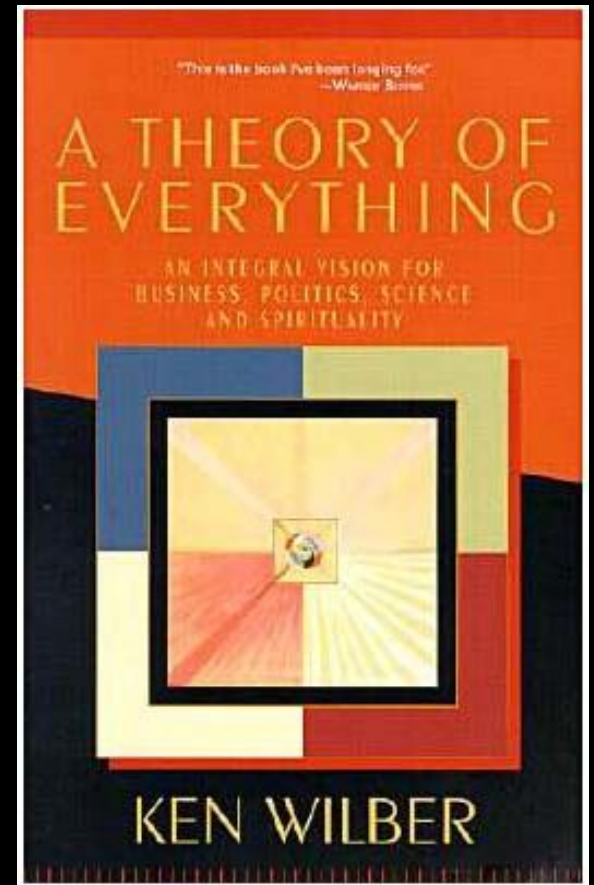


**Reality Check:**  
***A THEORY OF EVERYTHING***  
***An Integral Vision for Business,  
Politics, Science and Spirituality***

© 2001



Tim Mitchell  
UH Alternative Perspectives  
18 October 2012

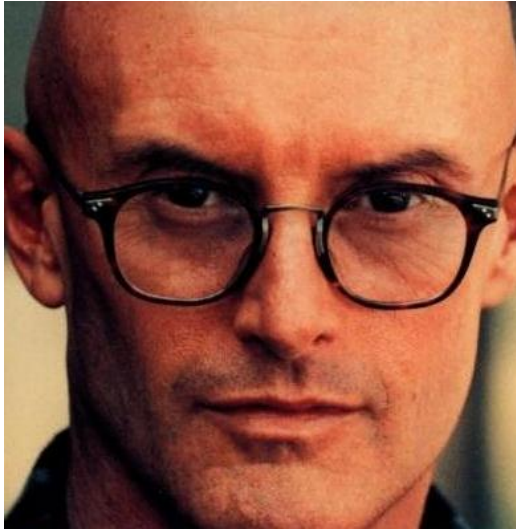
# Into the Wilberness

- Who is he
- What has he written, What does he say
- What's his motivation
- Core Concepts
- What's his point
- What can we do with a TOE
- Utopia?

**“Who Are You?”**



## Who Is He?



- “Ken Wilber is one of the most widely read and influential American philosophers of our time.”
- Over 25 published books on mysticism, philosophy, ecology, and developmental psychology
- His work formulates what he calls Integral Theory

# What Has He Written? What Does He Say?

## A Selected Integral Thinking, Publishing, Living Chronology

- *Transformations of Consciousness*, 1984: Contemplative thoughts on development
- *Grace and Grit*, 1991: Writing of his wife's ordeal with terminal cancer
- -- **Three Year Hermitage** --
- *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, 1995: Begins to seriously explore TOE, 800 pages!
- *A Brief History of Everything*, 1st ed. 1996, 2nd ed. 2001: Introduction to the overall integral model
- *The Eye of Spirit: An Integral Vision for a World Gone Slightly Mad*, 1997, 3rd ed. 2001: A vision for the modern to post-modern world
- *Integral Psychology: Consciousness, Spirit, Psychology, Therapy*, 2000: Integrative models of consciousness, psychology, and therapy
- ***A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality*, 2000: Applying the integral vision**
- *Boomeritis: A Novel That Will Set You Free*, 2002, paperback ed. 2003: Fictional story of a student's journey to self-discovery
- Late 1990's: Founder of the Integral Institute <http://www.integralinstitute.org/> "Providing research, education and events that foster intentional, behavioral, cultural and social self-awareness"
- Readings, DVDs, Lectures, Papers and subsequent writings focus more on the practice of integral living : 2007+
- Founds Integral Life, 2008: <http://integrallife.com/> Community, products/courses, news/events – percentage of profits go to Integral Institute

# Motivations

- Felt that postmodernism had invaded academia leaving no room for “transcendent studies”
- Sought to create a vocabulary for a more constructive philosophy on the level of orienting generalizations; a holistic Kosmos – a TOE
- Wilber’s big question: **What are the conditions that can help facilitate the transformation to an integral vision – what factors must be present?**

# Core Concepts

- Spiral Dynamics (Graves, Beck/Cowan)
  - Memes and Types
  - Most of us are stuck at Green (Pluralistic), p. 21
- Why stuck at Green? Boomeritis; Narcissim hold us back, p. 27
- Holon, p. 40
- Flatland, p. 41
- Integral Vision; Integral Practice, p. 55

# Spiral Dynamics

- Integral Psychology – Development of the mind occurs in a series of “waves”
- 8 stages or waves (memes) transcend and include the previous waves
- All memes are potentially available to all of us; Each meme is to be cherished and embraced; we must maintain the “health” of the entire spiral
- Wilber believes that human consciousness development is “stuck” in the 1<sup>st</sup> Tier (Pluralism) at Green – essentially stuck at “social constructionism” of reality.
- Only until we grow through Green can we experience Integral Consciousness, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier (Integralism)
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier represents the “leading edge” of thought





# World Views in Review

- Beige (survival): do what you must to stay alive (0.1% of population)
  - Purple (safety): keep the spirits happy and the tribe's nest warm and safe (10% of world population, 1% of power)
  - Red (power): be what you are and do what you want, regardless (20% of world population, 5% of power)
  - Blue (truth, order): life has meaning, direction, and purpose with predetermined outcomes (40% of world population, 30% of power)
  - Orange (prosperity): act in your own self-interest by playing the game to win (30% of world population, 50% of power)
  - Green (communitarian): seek peace within the inner self and explore, with others, the caring dimensions of community (10% of population, 15% of power)
- 
- Yellow (integrative, systemic): live fully and responsibly as what you are and learn to become (1% of world population, 5% of power)
  - Turquoise (holistic): experience the wholeness of existence through mind and spirit (0.1% of world population, 1% of power)

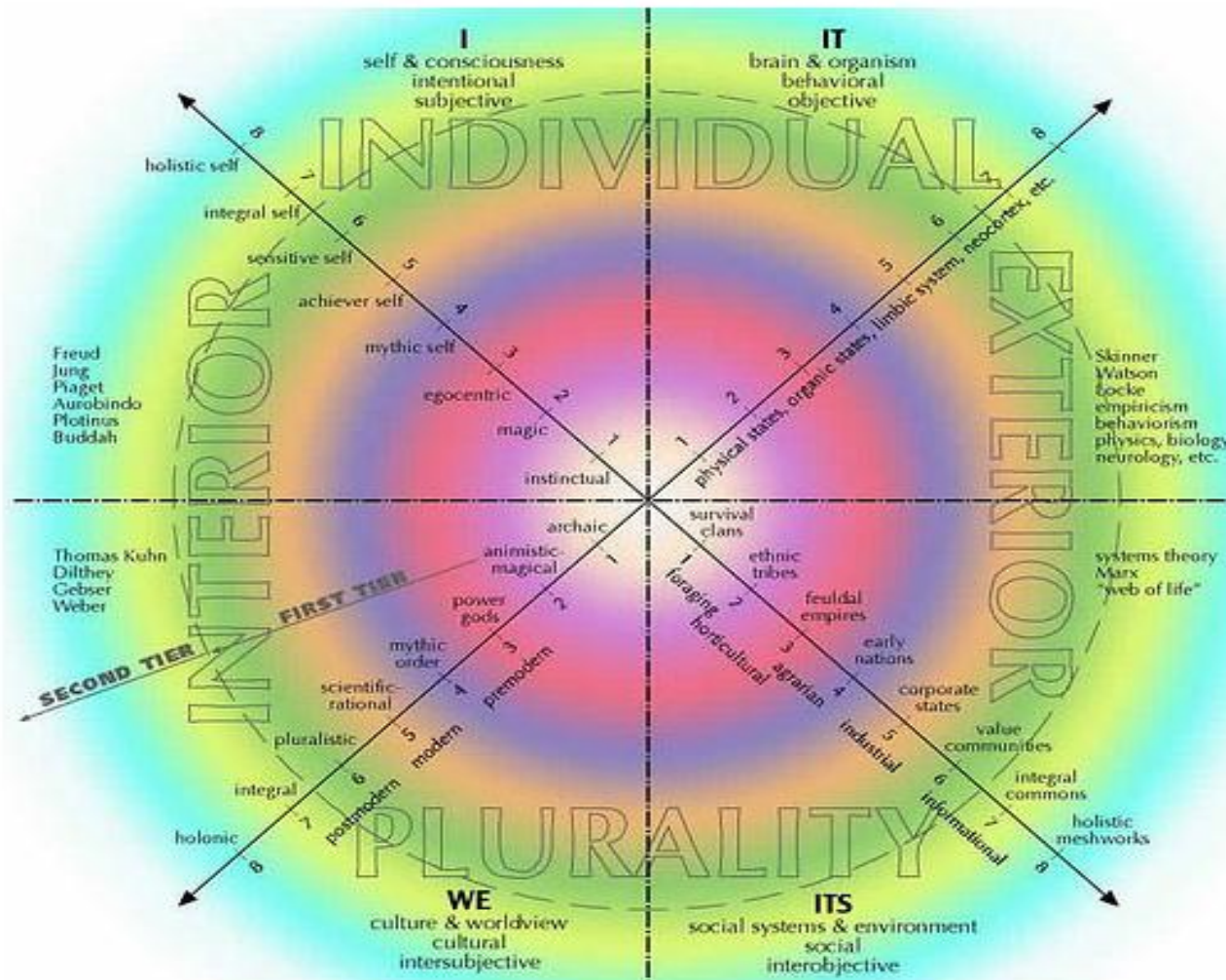
# Approach

- Three year hermitage -- Tried fitting together over 200 hierarchies
- If you hold a problem long enough in your mind, then the Kosmos will reveal solutions
- Realized a holonic big picture – the AQAL
- Somewhat baffled that most people do not see the world as holonic, especially academia – “Flatland”

# What's His Point?

- Challenge:
  - Can/could a TOE ever exist?
  - Is the world ready for a TOE? Why or why not?
- “Everybody is partially right”
- You need a touch of turquoise in you to consider that TOE is even possible!
- TOE is one version of an integral vision

# All Levels, All Quadrants



# Beck on Wilber, 2007

<http://integral-options.blogspot.com/2007/07/don-beck-on-spiral-dynamics-and-aqal.html>



- “In Gravesian language these are not types of people but ways of thinking about something, which means one can think in different levels (memetic codes) in different areas of one's life. Yet, too much stress on different "lines" can be misleading.
- Wilber has his own agenda for misrepresenting this work. He has a right to his opinion, but, also, the ethical responsibility to be accurate. We all do. He rightly named it "The Theory that Explains everything" in his recent book. I believe in an "invisible spiral" and support any wrapping around it, and avoid making any statement regarding other such models. We need them all, rather than put them in competition. Just let Gravesian/Spiral Dynamics be what it is and let people decide what works best for them. The real content of Spiral Dynamics, however, is not about the eight or nine levels, but how human systems emerge from the interaction of people with their life conditions. “
- Is This A Split? I don't think so...
  - Beck is more of spiral dynamics purist and researcher while Wilber is more of a promoter of “lines” in AQAL and of an integral living practice
  - Beck's own spiral dynamics website features Wilber's endorsement to this day: <http://www.spiraldynamics.net/about-spiral-dynamics-integral.html>

# Integral Living

- AQAL Exercises
- AQAL makes room for TOE
- “The health of the entire spiral is the prime directive; no preferred treatment at any level”, p. 56
  - Maintain the health of the entire spiral
  - Yoga, meditation

# What Can We Do With A TOE?

## Solving Problems

- World issues like housing, illiteracy, malnutrition, access to education, wealth redistribution and more hardly suggest that taking an integral vision is priority
- But, taking an integral, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier awareness, one with a comprehensive vision, can creatively help to solve these global problems
- Getting to TOE
  - We must overcome the conflict of science and religion
  - What if science and religion could contribute alongside each other, instead of opposite or on different levels?
  - Wilber believes that this approach has not been tried – he is trying it

# Integral = Utopia? A Golden Age?

- “In the end we will find, I believe, the inherent joy in existence itself, a joy that stems from the great perfection of this and every moment, a wondrous whole in itself, a part of the whole of the next, a sliding series of wholes and parts that cascade to infinity and back, **never lacking and never wanting because always fulfilled in the brilliance that is now.**”



# What The...?

- “All this talk of hypnagogic metaphysical supraconsciousness sounds dangerously close to the “woo woo hippy line”, as my (hippy, crystal-loving Deadhead) mother used to say.”
- “Metaphysical, quasi-spiritual methods such as these may feel good and may even be useful in the moment, but they marginalize our profession to the fringe and run the risk of making us (futurists) look foolish”
  - *Noah Raford, APF Listserve, 16 October 2012*

# Hmm...

- What would futures studies look like – what would futurists look like -- if we wholeheartedly accepted the existence of not just body and mind but also soul and spirit?
- Wilber's work (at least in this book) seems to resemble Presencing – what do you think?
  - Learning from the future today
  - Letting go, letting come
  - Performing by operating from the whole
- Is an Integral Vision a desired state, or simply an Alternative?
- Wilber asks: “Is the world ready for a TOE?” -- Is it?