

The misunderstanding and misinterpretation of key aspects of Ken Wilber's work in Hartelius and Ferrer's (2013) assessment

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It is well known that Ken Wilber has consistently claimed for well over a decade that critics of his work often misunderstand his views. This paper suggests there is some substance in Wilber's complaint in the context of the recent publication of Hartelius and Ferrer's 'Transpersonal Philosophy: The Participatory Turn' in Chapter 10 of 'The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Transpersonal Psychology'.

Hartelius and Ferrer acknowledge Wilber's grievance, and make explicit attempts to avoid such misunderstandings. Nevertheless, this paper identifies a number of key areas in which it is argued that Hartelius and Ferrer are providing an inaccurate and misleading account of some aspects of Wilber's work. For example, Wilber's definition of Integral Post-Metaphysics does not explicitly appear in Hartelius and Ferrer's paper and their assessment of this therefore has an inadequate foundation. Wilber has flatly rejected criticism that his work involves a perennialist version of a single nondual ultimate reality, or that it retains an experiential division between subject and object. Some substantive criticism by Wilber, a decade ago, of Ferrer's participatory turn that is germane to Hartelius and Ferrer's paper, has been apparently overlooked. And the misunderstanding suggested in this paper of Wilber's nondual ultimate reality is traced back, in part, to Ferrer's misunderstanding of Wilber and T.R.V. Murti's Absolute.

Hartelius and Ferrer argue that there have been just two major philosophical paradigms in transpersonal psychology since its inception: 'Wilber's perennialism' and 'Ferrer's participatory'. Both paradigms stress the importance of co-creative participation, and creative interaction between the two might therefore be expected to lead to advances in the field of transpersonal philosophy. But such advances will be obstructed as long as either of the respective proponents misunderstands each other's work.

Hartelius and Ferrer would no doubt agree with the potential benefits of a debate between the 'one' of perennialism and pluralistic aspects of the participatory turn (e.g. Ferrer's emphasis on the benefits of a debate between the 'one' and the 'many'; Ferrer, 2002, p.191). But such debate is hampered by misunderstanding between Wilber and his critics.

This paper, which is restricted to only certain aspects of Wilber's work, focuses on only one side of this misunderstanding (misunderstanding of Wilber's work by his critics rather than Wilber's misunderstanding of his critics). This is because Wilber's misunderstanding of his critics has been the subject of extensive existing literature (to which Hartelius and Ferrer's paper is a recent addition), whereas, from

the perspective of at least some of those outside his integral community, Wilber appears to have made little attempt to respond to critics over the past decade or so. Thus, in the absence of any substantial such response, I present what I hope to be a reasonable proxy of how Wilber might respond to misunderstanding of his views on some of the issues in Hartelius and Ferrer's paper – with the purpose of attempting to inject some balance into such a debate.

Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Wilber's Work

Evidence to support the thesis of this paper (that Hartelius and Ferrer have misunderstood the thrust of some important areas of Wilber's work) is provided in this section.

A complete understanding of the arguments presented here relies on a familiarity with Wilber's extensive work, including some of his twenty-first century 'Wilber 5' material. Although a commentary is provided on some of Wilber's relevant terminology and concepts, no attempt is made to explain all of these due to restrictions on space. Thus, although this paper provides evidence for its assertion of misunderstanding by Hartelius and Ferrer, it does not include a full account of Wilber's work that would comprehensively dispel such misunderstanding. The latter would be a substantial undertaking considerably beyond the aim of this short paper. Nevertheless, the explanation of the evidence that is presented is intended to provide a clear indication to those with only an acquaintance with Wilber's work that Hartelius and Ferrer have a case to answer.

Hartelius and Ferrer's section headed 'Perennial Philosophy' (pp.189–194) is replete with references to perennialism involving, for example, a single spiritual truth, a single ultimate reality, a single spiritual ultimate and a single nondual reality. Thus, the main assumption in Hartelius and Ferrer's paper is that Wilber's work involves a perennialist version of a single nondual ultimate reality. This, Wilber unequivocally rejects, and in this connection the following subsections argue that Hartelius and Ferrer have misunderstood Wilber's position on ultimate reality, and this has undermined some of their other criticisms of Wilber's work.

1. Hartelius and Ferrer wrongly attribute Wilber's work as involving a single nondual reality

A decade ago, in the wake of Ferrer's 2002 publication of *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory*, Wilber flatly rejected criticism that his work involves a perennialist version of a single nondual ultimate reality:

I don't know a single major theorist who actually believes that. (Wilber, 2002c, p.6)

Hartelius and Ferrer appear to have overlooked this, and thus have not considered the associated reasons Wilber gives for this rejection.

When traditions (and Wilber) speak of the 'One', they are 'utilising... the analogical [relative] way of pointing to reality.' (Wilber, 1977/2002, p.52). Wilber therefore makes it clear that, contrary to what is stated in Hartelius and Ferrer (p.190), his use of nondual *from an absolute perspective* cannot be conceived as a single reality. Other examples that contradict Hartelius and Ferrer's criticism of Wilber's explanation of nondual from an ultimate perspective are: 'Statements like... nondual are actually *dualistic* to the core. Zen tries to hint at this by saying that the absolute is "Not-two, not-one".' (Wilber, 2004, p.34). Similarly, 'The pure Nondual state [is] where the Subject and All Objects become One Taste, where Emptiness and Form become "not-two, not-one".' (Wilber, 2002b, p.17). Most directly, Wilber states: 'ultimate reality is nondual – it is "not-two, not-one".' (Wilber, 2002a, p.15). Thus, Hartelius and Ferrer's criticism seems to arise, in part, from their overlooking that Wilber sometimes refers to a relative, and at other times an ultimate, understanding of reality. We will return to this point, but it is useful to firstly point out that Wilber refutes the claim that his account of reality is perennialist. For example, as cited by Paulson (2002), Wilber (2000) contests criticism that his work involves a perennialist version of a single nondual ultimate reality in his book *A Theory of Everything*:

When critics identify me with the perennial philosophy, they fail to notice that the only item of the perennial philosophy that I have actually defended is the notion of realms of being and knowing, and then I only staunchly defend three of them: matter, mind, and spirit (or gross, subtle and causal)... That is, I claim that every major human culture, at least by the time of homo sapiens, recognised these three main

states or realms of existence (as evidenced in waking, dreaming and sleeping (universally present in all humans)). That is almost the only item of the 'perennial philosophy' that I have defended. Most of the other aspects... such as unchanging archetypes, involution and evolution as fixed and predetermined, the strictly hierarchical (as opposed to holonic/quadratic) nature of reality etc. – I do not believe are universal or true... (p.158)

Although Hartelius and Ferrer state that 'perennialism begins with the assumption that there is a single truth underlying the various traditions' (p.190), I argue that not only is that not true in terms of Wilber's depiction of a single truth from an ultimate perspective, but also that Wilber and Ferrer's position on a single truth, from this perspective, is very similar. Consider a comment by Ferrer that relates the Mystery to a single truth:

There is a way, I believe, in which we can legitimately talk about a shared spiritual power, one reality, one world or one truth... a common spiritual dynamism underlying the plurality of spiritual insights and ultimates. (Ferrer, 2002, p.190)

Ferrer's description of 'one reality' as 'a shared spiritual power', 'a common spiritual dynamism' with 'no pre-given essence' (p.179) is startlingly similar to Wilber's description. Firstly, Wilber explicitly equates the 'Mystery' to 'Emptiness' (Wilber, 2013c). This, for the same reason Ferrer would not agree he is *imposing* the Mystery on all traditions, is not an instance of 'forcing the convergence of all traditions to submit to a single spiritual ultimate conveniently resembling that favoured by [Wilber]' (Hartelius & Ferrer, 2013, p.190). That is, Wilber's Mystery or Emptiness is not a 'single truth underlying the various traditions'. Rather, it can be described just as Ferrer describes the Mystery. For example, Wilber's account of the Mystery/Emptiness includes: (a) it

having no specific qualities (Wilber, 2013c); (b) it not being related to any specific belief system (e.g. Buddhist, notwithstanding Emptiness is a key teaching in Buddhism); and (c) it being open to new creativity, new truths and new realities.

Wilber has been consistent from his first book in 1977 in explaining that perennialism does not involve, from an absolute perspective, a single truth underlying the various traditions. For example:

[When] traditions speak of the 'one', they always point out emphatically that they mean not literally 'one', but what could better be expressed by the 'Non-dual'... The truth of... reality [is] neither one nor two. (Wilber, 1977/2002, pp.51–52)

The above arguments therefore suggest that Hartelius and Ferrer have failed to understand that drawing an absolute and relative distinction is an essential element in understanding Wilber's account of what they describe as a single nondual reality. Wilber's account draws partly on the Buddhist account of reality, which in turn recognises the need for an absolute and relative distinction to understand reality:

One will... get caught in hopeless confusion if one fails to recognise the vital point that in certain texts, the dependent nature [which refers to understanding of the dependently originated nature of things] is presented from the ultimate point of view, whereas in others it is discussed in terms of the relative. (Mipham, 2005, p.99, emphasis added)

The extent of Hartelius and Ferrer's misunderstanding of Wilber's account of ultimate reality can, in part, be traced to a decade ago when Jorge Ferrer (2002) savagely attacked Murti's (and correspondingly Ken Wilber's) Absolute version of ultimate reality. This condemnation, which arguably underlies Hartelius and Ferrer's criticisms, has not attracted any serious defence as evidenced in Ferrer's recent 'Transpersonal

psychology: A 10 year retrospective' (Ferrer, 2011b). This is surprising as Ferrer's censure, although correctly rebuking Wilber for equating Brahman with emptiness (sunyata) and God with Tao, is otherwise almost wholly misplaced.

One central area of confusion for both Ferrer and Wilber concerns their understanding of 'Absolute' or ultimate reality, in the context of the writings of the pre-eminent Buddhist Nagarjuna. Neither appears to be aware that there has been over a thousand years of polarised opinion among distinguished scholars over this. For example, Thakchoe (2007) provides substantial evidence that clearly indicates how leading scholars and spiritual practitioners have profoundly disagreed on the absolute status of Emptiness for at least 600 years. Thakchoe focuses on contrasting views on the Absolute by the eminent 15th century masters Gompara and Tsongkhapa, and successive scholars who have supported their respective views to this day.

Ferrer (2002) cites a number of contemporary scholars to support his claim that Murti's (1955): 'Kantian absolutist account of Madhyamaka Buddhism is unanimously regarded today as a paradigmatic example of the projection of Western philosophical notions on Eastern thinking' (Hayes, 1994; Huntington, 1989; Streng, 1967; Tuck, 1990) and '...that modern interpreters of Nagarjuna find any absolutist account of emptiness (sunyata) unacceptable, and in no way grounded on textual evidence (e.g. Richards, 1978, p.259)' (p.102) and that emptiness does not refer to 'the ultimate, universal or absolute nature of reality ... (cf. Barnhart, 1994; Garfield, 1994)' (p.103).

This appears to give powerful support for Hartelius and Ferrer's critique of Murti/Wilber's Absolute view of reality. However, despite an impressive cast of support, Ferrer misses the point. He has picked a one-sided list on this polarised issue and ignored the significant number of contemporary scholars, both within Wilber's

integral community and outside it, who support some form of an Absolutist interpretation of emptiness. For example, some such contemporary scholars outside of Wilber's integral community include Capriles (2009), Chatterjee (1962), Coward (2003), Hookham (1992), Lindtner (1982), Sebastian (2008) and Sprung (1979).

Murti and Wilber's Absolute is not just misinterpreted by Ferrer, and by implication Hartelius, by focusing on one side of polarised views; it is also somewhat misunderstood by a number of the scholars Ferrer cites to support his dismissive view. It is instructive to highlight this misunderstanding because it will help support the argument suggested here that the foundations of Hartelius and Ferrer's critique of Wilber's 'Absolute' are in part at least, incorrect:

- Streng (1967) identifies Murti's basic presupposition to be that the 'whole' is real while its constituents (parts) are unreal. He critiques this view by citing the well known example of the chariot ('whole') and its parts in which the whole is not considered by Buddhism to be real, nor the parts. This is an outright misunderstanding of Murti's sophisticated position on the universal. Streng has apparently conflated the transcendent with the empirical (or the Absolute with the relative) as can be seen from an indication of Murti's actual position on the universal:

The Universe, ... viewed as a process [dependent origination] is the phenomenal [but] when causes and conditions are disregarded (i.e. the world as a whole, sub specie aeternitatis [viewed in relation to the eternal or in a universal transcendent perspective]) is called the Absolute. (Murti, 1960, p.233)

- Richards (1978): '...it would be a mistake to translate sunyata into a transcendental absolute... To do this constitutes a denial of pratitya samutpada [dependent

origination] and the notion there is no self-existent entity'. Richards' assertion of the denial of dependent origination can be compared to Murti's view in the above quote that dependent origination is one perspective and transcendence another. As to the notion of a self-existent Absolute entity, Wilber explains in an extensive note (Wilber 2001b, pp.714–732) how this is the interpretation, consistent with Nagarjuna's writings, of a number of Buddhist schools. This argument by Wilber, contra Ferrer (2002, p.102), does not exclusively rely on Murti's work; rather, it is based on a number of sources and schools of Buddhism. And beyond this, as mentioned above, an Absolute interpretation of Nagarjuna has been made by distinguished scholars and practitioners for many hundreds of years and right up to the present day.

- Tuck (1990, p.48) states that Murti assumes that absolutism is identical with monism. However, this is directly contradicted by Murti: 'Advaitism [Absolutism] must be distinguished from monism' (Murti 1960, p.12). Murti explains Absolutism is expressly the denying of the reality of duality which is consistent with Wilber's view mentioned in the above section that reality is 'not-two, not-one'.
- Hayes (1994) draws attention to Murti's 'fondness' for using the term 'Absolute' in that 'it leads to the awkward situation of his having an embarrassment of Absolutes that must somehow be distinguished from each other' (p.335). However, Hayes appears to overlook that Murti draws the distinction mentioned above that Absolutism is not monism. Indeed, it is notable, if not ironic, that Murti's view of multiple Absolutes (i.e. in Advaita Vedanta, Vijñānavāda and Madhyamika) seems somewhat in accord with Ferrer's conception of 'the mystery cocreatively unfolds in multiple ontological directions' (Ferrer, 2011b, p.6) and 'a plurality of potentially

overlapping but independently valid spiritual liberations and ultimates.' (Ferrer, 2002, p.185).

- Perhaps Ferrer was misled in part by Huntington (1989) who wrote that 'Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti... recognised and acknowledged in their writings the possibility of an absolutist interpretation [of Emptiness]... but did not perceive it as likely that such views would be attributed to the Madhyamika. *Nor did this happen until quite recently.*' (p.26, emphasis added). The arguably definitive evidence from Thakchoe (2007) indicates that Huntington is incorrect; an absolutist interpretation of Nagarjuna has been in evidence for many hundreds of years.
- Jay Garfield (1994), although a strong opponent of absolutism, echoes Tuck (1990) in commenting that 'Nagarjuna, like any philosopher from a distant cultural context is always read against an interpretive backdrop' (p.vii) and that 'Murti's Kantian [absolutist] interpretation' (p.viii) is one such. In his foreword to Thakchoe (2007), Garfield comments that 'the tradition of philosophical debate [including the Absolute views of Gorampa and the non-Absolute views of Tsongkhapa]... *is alive and well in the West*' (emphasis added).

To summarise this subsection, the above analysis demonstrates: (i) an absolute and relative distinction is an essential element in understanding Wilber's account of what Hartelius and Ferrer describe as a single nondual reality; (ii) some contemporary scholars that Ferrer cites in support of his critique of Murti's/Wilber's Absolute misunderstand Murti's work to a greater or lesser degree; and (iii) Ferrer's incorrect claim of unanimity among present day scholars in his dismissal of Murti's view of the Absolute.

This does not imply, of course, that Murti's views on the Absolute are correct. Rather, the foregoing should be seen in the context of presenting one side of the

polarised views on the Absolute (or ultimate reality) – a side that Hartelius and Ferrer appear to overlook.

2. Hartelius and Ferrer wrongly attribute to Wilber's the view that there is no division between subject and object

Hartelius and Ferrer maintain that Wilber's perennialist model 'necessarily retains an experiential division between subject and object' (p.190) but appear to overlook Wilber's reasons for equally emphatically stating this is not the case (e.g. in the context of the nondual state), Wilber gives an account of how there is no subject and no object. That is:

As a Zen Master put it, 'When I heard the sound of the bell ringing, there was no I, and no bell, just the ringing.' There is no twoness, no twoness, in immediate experience! No inside and no outside, no subject and no object – just immediate awareness itself, the sound of one hand clapping. (Wilber, 2001a, p.208, emphasis added)

For the Madhyamika, the Real [nondual] is neither one nor many, neither permanent nor momentary, neither subject nor object. These are relative to each other and are equally unreal. (Murti, 1955, p.239, as cited in Wilber, 2001b, p.720, emphasis added)

And thus, resting in simple, clear, ever-present awareness, I notice that there is no inside and no outside. There is no subject and no object. (Wilber, 1997, p.292, emphasis added)

Hartelius and Ferrer's apparent confusion on this matter may be due to their not appreciating, as argued in the above section, that an absolute and relative distinction is an essential element in understanding Wilber's work. That is, as the above examples make clear, Wilber's account of how there is no subject and no object is from an absolute perspective.

3. Hartelius and Ferrer take no account of Wilber's 2002 critique of Ferrer (Wilber, 2002c)

When Ferrer attempted to summarise critical response to his 'Revisioning Transpersonal Theory' two years ago, although he commented on some general relevant remarks Wilber made to Daryl Paulson (Ferrer, 2011b), Wilber's charge of performance self-contradiction and to Wilber's 'green meme' charge, he nevertheless failed to identify some of Wilber's substantive comments. Specifically, there is no substantial acknowledgement and critique of the importance Wilber places on a genealogical approach which he claims transcends and includes pluralism.

Wilber's comments on Ferrer (2002) that appeared a decade ago in Wilber (2002c) have not been addressed by Hartelius and Ferrer, or previously by Ferrer. Indeed they appear not to have received attention from other commentators on Ferrer's work. The quote below covers some of this unattended ground, which starts with Wilber identifying areas of agreement with Ferrer:

[I agree with] ALL of that type of [Ferrer's] pluralistic approach, as far as it goes. Of course you start with a caring hermeneutic within the horizons of that which is acceptable to the Other, ... you do not attempt to impose meta-narratives on the Other that the Other would not impose on itself... hermeneutic enactments are grounded in participatory intersubjectivity and not intra-personal empiricism...

We accept all of the basics of the pluralistic approach... but the integral approach goes one step further and adds second-tier understanding: with the dialogical cooperation of participatory subjects sharing the hermeneutic of their worldviews within the horizon of their own self-understanding... mutually [tracing] a dialectic of historical unfolding... wave[s] of intersubjectivity, subjectivity, objectivity, and interobjectivity... from within the horizon of enacted, co-created worldviews... Both new differen-

tiations and new dissociations; both new integrations and new fusions; both new expanses of increasing care and compassion... all unfold to the hermeneutic, dialogical eye once it is cut loose from a stagnant hermeneutic of de facto stationary pluralism and set free to roam the halls of history, time, genealogy, unfolding, temporality.

...Unfortunately, this hermeneutic genealogy from within intersubjective horizons – the core of the deepest insights of postmodernism – is a stance that is marginalised, repressed, oppressed and aggressively excluded from flatland pluralism...

In short, pluralism plus history is genealogy. The greatest of the postmodernists all knew this... they all intuited the basic fact that history passes judgments, from within, on its own self-enacted world-views – how else could the postmodernists themselves (correctly!) condemn patriarchy, slavery, female oppression, and so on? Of course genealogy is capable of passing judgments! ... History itself moves beyond pluralism, and therefore genealogy, in honouring history, moves beyond pluralism as well... those are indeed the two major roads—pluralistic and genealogical—through postmodernity, the latter of which transcends and includes the former. (Wilber, 2002c, pp.10-12)

Wilber posted Paulson (2002) on his kenwilber.com website for a number of years (but not currently) and Wilber's criticism of Ferrer (2002) thereby implicitly includes this material. Hartelius and Ferrer's paper does not refer to the criticisms of Ferrer's views in Paulson's paper, possibly because Ferrer (2011b) claims that Paulson now sees great merit in the Participatory Turn and he has therefore withdrawn his criticism. However, Paulson's current embrace of Ferrer's Participatory Turn does not necessarily amount to withdrawal. Neither Paulson, nor anyone else to my knowledge, has given any detailed explanation of why each of the number of powerful and persuasive criticisms he made concerning Ferrer (2002) would no longer apply.

4. Hartelius and Ferrer appear to overlook that Wilber's kosmic habits are not all universal

Hartelius and Ferrer (p.189) state that Wilber has developed a structuralist version of perennial philosophy and that this reflects a 'deep structure [kosmic habit] that is universal'. However, insofar as they imply that Wilber's kosmic habits are all universal, this is incorrect. It does seem that Ferrer holds this incorrect view. Ferrer (2011a) includes a section on this topic in which he cites Michael Daniels from Rowan et al., 2009, p.35:

I [Michael Daniels] don't deny that groups of people can cocreate... morphogenetic fields – or habits of working, or patterns of working... What I am denying is that they become kosmic habits – that they become realities that are given in the kosmos, and are fixed, and everyone has to go through them. (Ferrer, 2011a, pp.9-10)

Ferrer concurs with Daniels' view that local morphogenetic fields or habits of working do not become universally applicable. But, contra Hartelius, Ferrer and Daniels, Wilber too holds this view. The difference between them and Wilber is only that Wilber goes one step further to say *some* deep structures, or kosmic habits, are universal:

So the generic statement that 'deep features are inherited, surface features are not' needs always to be qualified, because the concrete meaning depends upon which class-level is implied. The statement actually means 'inherited by all members of that class'. (Wilber, 2003, p.115, emphasis in original)

Note that Wilber is unequivocal in that 'class' in this context can be universal or it can just include a particular culture or even only a particular family. Thus, to conclude this subsection, Hartelius, Ferrer and Daniels all overlook that Wilber acknowledges kosmic habits can be local rather than universal.

5. Hartelius and Ferrer are mistaken in arguing that Wilber's Kosmic Habits are assigned to the UL Quadrant

'Wilber has shifted the ontological status of... kosmic habits to his upper left-hand quadrant' (Hartelius & Ferrer, 2013, p.191).

Wilber is incredulous that Ferrer, and by implication Hartelius, can deduce that he has shifted the ontological status of kosmic habits to the inner realm (upper-left quadrant) of an individual. Wilber's reaction, in my opinion, is understandable. His work over at least the past decade has persistently made references to the tetra arising of quadrants. To give just one example: '...all four quadrants evolve (or 'tetra-evolve' together in mutual interaction)' (Wilber 2002d, p.43). The supporting citations Hartelius and Ferrer present (p.191) clearly refer to such assignment by the Traditions, not by Wilber. Wilber has recently expressed how taken aback he is at Ferrer's deduction:

I saw one theorist try to locate my work in one quadrant, and several other theorists in other quadrants. I don't disagree with his location of the other theorists in a particular quadrant, but to imagine that my work is only aware of one quadrant is downright hilarious. I mean, I am the guy who invented the quadrants, and constantly emphasises the necessity of all four of them; how they are all deeply interwoven, arise and tetra-develop together, and cannot exist without the others – they are tetra-realities if they are anything, as the slightest familiarity with my work makes overwhelmingly obvious. Utilising only one quadrant is a fallacy I've termed 'quadrant absolutism', and as the inventor of literally all of this, it was rather shocking to be accused of including none of it! Well, let that be a lesson – and in the meantime, the quadrants rise – and fall – together. (Wilber, 2014a, pp.39–40)

A further quote from Wilber's forthcoming book *Sex, Karma, Creativity* also refers to the tetra arising of kosmic habits/deep structures:

These levels of being-consciousness (red, amber, orange, green, turquoise, etc.) are not different interpretations of a one, single, pregiven reality or world, but are themselves actually different worlds in deep structure (an infrared world, a red world, an amber world, an orange world, a green world, a turquoise world, etc., each of which is composed of... kosmic habits [that are] tetra-created. (Wilber, 2014b, Endnote 4)

6. Hartelius and Ferrer omit Wilber's Definition of Integral Post-Metaphysics

'For Wilber (2006), post-metaphysical thinking replaces the pre-given ontological structures of consciousness (through which evolution progresses) with levels of being and knowing that are collectively constructed by humans [kosmic habits]' (Hartelius and Ferrer, 2013, p.191).

Hartelius and Ferrer tend to focus on only one aspect of Wilber's integral post metaphysics, albeit an important one (i.e. his replacement of pre-given ontological structures by kosmic habits). However, this tends to neglect other aspects such as tetra-meshing – eight fundamental perspectives of any individual and integral methodological pluralism (Esbjörn-Hargens & Wilber, 2006, p.528, note 6). They also omit an explicit identification of Wilber's definition, that is:

a positive assertion about an entity... implies being able to specify what injunctions (paradigms, exemplars, enactments) a perceiving subject must perform in order to be at a kosmic address [altitude + perspective] that can perceive the object. (Wilber, 2006, p.267)

Hartelius and Ferrer disagree with Wilber and insist his account of nondual reality is metaphysical 'in the sense that it is a deeper reality lying beyond the appearances of the world' (p.193); Wilber is saying this reality is post metaphysical because it can be realised by a first person perspective injunc-

tion 'that will transform [state not stage cf. Wilber, 2006, p.263] of consciousness to the levels from which that reality can be seen.' (ibid p.290).

The following quote is one illustration of Wilber's definition of integral post-metaphysics:

The particular experience [nondual reality or emptiness for our purpose] of the referent occurs, at first to a few people (in the upper left quadrant), who sooner or later begin to try to talk about it, with whatever marks and symbols and signs they can manage, attempting with their behaviour (upper right) to convey the experience. As this continues, it moves into the lower-left quadrant and groups of people, now having had the experience, contribute to the discussion. Out of this ongoing discussion, a set of preferred signs eventually emerge, and become part of the total semantic repertoire of that particular group. Soon the signs themselves are taken up into the syntax and grammar of the language (lower right), and the referents become full-fledged existing phenomena. They become part of the nexus-agency of the dominant mode of discourse of the group, available to any and all who wish to discuss the phenomena. Zen Masters, for example, talk about Emptiness all the time; it's no more ineffable than a sunset. But it is 'all Greek' to somebody who hasn't had the direct experience themselves, and since few people have had direct experiences of mystical Emptiness or the Abyss, those phenomena remain in effect 'ineffable' to the majority of people. But there is nothing inherent in the various mystical states and experiences that make

them ineffable – except their rareness in certain populations. (Wilber, 2014a, p.28)

Whatever the merits of their respective positions, the foregoing is intended to indicate that Hartelius and Ferrer have not taken full account of Wilber's post metaphysical approach generally and to nondual reality in particular.

Conclusion

Wilber and Ferrer's comments on each other's work, and much of the associated profusion of scholarly commentary, engenders the mood of Bob Dylan's 'Desolation Row' and his lyric 'Which side are you on?'. There seems to be a scholarly blind spot when it comes to analysing Wilber's work and the evidence presented here suggests Wilber has a point when he complains that some critics' response to his work 'has almost nothing to do with the piece itself or its actual contents' (Wilber, 2003, p.108). Of course Wilber's response to criticism, which includes cocooning himself within his Integral community and issuing occasional barbed comments, does not help. But that is not the point, what is required is a creative and constructive interaction between proponents of what Hartelius and Ferrer describe as the only two major philosophical paradigms in transpersonal psychology since its founding. Ironically, this co-creative participation, a principle much vaunted by both Ferrer and Wilber, is either largely missing or where it does take place is misfiring due to lack of mutual understanding.

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