*(This comment is in relation to "Through AQAL Eyes - Part 7" by Mark Edwards, which was contributed to Integral World).*

Peter Collins· Nov 30, 2020

Once again Mark you deserve heartfelt congratulations on an extraordinary piece of work. The detailed care and precision with which you clarify the various perspectives, non-reflexive and notional, is quite remarkable.

However, your very analysis reveals, I believe, a central paradox regarding the relationship between holons and perspectives, which is in need − dare I suggest − of integral resolution in an appropriate dynamic interactive manner.

Now Wilber believes that the indigenous perspectives are already contained in each holon (as inherent aspects of its very nature).

However, as you rightly point out, he then attempts to assign these perspectives to specific quadrants in a somewhat fragmented manner.
And to enable the 6 perspectives, 1st person 2nd person and 3rd person (in singular and plural terms) fit his four quadrants, he reduces 2nd person (singular you), unconvincingly, to 1st person (plural we).

This then leads to − what I consider − is your mistaken attempt to divorce the perspectives from the quadrants altogether by representing each perspective as a complete holon in its own right.

So, whereas Wilber defines each complete holon as collectively containing all the primary perspectives, you then by contrast define each individual perspective as containing a complete holon.
Therefore there is a clear paradox here in need of reconciliation.

To do this we need to define the holon itself (which has no meaning apart from its relationship with other holons) in a dynamic interactive manner.

When one is differentiating experience, one does indeed initially associate perspectives in a differentiated dualistic manner with fixed quadrant locations.

However the inherent dualistic contradiction in this approach should then lead to the complementary realisation that what is initially fixed with one quadrant location can become equally identified with its opposite, And this realisation should take place both with respect to interior/exterior aspects, and individual/collective aspects respectively. In this dynamic manner the 4 quadrants give rise to 16 distinct primary perspectives (in ceaseless interaction with each other).

Unfortunately the conventional language of perspectives is very misleading with respect to appreciating their true nature.

Perspectives have in fact both personal and impersonal aspects. However this is not reflected in conventional 1st person, 2nd person and 3rd person terms. So 3rd person refers directly to the impersonal aspect (of what is directly 2nd personal). There are also huge barriers in conventional usage to recognising that all so-called "its" have a personal "you" as well as impersonal "it" nature. So for example a scientist might well analyse a phenomenon such as a rainbow in impersonal "it" terms. However a poet by contrast might then view the rainbow in an aesthetic personal fashion (as "you"). And rightly understood, a further 4th person should be recognised (as the impersonal nature of what in personal terms is 1st person).

In this way, we are enabled to maintain proper dynamic complementarity between both the personal and impersonal aspects of perspectives, recognising in an appropriate manner that all the primary perspectives mutually co-arise in dynamic interactive fashion as the inherent expression of a holon's very nature. And this dynamic activity only properly arises in the context of the holon's interaction with other holons

However there is an equal relative truth in your position which then recognises that each (individual) perspective gives rise to a complete holon.
However when one closely examines the nature of your holon, it inevitably entails all the other perspectives. For example "my behaviour and activities" necessarily involve both 1st person and 3rd person perspectives. And "my social roles" will inevitably entail personal 1st person, 2nd person (I-you) type relationships.

So we can start with the holon and try to generate the perspectives or start with each perspective (as you have done) and generate the holons. However in dynamic interactive terms both of these approaches, properly understood, are complementary, each containing a relative truth value.
So just as Wilber can be rightly criticised for viewing quadrants in a fragmented manner, you could also be equally criticised for viewing perspectives in a fragmented manner (by identifying a separate holon for each individual perspective).

Now Wilber identifies 8 indigenous perspectives. But there are clearly 8 other missing indigenous perspectives arising from the 4-quadrant interaction which he does not identify.

And this relates to the fact that the 4 primary perspectives, not only can be given interior and exterior but also individual and collective meanings!

Wilber once maintained that the Kosmos consists of holons; he then later concluded that the Kosmos consisted of perspectives.

However this is a very misleading way of looking at reality which gives undue emphasis to both holons and perspectives as resembling the distinct individual building blocks of reality. And with respect to his asymmetric type analysis he indeed treats them very much in a dualistic fragmented manner as building blocks.
So in more accurate integral terms, he should be saying that the Kosmos consists of

holons in relation to other holons and perspectives in relation to other perspectives.

This for example would help to get rid of the nonsensical notion that he has continued to support over many years that only individual holons are sentient.

There are many other key issues with respect to perspectives that so far have been greatly overlooked. And these are especially relevant in terms of moving to an integral as opposed to a multi-differentiated viewpoint.

For example, nondual reality is ineffable and thereby completely without perspective. And this properly represents the ultimate integral stance.
Therefore the appropriate dynamic context for perspectives arises through attempting to move in development from the differentiated, to a true integral viewpoint. And associated with this integral viewpoint is the notion of an overall perspective (which represents a certain dynamic configuration of existing perspectives) that is inherently of a holistic rather than analytic nature.

Thus, from this overall perspective, Wilber provides a view of perspectives that is very much limited to a multi-differentiated expression, associated with the centaur stage of development.
He in fact provides no proper integral view of perspectives. This would entail providing a more dynamic holistic appreciation of perspectives associated with the advanced contemplative stages of development.

Moving towards an integral viewpoint therefore requires the explicit recognition of hidden or “shadow” perspectives which then enables perspectives to switch in complementary fashion.

It also requires the explicit recognition of imaginary as opposed to real perspectives. Wilber concentrates exclusively on the real actual nature of perspectives (corresponding to conscious understanding). However their imaginary potential nature corresponds directly with unconscious holistic appreciation. And it is the interaction of the actual with the potential aspects that enable the dynamic transformation of perspectives in development.

Another crucial area that receives little or no attention relates to the manner in which affective understanding (of the senses and emotions), cognitive understanding (reason) and volitional understanding (of the will) are related to the various perspectives that unfold.

Then beyond the integral stage of appreciation we have the more comprehensive appreciation − which I term radial − where both multi-differential and integral aspects (now suitably refined in experience) can themselves be coherently related with each other.

In fact I genuinely believe as an intellectual community that we have not yet even begun to properly address (in explicit fashion) the integral aspect of development.