

Subtle energy science

Ken Wilber Online : Toward A Comprehensive Theory of Subtle Energies Part 2

<http://wilber.shambhala.com/html/books/kosmos/excerptG/part2.cfm>

Wilber looks at the world's wisdom traditions: common to many traditions is the idea of a spectrum of energies and consciousness. Typically, these are gross physical, etheric, astral, psychic, and causal. The energies are not conscious. Rather, these levels of energy accompany and support their correlative levels of consciousness. In Wilber's scheme, higher biological evolution corresponds to higher consciousness evolution, and thus to more subtle energy levels, in a holonic fashion (i.e., as spheres of increasing expanse; transcend and include). For example, atoms and non-living molecules constitute gross physical matter and energy; simple living organisms consist of an etheric energy and etheric consciousness in addition to gross physical matter and energy. Neural cord organisms include the levels for simple living organisms, but also consist of astral energy and astral consciousness. Triune brain organisms include all the lower levels and in addition consist of psychic energy and psychic consciousness. "Psychic," in this case, simply means "thought fields," which are said to be produced by sustained mental activity.

Wilber believes that the scientific community which has associated the quantum world and the quantum vacuum with consciousness and spiritual potentiality and are incorrect, because the quantum world and quantum vacuum have physical properties (The vacuum has energy density) . "Unfortunately, the physicists who started equating quantum realities with the Tao were simply ill-versed in the philosophical subtleties of the great traditions. Oddly, the original and pioneering physicists themselves—from Schroedinger to Planck to Einstein—refused to make that confusion—refused, that is, to identify the findings of quantum or relativistic physics with any sort of spiritual reality”.

He sees the quantum vacuum as prana, which gives rise to matter. He believes David Bohm's concept of a single implicate and single explicate order was too simplistic. For him Prana is implicate to gross matter; etheric is implicate to prana; astral is implicate to etheric, etc. According to Wilber, Bohm later added several epicycle orders to his theory, including “super-implicate” and “beyond super-implicate” orders, supposedly all based on physics. For this reason Wilber believes that Bohm professed a colossally reductionistic game that reduced the levels of biology and psychology to hidden variables in his theory of the quantum mechanics of gross matter-energy. Based on the traditional wisdom of many cultures he subscribes to the two truths doctrine, which states that there exists absolute or nondual truth, and relative or conventional truth, and they are of radically different orders. He also believes that the etheric, astral, and psychic fields are part of the manifest realm, as is the quantum vacuum (prana) and so they are the proper object of study of science.

Wilber's views thus take us to a very sophisticated creationist version of Sorokin's ideational conception of true reality.