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4 Sara Ross

03/01/07 12:32PM



In response to Edward Berge (3)

hahahahaha great mid-day belly laugh - thanks Edward!

pressed between meetings, will chime in later!



private

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5 Mark Edwards

03/04/07 8:03AM



of TOEs and A-(w)holes

In response to Edward Berge (3)

Thanks for that one Edward. Cheered me up after reading the news.



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6 Tom Murray

03/07/07 1:16PM



In response to Alan Kazlev (1)

Alan, thanks for doing to work to count yourself among the few who have actually read some of the book (I'm not a member :-). And thanks for the summaries, I was comforted to see support for my preconceptions!

I agree RE Laszlo (even not seeing the book, other things I have read by him put his approach in a certain category shared by other authors I have read); but not as much RE Wilber. (Both authors provides real meaning and inspiration for many, which is enough for me to support their continued work.)

RE: "[Lazslo's theory] is too simple (tries to explain too much) and ...Wilber goes the exact opposite direction; everything is buried under a landslide of details and more details; with each iteration his theory becomes more complex, so that in the end no-one (except Wilber himself!) can understand it." The basic ideas behind the AQAL model are quite digestible. Yes, it is a machine with about 20 moving parts, but not hundreds, and Wilber and II have been working hard on producing many thousands of acolytes from the ranks of the cultural creative and business/leadership communities (green and orange). the AQAL core is not that esoteric or baroque (and it seems to be useful enough to many to put the time into learning how to drive something with 20 moving parts to keep track of).

Also as someone who has read a lot of Wilber, including the most recent stuff, I can say that I find his evolving thought continues to refine things in a way that feels like increasing depth and elegance, not out of control complexity and details.

I do think the model has some fundamental problems (as many of us do), and agree with you that "Truth transcends the intellect".



private

7 Tom Murray

03/07/07 1:19PM

In response to Sara Ross (2)

RE SR: "Are theorists, whoever they are, "given permission" to be in developmental

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processes themselves? Wilber perhaps more than any theorist, has been publicly going through various processes, maybe developmental maybe not, with AQAL." I love this question! It points to the possibility of more humble, more accurate forms of knowledge building. I would love to hear more well-known theorists be explicit that "I learned from reading so-and-so" and "I changed my mind" and "this is where my expertise runs short"... Maybe some would argue that this is fluff and backpedaling takes away from the literary power of a thesis. But I think its an essential step forward.



private



8

Sara Ross

03/07/07 11:06PM



In response to Tom Murray (7)

Yes, agree. And as I read your response and re-saw my own question, and Jonathan's observation in the Anderson forum (about that forum and this one) came back to mind, I looked in the mirror they provided, and they all gelled into new questions at new levels of ownership (for me).

Do I and do we, could I and could we, here, give myself/ourselves permission to be in the "open mode" of developmental processes in the course of our interchanges... like Tom's examples "I learned from ..." "I changed my mind when..." etc.?

And (or) if I/we would say, well, there has not been anything provocative enough or curious enough to feel as though this was anything more than - as Jonathan said - a pretty ordinary discussion, as compared to an inquiring dialogue - what might I/we do to shift that?

After looking in that mirror and these Qs, I am reflecting on how I have or have not been in open mode, learning mode, inquiring and sharing mode.

One thing I was reflecting on earlier today was how little personal sharing we have done... a "price we pay" when the starting point is someone else's thinking (via an article)? Is this a price that has to be paid? Is there a way to incorporate what it *means* to us that we think, or believe, this or that? Like, what's at stake for me, that it is important that I believe or think such-and-such?

I will try to take fruits from this set of musings over to the "Foundationalism" exchange.

Sara



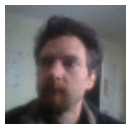
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9

Alan Kazlev

03/08/07 8:11PM



In response to Tom Murray (6)

Hi Tom,

You said: The basic ideas behind the AQAL model are quite digestible. Yes, it is a machine with about 20 moving parts, but not hundreds, and Wilber and I have been working hard on producing many thousands of acolytes from the ranks of the cultural creative and business/leadership communities

I have no problem there. Like you I find the basic AQAL model (Wilber-IV) with its quadrants and levels and so on, pretty easy to follow (although more complex than the very simple Wilber I and II). It's no more complex than, and in fact resembles in different ways, Steiner's esotericist philosophy of rounds and epoches and physical-etheric-astral

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and so on, or even more so Edward Haskell's Unified Science with its 9 co-action alternatives and its kingdoms and strata and substrata. And I *do* greatly respect the work that KW and I-I have done in trying to apply these ideas on a practical level, going beyond just theory.

My comments however were inspired by the fact that often when I have critiqued KW, people who are more familiar with his work than I, they may be students of him or not, will say "yes but that's not what Ken says at all". This has made me think that I don't understand him after all (despite the straightforward nature of AQAL, etc), and if I don't it's because his ideas must be too elaborate or subtle or detailed and nuanced. I do greatly welcome this sort of feedback and always try to incorporate it in my later work, but it does make me wonder if anyone really understands Wilber. Perhaps he has certain ideas but has difficulties putting them down on paper; e.g. in response to my comment #7 in the "Opening Question--What is a Theory of Everything?" Thread, on basing an Integral paradigm on Aurobindo, Teilhard, Whitehead, etc, Sara (comment #16) distinguished between the process view of those philosophers, and the thing-based view of AQAL.

And I certainly agree with her that AQAL, as presented, is very much based on a thing or structure perspective. Because there are such and such categories and levels, very much putting things in boxes, rather than a process perspective. This also seems to be the case with Wilber-V, which adds 8 perspectives to the 4 quadrants, but the 8 perspectives don't make it simpler, they make it ...more...



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Tom Murray

03/14/07 5:13PM



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In response to Alan Kazlev (9)

Wilber is not unlike many other famous/infamous thinkers. Non-famous thinkers spend exorbitant amounts of time debating what the famous ones actually meant. I am always reading something that explains how the common person's or accepted academic understanding of Freud, Darwin, or Descartes is misconceived. Professional philosophers will forever argue over what Hegel or Plato really meant. People's world-views are really complex, and their ideas evolve. And anything they write does not capture the full force of their understanding--the semi-coherent inner world they spent decades developing. On rare occasions one can point out a flaw in the reasoning or something they have not considered, but more often than not when they are asked about what seems like a hole in their statement or theory they answer to show that their understanding of that statement or theory actually satisfactorily includes the concern. Or they explain it from a different angle so the concern is addressed. 99% of the time its the interpretation of their understanding that is limited, not their understanding itself.

Of course, all theories and world-views are limited and perspectival--none are "true" in a sense. And it is critique, dialog, and multiple perspectives that moves understanding along. But when someone claims flatly that one of these guys is "wrong" its usually a straw-man argument. A simplistic over- or under-interpretation that allows for problems that don't exist in the full understanding of the main theorist.

I've read a fair amount of Wilber (am not an expert like some) and have listened to dozens of hours of Wilber talking to others from online audios. And I have found that for just about every thing Wilber writes that seems simplistic or wrong (to me) he has addressed it in some other venue in an in depth and acceptable way. Wilber does set himself up for critique however because he likes to propose categorical schemes, is not shy about making strong statements, and revels in making overarching claims about the work of others. So, in the end, Wilber's *writing* leads to a fair amount of confusion (for

those who like to think in-depth; they provide safe haven for those who find comfort in pre-packaged models), but his *understanding* of the issues and subtle aspects of them is rather astounding, IMHO.



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11 Alan Kazlev

03/15/07 7:47AM

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I have a different perspective

In response to [Tom Murray \(10\)](#)

hi Tom

regarding great thinkers, I suppose (very very simplistically here! Because these and the many other possible categories not listed here always merge into each other) we could posit several types. There are those, like Darwin, Marx, Einstein, Freud, Jung, Piaget, Bohm, Lovelock, etc, who are making theoretical observations and predictions based on phenomena in the objective or subjective world. Their ideas stand or fall on that account. e.g. Darwin's ideas have been radically built upon, refined, enhanced, etc, but his basic concepts are still pretty sound (as far as evolutionary biology goes). Marx so far hasn't fared as well; capitalism is as strong as ever, and the communist experiment has failed (ok you have a few holdouts like Cuba and North Korea). But maybe by socialism or communism Marx really meant something like what David Korten (*The Great Turning*) calls the "Earth Community". In which case Marx may not have been so far off the mark after all!

Then you have Buddha, Lao-tze, Plotinus, Shankara, Ramakrishna, Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi, etc who are spiritual visionaries who describe a transcendent Reality. In terms of the "perennial philosophy" this is realised through experience, through attaining enlightenment oneself. It isn't like empirical philosophy or science, it is based on spiritual realisation.

Or you can have occultists like Blavatsky, Steiner, etc who describe supra-physical realities. This is a funny one, midway between the above two categories. But they are describing realities, not abstractions.

Then there are those like Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Wilber, who are not describing any empirical or phenomenological thing or process, or enlightenment experiences, or occult experiences or anything else. Rather they are in each case proposing a meta-theory to explain a number of other theories or experiences or observations. So in each case it is a purely abstract mental formulation, which may be useful or not, depending on the level of insight and knowledge of the philosopher concerned.

And as you point out, these ideas may be superbly constructed, so that, in the case of Wilber for example as you mention, what he says in one place may be completely explained and supported somewhere else, so the whole thing is totally consistent and impregnable, like a fortress (a mental fortress in fact, to [...more...](#))



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12 Edward Berge

03/15/07 11:56PM

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You know Alan, one of the things that brought us together at Open Integral was Ken's Wyatt Earp fiasco, where he was flat out wrong in his "test." And another thing that brings us together is that we are both critical of Ken. Sometimes I too am so critical as to miss some of the things I find most valuable in him. But when you say things like Ken's model is just metal-perspectival and does not in the least deal with "real"

phenomological experience you my frind are just flat out wrong. I won't go into why I think so here, as I'm doing so right now at Open Integral in the thread "Gebser and the integral structure." You and others can pursue the conversation there is you are so inclined.



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Alan Kazlev

03/16/07 7:03AM



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Hi Edward

Looks like we have to respectfully agree to disagree! ;-)

And from the other side, there are the Wilberians who would dispute your statement that Wilber was wrong in Earpy with his test! That's human nature, and the fact that we all of us each have a specific point of view, betwene which no intellectual compromise is possible. I have my truth, which is self-evident to me, you have yours, which is self-evident to you. So all we can do is each honour and follow our own truth with sincerity, and respect the position of others, even where we differ. And that is the great thing about our Western society. That with all its many faults (and they are legion!), it still respects the freedom of individuals to follow their own truth, even if that truth differs from the mainstream religion or ideology. And we can have these wonderful forums like Arina and Open Integral and Zaadz and many others, where all these different matters can be discussed. So perhaps there is something in integral Spiral Dynamics after all, in that it is correct in recognising that some cultures and societies and civilizations are more advanced and tolerant than others. This is why any integral and multi-pespectival and aperspectival movement will, obviously, develop from and out of a tolerant society rather than a restrictive one.



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[Contribute](#)

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9 Alan Kazlev

03/08/07 8:11PM



close



In response to Tom Murray (6)

Hi Tom,

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Then in reply to Sara, Mark (comments #17 and #20) stated (and I think this is true) that Wilber is aware of this distinction and sees both as relevant, even if (as Mark agrees) KW's writings are slanted to the structure-perspective. So there is the distinction between what Wilber thinks and what he writes, which is what I find confusing! Or have I misinterpreted things again? ;-)

11 Alan Kazlev

03/15/07 7:47AM



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 I have a different perspective*In response to Tom Murray (10)*

hi Tom

regarding great thinkers, I suppose (very very simplistically here! Because these and the many other possible categories not listed here always merge into each other) we could posit several types. There are those, like Darwin, Marx, Einstein, Freud, Jung, Piaget, Bohm, Lovelock, etc, who are making theoretical observations and predictions based on phenomena in the objective or subjective world. Their ideas stand or fall on that account. e.g. Darwin's ideas have been radically built upon, refined, enhanced, etc, but his basic concepts are still pretty sound (as far as evolutionary biology goes). Marx so far hasn't fared as well; capitalism is as strong as ever, and the communist experiment has failed (ok you have a few holdouts like Cuba and North Korea). But maybe by socialism or communism Marx really meant something like what David Korten (*The Great Turning*) calls the "Earth Community". In which case Marx may not have been so far off the mark after all!

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And as you point out, these ideas may be superbly constructed, so that, in the case of Wilber for example as you mention, what he says in one place may be completely explained and supported somewhere else, so the whole thing is totally consistent and impregnable, like a fortress (a mental fortress in fact, to use a metaphor I borrowed from *The Mother*).

But just because a theory or set of ideas or personal worldview is consistent in itself doesn't necessarily mean it is "true" empirically, phenomenologically, occultly, or spiritually. It just means it's an internally consistent mental structure. To give an extreme example, I have known schizophrenics (several!) who have built the most marvelous self-consistent structures, which were incomprehensible to anyone but themselves. But you couldn't refute them because they could always say "yes but..." and bring up some argument to show that they have already considered that objection. This is what happens to the mind when it loses touch with external reality.

I'm not saying Wilber's necessarily like that, I'm just pointing out that internal self-consistency on its own doesn't mean a thing.

Of course likewise just because it's a mental structure doesn't mean it is automatically totally false either!

But one thing that *can* be said with certainty is that no mental structure faithfully reproduces the world. This is because it is in the nature of the mind to distort things (*avidya, maya*)

For this reason I find myself being much more interested in the actual subjective, objective, gross, subtle, causal, transcendent, and/or trans-transcendent realities, rather than in mental theories or abstractions about how these realities are or are not supposed to be like. Why get things second hand (through Wilber or anyone else) when you can get them direct from the source? By "the source" I mean either (a) through one's own actual experience or contact with a particular subjective or objective, physical or supra-physical reality, or (b) through reading the account of someone who has had this, or an expert who has specialised in it. Then one can come to one's own conclusions, or even make one's own mental fortress ;-)

(sorry to be such a cynic!)

 [return to Alan Kazlev \(9\)](#)