

Integral in Progress - #1 - The 4 Quadrants

I don't want to waste words, your time, or my fingers, so let's get into this.

We have to really start with basic assumptions about the nature of reality which we need to assume based upon everything we can perceive and understand in all domains of human knowledge and discovery. These are not crazy assumptions.

We can agree as our first assumption, most of us, that there is information we can perceive that is external to us as well as information internal to us. There is an “out there” that has information irrespective of our existence, as well as an “in here” that has information that cannot be found “out there”. In addition to that, there is both singular modes (a single group of one) and plural or collective modes (a single group of many) this information can exist in.

(arbitrarily chosen orientation)

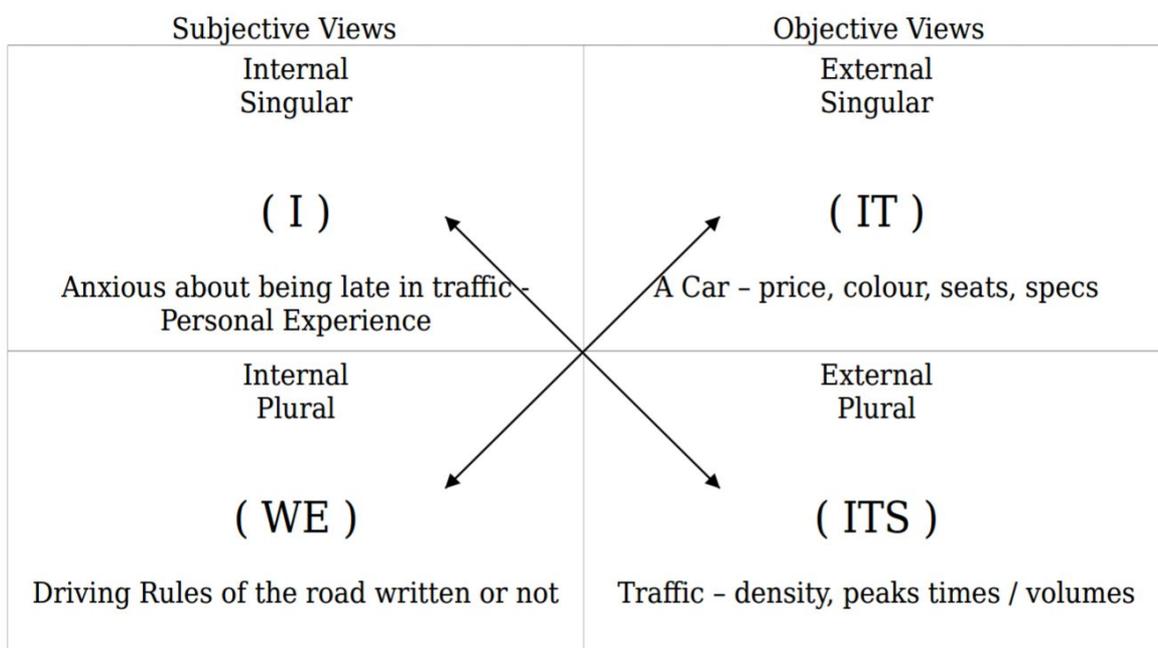
Internal	External	Singular
		Plural

This then allows us to look at the two types of information in two different modes (above); creating a matrix with the following four quadrants:

Internal Singular	External Singular
Internal Plural	External Plural

The Objective Info:

The information on the right hand side is an objective space. This is where science excels and rightfully so. We could look at the upper right for example, the External Singular. This is simply some single object that you can point to; a tree, a car, a neuron, an "it". Science kicks ass here because it allows us to interpret some important information. This information is what we can measure, the world of numbers; things like dimensions, weight, density, or price. The lower right quadrant, the External Plural, gives additional objective info not found in the singular objective. This information, is about many objects interacting within a singular collective system; the eco-system, the traffic systems, or our bodily systems to make the same comparison. Each of these two quadrants bring unique perspective which add different yet important information to create an objective view of the world.



The Subjective Info:

The right-side, externally Objective, space is the Quantitative world, where the internal-left, in contrast, is a world for the Qualitative or Subjective. This is where science cannot go, a space undefined by numbers. In the Upper Left, are the personal beliefs and feelings around a topic; feelings, emotions, interpretations, narratives. This information is non-physical yet is ever present in our awareness and impacts our lives. The lower left, the Internal Plural, likewise gives non-physical information though it is a singular collective system of interaction normally called culture; a country's culture, driving culture, religious culture, or family culture for example. Each of these two left hand quadrants presents different subjective info which together give a subjective view of the world.

What is important to remember is that each quadrant presents specific information not found in the other quadrants, yet each of them, plays an important role. These are

fundamentally non-reducible although people tend to reduce them to their favourite one. These different domains occur simultaneously.

We can now perceive greater information from the created four-quadrant map. Just before moving on, to reiterate the same information in a more clear, relatable, and memorable way for the layman or non-academic, the quadrants show us the following:

The Self perception of things	The Nature of things
The Culture of things	

In a simplified way we could say that in any one moment all of these quadrants are present and provide information that is unique. Everything, Everyone, in every moment, has some aspect of Self, Culture, and Nature. Furthermore, to only look at one part is to ignore other very valid domains of information and knowledge handicapping your ability to perceive a more complete picture of the reality we're in. Self, Culture, and Nature.

Let's look at a couple quick examples to try to clear any muddied waters. In each case below, follow around the quadrants seeing the different yet real parts of an event.

Going on vacation to Fiji

(I – Self) Excited for Vacation Nervous about flying	(It – Nature) (Object) Plane - Boeing 747 Price / Date / Seat number
(WE – Culture) Who boards first What to not say and not bring on a flight	(ITS – Nature) (Systems) Airport and plane systems Payment systems

Someone cut you off in traffic

(I – Self) Angry at the other driver You should have been first	(It – Nature) (Object) Car make and model Licence plate Speed
(WE – Culture) Rules of the road How to treat others	(ITS – Nature) (Systems) Road and traffic systems Vehicle systems (breaking)

So, with this simple idea, one can apply these different yet important perspectives to how something is. The practice of seeing and interpreting information in this way allows one to see different faces or sides to one event or item. With greater practice noticing what information comes from without and what information comes from within will become more natural and will allow one to understand with greater nuance the “Big Three” areas of life, Self, Culture, and Nature.