

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.

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

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....."