



Integral Finance 101

Richard B. Wagner

Money is a human abstraction. Although not found in nature, it is pervasively used throughout human activities and undertakings. In so doing, it generates an array of personal and cultural responses in addition to its material manifestations. As such, it is ideally suited for an AQAL analysis. This paper constitutes the introductory theoretical overview for Integral Finance. It introduces the basic principles and presents fundamental applications of Integral principles to money, including money's nature and its various roles in the world. Finally, I explore money's applications to and impacts on other disciplines.

Introduction

The Integral Finance Center at Integral Institute is about money. It is about all kinds of money and all aspects of money. Most especially, this domain engages an Integral view of money. From the *interior*, it considers money from individual and cultural perspectives. From the *exterior*, it addresses money's manifest aspects. These include everything we see, from money's most public features to the intimate revelations of your very own financial situation. Accordingly, this domain encompasses the universe of money's possibilities and its implications. By definition, this means it must also acknowledge money's challenges and shortcomings. There are many. They are also profound.

Of course, this is our universe—literally. Humans have created money and it is uniquely ours. Money does not appear in nature; the only money that exists is money we humans create. What else but money could enable human beings to self-organize for mutual support, cooperation, and social sustenance? What else but money could engender such ranges of response? What else but money could be perceived as the source of such suffering and inequity?



Integral Theory

Integral Theory is a transdisciplinary approach to self, others, and the world. It is built upon the foundation of Ken Wilber's voluminous writings. Although I will get to the details eventually, for now just remember this phrase: "all-quadrants, all-levels, all-lines, all-states, and all-types." This phrase is signified by the acronym, AQAL ("all-quadrants, all-levels"). These five elements/distinctions represent the essential aspects of an Integral approach.

This formula looks simple, yet it takes us from the most basic units of reality to the most complex aspects conceivable. This is to say, the formula is not simplistic but simple enough at heart to allow us to talk, think, and feel with/about each other. This is also to say that we will look at money from its simplest cultural manifestations to its most extraordinary spiritual implications.

Holons and the Four Quadrants

So what do we mean by the term *Integral*? First and foremost, it is a word that describes our attempt to unite all aspects of reality. At its most basic, Integral includes holons. At its apex, Integral engages our most profound spirituality. In between, Integral requires us to look at various lines and levels of development. When we apply this approach to money and our relationships with it, we touch upon much of what it means to be human, personally and culturally.

Let's look at the basics: *Holons*. Ken Wilber, Integral Theory's founder and most articulate spokesperson, begins with defining a holon as "a whole that is part of other wholes."¹ This takes us to the smallest units imaginable to the largest. In between, we have atoms, molecules, cells, and organisms. Yet no matter how small or how large the unit, we can always identify the four perspectives known as *quadrants*.



Specifically, each unit is whole and unique. Each unit has itself in the context of others (it is a member of a whole). Each unit has its aspects that can be observed—its *exterior*. Each unit has its parts that cannot be directly observed but only surmised—its *interior*. For you and me, this means our thoughts, our senses, our emotions, our motives, our tastes, and so forth.

There is a pyramidal aspect to holons working together. The most basic holons are also the most numerous. This is to observe that there are more quarks in the universe than molecules, more molecules than cells, and more cells than humans. This stands to reason if only because a whole *must* contain more parts than its own simple self.

The most complex holons embrace simpler ones. They require and consequently include more holons than simpler ones. An egg contains yolk and albumin. These in turn contain cells which, in turn... (see the previous paragraph and work backwards).

The most complex holons are also the most dependent on other holons—for the obvious reason that they are literally constituted of them. The cost of complexity is vulnerability. If all the cells in the universe get wiped out, our organs will also cease to exist and humanity will meet its end. This is not the case with quarks. They will easily survive even the demise of molecules.

Sometimes a picture is worth considerably more than a thousand words:

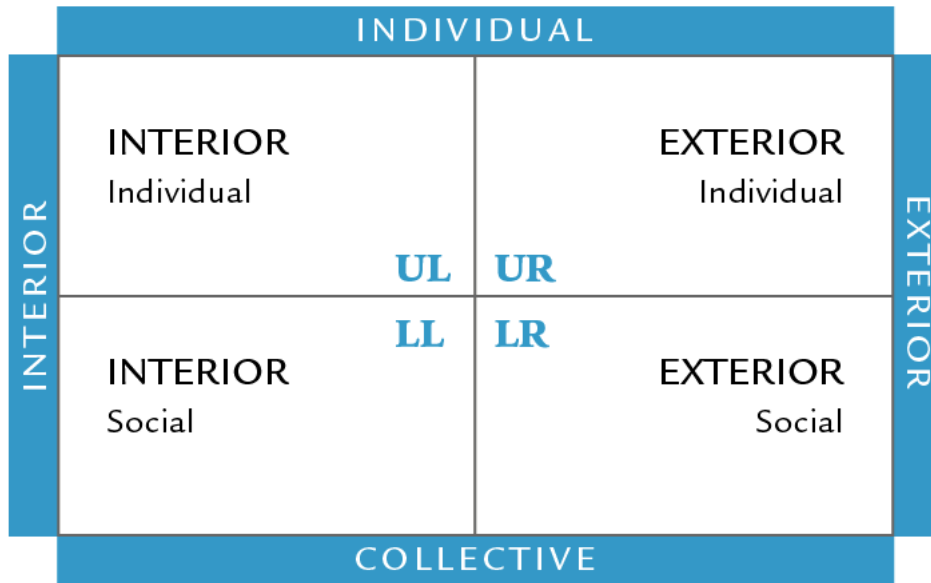


Figure 1. The Four Quadrants

Money is the product of all four quadrants. It obeys the laws of heart and hand as it springs equally from each of them. We can use the four quadrants to assess money from both exterior and interior aspects, individual and collective perspectives, and from each of their combinations.

Exterior

We are familiar with the *exterior*. This is not surprising. We are inundated with it daily: the newspapers, the salesmen, and the popular media give us the numbers and the news, the subject matter, perceptions, and context.

We are also flooded with outside information that is largely irrelevant, yet not entirely so. After all, when the economy sneezes, all of us reach for a tissue. When one is a numerator within our endless statistics; when we are the one that lost the job amidst the newest economic downturn or globalization enabled outsourcing; when it is *me* that suffered within an industry's exercise in outsourcing; when *my* mother's retirement funds are insufficient, then all of a sudden the *national* economy, globalization phenomena, and these other cold statistics have heartbreaking



implications. Then, too, those are *our/your* tax dollars attached to this and that policy decision. Talk about making it personal.

The design and implications of particular money systems have predictable implications that manifest in the exterior, collective world. This is especially true when scarcity is an issue. When we start subdividing our fiscal gardens, at any level from personal to family to community to state to nation to planet, these limitations can be displayed in both beautiful and nasty ways. We can easily observe that dominant international trading currency enables more to be created and distributed than other economic systems to date. We can also observe that these dominant international trading currencies—dollars, euros, yen—demand sufficient scarcity to make them attractive objects of pursuit. Yet this very scarcity requires that substantial numbers of people cannot access what they need. Their very certainties enable effective trade but they do not enact compassion well at all.

While human energies are multitudinous, the dominant international trading currencies do not enable us each to access them as needed for everyone as needed. Indeed, many of us are sorely lacking. Adam Smith's famous "invisible hand" functions efficiently and effectively but it has little regard for human tolls. This hand spreads admirable abundance and general prosperity, clearly better than myriad alternatives. Yet, for the most part, it demands certain competencies. Those lacking such competencies are dependent upon the financially expressed kindness of others.

It is important that we understand that much of this is built into the very design of the international trading currencies. Based on debt and demanding growth, these international trading currencies generate predictable behaviors. We will look at myriad complements springing up, around, and about. Their complementary designs generate different behaviors on the part of users.



What *looks* separate is *not* separate, but one. For example, in our financial divisions, we create an illusion that our exterior institutions are more discrete than they really are. Observable phenomena—from human behavior and health, transportation networks, communications schemes, economic dynamics, relationships between countries, the World Bank, and so on—are not truly separate but mere linguistic distinctions required for organizational manageability. They all deal with money and its relationship to the body social. Integral perspectives can help us grasp connections while maintaining distinctions.

Individually, we have yet another story, but still an Integral one. Here we have our checkbooks, our credit cards, our tax returns, our insurance policies, our homes, our clothes, our cars, our brokerage and savings accounts, our employee benefit programs, our “stuff,” our debt. We also have our consumption, our vacations, and our fun: infinite choice meets finite resources. Our *interior* wants to meet our *exterior* wherewithal.

In this era, money is necessary for smooth functioning in the exterior world. It is a 21st century survival skill. Unfortunately, it is not a survival skill that comes naturally or easily. Money changes consistently and dramatically—who could know? Moreover, since it is the subject of taboo—most folks would rather discuss their sex lives than their money. It is tough to have appropriate, necessary conversations about money.

Interior

As unfortunate as it is from many perspectives, we are even less familiar with money’s *interior* aspects—how we think and feel about money, both as individuals and as parts of culture(s). For one, it is dark in there—not fun. For another, we simply don’t realize that we are literally swimming in money, personally, culturally, globally. Noted money theorist Bernard Lietaer observes these difficulties, employing the ancient Chinese query: “What do fish know of water?”



Though we live in a world of money, it is hard for us to distinguish ourselves from it. Lietaer challenges us to become “flying fish.”

Historically, economists consider money to be passive. Yet it takes but casual glances to discern that money is anything but value neutral. Money-based decisions pervade our private lives. On social levels, from families to communities to regions to geopolitical units of all sorts, our relationships with money determine the nature and context of life for most people on the planet. Money issues subsume most of our social interactions, including public policies of all sorts.

Money affects our attitudes and our sense of possibility (from well-being to dysfunction), as well as our cultural values. Within money and its attendant forces, we find our most profound emotions, from personal expression, to anger, jealousy, and, yes, even love. (Maybe money can't *buy* love, but it sure helps create sustaining environments!)

Personally, our interactions with money constitute ongoing quintessential, existential choices. Publicly, our social expressions manifest themselves through money with virtually every major issue we face. Good? Bad? Neither. Money just is. It is terrific at generating self-organization. It is magnificent as a basic distribution system. It is terrible at equality or fairness. I suggest it is considerably more than hazardous as a source of social foundation. Perhaps we misperceive it. Possibly, just possibly, we are asking it to do jobs for which it was never intended. Regardless, it manifests in uniquely, obliquely powerful manners with intensities and implications unlike anything else. Whoa—potent.

The Nature of Money

Money is nothing if not peculiarly human. It has been a part of our collective discourse for a very long time. Money has the power to harness human energy unlike anything else. Some suggest money is among humankind's most elegant conceptual inventions. It is most certainly humanity's chief—and most peaceful—method of social interplay.



As time has passed, money has become increasingly smaller and more symbolic. In fact, historically, most money could never be carried in a wallet. Today, even paper money is considered too bulky. Although some suggest that symbolic money is not really money, others, such as myself, suggest there is no other kind.

Bernard Lietaer tells us that money is purely a human agreement. Obviously, money is not real in the sense of molecules and quarks. But neither is it merely fiction. It is an aggregation of promises, beliefs, and commitments tied to some standard upon which enough people agree so that it can be used effectively to facilitate various sorts of exchange, to store value, or to count.

These have traditionally been money's primary functions. Yet it ought to be intuitively obvious: if humans *can* do it, it *can* be done *without* money. We could always do it. *Couldn't we?* No doubt, we *could*—just not as reliably or as compassionately. Money certainly has its limitations, yet our agreements about money have enabled civilization as we know it to grow and build and mostly function. Moreover, these agreements continue to enable civilization, for better or worse.

Lietaer proffers this additional thought: the suggestion that something cannot be done for lack of money is the functional equivalent of suggesting a house cannot be built for lack of inches. Both money and inches are symbolic agreements. We can agree on anything within the realm of the possible. In money's case, it has proven to be simply the most effective and efficient tool humans have developed for harnessing the energies required for any given human undertaking. In a similar vein, *inches* are among our many forms of agreement for communicating linear measurement. As with money, *inches* are not found in nature.

Although money may be most *observed* in its outward manifestations, it originates in our hearts and souls. Money is *grounded* from within us. It is humankind's best attempt to work effectively, efficiently, and fairly between ourselves. It channels our best stuff. It challenges in manners



unfathomable. It attracts, organizes and lubricates. It serves humans selflessly, yet many of us feel that we are its servants.

Paradox. We love it. We hate it. After all, as we so frequently observe: “It is *only* money.” From an academic perspective, money looks like it is subject to scientific principles. And it is, *sort of*, giving rise to all manner of charts and numbers. However, money eludes the certainty of precise calculus and scientific methodology. Frankly, many of its formulae are, at best, loopy-goopy. With lots of numbers and symbols, they may look like science, but only in appearance. In real life, stats may aid understanding, but they should not be confused with the natural precision of real science. Such formulae reflect the flatland (i.e., reductionist) half-truths of the exterior that have afflicted so many subjects.

As with all artifacts, money is grounded in all four quadrants. Though money emanates from its human creators, it remains subject to the flatland fallacies that attempt to reduce its integral nature to just the exterior. Although certain predictions can be made and trends observed, these are, at best, imprecise predictors. Humans have the stubborn quality of being less predictable than physical elements. And therein lie some of money’s many myths. As goes the cynical humor of the professional investment world, “A lot of people have gone broke trying to predict interest rates.” Money’s behavioral imprecision is one of its prime qualities. It is also why money lends itself so well to an Integral approach.

Money, simply put, is not predictable. The rules of money are as much of the humanities as they are of the sciences. Accordingly, they lack exactitude. They muck about our insides where we can’t see them. It is not for nothing that *money* is the second most addressed topic in the Christian Bible. Money is from our hearts as well as from our hands, interior as well as exterior.



The Integral Finance Center

Integral Finance is about what money *is* and *does*: *with* us, *for* us, and *to* us. Its purpose is to look at money objectively, subjectively, in our souls, from our hands, within our cultures and our social orders. It is about what money is and does from the inside out and the outside in. It is about our relationships with it. It is about its impact on us and our impact on money. “Dismal science?” Not with money. Especially not when we engage it *integrally*. Within Integral Institute, the Integral Finance Center engages money’s relationships with those other centers affected by money. This is to say, *all* of them.

Money literally possesses powers of life and death over much human enterprise in the Western world; sometimes even over humans ourselves. As an entirely human construct, that means we must collectively take responsibility for it. It also means we can collectively change it, dissect it, separate it into different component parts, and otherwise assert authority over it as any creator asserts authority over her creations.

The Integral Finance Center examines money’s history as well as the modern methods of its creation and its possibilities. It engages ancient wisdom and modern *common knowledge*. Above all, it does so in an Integral way.

Integral Approaches

Integral Theory calls us to first look at anything from its most expansive aspects. From this perspective, it is axiomatic that “Everybody is right.” Remember Forrest Gump? Remember how his shrimper friend from Louisiana spent days describing different methods for cooking shrimp? Well, the Integral Finance Center is something like that. Within the various combinations of Integral principles and money we can just go on and on. There will be different recipes, different aggregations, and different menus, but they will all be about money. Some of this will be academic. Some will be experiential. We are developing speeches, workshops, and written



materials with emphases upon our sundry relationships with money. The themes currently addressed include interactions, wisdom, and spirit surrounding money, as well as products, policies, politics, and personal habits, including what I personally perceive to be the three keys to successful personal finance: “Save more, spend less, don’t do anything stupid.”

We will look at how money comes to be. What makes money *money*? What are the implications of different answers to this question? We can look at money’s exterior manifestations: the money we count. Or we can look at money’s interior symptoms: the money we feel. There is money itself, money as it is revealed, money as we experience it: individually and culturally, enabling civilization as we know it, for better or for worse.

We will look at how money operates in the world. We read about the bad stuff every day, even as we experience money’s many blessings and generally take them for granted. Of course, we mustn’t ignore the negatives, but it doesn’t hurt to stop and count these blessings every so often. The money systems arguably represent humankind’s most sophisticated cultural achievement.

Of course, these money systems may be unsustainable in their current iterations. Or they may be incompatible with other systems, such as political systems and legal systems. If so, *then what?! We will talk about that too.*

Then there is “different” money. This may be complementary. Or it may be logically separable. Somehow, individuals continue to make our distinctions between *fun* money and *rent* money. Businesses develop budgets and separation tools. Amazingly, we find these to be sensible comparisons, even though the money itself is completely interchangeable.

On the personal side, we have our own incomes, pieces of property, homes and habits, financial plans, and our observable value systems. Here, we can examine them all. We can *see* credit cards, checking accounts, personal philanthropy. We can *see* consumerism and our relationship with the poor and disenfranchised. We can *see* budgets, children, allowances, personal



indulgences, earning and spending, our deals with our miscellaneous partners. We can *see* crunched fenders and broken hips, food, drink, exercise, weddings, motorboats, and sound systems, yachts and big-time drugs, the sick, the injured, and the dying.

Socially, we can look at money's history and theory—beads to bytes, as it were. From there, we can look at stock markets, various financial institutions, miscellaneous taxes and tax planning, financial products, financial services industries, laws, government programs, public policies, balance of trade, inflation, public policy, interest rates, growth rates, exchange rates, purchasing power, IRA rules, and... and... yawn. The recipes only seem infinite. Yet statistics are boring only because they require interpretation and manipulation; they can hold a wealth of knowledge if we know how to look.

Subjective money has all sorts of implications for us. First, money itself is as *subjective* as *objective*. After all, since it is largely a function of belief and agreement, it follows the laws of the interior as well as the exterior. This is to say, it follows the laws of all four quadrants and cannot be understood as a purely exterior phenomenon.

Second, our *relationships* with money encompass our personal and cultural interiors. There is nothing more intimate: Did your parents fight about money? What is your first memory of money? What messages did you receive about money as a child? Does your spouse know about you and money? (*Yikes.*)

We can also examine public money issues with private implications. This would anticipate money's cultural motivational aspects, such as money and warfare, money and compassion, money and racism, money and nature, money and science, money and the modern university, money and medicine, money and art, money and social justice. And so forth. Money is everywhere. It is the water in which we swim.



Or we could make it more personal, and look at personal money issues with public implications. Something such as money and sustainability, inherited money, money and personal resource usage, our relationships with our parents and money, children and money, money and career choice, money and personal decisions, money and marriage, money and soul, money and personal transitions, or *Money and the Meaning of Life*.² Money is like that. It is everywhere and in everything on 21st century planet earth. We hope to deal with it all.

Current Issues

At this point, our relationships with money are amalgams of traditions, religions, resentments, abuses, natural resources, personal capabilities, necessities, social circumstances, miscellaneous philosophies, distortions, discriminations, and, of course, ever-present market realities. All of these issues are a part of 21st century money. All of them inform us. Or, as Ken Wilber would say with a mischievous grin and a genuine twinkle, “Everybody is partially right.”

However, controversy still abounds. Although market economies may be the finest system to ever emerge for organizing human interactions efficiently, reform is constantly on the agenda from all aspects of the political spectrum. There are those that resent government and its powers of coercion. In contrast, there are those that resent social inequities and perceived disparities. These forged the opposing ideologies that sourced much 20th century’s conflict and social policy. From capitalism to fascism to communism to variations on such themes, we humans have found ourselves ripped between ideologies that purported to care for common folk yet ostensibly justified unprecedented genocide. In between, we generated clearly unsustainable economic systems. What have we left our children? What ought to constitute our legitimate expectations? What ought to constitute social realities? And how much can we care about “fair”? Do we even know what “fair” looks like?

Money is not perfect. Its critics have ample evidence of its shortcomings. The gory truth is that markets do not deal well with folks incapable of meeting its demands. What of compassion?



What are we *trading* for money, especially when costs seem free? Do those who profit bear all necessary expenses? Or risks? Or are these costs shifted to those not otherwise involved? What about market-based societies? Should notions of equality govern? There is dignity in being human: why should some people luxuriate while others suffer? On the other hand, should indolence be tolerated?

We don't need to argue that markets are perfect in order to understand how necessary they are to human function. We don't need to argue that markets are fatally flawed in order to realize that market based societies have significant shortcomings. There is obviously some truth to all of these points. Clearly, money has engendered many negatives, but no criticism is totally correct—or totally wrong. The Integral Finance Center will address the many questions surrounding these current issues: what are our pervading cultural myths about money? Can we live with them going forward? Are they sustainable? What are public obligations regarding private issues? How can we calmly engage in conversation around matters literally engaging life and death? There are hosts of issues that go from the roots of our food chains to our most articulate expressions of hope and spirit. Money is inextricably bound with the most critical issues of our time.

The Way Forward

Integral money includes what we *can* do with it: how we get it, spend it, save it, invest it, share it, protect it, or gift it. It also includes what we *might* do with it—especially if we could design it differently. These two descriptors give us limitless possibilities.

As mere artifact, money has no consciousness. Nonetheless, it seems to work according to certain immutable principles, such as those found in the four primary forces of air, wind, water, and fire. Members of the Integral Finance Center call them *the money forces*. Though these money forces will be addressed at length, for now we must understand only that these



extraordinary forces operate from within each of the four quadrants and shape and shift each of us and our circumstances, internally and externally, socially and culturally. For understanding money, it is good to understand nature, at least just a little bit; the biosphere gives us useful metaphors.

Then there are yesterday's metaphors of the physiosphere. Here, we can observe money as a tool of differing implications: survival, socializing, ego, law and order, excellence, and community care. We can see money as an effective contrivance for delivery and distribution of the goods and services required to keep the human race ticking along.

Moreover, we can play with money through the array of centers at Integral Institute. It is moral. It is religious. It is self-actualizing. It expresses value systems and attitudes towards others. It tells us where our hearts are and channels our talents. It consumes our time and our talents.

At the same time, the phenomenon of greed remains all too observable. It is so tempting for individuals to succumb to money's siren calls. Many lives have crashed and burned for either lack of money or for having virtually unlimited access to it. Many are the lives that have been enabled by grasping money and developing the requisite skills for dealing with it. Thus is money's power, from the micro to the macro.

All of these are right—mostly. All of these are true—mostly. None of these are wholly true or uniquely distinct from qualification. Money's truths are mostly partial. Few of money's observers are entirely wrong about it. None are unconditionally right. Only the Integral approach allows us to accept all of these partial truths in an all-encompassing embrace that provides us a true way forward.

Integral Finance is about our relationships with money and our attempts to achieve vision and balance with it. Welcome.



Endnotes

¹ Wilber, *A theory of everything: An integral vision for business, politics, science, and spirituality*, 2000, p. 40

² Needleman, *Money and the meaning of life*, 1993



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Integral Finance 201

PART 1: THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF MONEY

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This is part one of a two part paper that offers an overview of Integral Finance and examines money from a holonic perspective. This paper addresses the fundamental applications of money within an Integral context. This will include what money is as well as money's nature and its various roles in the world. Though we spend most of our lives involved in activities with strong money referents, it is not commonly understood that money is fundamentally a symbol of agreements and beliefs. Accordingly, money is anything humans agree money to be.

Introduction

"Money is the water in which we swim." Bernard Lietaer

"What do fish know of the water?" Ancient Chinese proverb

This article engages money—integrally.

Standing alone, it probably won't make you any. Unlike most of the web's financial filler, we certainly aren't promising any get-rich-quick gimmicks, fancy investments, home loans, tax reduction strategies, inheritance schemes, or the rest of the internet's daily money drivel. If you had those expectations, I'm sorry, time for a new search. There are plenty out there—happy hunting.

Here, we are going to take an Integral look at money. Just money and our many relationships with it. How does it fit into our lives? In what manner does it impact our planet? What is its relationship to power, our personal happiness, security, compassion, or sustainability? Is the love of it really the root of all evil? Or does it really answer all things? What sorts of alternatives to familiar money (i.e., dollars, euros, yen, etc.) might be imagined?



This article will be a bit more advanced than “Integral Finance 101.” We will be digging deeper, searching more expansively, and directly engaging Integral Theory. As with 101, we will use a light touch. Money is too serious to take too seriously. We have more than enough of that elsewhere in our lives.

The Nature of Money

Money constitutes a pervasive and powerful secular force. Why? Because money impacts virtually everything about human beings, from how we manage and direct our time and talents to how we tend our various gardens and most loving relationships. This is because money is embedded in virtually every public and private issue of significance; because it shows where our hearts are even as it reveals value systems and priorities; because we can usually find money lurking wherever we find either alienation or mutuality between humans, groups of humans, or the world around us.

Clearly, money is not the most important part of human life. Yet it is equally clear that money permeates it and that 21st century life requires it. As I have heard Zig Ziegler say, “Money is not the most important thing in life... but it is right up there with oxygen.”¹ What is odd is that money is not even “real.” It is not part of our natural environment. Where is it? What is it? Even by modern standards of form over substance and physicists’ discoveries that “matter” is more empty than solid, money seems particularly insubstantial. Yet money has accompanied human beings in some form for thousands of years. Yet people frequently blame money’s absence for human suffering and all manner of failed undertakings.

Within the strictures of Integral Theory, money itself is an artifact. It is *not* a holon (a whole/part that self-organizes). Though we frequently assign money such human qualities as *will* and *purpose*, logically, these cannot be. Money simply has no awareness of the world around it. Though money is without inherent consciousness, it is the product of exquisite human



consciousness focused on trade facilitation, transactional fairness, specialization needs, and human requirements for systems to efficiently distribute goods, services, and the intelligent, compassionate allocation of resources. As such, money serves to address profound problems. Yet money itself is only the product of *agreement* and *belief*. This constitutes an integral combination if ever there was one.

Money's origins are curious. In theory, humans have *agreed* to dominant currencies. Unlike most contracts, these *agreements* have evolved over thousands of years. Obviously, most of us have not consciously signed on to the deal. We have simply arrived at adult consciousness with a culturally hardened *belief* in money. On the cultural side, this serves as explanation for money's realities, albeit such explanations are not always pretty. On the complementary side, we can redo or renew agreements to accomplish specific jobs. Either way, from big rocks (Yak Island) to little bytes (modern trading and banking systems), whatever humans *believe* constitutes money *is* money.

The notion that there is such a thing as *real money* (usually argued to be gold or silver) is humorous. Money is *always* a humanly conceived abstraction. Of course, it has had different levels of tangibility. Throughout history, an array of objects has constituted "money."

From those huge rocks to pierced shells to hogsheads and tobacco to barrels of bourbon and gold and silver to paper and megabytes, money has traditionally enabled trade of goods and services, served as a storehouse of value, and facilitated various methods of (ac)counting. As such, the creation of commonly accepted money from *agreements* and *belief* into symbols is arguably one of humankind's most significant achievements. Imagine life without money and its abilities to both facilitate and compel personal and cultural organization. It clearly has no equal.

Yet all sorts of mischief stem from such beliefs to the point where the generated forces, *the money forces*, arguably constitute the most powerful and pervasive secular forces on the planet.



Though money seems inherently passive, the powers of these agreement-generated forces are awesome.

Money has become the human made force that dominates our public and private worlds. Within its domination, money skills have literally become 21st century survival skills. Yet, unlike all other survival skills, money skills do not come naturally to humans.

Money seems like a blessing, but unlike most blessings, it is susceptible to forceful appropriation and manipulation from robbers, cheaters, or governmental authorities. Moreover, money abundance seems to carry some unique problems. That “Money cannot buy happiness” is axiomatic. That money, in abundance or paucity, can stand in the way of personal development is becoming an authentic truism. Money’s nature changes constantly yet there are no substantial personal or cultural issues without significant money components. Unfortunately, cultural transmissions regarding money and fundamental financial literacy are problematic. Simply put, the experiences of peers, parents, and elders are not necessarily apt. However old your parents are, however young you are, the one certainty is that the nature of money has changed dramatically between their lessons and yours.

Friends may have entirely different money perspectives. Indeed, this is more likely than not. Even forgetting pending age-wave challenges to our dominant money systems, it is difficult for most of us to hold meaningful conversations with most other people in light of our generational and situational disconnects. Different *types* have difficulties understanding each other in relation to money. The rich cannot talk to the poor in any meaningful fashion. Blue collar problems are not understood by white collar workers. Men/women, young/old, race, ethnicity, national origins, and other *type* differences will generally have money differences as well.

Money matters saturate psychological and spiritual issues. Money pathologies abound. From adolescent wounding to adult failures, to shame, and miscellaneous religious injunctions, to guilt



and envy, to genuine fear, terror, and greed, we generally confront our own money issues in painful silence. In my experience, these issues can, and do, go as deep as it gets. Indeed, many mental health professionals, such as Courtney Pullen, M.A. of Denver and Ted Klontz, M.A. of Cumberland Furnace, Tennessee, view money pathologies as fundamentally more profound than those grounded in sex or family. They particularly note money's power to shame. Moreover, as with sex and family, mental health workers and spiritual leaders are not exempt from their own money disorders. To the contrary, they may carry tremendous money burdens.

Objectively speaking, money consistently trumps any given religion in sheer numbers of dedicated believers. In the so-called first world, even hard-edged skeptics believe in money with devotion that rivals the most dedicated disciples. Of course, these skeptics have their own money pathologies as well.

Though money itself is insubstantial, thousands of temples (banks) have been erected for its care and keeping. Money's manifestations fill our common worlds. Its pursuit consumes many of our days and hours. Yet for all this money remains a personal and cultural taboo. Obviously, we hope to unravel some of these taboos with our Integral Finance efforts.

The notion that our relationships with money present extraordinary spiritual issues is likewise ancient. Money issues pervade the Christian Bible. Arguably, the gospel lessons of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are among the best work ever on money and its interior implications. Stewardship, mindfulness, balance, compassion, perspective, non-attachment, sharing, duty, humility and the like are all profound and powerful money concepts.

The opening quote of this paper serves as our constant guide. We are all part of the money forces; none of us is exempt from feeling the full thrust of money's powers. Yet we are all unique in our relationships to them. We have the world of money and our baggage in the world



of money. We have our personal relationship with money and we are in relationship with money within the contexts of our various “We’s.”

Money attitudes are as distinctive as fingerprints. Accordingly, it behooves us to remember that our individual views and perceptions of money are unlike those of any other. Some might call these pathologies. Some might observe them as idiosyncrasies. Personally, I prefer simpler nomenclature. Or, as I once heard Jacob Needleman observe in a speech, “Everybody is weird about money.”² That simply allows us to love each other and ourselves as we try to grasp our relationships. Accordingly, as we look at money, we must be curious about ourselves as well as curious about the artifact itself.

What’s more, people’s relationship to money evolves along commonly accepted theoretical and empirical levels of development. Psychologically, archaeologically, culturally, institutionally, we can see money’s aspects in each of the quadrants (described below) of Integral Theory.

Historically, money is of ancient origin. It goes back to 9,000 BC when cows and grains served trading functions. Its first legal acknowledgement came with the *Code of Hammurabi*, commonly dated between 1728-1686 BC. Although the *Code of Hammurabi* is most famous as the first written codification of law, its emphasis on money governance is noteworthy. From its origins to present day, money and its relatives have been prominent aspects of human society. However, only recently have the money forces took on lives of their own. This came with securitizing money and manufacturing it through lending processes.

As an *exterior* phenomenon, money has ranged from those bulky cows (still used by the African Masai) to the literally weightless electronics of 21st century plastic. On the *interior*, we have come to ground the bulk of our cultural relationships and responsibilities in money. Individually, we range from a child’s allowance to an elder’s pension; then to our most intimate personal decisions including primary contexts for both time and talent.



This is the spirit within which we are developing Integral Finance. Whether you are a financial professional or just have daily encounters with it, Integral Theory offers an exceptionally fertile environment for the study of money and inquiry into its essential components and implications.

My Story: Financial Planning Meets Integral Theory

I came to Integral Theory as a stranger not so long ago. My first encounter was an epiphany. Since then, it has dominated my life.

I have twenty years experience in the financial planning profession and five as a lawyer. I have spoken about money issues in countless conversations with colleagues, in print, from podiums, and within the profession's political structure. I had spent a year of service as the financial planning profession's chief spokesperson and written dozens of articles addressing financial planning theory. But somehow I knew we had yet to learn how to communicate the importance of our individual and cultural relationships with money.

Thoughtful financial planners knew that money issues were incredibly intimate and complex. We also knew that they had enormous implications for life's non-quantifiable issues; namely, that money played huge in the lives of most people. Yet we were stuck in two dimensions. We could speak intelligently to the quantifiable. What of the non-quantifiable? Unfortunately, we lacked the language required to center, study, and communicate. How could we talk and think about concerns critical to our work if we had no words?

It's not as if we don't ever talk about money. Public media is full of money news. We just don't talk much with each other about our own relationships with it. Ask someone what they made last year? Or speak to them of their aggregated net worth? Responses will generally include looks of horror, contain hints of violence or disgust, or simply convey disbelief. Try communicating any of these to a casual acquaintance. Are these powerful taboos or what?



Unfortunately, with notable exceptions, there is near silence regarding our personal relationships with money. Until recently, the public, too, literally lacked the vocabulary to rationally discuss money's cultural, spiritual, and psychological implications. Our words led to fights and furor. These words reeked with hidden implications, unstated agendas, commercial interests, and the codes of class and conflict. This dissonance permeated our family relationships, neighborhoods, and cultural institutions. They infected our conversations. Money issues reflected our most intimate thoughts and sense of self-esteem. It impacted our most life defining choices; it touched upon our sense of right and wrong.

Every time we turned around, there were more money issues. We could not avoid them. Yet, with the exceptions of a scant few, we rarely talked of money directly. Such talk is taboo. Nonetheless, we made extraordinary money decisions even in the absence of our personal explorations, to the point where our culture is seemingly, possibly irrevocably, addicted to the stuff.

The Christian Bible deals with money extensively. "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."³ The Koran and the Bible both attack usury. Most religious traditions address money within doctrinal contexts. Indeed, some of our best money guidance comes from these ancient sources. Unfortunately, these sources do not count for much in a postmodern society. Worse, they still did not give us the words we needed. How could we hold conversations without vocabulary? What of these whirling, swirling forces of money? How do we talk of them?

Even within the financial planning profession we had no good words for these conversations. It was immensely frustrating. It seemed like we were doomed with words like "soft-side," "touchy-feely," and "life planning." The first two were simply insulting. Although the latter was becoming something of a professional phenomenon, it was insufficient. The vacuum was palpable.



So I sent a written, published, nakedly vulnerable plea to the universe to resolve my dilemma. In post-millennial frustration, I wrote an article entitled “In Search of the Elusive Word” for *Financial Advisor Magazine*.⁴ In it, I bemoaned the dearth of words to describe these implications and attempted to enlist the aid of others to develop them.

Shortly after its submission, but before publication, a friend suggested I might enjoy Ken Wilber’s modestly titled book *A Theory of Everything*, proving once again the virtue of caution when articulating one’s wishes.

Now I like a solid sense of confidence in a person, but *A Theory of Everything*? This seemed over-the-top immodest. Yet somewhere around page three I began to sense that this was something special. At page seven, I felt tremors ripple through my body, my eyes welled with tears, and I felt what Spiral Dynamics authority Christopher Cooke calls an “eehee.” There it was: the word “Integral” blazed. Then “interior.” Eureka. I understood the senses that gold miners must have had as they found a region’s first gold nuggets. I got not one word but two. Life has never been the same.

Despite titular immodesty, *A Theory of Everything* did, in fact, enunciate an integrated approach to everything. It sought to integrate all perspectives while encouraging exploration—that was exciting.

I wrote another article arguing that the word Integral enables us to look at money holistically. I talked about Exterior, Interior, Individual, and Cultural. Between them, they plug the gaps. Interior, especially, was the word that allowed us to talk about money from the inside out. Integral enabled us to talk about whole people within the same conversation. Integral Theory permitted a full blown exploration of quadrants, levels, and lines. I talked about the Spiral and the money issues that appear at each level.⁵ This, in turn, morphed into a paper that won the Financial Planning Association’s “Call For Papers” in 2002.⁶ The beauty was that these words



worked. They flowered and bloomed. People understood them intuitively. They are even starting to apply them to their own work.

Most importantly, Integral principles work with money. The work we are doing throughout the Integral Finance Center at Integral Institute is unmatched for helping us understand money and its relation to everything. Now we can go to work.

Integral Theory

Integral Theory holds it all together. First, *everything* is broken down to four irreducible *quadrants*, and then viewed from the perspectives of developmental *levels* and *lines*. Then it is viewed from the various states that can occur in each quadrant such as the three *states* of consciousness (waking, dreaming, and deep sleep) within all *types* of contexts. Together these are known as “AQAL” (all-quadrants, all-levels, all-lines, all-states, and all-types). Together they enable integral perspectives and thinking.

Holons

From the *interior* and *exterior* of the individual and collective, from levels and lines, Integral Theory applies this consequent structure to *all that is* (and I do mean the whole lot)—from aardvarks to zebras, atoms to zoo keepers. Everything can be seen through the lens of the four quadrants. The basic unit is the holon. Technically, a holon is “a whole that is part of other wholes.”⁷ We will explore individual holons, social holons, artifacts, and heaps.

To understand Integral Theory, it is critical to understand the difference between individual and social holons. Individual holons are alive. They are dependent on lower-level holons from quarks to electrons to molecules to atoms to cells to organisms to complex organisms. Human beings are dependent on cells; cells are not dependent on human beings. If all cells were instantaneously neutralized, all mammals would cease to exist. If cells were instantaneously neutralized, electrons would continue with barely a ripple, unaware of the chaos above them.



In contrast, social holons are groups of individual holons. Governments, clubs, families, parties, poker games, markets, and the like are *social* holons. We can look at these social holons from interior and exterior, individual and collective dimensions.

To these, we must add *artifacts*, or products of individual or social holons. *Artifacts* include institutions, games, laws, crafts, and all else that humans create.

Finally, we have *heaps*. A heap is simply a pile of something like rocks, leaves, or car parts. A heap may contain artifacts, and its parts may one day become an artifact.

Individual holons have four quadrants, or dimensions. Any given quadrant represents a dimension of an individual holon that cannot be reduced to any other quadrant. Taken together, these four quadrants form a functional whole of four irreducible dimensions of all sentient holons: the interior and the exterior of the individual and the collective. These dimensions are otherwise known as “I,” “We,” “It,” and “Its.” Holons are fundamental to life—to *everything*. This holonic concept works superbly in the development of Integral Financial Theory, especially as it applies to our relationships with money.

Integral Theory is inclusive by its nature. It attempts to grasp the partial truths of every theory. One of the best parts of Integral Theory is that nobody gets hurt in an obscene dance of mutual disrespect that seems all too common in modern (and postmodern) discourse. Integral Theory honors everybody. Obviously I simplify, but at its roots Integral Theory provides beautiful unities and delightful explorations. It honors all while reconciling *everything*. As Ken Wilber says, “Everybody is partially right.” Since *everything* can be looked at from four quadrants, this constitutes a profound foundation for analysis, comparison, and integration.

Quadrants

The chart below (figure 1) reflects *everything* about money as it relates to human holons. The *Right-Hand* side notes how we generally perceive money. On the individual exterior (UR), we



have behaviors related to money (how you spend, what you do with your money, what you buy, etc.) and our *individual* artifacts ranging from our jobs, to financial products, to budgets, to our personal taxes and wills. These are money's apparent manifestations—the appearances that other people can see.

On the collective exterior we have the various systems connected to money. Further, we can see the *public* artifacts (LR). As with the personal, we can see and touch these. Unlike the UR, these apply to billions of people and include things like coins, paper money, loans, credit card systems, inflation, taxes, banks, etc.

Note that our personal artifacts are situated within these larger systems. When it comes to money, our personal manifestations merge into these larger social contexts. These exterior, Right-Hand attributes reflect what most of us know, (or think we know) about money. We can generally have these conversations freely so long as they reveal nothing personal. Then it gets to Left-Hand issues, aka 21st century taboos.

Interior, Left-Hand attributes are more elusive. Here we come face to face with ourselves and our cultural contexts. This is where we find those aspects of money we typically keep private; those parts that polite people don't discuss in public. These are the parts that resist examination because most of us are not comfortable with the implications for ourselves or our respective social holons.

The individual interior or Upper-Left quadrant is where money touches our experience of ourselves and the world around us. It is where we confront our needs to self-regulate. This is where we make decisions about accessing the world's goods and services for ourselves (joy, anxiety, fear, hope, love, impulse to buy, guilt after buying).

Money *enables* self-gratification. Money demands we grasp its most essential qualities for the span of our lives—even though our lives may have decades to run—or not. Perhaps this body



will last but a few more moments. We don't know. Money doesn't care. This tension reflects the Upper-Left existential dilemmas. How shall we live? How do we function within such tensions?

Money reveals who we are. In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus observes, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:20-22; Luke 12:33-35). Our money choices reflect upon us with spot lit intimacy. This is where we find our individual versions of the Seven Deadly sins (Gluttony, Sloth, Greed, Anger, Pride, Lust, and Envy). This is also where we find generosity, creativity, sharing, acceptance of responsibility—in other words a fair number of human virtues.

The Upper Left, as the locus of our personal experience with money, may also be the repository of extraordinary pain. We find such pain grounded in existential crises, childhood wounding, or even the life traumas of our ancestors. What is *your* first memory of money?

Money is, perhaps, most enigmatic in our cultural relationships with it. This is where we share values with others—the Lower-Left quadrant (LL). How did past cultural relationships with money impact our relationship with it today? Although we are generally more comfortable with money's exterior attributes and our personal relationships, the Lower Left is a critical aspect of money's meaning. It is also the quadrant where we tend to locate our money conflicts (the meaning of money, money symbols, cultural notions of its attributes, money types, cultural foundations for social structure, etc.).

Money involves a shared value. What we collectively deem "good value" involves engaging reciprocity and exchange. Accordingly, it is only as we mutually agree that money actually has value. It doesn't taste good. By itself, it can't keep us warm or comfortable. Even the largest paper money makes an insufficient umbrella. Money's powers actualize only in exchange. Monetary exchange requires agreement and belief. As the Lower Left addresses shared values, this is, literally, money's meaning source.



Along with money, the Lower Left contains humanity's various theoretical agreements for dividing labor and distributing both necessities and niceties among ourselves. Etymologically speaking, the roots of the word "economy" translate roughly into "house management." Viewing the planet and its miscellaneous geographical and cultural components as our "house," this is where we collectively determine our money referents, or that which shall be deemed scarce and valuable, and hence worthy of pursuit. In so doing and being, our Lower-Left relationships with money source the gamut of miracle to tragedy.

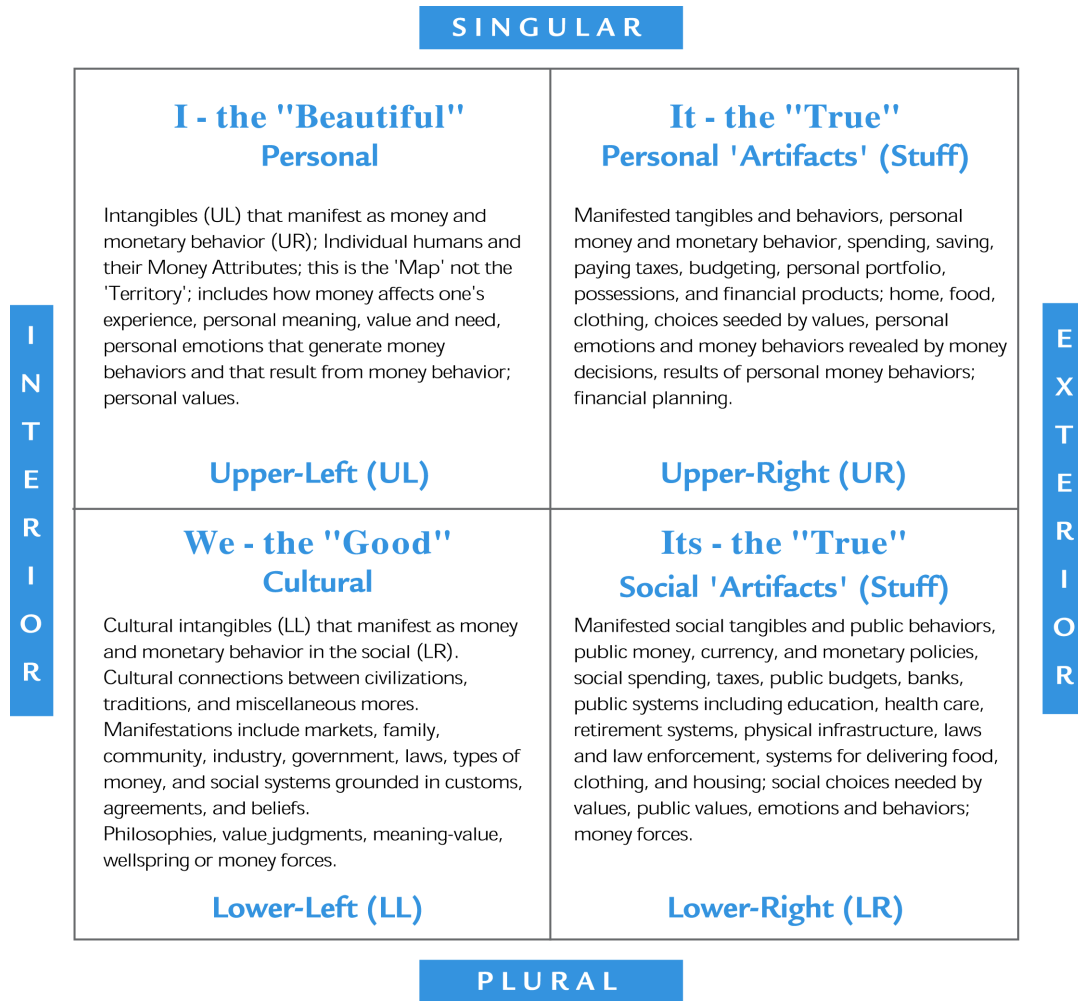


Figure 1. Aspects of the Four Quadrants of Money

The Integral Market

When it comes to money, we can see each of these individual holons, social holons, artifacts, and heaps all within the word “market” (e.g., the stock market). So let’s take a look. Humans created the market. It is conducted in accord with certain rules.

We each have interior Upper-Left aspects within ourselves. Each of us demonstrates our interior Lower-Left attributes when we are in relationship with the other men and women who are also



participating in the market. We can see each of these people as individuals (Upper Right) and members of the group (Lower Right).

In its daily functions, the market itself is a social holon. It, too, expresses the quadrants. Created by humans for human functions, it is objectively visible in the individual's case to all who wish to observe the Upper Right. It is also visible in its social relationships with others, or the Lower Right. At the same time, we can view its individual interior realities that can only be perceived, but not seen, in the Upper Left. Then, too, it relates to others in the Lower Left as part of the larger culture. Interior, exterior, individual, collective—the market has them all. But it has no dominant monad of its own. The individuals constituting it are *members*, not *parts* of the market. No humans, no market.

However, the market itself is also an artifact in its functional context. The market is made by humans. Once they have come together to create it, it is like a game of chess as well as a social gathering. As such, it is part of the economic system. Once created, it is like chess and money in that it has its own rules and order. Humans participate but within their construct, now with its own existence. The market, in turn, has its own abundance of artifacts. The machines, the paper, the communication systems, the electronics, its building, its clocks, and so forth are all artifacts. They are useful to the market's functions. Individual or social holons built them all. They all have their own discrete existences and rules. Yet the market also generates a lot of useless waste, or heaps. If you have remaining questions regarding the basics of Integral Theory, I strongly suggest visiting Integral Institute (www.integralinstitute.org).

Integral Implications

Integral Theory argues for the importance of including the interiors. Specifically, we must consider all four quadrants in our study of anything. Unfortunately, conversations regarding our traditional relationships with money have been almost exclusively focused on *exteriors*. The



attitude is “*We have these tools to address these issues.*” Not, “*Why do we have these issues?*” This would require drilling deeply into the subterranean pools of psyche and culture. Thus, our interior relationships with money have suffered. Money may manifest in our *exteriors* but its generative source is from within our *interiors*. This is to say that money is conceptually rooted in the Lower-Left quadrant even though we mostly see its manifestations in the two Right-Hand quadrants and we *feel* it most acutely in our Upper-Left quadrant. Money needs aggregations of other people to agree about it and to believe in it.

Money is perfect for Integral analysis. Money profoundly engages, integrates, and articulates humanity’s height, breadth, and depth.

Notwithstanding its reputation, money is *not* inherently political. Rather, it represents a perfect integration of the technical and the intuitive. Despite increasing evidence of quasi-spiritual qualities and its impact upon the life choices of virtually all people, economists continue to treat money as machine and humans as machine operators. Yet as the product of *belief* and *agreement*, money is not just the result of physical mechanisms. Money’s structure seemingly requires subjective moral integrity, as well as physical design.

Likewise, though money’s functional attributes are particular systemic mechanisms; its qualitative attributes portray emotional essences and intersubjective shared values. Even as economists blame money for not acting like their models, I suggest that more acts of peace, love, and brotherhood occur daily in its name than anything else. “*Peace on earth, good will between humans?*” What enacts this better, more consistently, more powerfully than money? Yet culturally, politically, personally, it challenges us like nothing else.

Money is, of course, ironic. It often seems that few folks spare kind words for money; they just want more of it for themselves and to direct the use of others’ money as they would prefer.



Though money has no end of critics, I have seen few folks willing to deprive themselves of sufficient access to it.

Accordingly, Integral applications are not merely intellectual exercises. They are bases for getting along and mutual understanding. They enable conversation and decision-making. They are foundations for grasping the nature of various money issues. Integral applications articulate the *possible*. Perhaps more importantly, they convey viable notions for transforming the *impossible*.

Theoretically, it would seem money is in infinite supply. Not true. It depends upon the standards of a particular currency. Money of all sorts requires reference points, or some form of underlying scarcity such as gold, cigarettes in prisons, or time. If everybody had as much as they wanted of money, it would not work. There must be a motivation to seek it. Much as we might want sufficient money for all, money as we generally perceive it (i.e., our international trading currencies) is based on debt. Without debt and its need for repayment, there is no scarcity. Without scarcity, money has no ascertainable value.

This is tough to grasp. For example, we are most familiar with money denominated in dollars. This has implications. Did you know that dollars in circulation match dollars of debt? Debt is a precondition to the creation of a dollar. Debt systems have limitations. They require borrowers to repay. This singular fact—that mandatory repayment requires the creation of *new* wealth—generates significant consequences. It is necessary to create new money. This cultural machine requires constant refueling. (By the way, this is *not* the case with all forms of money. Sometimes the point of scarcity is time, a desirable object, or function. For example, Bernard Lietaer describes “currency” as that which is required for payment of taxes. All of these have significant implications.)



The debt based forms of money require certainty. Lenders must have the ability to foreclose. This requires laws, respected law enforcement, and predictable reference points such as clear-cut ownership and something precisely defined, such as survey stakes and legal descriptions. Noted Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto suggests that these seemingly separate elements—survey stakes, legal descriptions, and respected law enforcement—are the true keys of American success. They enable us to unlock capital. Capital enables us to bring ideas to life.

We will address money as a complex force. As with nature's primary forces—earth, air, fire, and water—money's consequences can be beautiful or horrific. Integral Theory can help us understand money better.

Integral

Meanwhile, let's look at the word: *Integral*. It is beautiful. "Integral" bridges spirituality, psychology, sociology, and technology as it couples nicely with "integrity" and "integrated." Our approach successfully melds all four quadrants into a unit.

Integral Theory addresses the wide-ranging: from the narrow to the complex. It catalogues common elements, posits a nested hierarchy reflecting developmental theories and then proceeds to catalogue their comparative evolutionary parallels. Developments include precedent components. We can't go bald until we have hair to lose. There are no molecules without atoms.

The Left Hand anchors interior work, individually and culturally. It enables the big questions: How does money impact life? Why does money pose such spiritual challenges? Why is money taboo? Why can't we talk about it in polite company? How does philanthropy work into a comprehensive financial plan? What about training for inheritors and lottery winners? What are the responsibilities of society at large for the care and keeping of individuals? The implications of these questions are immense.



Left-Hand attributes generates anxiety for financial professionals. With fuzzy terms like *risk tolerance* or activities like *determining goals and objectives*, we natural born analysts noticeably twitch when the conversation turns inward. Words like *values*, *spirit*, or *soul* are just plain scary.

Traditionally, most professional money work has been from the Right Hand. The Right Hand consists of the quantifiable exterior. There we have statistics, indexes, and the “dismal science” of economics, measurement systems for banking and accounting, legal systems for protection, guidance, and decision-making. The Right Hand is the traditional locus of our financial bits and pieces such as retirement accounts, estate planning, rates of return, “rules of 72,” interest rates, inflation rates, exchange rates, betas, alphas, Sharpe ratios, miscellaneous financial products, and so forth.

Interior and Exterior

With an Integral methodology we can perceive money inside out. We observe from both individual and cultural perspectives. We don’t need to argue whether the *technical* is more important than the *personal* because all quadrants and all levels are important. Neither must we strain reason to address *interior* realities. We can give full honor and vitality to the *interior* even as we have given full honor and vitality to the *exterior*. All-quadrants, all-levels. Which is more important? How high is up? These are both irrelevant questions. *Everything* is important.

Clearly, in this slice of time and culture, notions of interior work trouble many of us. Ironically, in current Western cultures, we may enjoy our freedoms but we like what we can count and we fear the immeasurable. This is a uniquely 21st century cultural flaw. Our level is imperfect, with its own unique issues that do not trouble societies less wedded to money and its acquisition. When we just take an exterior view, the intangible is demonized. According to this viewpoint, if we can’t measure it, smell it, hear it, taste it, or see it, it seems unreal and unworthy of serious attention. This is arguably true both within our society at large and our various sub-cultures.



We stress over the irresolvable tensions between our Right-Hand skills, the knowable and measurable, and our Left-Hand proficiencies. The Right-Hand path contains the information in the business magazines. We have no cultural locus for money's messier interior work, addressing such immeasurables as motivation, genuine goals and objectives, the interface of money and life, miscellaneous moral conundrums, and achieving vision and balance in personal relationships with money. Knowledge and understanding elude. We have built systemic mechanisms. Yet machines break and social institutions crack.

We need to glorify life's enigmas. In the past, and for various cultures today, appreciation of the mystery manifested through gods and fables, stories and lore. Fables, morality tales, and parables provided guidance. These interior representations may not have withstood scientific tests of objective "truth," but they stood absolutely for functional truths in those vital places where money's ineffable ambiguities confront the day-to-day.

The money world is particularly vulnerable to this unfortunate fragmentation. To most financial service industry professionals, money work is peculiarly Right-Hand. Personally and culturally, we devote extraordinary resources to it. Our tools for addressing Left-Hand concerns are less than impressive. They remain tightly locked within cultural taboos (e.g., "if you have money, don't tell anyone"). They await development. Between cultural malaise and individual despair, amidst inter-global conflict and money's impact on individual life decisions, we desperately need tools for exploring money's Left Hand. Circumstances abound. Answers don't.

Money is global lifeblood. It breathes life into our complex, intertwined relationships, our social body if you will. Money challenges our understanding of life and the universe. Indeed, virtually every culture has encountered difficulties with money. All of us need help from the inside. Technical skills alone are vital but insufficient for 21st century demands.



Money Questions

Can couples, companies, communities, or nations talk about money healthfully? Can irrational divides between classes, resources, or laws be resolved or at least made workable? Can we minimize the negative repercussions of global monetization? Can we resolve issues of local or national laws, money and governmental sovereignty? Can we compassionately buffer market indifference without dreadful implications for free markets? What about the marginalized: the poor, the sick, the young, and the old? Can money, family, and children dilemmas be creatively resolved? Can we effectively repair or replace cracking social infrastructures? Are these the questions we should be asking? *Are we asking money to do jobs that exceed its capacities?*

Money aids in achieving dreams and buying security, but there is never enough money for everything that one could wish—no matter how much of it there is. With debt-based currency designs, financial insufficiency is a built-in reality.

For many, there is truly not enough. For others, it is just raw fear. For still others, it means they are likely to run out of money someday unless something changes. What of pandemic inabilities to look inward at our relationships with money? What of potential bear markets, shaky institutions, or job loss? What of survival? Can complementary currencies be engaged to address any or all of the above? What about money, spirit, and our individual journeys?

These answers are not in a teacher's key book somewhere. Integral Theory, however, provides a number of additional elements (levels, lines, states, and types) that can provide much insight and direction in beginning to answer these money questions. In Part II of this article we will continue to wade into money using these elements of Integral Theory as our water wings. This is our work. It is about exploration, integration, and conversation. It is an Integral journey. It should be fun.



Endnotes

¹ Zigler, personal communication, 1998

² Needleman, personal communication, 1999

³ Matthew 6:20-22; Luke 12:33-35

⁴ Wagner, "In search of the elusive word...", 2001

⁵ Wagner, "The power of integral finance," 2001

⁶ Wagner, "Integral finance: A framework for the 21st century profession," 2002

⁷ Wilber, *A theory of everything: An integral vision for business, politics, science, and spirituality*, 2000, p. 40



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Integral Finance 201

PART 2: THE ELEMENTS OF MONEY

Richard B. Wagner

This essay is a continuation of Part I. It applies Integral principles to money, including a core Integral assertion that “everybody is partially right.” It addresses levels, lines, states, and types within a financial context. It then lays groundwork for future work of greater depth and detail.

Money: “Everybody Is Partially Right”

Integral Theory’s capacity for reconciliation is powerful. “Everybody is Partially Right” means none of the serious thinkers about money can be entirely wrong. Instead of constant critique, we can talk and listen to each other. We can dialogue about money or engender new forms of money. Our belief that other folks have something to share is humanizing and peacemaking.

People have different perspectives and make dissimilar assumptions regarding a given issue. Upon first glance, it may even seem that these people have nothing in common with regard to their subject. They only see their personal, partial truth. Yet, no matter the apparent disparities, none of them will be entirely wrong. This would be virtually impossible. There is generally some rationale behind an individual thought process. For Integral Finance, we must look at these partial truths within money observations.

For example, just look at our myth structures, the ways our parents and the dominant culture talked about money. These epitomize the partial truths, the notion that everybody is right. We were all taught money aphorisms, such as “A penny saved is a penny earned,” and truly, in a very weird way it is “as easy to marry a rich person as a poor one.” It seems “fairer to tax the rich.” We know that “a stitch in time saves nine,” and that we never, ever, want to “kill the goose that lays the golden egg,” and so on. Money wisdom has been passed down from mothers,



grandfathers, and wise folk through the ages. These half truths abound within families and society. Though most of them have a point, they also have considerable shortcomings. Part of our job is to locate those nuggets within popular belief systems and understand both their truths and shadows.

This means we look for the truths behind all of the different perspectives on money. Then we can attempt to reconcile these truths with others in the context of money's larger truths. Take the saved penny, for example. First, it is in technical error. Anyone who gets a W-2 knows they need to earn a lot more than a penny before they can save one. With FICA, state, and local taxes, and "progressive" national income taxes all munching away at the take home, a reasonably well-paid earner must earn nearly two cents to equal the buying power of the penny saved. On the other hand, for the "penny wise" but "pound foolish," saving that penny could have been a foolish avoidance of an investment that may have been exceedingly remunerative or personally rewarding. Same act, different perspectives, different outcomes: all with something to offer.

Unlike other disciplines, there have really been no "schools" of personal money in the sense of the Jungian school or the Freudian school of psychology. Indeed, money seems to span political systems, survive cultural upheavals, and serve intrinsic function within all manners of social holons. However, in so doing, human beings seem to have functioned within different money systems during different times in different ways with different attitudes. We have assumed money as we have assumed air, water, fire, and earth. It is just part of our atmosphere, much like the air we breathe.

With regard to economic theories and the social and cultural quadrants, there have been some fierce disagreements. Most notable among these is the disagreement between the capitalist perspective and the communist and socialist schools of thought. This disagreement dominated the 20th century, involving everything from public policy to world war to grotesque campaigns of genocide. Ideologically, there are those who believe that individuals and society are responsible



for their economic circumstances; there are others who believe that social structures and systems control the plights of their constituency. Obviously, both are partially right in the sense that all competent individuals have a primary responsibility to self and the larger social systems they must function in. Yet these larger social systems are merely aggregates of individuals and have responsibilities to their incompetents.

Some try to anthropomorphize money, literally giving it powers of thought and intent. Many others assert that money has no consciousness of any sort. For them, it is ephemeral, essentially worthless immateriality upon which we have built modern human societies. To others, manners of reception generate nearly karmic qualities. This would include “blood money,” “love money,” or “dirty money.” Some say money is value neutral. Others, including me, find money to have high personal and cultural impact. Truly, none of these are without their genuine aspects.

Obviously, we can look at our relationships with money through all four quadrants and the other elements of Integral Theory; but money itself, as an artifact, has neither conscience nor regard for the suffering it inflicts or fails to alleviate, or the joys it brings about or represents. Money is merely what we humans make it to be. Yet certainly our relationships with money reflect Integral perspectives: Each quadrant, each level and line of development, our states of consciousness, and our psychological type play a part.

Let’s look at a few of the more common belief perspectives. Some observe that money generates conflict and fear as nothing else. They suggest that any notions of personal or cultural security through money vehicles are false. Others, paradoxically, observe that money engenders cooperation and personal security as nothing else.

Within these extremes, pontifications abound. These are the homilies of childhood and the firmly held belief systems of different levels of development. Within cultures, individuals, and



institutions, feelings flourish. Some of them literally take us to our own spiritual foundations. Some pass like a breeze.

Some say money is one of humankind's most important inventions. For them, money is our primary mode of interpersonal cooperation. Without it, they claim, civilization as we know it would not exist. Others think it stems from the devil himself. Each has a point. Without money enabling agreements across billions of transactions, civilization as we know it would be impossible; yet, without money's negatives, including temptations, abuses, overt falsities, fighters, robbers, cheaters, and so much more, who knows what life would be like? Many of us frequently wonder if money is worth the trouble. Then, as we ponder the alternatives, we must contemplate the impossibility of civilization even remotely as we know it without money.

For all the truth of the observation that money surrounds us as water to a fish, we understand but bits of it. From premise to perspective, few are dead wrong. All of us have a lot to learn.

An Integral perspective must address both money's blessings and money's ills. This means exploring money using Integral Theory's five elements: quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types. Part 1 of this article focused on the quadrants. Now we turn our attention to the other AQAL elements, beginning with levels.

Levels and Spiral Dynamics

Using Spiral Dynamics, we can view money through at least eight developmental levels (described below).¹ Not only has the way money been valued evolved historically from the Beige ν Meme (survival values) through the Second-Tier ν Memes (integral values), but each value system continues to manifest in each of us to the extent that we have stabilized its essential capacities.



Beige ^vMeme

“Don’t mess with my rice bowl.”

Humans begin their developmental journey at the Beige value meme, (hereinafter ^vMeme). At this level, survival instincts rule. Historically, no money was traded. But today we find money right there at the Beige ^vMeme survival level so much of the time for so many of us, in our businesses, our institutions, and non-dominant countries.

Most of us take money for granted and assume survival. Yet money is vulnerable—as are those unable to access it. Obviously, it is not realistic for six billion people to hunt and gather our collective physical necessities in the absence of money. In the 21st century so-called First World, money is quite literally our medium for accessing modern survival basics. Money worries can trip the same physiological responses as if we were being chased by a saber-toothed tiger. As such, money skills have become 21st century survival skills. As with all survival skills, their absence is no joke. Circumstances can be fatal, both literally and figuratively. Earning, investing, saving, insuring, debt control, perspective, values, intelligent purchasing, avoiding stupidity—all 21st century survival skills.

Purple ^vMeme

“Let us break bread together.”

The Purple value meme is the level of magic and tribal survival. The world is “a magical place alive with spirit beings and mystical signs.”² The group is valued more than the individual. Indeed, individuals at this level have trouble separating themselves from the group. We can relate this stage to bonding babies, some aspects of pagan cultures, and the camaraderie of athletic teams. For examples we can look to voodoo cultures, the early civilizations of the Mayans, Aztecs, and the ancient Egyptians, indigenous cultures of all sorts, the ancient Greeks,



and various forms of new age mysticism—namely those cultures who looked to all-powerful gods as sources of bounty and tragedy.³

Some contend that humanity's first money was grounded in the sacred. Whether this is literally or partially true, it is a fact that the term "money" has its roots in the name of the Greek goddess Juno Moneta. The first money mints were in the basement of her temple. Indeed, from ancient origins to present day, symbolic money has served as payments to priests, as commemoration of special events, as sacrifice. Even today, money tells us which tribe is ours. We can find money issues laced throughout Purple's cultural manifestations. Even today, money is inherently engaged in our relationships with our various tribes, including churches, civic groups, trade and professional associations, athletic teams, families, and places of work.

At the Purple ^vMeme, as with all levels, money operates in all four quadrants. Within them, money is the magic that binds six billion people in our global survival dance—one person, one transaction at a time. It is life's blood for the body social, giving rise to institutions and customs, distribution methods, ownership concepts, and, indeed, ownership itself. Teams count.

People operating from the Purple ^vMeme engage in supplication. They are conscious of prerational spirits and omens. Wise people within Purple cultures study the charts, look for signs, and ponder matters of risk. Primitive cultures used the word shamans to describe their wise ones. In modern times, we claimants to wise-one status call ourselves experts, commentators, or advisors.

Red ^vMeme

"It's my bread. I deserve it. I am eating all of mine, then I am taking yours. To heck with bread, I want meat."

Now we move toward the Red ^vMeme, the level of egocentrism, dictatorship, paternalism, and gangsterism.⁴ As humans emerged from council fires and the semi-domestic comforts of our



tribes, we began our pursuits of self. We sensed our uniqueness. We indulged our pride and relished our individual triumphs. We could utter the words “I am” and feel our emotions fully engage. We could also say things like “Because I said so,” “Because I am in charge here, that’s why,” and “Off with their heads.”

People with a center of gravity at the Red ^vMeme may articulate egotistically and remorselessly such phrases as “Survival of the fittest,” “It’s a jungle out there,” and “Only the strong survive.” We often find such sentiments especially in financial markets as well as historic power figures and two year-old humans.

Cultures with a center of gravity at the Red ^vMeme are in the realm of the mythic. Here, power vests in human authorities whose authority, in turn, is rooted in commonly accepted mythologies of power. This leads to kings, queens, overlords, chiefs, emperors, godfathers, and other channels of unearthly power. Power is no longer in other-worldly gods and goddesses but brought to earth through these human repositories of divine sanction. We can even see their images directly on the coins and bills of money. (This practice began with Phillip of Macedonia and continues to the present. Render unto Caesar....) For people seeing the world through Red values, money is power, power is might, and might makes right. At this level, money is a dominating transmitter of will and ego.

The Lower Left of the Red value meme does not involve voluntary agreements of the sort required for symbolic money such as those dominating the world today. Accordingly, money with Red ^vMeme social orders tends to be that which is immediately useful, inherently valued, and generally transportable.

However, from an Upper-Left perspective, symbolic money is wholly accessible to individuals whose personal values are grounded in the Red value meme. For them, money can be an awesome tool. Indeed, even folks who tend to operate at other levels find that money enables



them unreflective, unrepentant, powerful ego indulgence. If money enables survival and reflects tribal connections, it most certainly functions to enable self-indulgent and even self-destructive behaviors. The same money that can support art, health, and scholarship can as easily buy guns, sex, and drugs. Pick a sin. Someone will happily sell it to you.

Historically, there have been obvious links between money, war, and invasion. Army strength was a function of treasury strength and the converse is also true in many cases. Finances have dictated military possibilities throughout history. Though these have often been the folks that would rather steal wealth than generate it, they still needed to pay some bills. Treasury strength often reflected conquest success. Or, if the treasury was insufficient, stealing, cheating, and fraud were viable alternatives. Monetary history is replete with financial gimmickry and stymied will. Truthfully, though, wars are not good for most business. On the other hand, someone needs to keep the supply lines open.

The Red ^vMeme is ripe with a level of posturing and self-image. “Avoid shame, and do what you want.” Money enables the actualization of its holders’ primal wills. It doesn’t care if its holder has negative qualities or positive ones. If someone is selling and the other one has money, it can happen. Consequently, it is money’s nature to serve this stage loyally, efficiently, and effectively but not always peacefully or rationally. Money is obviously not evenly distributed; neither are the things that money can buy. For folks and communities functioning primarily at this stage, money enables indulgence and domination. For folks caring about fairness, money employed in this manner can generate anger and resentment. This can lead to direct responses including violence, revolutions, and work stoppages.

Blue ^vMeme

“Bread is best when you follow the recipe. This is how we make bread. Use these steps, this pan, this fire with these ingredients and these conditions. Just so.”



Money mixed with the Red worldview is fascinating. Ultimately, however, money mixed with people who are displaying unhealthy Red ν Meme behaviors is actually inefficient and harmful to a social order. Money ultimately demands order and law for basic function. People whose center of gravity is at the Red ν Meme have strong individualism that may generate economic expansion, but it also generates chaos and abuse. The first awakens. The latter becomes culturally intolerable.

Without law, markets lack effective contexts and controls. Without order, people cannot plan, prepare, or hope. In Spiral Dynamics, the fourth value structure focuses on standards and expectations. It grounds law and order. This is the Blue ν Meme.

The Blue ν Meme is as logical a response to the Red ν Meme excesses as the Red ν Meme was to the constraints of the Purple ν Meme. Though some cultures centered at the Red ν Meme endure forms of arguable order based on force and necessity, they are, for the most part, lawless and chaotic. Chaos is not good for children and other living things. More importantly for our purposes, chaos and money do not mix well at all. To function effectively, communally, and humanely, humans seem to need considerable amounts of reliable, predictable stability.

Red ν Meme egocentrism is great up to a point but it leaves many wanting. People tire of fear and unpredictability. They want to build lives around something reliable. This is tough in worlds run by Red ν Meme bullies, punks, egomaniacs, and thugs. These generate terror, anger, and constant fear. Moreover, it is inherently inefficient and unproductive. Remember who these people are—they operate from and for themselves. They are arbitrary and capricious in their use of force. Muscle is valued over brains.

The Blue ν Meme mindset tells us we need some rules if this world is going to work. People centered at the Blue ν Meme like law and order. They love rules, a sense of purpose, and notions of working within divine plans for the common good. From there, humans then seem innately



inclined to conclude we need rules and the rule of law. We need a sense of justice. We need to neutralize the constant states of fear prevailing in lawless societies.

Metaphorically speaking, we must “make the West safe for women and children.” So dreams of order materialize. Gradually, laws emerge. Law reflects mutual expectations. Law is the framework of most human economics. From the Blue Meme, we engage our miscellaneous systems for harvest, creation, manufacture, and distribution. Theoretically, then, law enables order, generates reasonable expectations and allocates loss, imposes sanctions, addresses major social issues such as health care and education, attends to the needs of the least among us, and facilitates the peaceful resolution of disputes. It enables answers to important, unavoidable questions fraught with potential violence: What does it mean to own? What rights do I have to be secure in my property and person? How do we transmit property ownership? What happens in the event of death or bankruptcy? What happens if I break the law? What is a contract? What are my rights to survival basics? What do I get from society because I am a human being living within it?

This is also when money transformed from tangible goods (spices, shells, etc.), metals, and scarce but attractive rocks to belief in the conceptual, intangible, symbolic, and easy to carry. So, for example, if the Knights Templar held a piece of paper attesting that it represented gold in its custody, you could bet the promise was good, that they had the gold, and would make sure it got to you upon demand. When that happened, well that piece of paper became “as good as gold.”

Likewise, when the Baker stored his gold at the Goldsmith’s instead of burying it next to some potatoes in his garden, the Goldsmith would give him something that said he was holding it. Of course, he took just a few specks of gold dust for his troubles. It was a service that allowed him to take his promise to the fellow who sold grain, and the Miller could take it to the Farmer, the Farmer could then take it to the teamster, who could take it to the Cartwright, who could take it to the Wheeler, who could take it to the Smith, who bought some of the Baker’s bread. This



virtuous circle not only created a passel of surnames, it worked flawlessly—at least so long as everybody knew that the gold was with the goldsmith, and that they could redeem the note promptly. Then Mr. Goldsmith realized that he could write more notes than he had gold so long as these folks believed he had the gold. Then he became a banker and the world had currency.

This sort of thing happened at different times in different ways throughout other parts of the world, such as Egypt, China, and Babylon among others. In each, Blue ^vMeme rules, Blue ^vMeme faith, and Blue ^vMeme belief enabled money as we now know it to generate the world's most powerful and pervasive secular force.

John Law, Scottish gambler in the French Court of the early 18th century, arguably the father of modern finance, took a look, learned about symbolic balloons, and generated new, albeit short-lived, levels of wealth creation. Adam Smith took a look, figured out that money was a key to “The Wealth of Nations,” and observed some of money's more extraordinary qualities, including his famed “invisible hand” and money's remarkable powers for merging social good with self-interest. Alexander Hamilton took a look, realized promises were promises, accepted the heat, and set the United States on course for unmatched wealth and prosperity. Karl Marx took a look, observed the perpetuation of class systems, and wrote world-changing notions of universal fairness and social responsibility.

Money as we know it today is a phenomenon of the Blue ^vMeme. In most respects, it works best for people who are operating from the Blue ^vMeme. But its full potential remains incomplete.

Orange ^vMeme

“My bread is best. It is the best tasting. It is the best for you. It is the best value. It is better than the old bread and we will make it better still.”

The Blue value meme was about groups. Yet some of us value our individuality. Though we appreciated the benefits of people behaving from Blue values and continued to rely upon them,



we resented the restraints that the Blue ^vMeme worldview imposed. These are the folks among us who care more about possibilities and opportunities than certainties. Some of us grasp rules but don't think they necessarily apply to us. Even so, we are more comfortable playing within them most of the time. Some of us believe in God but not necessarily the characteristics imputed to "Him." We like to win and we play to win. We take risks, we see our lives optimistically, and we believe we are self-reliant. This level is the Orange ^vMeme.

To quote Don Beck, the preeminent authority on Spiral Dynamics:

Orange is about advancement, improvement, and progress. Once again, you play out the Blue theme to its ultimate. You make it very, very successful and then what happens? The individual gets restless. 'But I'm an individual. I want to assert my personal autonomy.' 'No,' Blue says. 'You must stay in line and conform to the dictates of the system. Don't you want to go to heaven? Don't you want to have a retirement?,' and Orange says, 'Yes, but I think I can produce a heaven on earth. I think I can increase the size of the cake.' Thus we had the great Enlightenment, which is simply the individual spirit breaking free from what had become very restrictive forces.⁵

The Orange ^vMeme is where money plays hard. Money is no longer just about the game's rules, though it continues to need them. Money is the game. Money is also the prize. Winners live well.

However, money is not the only prize. Within Orange value structures, excellence and knowledge are valued for its own sake. This is about science and rationalism. It is about liberation from the constraints and restraints of orthodoxy. People who are centered at Orange may have an ego but it makes the world more interesting.

Here we do our work—most of us prefer to do it honestly and well. Most of us prefer to benefit people rather than harm them. People with a center of gravity at the Red ^vMeme do not reflect



upon their lives and meaning. They don't care, but people centered at the Orange ^vMeme do. At least we like to think we do.

Unfortunately, for those of us centered in Orange, "success" often means numbers measured in dollars (i.e., debt based fiat currencies and international trading currencies). Put to the test, success trumps compassion. If you can't count it in dollars, it does not count. Value the environment? How in the heck are we supposed to count that? Negatively impacting the lives of others with our quests for success? Excuse me, but that's not our problem.

The thing about money values of people operating from the Orange ^vMeme is its generation of visible wealth in ways unimaginable not so very long ago. Moreover, folks centered in this level are relatively oblivious to money's many negatives. They, too, are pervasive.

Green ^vMeme

"Everybody is entitled to bread. Rich, poor, sick, healthy, contributors, moochers, all races, all religions, all creeds, all ethnicities, all sexual orientations, all classes, all languages, all of us deserve bread. We should all share our bread. However, we don't particularly want to make bread ourselves or be around those who do. Bread making pollutes. Bread making contributes to global warming. Bread makers and sellers tend to operate hierarchically. Plus, they often use preservatives. That's really bad."

Accordingly, many of us take note and don't particularly like what we see. We want to be better people. We want to be fair, to appreciate the goodness in others, to respect the planet. We intellectually reject different treatments for apparently irrational reasons like skin color, religion, class, sex, and sexual orientation. It makes us angry. We see war and hope for peace. We see disrespect and crave respect for ourselves and others. We see humanity's impact upon the planet. It does not cheer us up. This level is the Green ^vMeme.



To quote Beck:

At its peak, Green is communitarian, egalitarian, and consensual. Without Orange we wouldn't have Green, because in Orange the inner being was bypassed and ignored. Our science left us numb, without heart and soul, and with only the outer manifestations of success. The 'good life' was measured only in materialistic terms. We discover that we have become alienated from ourselves, as well as from others. So Green, this fairly recent vMemetic code, began emerging about 150 years ago, out of the Ages of Industry, Technology, Affluence, and Enlightenment, to declare that in all of these undertakings, the basic human being has been neglected. The focus shifts from personal achievement to group- and community-oriented goals and objectives—for Green, we are all one human family.

Green begins by making peace with ourselves and then expands to looking at the dissonance and conflicts in society and wanting to make peace there, too, addressing the economic gaps and inequities created by Orange, and also by Blue and by Red, to bring peace and brotherhood so we can all share equally. Gender roles are derigidified, glass ceilings opened, affirmative action plans are implemented, and social class distinctions blurred. Spirituality returns as a nondenominational, nonsectarian 'unity.'⁶

On the other hand, individuals at the Green vMeme can get a bit bossy. They hate seeing folks enjoying the obviously insignificant and reserve special scorn for those who ignore the terribly important matters of our day: the environment, peace, and the various "isms." You know, "things that matter in words that must be said."⁷ People with Green values can engage in endless dialogue and be highly critical of their critics.



Individuals and organizations with many employees centered at the Green ^vMeme can become anti-money. Green values can potentially slide into what Ken Wilber calls “Boomeritis.” Wilber has also coined the phrase “the Mean Green Meme” or “MGM” in honor of its intolerance of intolerance.

People with Green values have attempted to link compassion and money. The “non-profit” is a perfect example of doing compassionate business that is not driven by assertive Orange ^vMeme greed. Money seems to be the answer to the world’s problems—if only the alleged selfish holders of money would share their money more readily. People with Green values give scant attention to money’s needs and structure. It is perfectly willing to tamper with notions of property ownership, using force if need be, to reallocate resources to satisfy its own need to see its version of justice done. It is generally oblivious to the cultural impact of money’s efficacy.

People operating from the Green ^vMeme continue to explore ways for us to share and love with money even though they don’t quite understand how money works. They see money’s obvious flaws and faults; and they are not quite sure of the alternatives. Moreover, notwithstanding some protestations to the contrary, people at the Green ^vMeme do not really want to work with people who have a center of gravity at the Blue ^vMeme or Orange ^vMeme. This is a problem.

First-Tier Problems

“You can’t cook bread on Sunday. How much of your bread do you give to the poor? Why can’t we just share our bread and all get along? So give me some of your bread. Your bread tastes horrible. Your mother’s bread tastes worse. My bread tastes best and it is also the healthiest. Don’t talk about my mother.”

Indeed, communication difficulties constitute a substantial deficiency with the first six stages of Spiral Dynamics (First Tier). Some view emergence as a level’s rejection of the previous level’s primary flaws. This means that people centered at the Purple ^vMeme value the security that



people at the Red ^vMeme reject in search of personal satisfaction that people at the Blue ^vMeme reject as dangerous and unpleasant in search of law and order that individuals at the Orange ^vMeme reject as bland, restrictive, and boring in search of personal achievement, production, and excellence that people at the Green ^vMeme reject as selfish, dangerous, and arrogant in search of freedom, caring, harmony, and sharing.

Truth be told, many of us just can't stand each other. This is difficult inasmuch as we share our problems. Such mutual intolerance makes it difficult or impossible to answer the hard questions: What is the relationship between personal and cultural responsibility and accountability? Is debt-based, fiat currency even ultimately capable of addressing or redressing cultural issues? What is the proper relationship between money and the meaning of life?⁸ What are our responsibilities to the least capable among us? What are our responsibilities to provide the certainties that sound money apparently requires?

First Tier exemplifies emergence. We can see action and reaction. We can easily watch money go from survival basics to trade to fiat to intangible belief, law, and order to reward for excellence and achievement to a source of sharing and compassion and judgment and punishment. We see each of these qualities within our current economies and within ourselves. Money, for all its power and imperfections, reflects the spiral almost perfectly. Now what!?

Second Tier

“Everybody really is entitled to bread—at least the basic minimum. It is nice to see all the breads of the world—even better to eat them—with some great butter or fresh cinnamon. Isn't it interesting how bread helps us understand the world? Isn't it extraordinary how profitable it can be to bake and sell superb product? The better bread I bake, the more I sell; the more I sell, the more I share, and the more I, in my turn, can give away. Thank God for the blessing of bread for which we are truly grateful. It will nourish me for this morning's conference call. I wonder how we can make more of it better.”



This brings us to Second Tier. These are the folks who can relate effectively with the first six Memes and take multiple perspectives. With only a reported 2.5 percent of individuals purportedly functioning at Second Tier, money has not evolved to reflect its qualities of universal appreciation as well as universal care. At this level, we can see the imperatives of survival; the joys of being members of our groups; our needs to be fully ourselves and to care for ourselves; the beauties of law, order, and meaning; the necessity of playing for success and excellence (without being attached to outcomes); and the urgencies of caring, sharing, and right living. This blend enables us to think organically and holistically, which is to say, integrally. We see the value and contribution of each level of the spiral without absolutizing any single view.

Here, we appreciate chaos and change as part of the process of emergence. We appreciate peace but understand the need to resist aggression and manipulation. We are simultaneously flexible, functional, responsible, and spontaneous. While we play fair and hard and appreciate mutual inquiry, we also appreciate decisiveness. Most importantly, we think integrally, systemically, and creatively without First-Tier fears. But Second-Tier pathologies are emerging as well. Since we can't see ourselves particularly well, who knows what will come? Still, Second-Tier thinkers may enable us to view money with necessary clarity and insight.

Again, Don Beck:

[Clare Graves] finally came to the conclusion that something unique was happening here that didn't appear to be just the next step up from the Green level. It seemed to be a new category. Life Conditions that would require this new thinking complexity that he observed three decades ago have finally appeared on the scene. But his observations were way before the microchip, before the end of the Cold War, and before the discovery of DNA and molecular biology.



So Graves sensed that a change of a profound nature was occurring, one that was beyond the sum total of the first six vMemetic systems combined. Now that, of course, was a theory. But as we look at the extraordinary complexity we are facing, this theory seems to gain more and more credibility. Because now we can see the planet from the moon, and now we have these wonderful scanning devices and satellites that can even penetrate beneath surfaces, and for the first time we can begin to understand the planet itself as a total ecosystem in a way that was never possible before. Together with that, the world in which we now live is struggling with the appearance of all of the vMemetic cultural expressions at once—ethnic tribes, egocentric warlords, both dangerous and redemptive ‘isms,’ a whole plateful of opportunists and materialists-in-the making, and a host of postmodern egalitarian political, religious, and professional structures—oh my, it makes a grown man want to weep. What do we do?⁹

Indeed. And money is right smack in the middle of it.

Lines

Lines are the third aspect of AQAL. Within Integral Theory, lines represent different aptitudes. For example, lines include values, morals, music, art, social interaction, or spiritual capacities.

One critical aspect of lines is that each individual has different line aptitudes. The science genius may have the ethical maturity of a pit bull. An extraordinary musician may have no social skills whatsoever. Both may excel at athletics. Neither may be spiritually developed but both may be intellectually proficient. Neither may be able to raise children effectively. Different strokes (aptitudes that is), different lines.

Identifying the lines most pertinent to an Integral Finance is fertile territory for exploration and theory. Still, we are not clueless in our anticipations. Extrapolating from Integral Theory, we can



anticipate exploring how lines of development affect money and financial theory as we continue our explorations. We can anticipate that these explorations will engage other Integral Institute Centers and their work.

As we might infer from other sections, lines involving money permeate the human experience. There are countless money aptitudes, personal developments, and financial product evolution. There are loosely identifiable psychological types whose relationships with money are grossly dissimilar. Some psychologists have even created money personalities out of saving and spending proclivities. Others note the importance of “money scripts” and early childhood money messages.

Money laces throughout ecology and sustainability; it is an issue in spirituality and, of course, is a key element of business, medicine, criminal justice, and education. I have hypothesized that money is itself a line—but that is for another day. For now, we can simply glance at the lines within each quadrant.

For example, in the Upper Left, we can explore various interior aspects of individuals, such as how cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and moral capacities interface with money. Also, there are the intimate lines of personal psychology and spirituality as they manifest in an individual’s value choices and relationships. Here we may also expect deeper inquiry into such diverse areas as buying preferences, relationships, and decision-making processes. These decision-making processes, in turn, include such critical areas as child-rearing, residential location, education, and career decisions, or the thought methods employed (or not) in maximizing one’s personal self-interest as presumed by economists. Current research into behavioral economics and happiness studies will fit here.

In the Lower Right, we can look toward social lines of development as they manifest in markets, consumers, individual products and their developments, sales processes, and industries of various



sorts. This will include critical laws of daily impact, including taxation, bankruptcy, torts, contracts, intellectual property, and consumer protection. They will also engage social structures currently dependent upon international trading currencies such as education, healthcare, criminal justice, and transportation.

Lines within the Lower Right will necessarily engage money itself as it manifests socially. These will also look at international trading currencies, their strengths and vulnerabilities. Clearly then, this exploration will look to other options including various sorts of complementary currencies.

Perhaps most importantly, we will need to look at lines within our “We,” our social/cultural body. Here our collective “We” will be forced to confront money in all of its glorious implications. Line inquiry will enable us to examine the nature of our money beliefs and how they feed into other cultural ideas. Perhaps these inquiries will even enable examination of heretofore unexamined social constructs.

Perhaps our most fertile lines for exploration will be in the virtually unexplored territory of the Lower Left. This will include the various lines emerging from an undifferentiated marsh giving rise to significant socio-political issues. These include such cultural monsters as aging, health and medicine, education, ecology, sustainability, intercultural strife, business and business forms, transportation modes, food and water, crime, drugs—all critical issues confronting the body social.

Lines enable us to get specific. Within each quadrant and level, we will be able to engage in comprehensive yet discreet inquiry into money and our various relationships with it—individually, culturally, and socially.



States

AQAL suggests that we check in with states. Within individuals there are three primary states: waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Money issues may interfere with dreaming or be the stuff of them.

With the waking state, however, money issues abound and constantly confront. They are also complex and demand integration with such related disciplines as psychology, sociology, religion, etc. Culturally, we find money everywhere challenging our notions of what it means to be human, what it means to be fulfilled, and, in fact, what is the purpose of life? “He who dies with the most toys wins” is a cynical half-truth but not an alien one. It is constantly blared by various media. “Worth” seems to be a particularly money-centric term.

First, let us recognize that money takes upon the guise of secular religion. As with religion, money is a matter of belief. As with religion, it requires others. As with religion, money is subject to assorted common orthodoxies of belief and practice.

Money, for all of its imperfections, acknowledges our oneness. It binds us together through acts and beliefs. What else beats swords into plowshares? What else induces the lambs and lions to lie with each other for the purpose of doing each other great favors? We can easily see money’s powers to hurt and wound. Can we as easily see that money brings us into each others’ stories? That money is our most important medium for sharing our best?

Money also requires us to look at ourselves. Who are we as we go about our process of attaining it? What are we doing to access it? What are we giving of ourselves? How are we spending the days of our lives in so doing? Then, what about others? How are we sharing? Are we seeing poverty or plenty? Fear or hope? Faith and gratitude, or dread and bitterness?



For most of us, money is a huge aspect of our waking states. What we do (for money) can ground our identities and what we want to be. When we “grow up,” money can ground our most critical life choices. Our perceptions of vocational triumphs frequently define our notions of personal “success,” for these often constitute our self-image.

We may also find money-based issues driving our imaginations and our deepest fears: aging and personal maturation; our sense of risk, obligation and responsibilities; commitments to uses of time; courses of action. For most adults, money issues are at their heart.

This situation is mirrored culturally. There are moods, attitudes, cultural value systems, and money-based issues within given social units. These lead to intriguing social/cultural ramifications. Bernard Lietaer suggests that money has “yang” (dominant international trading currencies) or “yin” (local, complementary currencies) qualities that qualify their ramifications for those they touch.¹⁰ Commentators frequently anthropomorphize markets, ascribing to them moods and emotions. Political bodies argue about public will in reference to money issues.

Indeed, it may well be that one of the greatest sociocultural challenges of the next several decades will be to look into our souls to examine our relationships with money and the unlimited possibilities for what money can become.

Types

Similarly, Integral Theory suggests that we consider all types. Given that money permeates virtually the whole of humanity in this 21st century, there is an array of types we could study. We could look at distinctions between class, race, religions, geographical circumstance, degrees of reliance upon money (or not), family structure, or circumstances of health and age—and on and on. Within the broad category of types we can also look at types of money, types of economies, types of markets. The list is endless. Suffice to say that virtually all differences between human beings are generally reflected in their relationships with money and the money forces.



While all of these are appropriate for study and conversation, this is especially poignant regarding the typological distinctions between the sexes. Historic roles, implications of biology, children, aging, work, and expectations—they are all here. Let's take a brief look.

Most folks think that men and women have considerably different attitudes towards money. Most also think the money forces impact men and women in a different ways. Truly, this is a huge topic that touches many other disciplines as well as emotional nerves. For our purposes here, we will paint with the broadest of brushes.

Economics and money takes us through the different roles of men and women within the multitudes of human economic systems. It begins with the differences between hunters and gatherers and their implications for early social structures. It moves through the roles of child-bearing and child care to include practical limitations on female participation in food creation processes. Ken Wilber has written about the extraordinary repercussions of simple cultivation tools—hoes versus plows—even upon a society's perceptions of deity. Pregnant women can use hoes; they cannot use heavier plows without great risks. Societies that employed a hoe had female deities. For the most part, plow-using societies did not.

Relationships between money, child-bearing, and child-rearing continue through all levels to the present day. For millennia, children were a family's dominant form of financial plan. The death of a child had rippling implications for old-age and illness. More children equaled more wealth and security. "Retirement" plans included generational supports. Marriage, as an institution, solidified alliances and enabled family as the premier entity of social stability.

Marriage was also the primary financial plan for many women. Prevailing power dynamics put economic power in the hands of men regardless of personality, abusive qualities, or even reliability. The implications for women in such situations were too often horrific.



Conversely, modern folks generally perceive children as net economic detriments to their parents. Children interfere with modern money earning from child care, to housing, food, and clothing costs, to education, and time consumption. Survey after survey shows the burdens of child-bearing and child-rearing tend to fall disproportionately upon females. These same surveys continue to confirm income gaps between men and women notwithstanding legal injunctions for equal treatment. Again, as with hoes versus plows, the socio-economic implications for men and women are enormous.

Today, sex differences and money are huge. Studies show that married men have best overall wealth and health. Women with young children have the least. Single women without children, however, tend to earn more than men working the same jobs. Men still work jobs more likely to result directly in death or in reduced life spans.¹¹ While longer life span for females has its attractions, the aging and death processes are expensive. Women's longer life spans and related diseases have enormous consequences for both individuals and societies. Longer life is a hazard to financial sufficiency. Simply put, longer lives place extra pressure on personal savings and retirement plans because there are more years that personal support is entirely dependent upon financial assets as opposed to earned income. Additionally, the diseases of aging can be long and expensive.

Life span and earning differentials exacerbate sex type issues. Men generally perceive legitimate abilities to work for more money for longer durations of their lives. "What, me worry?!"¹² I will just work a while longer and die younger. Fast—from a heart attack. Financial planners perceive nearly universal pathology differences: men have crises of meaning; women fear becoming bag-ladies. This generates men's attitude for risk that is considerably at odds with the female fear of dying old, poor, and alone. Apparently, law cannot create equal lives.

There have been vast legal differences between men and women with big money ramifications. In many societies, women have had no ownership rights. In others, common death transfer



customs have transmitted most property to sons or husbands. In others, women literally are property. Dowries, bride price, differing implications for infidelity—all have reflected type distinctions.

Muscles, children, sex roles, life spans, legal distinctions, and gender roles have traditionally combined to create different relationships with money for men and women. Warren Farrell, for example, unravels many prevailing money myths. He gets behind the numbers to look at non-discriminatory explanations for apparent inequalities. He observes these most commonly involve life choices, not prejudiced hiring decisions.¹³ As noted above, these issues are as big as they get. As with so much of money, they demand a transdisciplinary approach.

These are dominant topic areas for addressing sex types and money. Clearly, this omits much that is of both historic significance and cultural shame. Though this short discussion does scant justice to the subject of male-female money distinctions, it is fair to note that they exist and they are vast. It is a subject that has consumed considerable energy over the past century. It continues to do so.

Masculine and feminine gender distinctions also go to money's essence. Money theorist, Bernard Lietaer, posits that there are masculine and feminine money forms. He further observes that money's fundamental principles of agreement and belief apply to an array of currency forms. Indeed, these principles can be expanded in infinite ways to create financial artifacts with masculine or feminine qualities. Unfortunately, these qualities are substantially out of balance.

Lietaer observes that today's dominant international trading currencies are, for the most part, debt-based fiat currencies. These currencies are highly "masculine" or "yang" in nature. They reflect masculine qualities of efficiency, strength, and agency. Such currencies accommodate trading functions quite nicely. Conversely, they do social work badly. They lack "feminine" or "yin" qualities of care, large picture efficacy, and compassion. Unfortunately, he observes, these



currencies have dominated for several thousand years. It was not always thus. Nor need it be this way from here on in.

This brings us to the issue of “complementary” currencies or new types of money designed to complement the dominant international trading currencies for addressing issues these dominant currencies tend to do poorly.

Complementary money forms are not a fad. They go back thousands of years in different cultures. In contemporary times, the small country of Bali has employed a two currency “yin-yang” system for upwards of one thousand years. Even Switzerland has operated a two currency system for quite some time. At last check, there are over four thousand complementary currencies operating in the world. Their numerical growth has been exponential.

The possibilities for complementary currencies are far ranging. Here, we can only touch on the high points. For example, currencies have evolved with designs for accomplishing particular functions. Such functions range from various forms of compassion (e.g., Japan’s firieu kippu focusing upon elder care, to currencies that bolster local economies (e.g., Boulder dollars), to currencies that encourage time trading and talent sharing (e.g., Ithaca time dollars/Bali), to currencies that simply encourage resource sharing (e.g., LETS systems), and all the way to currencies whose primary function is to flatten the volatility of the primary international trading currencies (e.g., the Terra).

Indeed, modern ingenuity has generated thousands of complementary currencies. It is creating unique ways to enjoy money’s qualities for generating cooperation, reciprocity, and creativity. We anticipate continued increases in the complementary currency approach. I further believe that Integral approaches will facilitate currency-oriented imagination and designs, especially as our conversations begin to address the social shortcomings of dollars, euros, and yen. There are



numerous possibilities for mixing money's attributes with complementary currencies and creative Second-Tier thinking. It will be fascinating to see what emerges.

Types give us a chance to recap the Integral approach. Notice how types bring quadrants, lines, and levels each to bear. For each of these issues, we can look at money from our individual or "I" perspectives as masculine or feminine, and how it affects our sense of right and wrong in the Upper Left. Then, we can see how it plays into our cultural relationships with others through family, groups, political entities, work, unions, professions, and so forth in our "We" aspects (Lower Left). These are both interior exercises. Then we can note implications for our outward selves and what can be seen about the "It" aspects of our personal property (Upper Right) and the "Its" aspects of larger social forces (Lower Right).

We can grasp money's Integral nature by acknowledging egocentric, ethnocentric, worldcentric, and beyond; interior and exterior dimensions; and the importance of the self and its relationships with others across lines, states, and types. Truly, the money forces are formidable, ubiquitous, and amazing.



Endnotes

¹ Beck & Cowan, *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering values, leadership and change*, 1996

² Roemischer, "The never-ending upward quest: The practical and spiritual wisdom of Spiral Dynamics; An interview with Don Beck," 2002, p. 19

³ Not all aspects of these cultures come out of the Purple value system.

⁴ These are all pathological expressions of Red values. There are also many healthy expressions of Red. Here I am simply outlining the limitations of each level of development.

⁵ Roemischer, "The never-ending upward quest: The practical and spiritual wisdom of Spiral Dynamics; An interview with Don Beck," 2002, p. 14

⁶ Roemischer, "The never-ending upward quest: The practical and spiritual wisdom of Spiral Dynamics; An interview with Don Beck," 2002, p. 15

⁷ Simon, "The dangling conversation," 1967

⁸ Term originally popularized by Needleman, *Money and the meaning of life*, 1993

⁹ Roemischer, "The never-ending upward quest: The practical and spiritual wisdom of Spiral Dynamics; An interview with Don Beck," 2002, p. 24

¹⁰ Lietaer, *Mystery of money*, 2002

¹¹ Farrell, *The myth of male power*, 2001

¹² Popular quotation by the fictional character, Alfred E. Neuman, from *Mad* magazine.

¹³ Farrell, *Why men earn more: The startling truth behind the pay gap—and what women can do about it*, 2005



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