

## Swimming in Wilber's World (Disorienting Generalisations)

What fascinates me most about Wilber is his ability to use what he calls 'orienting generalisations' to construct such an impressively integrated view of reality. My own bias, as a biologist, is the idea that we construct our individual worlds, in language, by a fundamentally emotional process which partially blinds us from seeing its operation. I always wonder about the language being used. The word, reality, for example, is simply an explanatory idea for me and does not refer to something that exists independently of us - an argument often used to persuade or impose upon others. Is Wilber using the word, reality, to share with me his experience of living or is he using it to try to convince me to believe in a particular reality of which he seems so certain? The way in which he handles criticism interests me. He seems to be able to 'orient' it away.

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1

One day I saw an holon  
It was up there in the sky  
How beautiful the physiosphere  
Glimpsed with the naked eye

I gazed at it and wondered  
Could it help me understand:  
Infinity in an hour  
Blake's 'world in a grain of sand'?

I knew it was a holon  
For as near as I could tell  
'Twas inside another holon  
And outside one as well

And this brought me some comfort  
As I brushed my teeth that night

2

*I saw another holon too  
That looked remarkably like you  
And in a biospheric glory  
It told a rather fancy story*

*Of what was wrong and what was right  
Of many thinkers not too bright  
How everything is made to fit  
Procrustes would have relished it*

*It bothered me this tidy sorting  
In my head the fiends cavorting  
Said the doctrine you've been taught  
Is that final words are a last resort*

I wondered what was residued  
When everything was said  
And this troubled me a little  
As I got into bed

3

Then I saw some holons  
In the noosphere connected  
Their intersubjectivity  
Their we-ness I respected

I had a swimming feeling  
As I drifted into sleep  
And questions, warnings, questions  
Lured me in too deep

The noosphere begins with no  
But stays alive with yes's  
Somehow it seemed dangerous  
To make too many guesses

A largely linear logic  
Enriched with states and streams  
Illuminates the flatland  
May even touch our dreams

It helps avoid confusion  
Of the inside with the out  
But the tidier the argument  
The more there is to doubt

Archaic to holonic  
From survival to the mesh  
We yearn for vision logic  
And each yearning makes us fresh

To slip between the quadrant lines  
To where the arrows meet  
Ascending and descending  
Toward the judgment's seat

A framework structures thinking  
And points beyond its arrows  
We notice what it might expand  
Forgetting what it narrows

Quadruple evolution  
As a way to see the whole  
Might do more for conversation  
Than it sheds light on our soul

*Though I tried to face the fact  
That God has finally been unpacked  
My eco/ego conflicts said  
We will continue in your head*

4  
And when I could no longer  
Bear the dizziness of knowing  
I dived into the Kosmos  
And, with just my toenails showing

*I heard the water's singing sound  
In Wilber's World had I drowned?  
Yes, it was some angels singing  
Or my mobile faintly ringing*

In this sound of heavenly voices  
I dared not say as Faust had done  
"Linger for thou art so fair"  
Lest Mephisto says "I've won!"

There was no answer to my questions  
In not knowing was I free  
To live today in simple wonder  
I, we, it and you and me?

5  
*Then I awoke with a woozy head  
And knowing that I wasn't dead  
Went on my uncertain way  
Left Wilber to his eager play*

But though I seem to go on thinking  
That we cannot know for sure  
I admire his hours of labour  
And his glorious metaphor

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In fairness to Wilber, I include the following paraphrased summary from a Wilber/Cohen dialogue in WIE(What is Enlightenment).

"...so if you're on a spiritual path, at any level, and you're actually attuned to the authentic moment itself whenever it occurs, you're going to be riding the edge of evolution. You're going to be sitting on the edge of that chaotic, frothy emergence, both helping and seeing new structures of consciousness unfold..... So you're actually watching your own subjective and inter-subjective collective structure-building occurring. But we're all sort of groping our way into it. New inter-subjective structures have to be built and we don't quite know what those are, yet. And so there's this trial-and-error process, where you try to build these structures and hope that they get laid down in some way.....if you're building inter-subjective structures, to the extent that they do get built, they'll stick because structures are permanent....."

"Helping people to see what structures already exist that they weren't aware of before, but through that same insight, also making it possible for new structures to be created....."