduce the psychological, social, and economic costs of conflict. The direction, meaning, and boundaries of the field's research and knowledge endeavour cover a broad range—from local school peer-mediation programs to the use of force as an intervention. In the areas of family mediation, organizational conflict, community dialogue, and environmental issues, the conflict field has been quite successful and has had a significant and positive impact, creating important and powerful avenues for individuals, families, communities, and organizations to engage and resolve their differences.

And yet, a sense of profound unreasonableness seems to dictate *other* types of conflict and the way these types of conflicts are waged: the violence that has killed so many across the planet is incomprehensible. The rise of the Islamic State in the Middle East gives us YouTube videos of ISIL[11] solders beheading captors; reports of their horrifying battlefield brutality have set the international community back on its heels and serve as a potent reminder of the seemingly unreasonableness of some conflicts. Things change and evolve and get more complicated, but they don't necessarily get better. In response to these kinds of larger-scale conflicts, the explanatory power of the conflict field and the capacity to seriously engage with brutal, deeply intractable international conflicts has been uneven. How *do* we respond effectively to the violently polarized, competing truths and stories in brutal acts of terrorism, the formation of the Caliphate, the war in Afghanistan, tribal conflict in Africa, or in the Middle East?

How do we, as conflict engagement specialists, make sense of conflicts that are hundreds and thousands of years old and still held in the hearts and minds of our tribal selves as if they happened yesterday? How do we understand and respond to the terrorism that runs rampant across our planet, bent on destroying everyone and everything "other"? How do we understand the hatred of one tribe for another? And, the need to exact revenge even to the point of destroying our own tribe and our own planet? All over the world, in our homes, small towns, large cities, and across nations, brutal conflicts defy reason. They also seem to defy our best efforts at resolving them. And there is not just one truth in these conflicts, nor is there just one shared story, but many fiercely competing ones. How do we not only make sense but *transform* of our collective inability to (re)solve our brutality toward one another? Who and what has the power to inform, enlighten, and lead us through the darkest parts of ourselves and our cultures toward a more reasonable way of engaging our differences? Our old notions of "progress"—of things getting better over

time—is not what many see playing out in the world today. Things change and evolve and get more complicated, but they don't necessarily get better. Morin describes this as a "crisis of the future"—meaning that our future on the planet is far from certain and our salvation is certainly not at hand.[12]

A conflict specialist well-versed in one or two theories or conceptual frameworks will be an effective intervener within certain aspects of the conflict field. However, that doesn't help us to find our way through the immense tangle of theories about conflict analysis and engagement. There is no shortage of theorizing about the nature and process of conflict and what should guide intervention. In fact, it is the accumulation of the ever-growing numbers of theories that is cause for concern—we don't have adequate ways to integrate them. Political scientists and international specialists, for example, have centered their work on political and international conflicts, with little or no attention paid to the impacts on the individual psyches of those caught in the middle. Psychologists offer powerful insights into the human psyche in intra- and interpersonal conflict, yet know little of economic competition or resource access issues that hold and shape the communities within which these individuals live. Focusing on the interpersonal issues within a conflict does little or nothing to address the larger structural issues that perpetuate it. Social psychologists can tell us much about communities and inter- and intra-group conflict, yet stop short of connecting their insights with economic, educational, or environmental inequities. Economists focus on game theory and decision making, economic competition, labor negotiations and trade disputes, while sociologists have stressed role, status, and class conflicts.

These multiple lenses on conflict create fragmentation and competition among the various disciplines and perspectives on what constitutes the truth in any conflict. As we see it, this fragmented identity and research history within the conflict field not only makes it difficult to track *theory* development but also leaves us floundering for an integrated and coherent approach to *engaging* conflict, to understanding and intervening in the brutal and complex conflicts that hold us and our planet hostage. Looking at conflicts through such a fragmented array of the current theoretical and disciplinary lenses, one can't help but wonder how to interpret the destructive choreography of conflict and to figure out what remedial, de-escalation strategies to use. The view of any conflict through such fragmented lenses has a kaleidoscopic quality—the pieces change and rearrange themselves depending on which lens fragment we are looking through, and they can change without provocation or warning. Without an integrated and cohesive framework that acknowledges and interrelates the multifaceted issues and lenses, we can never be sure exactly what we are seeing, how it relates to the other pieces, and what our own biases prevent us from seeing. This makes it nearly impossible to successfully engage and resolve deep, complex, and intractable conflicts.

Given this history and fragmentation, it is not surprising that many theorists in the conflict resolution field have expressed concern about the state of the field, about its failure to seriously engage its purpose in profound and

powerful ways on the international stage, and about the subsequent lack of public embrace of the field and its practice. Traditional theoretical approaches to understanding conflict are all too frequently limited and inadequate. Education and training courses are often steeped in a "how to" mentality, featuring idealized conflict resolution scenarios and behaviors that bear little resemblance to the chaos of real conflicts. The exclusivity of perspectives creates an incomplete picture of the complexity of the dispute.

Years ago Fisher[13] observed that the world continues to be besieged by a host of destructive, and apparently intractable, complex conflicts among groups, factions, and nations that induce incredible costs in human terms and divert resources so badly needed for development. He noted that, while our technological capacity continues to develop at an exponential rate, we are sadly underdeveloped in social and political competence when responding to difficult conflicts.

For decades many scholars in the conflict field have recognized the need for a unifying theory of conflict as well: over twenty years ago Deutsch[14] called for more investigation, saying many research questions have not yet been fully answered, while many others have not been asked at all. We need unguided, basic research, he says, to help map the field and to identify its key characteristics. He also questions one of the conflict field's biggest assumptions: that it is possible to develop single-sided approaches that can be applied to a disparate range and intensity of disputes. Jeong[15] also spoke to the importance of developing more conceptual work to embrace the multidimensional aspects of conflict resolution. Dukes[16] defined the need for a unified body of conflict theory that would link individual circumstance and social structure, and Rubenstein[17] spoke of the need for a "revolutionary" brand of conflict resolution that would offer processes for altering basic socio-economic structures without the mass violence that we witness today in places like Iraq. Fast[18] argued for the integration of theory, practice, and research within the field to more clearly define its theoretical and practical boundaries. With so many of its leaders calling for integration and unification, why and how is it that the field remains so fragmented and compartmentalized and ineffective?

The problem with this fragmentation is not the multitude of disciplines coming to the table. The problem is that those disciplines don't talk to each other. Nor do they respond to the mutual impact and benefit their work could have on each other. This is the conflict field's *Tower of Babel*.[19] As a field of both study and practice, the field lacks a vision for the unifying approach that we so clearly need in these complex times, to understand the profound and essential interrelatedness of all these facets.

Every theory of conflict embodies valuable insight and, if we can systematically organize and integrate these theories, it will create more opportunities for the emergence of better ways of analyzing and engaging conflict. This may seem like a simple idea, but, as you will discover, it has a complexity that challenges practitioners and theoreticians to become more complex themselves! Edwards notes that every theoretical position has some valid research basis or authentic

tradition of cultural knowledge behind it and has something to offer, and that we need to find ways of integrating those insights while also representing their characteristic and often conflicting differences.[20]

As conflict specialists, we want to be effective. Our intervention actions are motivated by our desire and determination to create contexts in which we can optimize our best intentions and maximize the successfulness of our constructive conflict interventions. And so we argue that we not only need a different way of responding to the complex conflicts that pepper our world, *we need a different way to understand (the experience of) conflict itself*, and an understanding that, at the very least, recognizes that the *meaning* of conflict is multidimensional and not the same for everyone involved. We are not referring to any particular *content* of a conflict, rather we are talking about the ways that people *make sense of* conflict itself, the ways in which people create conflict and conflict "creates" people. It is essential to understand the people and their experience in the conflict in order to understand and successfully engage in the conflict.

Our desires and determination to be effective are shaped by our theories and beliefs about what is important in this life. In order to achieve that, we firmly believe that awareness of our theories and assumptions is essential, and that our theories must be the most inclusive, yet discerning, finely-tuned "steering wheels" we can get our hands on. So, lest the conflict resolution community become marginalized by its own impotence, we remember the (paraphrased) words of Kurt Lewin, who once said, "*There is nothing so useful as good theory.*"[21] We, the authors, hear this as a rallying cry to develop a more inclusive AQAL perspective that can go the distance toward demystifying conflict, bringing together best practices and theories from all disciplines, and suggesting more effective, life-affirming ways of engaging it.

Theory matters because it shapes the ways we understand and respond to conflict and the people in it. Our work here is about deepening theory. Our theories and meta-theories are "intimately part of social reality and as causally efficacious as any material object."[22] In simpler language, it is our theories about human behavior and conflict that guide and shape how we create governments, how we create and enact laws, how we structure our communities and schools, how we interact with the natural world and—crucial to our discussion here—how we understand what conflict *is* and how to constructively engage it.

Theories matter—not just as abstract ideas to apply here and there, but as the shapers of our experience. They powerfully influence all of the elements of our daily life. AQAL, a meta-theory of conflict, has the potential to influence a new way to study conflict and to navigate pathways of constructive conflict engagement. As a form of transdisciplinarity, it does this by making the connections between and among the multitude of conflict theories clear and explicit—putting them on a map, as it were, as a useful and helpful guide through our navigation of them.[23] This is a key element in our discussion with you about an AQAL approach to conflict. Without a theory to explain and

guide intervention into complex and logic-defying conflicts, our hands are tied. We need a transdisciplinary approach to theory and intervention practice that is as complex and powerful as the conflicts themselves. And, as Edwards says,

> . . . in moving forward it is also important that we retain the valid contributions of our intellectual heritage. The intention here is not to replace one view with another—to substitute the "old paradigm" with a "new paradigm." In developing more inclusive frameworks it is important to recognize the contributions of extant theory and to integrate the store of knowledge that currently exists into whatever overarching framework we might end up building.[24]

This book is our answer to that call. Drawing heavily from Ken Wilber's extensive writing,[25] we offer here the AQAL approach to understanding conflict, a New Science of Conflict; one that provides a more inclusive, comprehensive, and balanced vision that embraces and integrates the important, diverse, and interdisciplinary roots of the conflict field. In this way, our AQAL approach to conflict unites and harmonizes the chorus of interdisciplinary voices in the conflict field, deconstructing the Tower of Babel, offering broader and more effective intervention practices.

In late 1990s and early 2000s, Ken Wilber, who was influenced by both Aurobindo and Gebser, among many others,[26] adopted the term AQAL to refer to the latest revision of his own integral philosophy. He also established the Integral Institute[27] as a think-tank for further development of these ideas. In his book *Integral Psychology*, Wilber lists a number of pioneers of the integral approach, *post hoc*. These include Goethe, Schelling, Hegel, Gustav Fechner, William James, Rudolf Steiner, Alfred North Whitehead, James Mark Baldwin, Jürgen Habermas, Sri Aurobindo, and Abraham Maslow. In the movement associated with Wilber, "Integral," (when capitalized) has become synonymous with Wilber's All Quadrant All Level (AQAL) Integral theory and our *New Science of Conflict*, whereas "Integral studies" refers to the broader field and includes integral thinkers such as Jean Gebser, Sri Aurobindo, Ken Wilber, Rudolf Steiner, Edgar Morin and Ervin Laszlo.

AQAL: The New Science of Conflict

AQAL, a form of meta-theorizing, provides a new and powerful context in which to understand evolutionary impacts on the development of consciousness, culture, and conflict. We characterize this as the *New Science of Conflict*.[28] We use AQAL to describe and understand the dynamic, dialectical evolution between theory and practice, between the idea and the action, between how our identities, thoughts, and experience shape conflict and how conflict shapes our identities, thoughts, and experience.

Wilber coined the term "Integral theory" to refer to the integration of all the fields of study, the history and the present, internal and external, the individual and the collective, all in the endless cycles and patterns of evolution.

Integral: the means to integrate, to bring together, to join, to link, to embrace. Not in the sense of uniformity, and not in the sense of ironing out all of the wonderful differences, colors, zigs and zags of rainbow-hued humanity, but in the sense of unity-in-diversity, shared commonalities along with all the wonderful differences. And not just in humanity, but in the Kosmos at large: finding a more comprehensive view—A Theory of Everything—that makes legitimate room for art, morals, science and religion, and doesn't merely attempt to reduce them all to one's favourite slice of the cosmic pie.[29]

Integral theory, or AQAL, is a big-picture perspective; it is derived from the analysis of other theories, philosophies, and cultural traditions of knowledge. It is important to note that AQAL is not a theory itself; rather it is a meta-theory that takes as its unit of analysis other theories—analyzing, locating, and integrating them within larger frameworks that honor the truth and essential contributions of all of them and their cultural traditions and social practices. Meta-theories have a long scientific tradition of reflecting the pursuit, understanding, and creation of knowledge. Integral analysis is a distinct form of scholarly activity that has not, until now, been brought to the conflict field. It radicalizes the field and holds the promise of uniting disparate theory development and practice into a coherent whole, answering Boulding's[30] dream of a unified theory of conflict, which we talk about in chapter 2.

The contribution that the *New Science of Conflict* with its AQAL perspective can make to the conflict field is significant. It completely changes both how we *think* about conflict and how we *engage* and *experience* conflict. An AQAL perspective is not simply a new interpretation of conflict. It is a radical new model and philosophy that, in its honoring and integration of *all* theories and approaches to conflict, offers a complete, comprehensive, three-dimensional and evolutionary map of the whole beast—of the multilayer terrain and process of evolution and the development of consciousness, culture, and conflict. An AQAL perspective challenges the postmodern distrust of *the big picture* approach to knowledge development.[31]

We invite you, the reader, into another world of a conflict, looking through the powerful, inclusive lens of the *New Science of Conflict*, to demonstrate and discuss how the terrain of conflict not only becomes sharper and more clearly illuminated, but more three-dimensional as well—as we see how individual meaning and experience of conflict is held within powerful cultural histories and identities, and the impact those have on individual and group choices and behavior, which are concretized in the social structures that hold and shape the cultures. The conflict field has not yet seen such a map of conflict, and in

the desperate, chaotic situations across our world today, we need this map now more than ever: to show us where we've been, where we are, and how we got here, and the different roads to where we want to go; to help us understand the whole proverbial elephant and to see how the trunk is connected to the ears, and how the head is connected to the heart, to the legs and stomach and tail. None of the parts go anywhere without all the others!

This book is both a culmination of and a springboard for our work, as individuals and as a team, as we recognize the urgency for an inclusive and comprehensive understanding of those conflicts that seem to defy reason and logic. Thus we bring an AQAL perspective to the field to integrate strategies, practices, theories, and ideologies toward a fundamentally different way to engage conflict, and to engage it in such a way that it can become an opportunity for growth and deeper understanding of one another.

We now lay out a chapter-by-chapter framework for a new and radical vision of the New Science of Conflict, which we hope will gather momentum and create a new wave. It is an ambitious agenda, not unlike Burton's and Sandole's dream twenty-five years ago of ". . . a radical *a*disciplinary science of conflict and conflict resolution."[32]

As we lay out our overview of each chapter, you will note the integrally informed evolutionary theme woven throughout.[33] An AQAL perspective is an evolutionary approach and that is the overarching theme and foundation of our work and this book. We will show how this evolutionary perspective changes everything about the ways we relate to and understand conflict. In fact, some would say, as McIntosh does, that evolution is who we are: "Evolution is not just something that is occurring within the universe; evolution is what the universe actually is."[34]

Who Is Ken Wilber?

Jack Crittenden quotes Tony Schwartz, former *New York Times* reporter, in the foreword of Wilber's book, *The Eye of Spirit*, calling Ken Wilber "the most comprehensive philosophical thinker of our times."[35] Not everyone agrees with this statement. Having researched, written about, taught, and applied Wilber's thinking for more than twenty years, we know that discussing Wilber's work can raise a lot of hackles. His work has no shortage of critics. His work and his persona are somewhat of a lightning rod for controversy, for both his followers and his critics. Our translation of Wilber's AQAL model into *The New Science of Conflict* will no doubt be met with a full range of responses from readers—from irritation, scorn, and anger, to confusion, curiosity, intrigue, and welcome. We expect readers' responses to run the gamut.

Wilber's work has not been welcomed into conventional universities within a single department, nor has it been widely accepted in academe. Some academics have been known to break out in a rash when asked to consider Wilber's

work. We are aware of the many threads that are woven into the criticism of Wilber, some of which we believe have merit, others less so. *The New Science of Conflict* is not a critical analysis of AQAL, nor was it ever conceived to be. That does not mean we are not critical of his work, nor does it preclude us from mentioning AQAL's critics and some of their seminal points. It means that we set our work within the context of a much larger discourse about AQAL and acknowledging the full, energetic conversation. Our contribution to the discourse with this book is an application and test of the principles of AQAL to a field and a world very much in need of them.

While much of the criticism focuses on the gaps and omissions of AQAL and on the persona of Wilber himself, some of the criticism is more substantial, as Roy details later on. In our view, any model has gaps and omissions and it is important for critics to identify them. Wilber never proclaimed that AQAL is finished or without need for continuing development. He has consistently said the opposite, that it does need field testing, critical analysis, and much further developmental work. As for Wilber the person, he is a daunting and imposing real life character, famous for his intensity and sometimes scathing responses. He is, also, as Stuart Davis says:

> . . . a new kind of genius, a meta-genius, somebody who is a genius in numerous disciplines and has showed us the ways that they can be drawn together and integrated. Far from being a mere "lumper," as those unfamiliar with the details of his work might claim, Ken is a unity-in-diversity theorist: he skimps on neither the unity (as the dividers do) nor the diversity (as the lumpers do). He's a meta-genius that sees both the extraordinary details of the trees, but can also see the majesty and meaning of the whole forest. This is the whole point of Integral Methodological Pluralism—it's both integral and pluralistic. His entire life he has been attacked by both the dividers and lumpers, but fortunately for us, has not been deterred from his work.[36]

All this said, we believe it is important to respect the whole of the conversation, while at the same time, remaining committed to our more confined focus. We will briefly discuss some of the main criticisms of AQAL.

Wilber has been criticized for using "orienting generalization" or "sturdy conclusion," which Crittenden[37] describes as the core explanatory themes and definitive contributions that a particular field or tradition makes to some topic. Some theorists believe that in doing so, Wilber has not accurately described, or has misinterpreted or misrepresented, their particular field. And by saying that all fields are partially right but none hold the whole truth, Wilber is effectively taking any and all fields off of their respective pedestals. Wilber's fellow integral philosophers have their criticisms, too. Ervin Laszlo, a noted builder finds Wilber's work lacking:

Life, mind, culture, and consciousness are part of the world's reality, and a genuine theory of everything would take them into account as well.

Ken Wilber, who wrote a book with the title *A Theory of Everything*, agrees: he speaks of the "integral vision" conveyed by a genuine TOE. However, he does not offer such a theory; he mainly discusses what it would be like, describing it in reference to the evolution of culture and consciousness—and to his own theories.[38]

Wilber has been criticized as well for being too preoccupied with the interior development of the individual (which we discuss in chapter 5) building on Kegan's[39] psychological "inside out" approach to development rather than Vygotsky's sociogenetic approach called *activity theory*,[40] which characterizes development as an "outside in" process.[41] AQAL has been criticized for over emphasizing the development of the self and then generalizing that process to the development of the collective.

Many critics challenge the evolutionary aspects of AQAL, objecting to the hierarchies inherent in models of individual and social cultural evolution. Hierarchical stage theories are not popular these days as they challenge the postmodern sentiments about absolute equality. Applying evolutionary thought to cultures is also seen as Western culture claiming to be better than all the other cultures, especially indigenous ones. Edwards,[42] both a supporter and a critic of Wilber, notes that there are many shortcomings in an integral approach to collective development. Kremer[43] notes that: "evolutionary thinking in general has always been problematic because of its (at least implicit) notion of progress towards some better, more complete, or more actualised way of being, some *outopos* (Greek: utopia) or nonexistent place to be realized in the future."

Proposing a more scientific, systematic, and self-critical method for integral meta-theory building (AQAL is a meta-theory) Edwards,[44] an expert on meta-theory building, is critical of the lack of any formal research method for developing or evaluating AQAL's framework, propositions, and knowledge claims. Critical realism, defined by Bhaskar[45] has a multi-step dialectical method of analysis for identifying the hidden assumptions or embedded frameworks in any particular theory, model or science (which, by the way, is what we are doing with the conflict field in this book). The general steps are: (1) *immanent critique*, which is a critique of the system from within its own understanding, and a crucial element of this is to point out what is missing; (2) *explanatory critique*, which explains the system's inconsistencies and absences by looking at the system from within a greater system; and (3) *emancipatory leap*, which investigates how to transform the system toward greater inclusivity and liberation. When these steps are applied in an analysis of AQAL, several problem areas surface:[46]

1. It commits the epistemic fallacy, confusing the "known world" with the "real world."

2. AQAL is based upon broad empiricism lacking an explanatory critique. This potentially undermines the theoretical foundations of Integral Theory because developmental theories derive their validity from empirical research.

3. AQAL has a monological ontology, meaning it has no way to assess the validity of what it is saying.

4. AQAL has a developmental bias.

The general idea here is that AQAL does not have a system for evaluating and assessing its own premises. In his *Response to Critical Realism in Defense of Integral Theory*,[47] Wilber discusses the deep differences as well as the common ground that Critical Realism and Integral theory have. At the top of the list of differences is the way they each deal with epistemology and ontology. Critical Realism separates them and elevates ontology as the "real." Integral theory sees them as "two correlative dimensions of every Whole occasion."[48]

Adding to this discussion, Roy's critical comments are directed at Wilber's views on cultural evolution.[49] Her research into post-postmodernism's impact on evolutionary thinking reflects a new inquiry into scientific reasoning, where the theorist/researcher is aware that a theory of evolution (such as we will be discussing in chapter 6), ". . . is constrained by the epistemic, conceptual framework any particular theory is working from." This comes out of the emerging field of theory and research called "Evo-Devo,"[50] which is attempting a "grand synthesis" of evolution and development, one that leads to a re-conceptualization of social-cultural evolution.

Roy admonishes the integral community for its hubris in creating feel-good narratives that are not grounded in quality research or scholarship. With this stance, she declares that Integral theory is not up to the robust levels of scholarship required to contribute to the investigation of a post postmodern synthesis of evolution and development:

> More than a few people identified with "integral" deploy simplistic concepts and overtly simplified generalizations and then stake out gigantean claims such as evolutionary imperatives, cultural evolution, the evolution of consciousness, and Kosmic development. Notions such as these have become tag lines for a kind of mainstream integral cultural groove—not because they are founded on quality research or scholarship, but because they create compelling "feel good" narratives for a generation that seems to have been starved from epistemic satisfaction. My friend and colleague, Tom Murray identifies "epistemic drives" as the phenomenology of satisfaction (a hit of dopamine, perhaps?) that the body-mind receives from enjoying grand unifying notions and elegant models conveying beautiful images that resonate with a particular epistemic desire.[51]

Quoting Callebaut, she notes that the integral community's feel-good narratives ". . . must not be confounded with the correctness of explanation."[52]

Bhaskar's and Roy's theoretical criticisms are intriguing, complex, and worth investigating. And while we have introduced only a few critiques, all are important to consider and engage in order to continue to develop AQAL. For the moment, however, we will leave that work to others. What follows in this book is our best effort to take the significant contributions of AQAL and show how they help us understand and work with conflict in more comprehensive and effective ways. In applying AQAL to the conflict field and discussing the results of our "field test," we hope we also contribute to the ongoing development and refinement of the AQAL model.

Chapter 2: The Development of the Conflict Field

The emergence of the conflict field as a field of study and practice came about after the Second World War. In the mid-1950s, Kenneth Boulding and his colleagues had a vision of an integrated theory of conflict that would bring together the burgeoning information, themes, knowledge, and wisdom of all the various disciplines that were taking shape. Since then, the field has been both blessed and cursed by its diversity, and haunted by the unrealized vision of Boulding and the many others who carried on with his mission.

The field has evolved through what we characterize as two distinct waves and is beginning to evolve into a third: the first wave being the founder's vision; the second wave being the rise of the contemporary field; the third wave, just appearing on the horizon, being the evolutionary, or integral, wave.

The boundaries of these phases are somewhat arbitrary, but they are helpful in outlining a meta-perspective of the evolution of the field, each new wave building upon the contributions and foundation of the wave preceding it. We will take the reader through a comprehensive tour of the history and development of the conflict field, highlighting its many important advances and achievements as well as its gaps, omissions, and deficiencies.

As a multidisciplinary field, it is widely, and in varying degrees, informed by the theory and research of many diverse disciplines: psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, international relations, philosophy, ethics and religion, and applied fields such as peace studies, social psychology, economics, and law.[53] While the diversity of disciplines has been a great benefit for the breadth of knowledge, understanding, and practice it has generated, it has also been a constraint and a source of fragmentation within the field. Many contend that its diversity contributes to the theoretical chaos plaguing the field, creating its own Tower of Babel.

Chapter 3: An Overview of the New Science of Conflict

With this chapter we carry on the mission of the founders of the conflict field with the development of the *New Science of Conflict*, based on Ken Wilber's

AQAL model. The New Science of Conflict follows the direction and purpose of Kenneth Boulding's remarkable insight and vision. Our world is a very different place—more dangerous and volatile—than it was seventy years ago; the terrain has changed, but the mission has not. In 1981, Erich Jantsch noted,

> "The evolutionary vision" is the term coined by Kenneth Boulding for the pattern connecting evolution at all levels of reality, from cosmic/physical through biological/ecological/sociobiological to psychological/sociocultural evolution. It is linked to the search for commonalities in the functioning of systems pertaining to different domains . . . The evolutionary vision searches for <u>commonalities in the evolutionary dynamics</u> at all levels of reality. It is not satisfied with a cross-section in time, but attempts to grasp the principles underlying the unfoldment over space and time of a rich variety of morphological and dynamic patterns. (Underscore in original.)[54]

We begin chapter 3 with a discussion of consciousness and experience as the fundamental "ground" on, in, and through which conflict plays out. Then we move to a discussion of the ways in which experience—*every* moment of *every* experience—can be "refracted" through our reflective awareness into four distinct, yet intimately interconnected, dimensions and perspectives. These four dimensions comprise the four quadrants of Wilber's AQAL model. Among all of those who have contributed to the integral enterprise, we choose to base our discussion on Wilber's definition and model of AQAL, in which he defines the term "integral" to mean inclusive, balanced, or comprehensive. AQAL is shorthand for the multiple aspects of reality that are recognized in the integral approach.[55]

We focus primarily on Wilber's AQAL model because we believe it presents an unparalleled level of scholarship, research, and sensitivity to the nuances of experience that underlie both conflict and our responses to conflict. The AQAL approach originated from Wilber's cross-cultural comparison of most of the known forms of human inquiry.[56] A close examination of all the available research and evidence led him to a kind of comprehensive map of the four fundamental aspects of human capacities and experience, which we apply to our model of the evolution of conflict theory and engagement. We note again that while there are shortcomings to Wilber's AQAL model, our purpose is not to critique it; our purpose is to apply and expand the model.

This *trans*disciplinary, or Integral, or AQAL framework, that we bring to our analysis and understanding of conflict is unique in the conflict field. As a transdisciplinary meta-perspective, it returns to a holistic model and integrates multiple theoretical perspectives and research methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, into one coherent story. It acknowledges and honors the distinct contributions of each discipline within the field and locates each in relation to the others.[57] This allows for a new and integrated level of discourse and applied knowledge development to emerge with respect to conflict engagement and

analysis.[58] This chapter discusses the importance of meta-theorizing as a core scholarly activity brought to bear on understanding conflict.

While critical of Wilber's thinking, Mark Edwards, in his book *Organizational Transformation for Sustainability*,[59] has a powerful and convincing perspective on the importance of integrating frameworks to make sense of the profusion of theories that have emerged since the 1960s. He says,

> Over the last three or four decades, there has been a steady increase in the number of theoretical contributions to explaining social change. Because very few of these models and theories are ever found to be completely without merit and because they each contribute some insight into social complexities, the extant body of organizational research paradigms, theories, and models is vast and it continues to expand. This is true for all social science disciplines.[60]

And it is certainly true of the conflict field. Theories are much like fashion in some ways; there are always new trends and innovative ideas. And as we suggested before, the problem is not that there are so many of them, the problem is the fragmentation and that we, as a field, haven't yet created an integrating framework within which to facilitate conversation and interaction among them all. So we are left with our kaleidoscope of intriguing and ever-shifting fragments and few ways to relate them to one another. Chapter 3 is our attempt to "map" them all in order to be able to relate them to one another.

One of the important reasons we see for creating this kind of map is that behind every effort to respond to a conflict lives a set of assumptions, theories, and hypotheses about what the terrain of that particular conflict looks like and what will help. Not often in our conscious awareness, these tacit assumptions, concepts, and metaphors nonetheless inform and guide our interventions. Conflict practice is never theory free—it is always guided by an image or images (whether conscious or not) of what we are trying to do and why. One of our most basic concerns is the degree to which we, as practitioners, are aware of the theories and assumptions that powerfully and inevitably steer our intervention practices. Having an AQAL map helps to keep us from getting lost in the weeds of our own unchallenged assumptions. It helps us to keep looking for what is missing in our understanding.

Chapter 4: The River Conflict Case Study

In "Public-Policy Conflict Resolution: The Nexus between Culture and Process," Warfield[61] describes a five-step continuum, along which, he contends, most community interactions and decision-making processes could be found. At one end of the continuum is *Crisis*, where there is disruption to the public order, where disputants provoke one another, causing incidents and arrests, and decision making is characterized by an "I decide" model. At the other end of

the continuum is *Cooperation*, characterized by a "we decide" decision model. Our intervention in the River Conflict began in a situation of crisis.

In the late fall of 1999, McGuigan and Diamond Management began their intervention with an integral assessment of the River Conflict, chronicled in the River Report: Constructive Impulse Toward Change, presented to the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) in September of 2000. It was a crisis situation—the River Conflict was escalating toward dangerous standoffs and the potential loss of life was a concern for the DFO officials. On the river the situation was intense. The parties were bitterly divided against one another, and the hostility in the air between them was dark and heavy.

Over the ten years of Diamond's intervention, the relationships in the River Conflict gradually moved toward cooperation, tangibly manifested in the creation and development of The Salmon Table in 2008, a not-for-profit society dedicated to developing joint solutions among the communities involved: the First Nations communities, the sports fishing, conservation, and commercial fishing communities. In the spring of 2012, The Salmon Table initiated a collaborative conflict resolution process and produced a video highlighting the importance of cooperation among the various groups.

Chapter 4 is our telling of the story of the River Conflict, which illustrates many of the AQAL concepts that we present. You will hear some of the disputants speak, giving voice to the many perspectives, meanings, and experiences within the conflict. While we have changed the names of those we quote, these are their own voices; this is the meaning made in their experience of and response to the River Conflict.

Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8: The Four Quadrants of Conflict

Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 comprise our on-the-ground tour of the River Conflict guided by our AQAL map. We will deepen our investigation and discussion of several aspects of the New Science and apply them to the River Conflict. The four quadrants—the Upper-Left, Lower-Left, Upper-Right, and Lower-Right—will serve as our primary landmarks as we build our analysis of the River Conflict. In doing so, we present some elements of the original integral analysis of the River Conflict and some of the interventions that were undertaken. In chapters 5 and 6 we focus on the two quadrants of the Left-Hand of Conflict and the qualitative aspects of conflict that they illuminate. In chapters 7 and 8 we then focus on the two quadrants of the Right-Hand of Conflict and the quantitative, physical, and objective aspects that they illuminate.

CHAPTER 5: THE UPPER-LEFT QUADRANT (UL)

Chapter 5 looks at the evolution of consciousness and conflict: the inside of the experience of conflict and what the conflict means from the individual's perspective. Years ago, as the 2008 election campaigns were heating up, Dr. Robert

Kegan wrote an editorial published in *USA Today*, entitled, "Wanted: A president with a Complex Mind."[62] In this editorial, Kegan lays out the differences between living in a "simple world" and living in the "real world," and the importance of leaders having a complex enough mind to understand and engage the complexities of our volatile world. The same principles apply today. He writes:

> I'm not just talking about intelligence or smarts. George W. Bush graduated from Yale and Harvard; C student or not, he wasn't failing. The tragedy of the Bush presidency is not about failure; it is about a conception of success that is much too simple.
>
> In the simple world, the Sunnis and Shiites are feuding factions like the Hatfields and McCoys. In the real world, many neighborhoods and families are inextricably both, and there are feuding factions within, as well as between, each group.
>
> In the simple world, we are helping to create a democratic state, a crucial piece toward a new Middle East that, Europe-like, will consist of a collection of pro-Western partners. In the real world, most Iraqis do not think "nationally" at all, regard state boundaries as arbitrary, and feel first allegiance to their brand of Muslim faith rather than to their current or future country.
>
> When we listen to the candidates discuss the issues: Are we learning anything about the subject itself other than the candidate's position? Is this a mind that can be in conversation with itself, or is it blissfully unencumbered by alternative possibilities? Do opposing views and the people who hold them get characterized as two-dimensional straw men? Are we visiting a world of black and white or one that respects the shades of gray? Can candidates surprise us with their views when they turn to a new topic, or can we anticipate how a cookie-cutter mentality will put its familiar frame on fresh material? In a complex world, a complex mind in the leader is no luxury. We simply cannot afford otherwise.

That is what this chapter is about—the differences that the complexity of one's mind makes in the ways that an individual understands and responds to conflict. We look at the meaning of conflict from the different complexities of mind and what the implications and possibilities are for understanding, engaging, and leading the way through the River Conflict and conflict on every level and scale.

CHAPTER 6: THE LOWER-LEFT QUADRANT (LL)

In chapter 6 we shift our investigation to the Lower-Left quadrant (LL) of our AQAL map. This quadrant represents the *intersubjective* cultural "space" that connects people in the sharing of their feelings, identities, concerns, thoughts,

values, ideas, beliefs, and so on, the interior of the collective or group. The sharing of these internal (UL) experiences with one another does two things: it helps us understand each other better, and it strengthens the invisible bonds of our shared reality.[63] Culture is an ongoing dynamic *process* that changes with every interaction, both within and between collectives. Jean Houston calls culture "the living tissue of shared experience."[64] Phipps describes it as ". . . where meaning, values, and agreements live." He goes on to say,

> Recognizing the existence of this intersubjective dimension allows us to take that understanding deeper—to see the actual "place" in which worldviews form and develop. After all, a worldview is a collection of shared values, beliefs, and agreements, and where do these cultural constellations live if not in the inner space between us?[65]

We shall see how culture informs our (or the group's) analysis of a conflict, our engagement strategies, and our actions or behaviors. Culture defines *who we* are as well as who *they are* and *why we do what we do*. Because culture is hard to discern, our awareness of it often remains distant and this limits the frames we have for making sense of and engaging conflict. Since our frames are implicitly limited by our shared experience, we do not consider other frames or we see them as less worthy. The parameters of options are set by our culture and they are powerful and exclusive.[66]

Culture can be difficult to discern because it constantly changes shape. It is a dynamic and complex system, one that over time and in response to life's conditions evolves, morphs and changes, adapts, and accommodates. This is a key theme that we explore in chapter 6—an evolutionary perspective of culture and conflict. Later on in the chapter we apply more traditional starting points to understanding culture and the River Conflict, such as (1) how organizational culture generates and perpetuates policy conflict, (2) high-context and low-context communication styles, (3) cultural influences on negotiations, and (4) local and generalized forms of knowledge and victimhood and conflict.[67]

CHAPTER 7: THE UPPER-RIGHT QUADRANT (UR)

In this chapter we investigate the implications of human nature on conflict and violence, and the role of the brain, DNA, and individual behavior in our responses to conflict. We are interested in everything about the individual that can be observed—that can be perceived by the senses or their extensions (e.g., telescopes, microscopes, video, ultrasound). We'll explore such theories and claims as Steven Pinker's,[68] who in his most recent book, says that human violence is in decline and that an evolutionary computational theory of the mind explains why. Others have advanced theories such as behaviorism, determinism, and evolutionary psychology to explain conflict and violence. We'll take a look at those theories too. Indeed, it is clear to us that poor physical health, and

drug and alcohol addiction have been active contributing factors to many of the challenging situations in the River Conflict.

We also explore Vygotsky's ideas of the importance of social interactions (behavior) on the development of our identity and mental activities. According to Vygotsky and his colleagues, social interactions are the foundational building blocks of our inner selves and lives, in contrast to our discussion of the Upper-Left, where Kegan suggests that meaning-making is the primary motion of being human. Within an AQAL model, neither is primary—they arise together, each bringing the other into being.

CHAPTER 8: THE LOWER-RIGHT QUADRANT (LR)

After looking at the important contributions that individual, physical elements have made to the development of a wholistic picture of conflict, we move to the collective, social elements of the Right-Hand of Conflict (the Lower-Right quadrant). The perspectives in this quadrant view knowledge as empirically grounded and acquired through observation.

Here, we take a look at the groups and social systems within which individuals live and act: the structure of their governments, the laws of their societies, hierarchies of power, access to resources, and the rules of negotiation and engagement; their traditional social and family structures, the roles designated for men, women, and children in the social order; and the physical location of the banks, the schools, and the religious or spiritual ceremonial space(s) in the community. All of these observable structures and systems of social life regulate and inform the negotiating behaviors of individuals and groups. From smaller-scale teams and groups in organizations to larger-scale social systems, we gain essential information when we use the Right-Hand perspectives to examine the actual location of the disputants, their degree of isolation from or integration into groups or sectors of society, their access to information, the opportunity to express their views, as well as the effects of ongoing economic and social marginalization.

The Lower-Right quadrant also attends to different types of political systems: communism, democracy, monarchy, and various degrees of dictatorship. The various environmental and ecological states are also part of this quadrant and, as we shall see, have a direct impact on the River Conflict. For instance, the changing weather conditions have increased the spring melt, and rising water levels have in turn decreased salmon spawning, which then further increases conflict among the various groups who want, expect, and demand access to diminishing stocks.

In this chapter, we pay particular attention to structural violence, to the imbalance of power as manifested in the unequal distribution of resources. The exercise of power in a social system and its operation will reflect the difference between a pathological or dominator hierarchy and a natural or Sacred hierarchy.