

I studied Ken Wilber a number of years ago and found his Integral Theory quite complex. I realise how valuable his AQAL model is for analysing human beings but I still feel it is overly complex and intellectually driven. The readings I have completed for this forum have led me to value his overview and general philosophy but I must say I continue to find the depth of the analysis that is brought about by the AQAL model too analytic. Nonetheless, I did enjoy his general theories which gave rise to his model and which I have focused on in this post.

As recent as 2013 Wilber (2013) stated that we are evolving towards a greater levels of complexity and awareness ultimately towards “noumenon” (p.124). He cites Hegel with the description of this journey from the pre-personal to the self-conscious to the transpersonal (p.125) and the main challenges experienced is determined by the gap between the pre-personal and transpersonal.

He cleverly explains the benefits of his integral system by saying “if you are running any “software” in your life – such as your business, work, play or relationships – you want the best operating system you can find, and IOS fits that bill.” (Wilber, 2003/4, p.4)

He differentiates between states of consciousness and stages of consciousness with the former he terms temporary and the latter permanent (2003/4, p.6) confirming his belief that ones state of consciousness can have a very important role to play at any given time in any particular situation or experience. In this he specifically refers to the three “natural states” waking, dreaming and sleeping. In my study of Vedanta I have found that the Vedas present this with even more depth that it is the state of consciousness itself that determines the reality of the experience.

He then differentiates between states and stages of consciousness on the initial basis that the former are temporary and the latter permanent. An interesting reflection on this would be that it is the state of consciousness itself that determines the reality and so the states themselves are not temporary but what is temporary is our experience within those states going in and out of them.

I really liked where he stated that part of integral wisdom is finding where one excels and this is where “one can offer the world ones deepest gifts” (2003/4, p.10).

He continues to explain that the aspects of his Integral Theory refer to subjective, objective and collective reality but interestingly omits universal which I believe is a combination of all aspects of reality personal and collective.

He then presents a simple psychograph which “helps to spot where your greatest potentials are” so that “so that you can more confidently deal with both your own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of others” (2003/4, p.11).

This struck a chord with me and the importance of having an integral practice. I learned this first-hand in my Learning through Integral Practice module and especially my experience was that the goal of such a practice was not in reaching a place of perfect balance but to a place where one could recognise the imbalances and thereafter decide what to address. This was also advocated by Wilber (2003/4, p.11) referring to one being “integrally

informed” and then there is choice in the actions taken thereafter which are defined as the “Integral Transformative Practice”. He does confirm the benefits of meditative states and states and that the more we experience “authentic higher states of consciousness” the more likely we are to develop through the stages of conscious development. (2003/4, p.13) which has also been my belief and experience.

References:

Wilber, K. (2003-2004) Introduction to Integral Theory and Practice.pdf retrieved from <https://learning.aleftrust.org/access/content/group/caa485d1-1146-4452-a4ce-f3ffc49c5cb5/4.Resources%20Forum%203/2.%20Introduction%20to%20Integral%20Theory%20and%20Practice.pdf> on 17 April 2019

Wilber, K. (1993) The pre-trans fallacy (p. 124) retrieved from <https://learning.aleftrust.org/access/content/group/caa485d1-1146-4452-a4ce-f3ffc49c5cb5/4.Resources%20Forum%203/Wilber%201993%20the%20pre-trans%20fallacy%20-%202003%20Feb%202013%203-33%20PM%202020.pdf> on 17 April 2019