OPENING SPACE FOR TRANSLINEAGE PRACTICE
Some Ontological Speculations

Bruce Alderman

ABSTRACT This article makes speculative gestures toward the integral facilitation of a translineage religious orientation. I focus on translineage religious practice for two reasons: 1) it is becoming an increasingly common option in postmodern spiritual culture; and 2) for those who do pursue a trans-lineage path seriously and with rigor, it may be the field where the incommensurability between faith traditions, with their potentially conflicting truth claims, soteriological ends, and conceptions of ultimate reality, may be felt most acutely and personally by practitioners. In developing an integral approach capable of non-reductively accommodating and fostering multiple religious enactments, particularly in the context of a robust translineage spirituality, I argue that it is imperative that we explore both the implicit ontological commitments of Integral Theory, and the promise of emergent ontological models that are being forged in the crucible of interfaith and intercultural dialogue and engagement. To this end, I introduce concepts from recent works in comparative and constructive theology, as well as speculative realist and deconstructive philosophy, and consider the contributions these perspectives might make to an Integral framework for translineage spiritual practice.

KEY WORDS enaction; Integral Theory; multiplicity; ontology; spirituality; theology

Integral spirituality invites multiple possible realizations:

1. The development of integrally informed schools of thought within existing religious traditions, which may encourage greater balance and scope of vision and practice than have been previously realized, while also providing opportunities for traditions to reciprocally and uniquely inform, or even transform, integral thought itself (an AQAL Christianity, and a Christianity-inflected Integral)
2. On the philosophical level, and in its role as a meta-system, the facilitation of robust and transformative interfaith dialogue among traditions through the provision of a shared meta-language (an encounter among autonomous paths that may or may not involve actively "borrowing" from each other, or practicing across traditional boundaries)
3. The emergence of a new global, integral, or world spirituality as a complete path in itself
4. The cultivation of a sensibility that would allow practitioners to skillfully embrace and navigate within multiple spiritual worldspaces simultaneously, as they learn to surf their vertiginous crests rather than being dashed by the waves of incommensurability (i.e., a translineage practice, or what Marc Gafni [2011a] calls "dual citizenship")

Correspondence: Bruce Alderman, 1416-C Del Rio Circle, Concord, CA 94518. *E-mail*: rbruce11@comcast.net.

In a previous article (Alderman, 2011), I discussed two of these possibilities (the emergence of a new integral religion and the development of an integral post-metaphysical model of interfaith relations). In this article, I would like to focus on the fourth possibility: making some speculative gestures toward the facilitation of a translineage religious orientation. Although I expect the thoughts I develop here would apply equally to several of the scenarios listed above, I have elected to focus on translineage religious practice for two reasons. First, it is becoming an increasingly common option in postmodern spiritual culture, frequently at the expense of depth of vision or commitment as spiritual consumers drift rootlessly from one practice and teacher to another (Gafni, 2011a). And second, for those who do pursue a translineage path with rigor, it may be the field where the incommensurability between faith traditions, with their potentially conflicting truth claims, soteriological ends, and conceptions of ultimate reality, may be felt most acutely and personally by practitioners.[1] While the first point suggests that such an inquiry is indeed timely and an emerging cultural need (as more individuals move into a worldcentric orientation), the second poses a challenge and invitation, particularly for integral practitioners who see shortcomings in a too-easy perennialist inclusivism and are seeking an approach that does justice to the plurality and precious particularity of the world's many wisdom traditions.

Until relatively recently, Integral Theory did, indeed, espouse a version of the perennial philosophy, and thus arguably also endorsed a form of universalist religious inclusivism. In this view, each of the world's many religious paths is seen as orienting more or less successfully or completely toward the same metaphysical ultimate and the same final realization (in potential if not in actual practice). As I have argued (Alderman, 2011), however, and as I will further develop here, the post-metaphysical, enactive turn in Integral Theory represents a subtle but profound shift in orientation, one which, I maintain, invites and supports a non-relativist, deep or integral pluralism, capable of non-reductively holding and honoring the rich multiplicity of humanity's many religious truths and worldviews. Specifically, I believe that the post-metaphysical turn in Wilber's (2002, 2006) work supports proceeding on post-metaphysical and metaphysical levels simultaneously. Post-metaphysically, the Integral model embraces metaphysical pluralism, viewing metaphysical systems as enactive operators that play a role in the enactment of particular, ontologically rich worldspaces. And metaphysically, Integral Theory advocates the adoption of facilitative metaphysical models, such as the Three Faces of Spirit (Wilber, 2006), which invite deepened appreciation and integration of the major perspectives on divine reality available in the world's major religious traditions.

As I will discuss in greater detail below, both Wilber's (2006) post-metaphysical and Jorge Ferrer's (2008) participatory models of enaction already go a long way toward establishing a framework for translineage practice. Each enables us to understand our various traditions—with their particular practices, visions, beliefs, and so on—as unique means of spiritual enactment, or as I will describe later, as "generative enclosures." There is work yet to do, however. Although Wilber (2000) first introduced a post-metaphysical orientation more than a decade ago, in the footnotes of *Integral Psychology* and in a few scattered essays (Wilber, 2001, 2002), I believe we have yet to unearth or trace out some of the deep implications of this turn for Integral Theory as a whole. In particular, the ontological implications of this turn are, I believe, still unrecognized or underappreciated. Sean Esbjörn-Hargens (2010) recently made some very important, and pioneering, steps toward articulating an ontological model consonant with Integral Theory's pluralist epistemology, and I offer this article in the hope of further contributing to this effort.[2] As discussed below, an implicit or explicit commitment to the metaphysics of the One—a monistic ontology—frequently has underlain, and supported, various problematic forms of religious inclusivism (whether traditional or perennial philosophical) and even, arguably, informs John Hick's model of religious pluralism (Griffin, 2005). So, if we are interested in developing an integral approach capable of non-reductively accommodating and fostering multiple religious enactments, particularly in the context of a robust translineage spirituality, it is imperative that we explore both the implicit ontological commitments of Integral Theory to date, and the promise of the

emergent participatory and multiplistic-relational ontologies that are being forged in the crucible of interfaith and intercultural dialogue and engagement.

To this end, and for the purposes of this article, I would like to bring Integral Theory into conversation with several post-postmodern philosophers and theologians whom I believe have much to contribute in this area. In particular, I intend a polyphonic performance—one in which a collection of disparate voices, in parallel and contrapuntal movements, will help us to reflect on a suite of themes relevant to an integral, translineage spiritual practice. The major themes to be explored here include the post-postmodern rehabilitation of ontology; the relevance of the metaphysical reflections on the Many and the One for conceptualizing the relation of religious worlds and worldviews; participatory and post-metaphysical models of the enactment of spiritual realities; and several recent multiplistic, relational, and nondual ontologies that may give us the subtle conceptual resources necessary to hold multiple religious orientations concurrently. After I lay these perspectives out alongside each other, I will attempt to bring them in closer relation through the related concepts of generative enclosure and disenclosure, in the interest of articulating an integral pluralist approach capable of honoring both the interdependence and precious particularity of each of our religious practice traditions.

Rehabilitating Ontology after Postmodernism

Whether in contemporary philosophy (Badiou, 2005; Bhaskar, 2008; Bryant, 2011; Deleuze, 1994; Harman, 2009, 2011; Latour, 2005; Meillassoux, 2008; Nancy, 2000), phenomenology (Gendlin, in press; Levin, 1988), religious studies (Ferrer, 2008; Panikkar, 1993; Griffin, 2005; Keller and Schneider, 2010), or transpersonal or integral studies (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2010; Ferrer, 2002, 2008; Morrison, 2007; Roy, 2006), an increasing number of theorists across multiple disciplines have been attempting to think beyond the ontic-shy, epistemological cul-de-sac of cultural and linguistic relativism that has marked much postmodern theorizing. As Ferrer (2008) notes, the postmodern linguistic turn has been particularly enervating for the field of religious studies, as religious truth claims have come to be regarded as little more than language games. "Apart from certain confessional or theological works," Ferrer (2008) writes, "current academic thinking on religion displays an intense skepticism toward any metaphysical referent or transcendental signifier in religious discourse. Post-metaphysical thinking, in short, deprives religious truth of any ontological significance beyond language" (p. 24). While the strategies for moving beyond the postmodern bind adopted by the thinkers listed above vary significantly, there is broad consensus across these disciplines that the positivist and postmodern bracketing, if not outright banishment, of serious discussion or speculation about ontological, extra-linguistic, or non-empirical dimensions of reality is no longer necessary, and has become, particularly in its more stringent forms, limiting and counterproductive for the advancement of human knowledge and well-being.

Before I turn to the reflections of Ferrer and Keller on this issue, I would like to review several distinctions offered by Joel Morrison (2007) that I have found to be clarifying: the polar distinctions between ontic and epistemic, and ontology and epistemology, respectively. These distinctions will be useful for the light they shed on the current epistemological cul-de-sac of the postmodern linguistic turn, but also because they will help to contextualize the Integral project—and this article—in relation to postmodern ontological skepticism and several recent philosophical movements that argue for the revaluation of ontological inquiry.

As Figure 1 illustrates, the four terms under consideration can be applied self-referentially to each other—using the Taoist insight into the identity of opposites—to illuminate both the epistemic nature of ontology, and the ontic nature of epistemology. The relation of these terms to each other can be most easily understood, as Morrison (2007) points out, by recalling "that 'ology' itself refers to a field of study, or knowledge, the real world of the epistemic, and that the 'ic' points out a real aspect or feature of reality [i.e., ontic]" (p. 552). In other words, ont*ology* and epistem*ology* are relative forms of knowledge, or polar distinctions drawn within the domain of the epistemic, while the epistem*ic* and ont*ic* domains are polar aspects of the real,
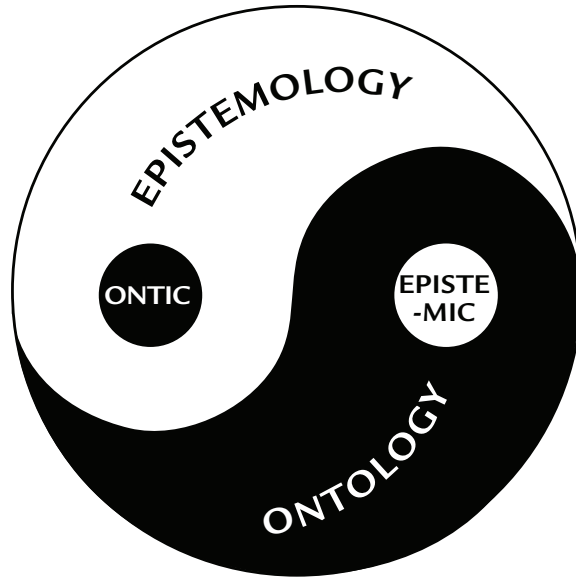
Figure 1. Ontic-epistemic polarity. From Morrison (2007); used with permission.

the former transcending and including the latter (since knowledge is both embodied and real, regardless of its domain of focus or its representational clarity or acumen).

These distinctions are quite relevant for Ferrer's (2008) participatory project. In particular, the recognition of the ontic nature of epistemology plays an important role in the pragmatist/participatory strategy he has identified as essential for moving beyond the linguistic turn in religious studies. As noted above, the current trend in religious studies to view religious categories and knowledge claims primarily as linguistic performances has come at a heavy ontological cost, at times fostering, as Ferrer (2008) puts it, "a linguistic idealism hardly distinguishable from nihilism" (p. 17). To move past this, and to begin to reclaim the ontological integrity of religious knowledge, Ferrer (2008) follows pragmatists such as Peirce and Royce in viewing language itself as ontic—as a performance of the real:

> Rather than conceiving semantics in terms of epistemology and demanding that our languages impossibly represent a wholly nonlinguistic reality, participatory thought considers that Peirce and Royce made the right move by attaching semiotics not primarily to epistemology but to ontology. Communicative acts and semiotic exchanges take place, first and foremost, in the sphere of the real, the ontological, the realm of signifying bodies and events upon which the subtlety of human cognition and language may supervene. (pp. 17-18)

Using Morrison's distinctions above, we might say that semiotic exchanges take place in the *ontic*, rather than the ontological, but Ferrer's meaning is clear: if semiosis goes all the way down, as Peirce (1991) maintains, as a feature of reality at all levels, then language becomes not simply a representational mapping of the real world without any ontological depth of its own, but a living performance of, and thus also a means of transformative, participatory engagement with, that world in its ontic fullness. The map, as Morrison (2007) stresses, is a *part* or *expression* of the territory, and as such, has the power to act creatively in and on it.

This point is directly relevant to the enactive core that informs both Wilber's and Ferrer's approaches, so I will return to a fuller discussion of it in the next major section of this article. For now, I would like to

briefly use these distinctions to illuminate certain important issues and tensions within Wilber's Integral model, particularly with respect to the post-metaphysical turn in his theory and its emphasis on the primacy of perspective. Taking the time to do this will, I hope, be instructive for two reasons: it will help integrally contextualize the ontological focus in this article, and it may also help to clarify, and address, several recent criticisms of Integral Theory as appearing to endorse epistemic absolutism (Morrison, 2007) or as committing the "epistemic fallacy" (Bhaskar, 2008; Roy, 2011).

Wilber's quadrant map, which identifies and contextualizes four major perspectives (subjective, objective, intersubjective, and interobjective) available to human beings, has proven to be quite a powerful epistemological tool. Not only has it helped practitioners take broader, more integral approaches to the interrelated domains of their lives, it has helped identify and guard against various forms of quadrant absolutism (which occur when one perspective or domain of knowledge is privileged above all others). To a great extent, it has accomplished this simply through clearly demonstrating the ubiquity, and equal importance, of each of these major perspectives. But while the Integral approach has been effective in identifying and countering various forms of absolutism *within* the epistemic domain, several critics maintain that it commits another error: it privileges the epistemic to the exclusion of the ontic, or else it conflates the two, and therefore commits another, more general form of absolutism, which Speculative Realist and Object Oriented philosophers would call the "epistemic fallacy" (Bhaskar, 2008; Bryant, 2011). Regarding this latter error, Bryant (2011) writes:

> A critique of the epistemic fallacy and how it operates in philosophy does not amount to the claim that epistemology or questions of the nature of inquiry and knowledge are a fallacy. What the epistemic fallacy identifies is the fallacy of reducing ontological questions to epistemological questions, or conflating questions of how we know with questions of what beings are. In short, the epistemic fallacy occurs wherever being is reduced to our access to being. Thus, for example, wherever beings are reduced to our impressions or sensations of being, wherever being is reduced to our talk about being, wherever being is reduced to discourses about being, wherever being is reduced to signs through which being is manifest, the epistemic fallacy has been committed. (p. 60)

To clarify, then, we could distinguish between two forms of absolutism: *epistemological (or quadrant) absolutism*, which is the absolutizing or unjustifiable privileging of one perspective or knowledge domain over all others that Integral Theory has so powerfully addressed; and *epistemic absolutism*, which entails either the reduction of ontological questions to epistemological ones, or the banishment of ontological thinking altogether from accepted modes of discourse, as is found among more extreme proponents of the linguistic turn critiqued by Ferrer (2008) above.

Does Integral Theory commit the epistemic fallacy? When Wilber (2006) writes, in *Integral Spirituality*, that "each thing *is* a perspective before it is anything else," this might appear to be the case. It suggests that the *being* of an object is identical with one's *mode of access* to it. But as Morrison (2007) notes in a related discussion on the problem of epistemic absolutism, while Wilber does sometimes say that everything is a perspective before it is anything else, he frequently balances such statements with the (ontological) observations that everything is holonic, and that perspectives are always already embodied (in individuals and cultures). These statements should help mitigate concerns that Wilber is continuing the banishment of ontological thinking that Ferrer (2008) and Bryant (2011) critique among certain postmodern philosophers.

From an epistemological perspective, I believe it is indeed appropriate to argue that *things are perspectives before they are anything else*, including things such as holons or bodies. Known things presuppose knowers, means of knowing, or modes of access. But this is quite different from making an ontological claim.

Ontologically, such a statement would seem to imply a universe of free-floating, disembodied perspectives—a very un-integral "'I' without an 'It'," as Morrison (2007, p. 570) puts it. Thus, if we cannot accept this claim from an integral perspective as a viable *ontological* truth, we would seem to be left then with two options: 1) accept the epistemological limitations upon our possible knowledge of the world that this claim implies and abandon ontological talk altogether, or 2) take the metaphysical step of positing ontological givens apart from perspectives (such as holons, which ontically *embody* perspectives). While the latter move might make some post-metaphysically inclined readers uneasy, I believe it is both justifiable and necessary, particularly if we are interested in avoiding the epistemic fallacy. Can it be done without falling into the forms of metaphysical absolutism that post-metaphysics aims to avoid?

I believe it can be. For, if, with Bryant (2011) and the Object Oriented ontologists, we can recognize the error and inadequacy of conflating the *being* of things with our *mode of access* to them; and if, in reflecting on Morrison's (2007) distinctions above, we are able to acknowledge ontology and epistemology as *relative* fields of knowledge within the *real* domain of the epistemic, then we can take up ontological reflection again as a worthy, if admittedly speculative, endeavor. We can pose ontological questions—"What must be the case, what must I transcendentally deduce as given, for this world to be as it is and to function as it does?"—along-side the familiar epistemological questions that engage and exercise us as Integral practitioners, without concern that doing so necessarily entails indulgence in the forms of absolutizing thought that post-metaphysics aims to redress.[3]

Such, at least, is the spirit in which I am approaching this article. Acknowledging at the outset the speculative nature of this exercise, I hope nevertheless that such an inquiry into the ontology of a translineage religious orientation will be fruitful and generative of insight for fellow practitioners. Let us turn now to the next step in this journey.

The One and the Many

One of the central concerns of first philosophy, of fundamental ontology, is the question of the relation of the One and the Many. Which is primary, if any? Like a single note sounding again and again, this question has been posed across multiple cultures and times, and we have answered it multiply.[4] The fact that the question is universal, but its solutions have been many, is suggestive: while this question is fundamental to human thought, its power may lie elsewhere than in the promise of a final answer, a final privileging of the Many or the One.

In eluding easy resolution, the question is generative: it calls us ever deeper into the mystery of being, of our being-together. How we hold it, then—how we engage with it, and what light we draw from it in our living, thinking, and practice—matters, for our responses to its solicitations, individually and collectively, play out in our relationships and institutions, both secular and sacred.

In the next two sections of this article, I will consider several recent offerings in the fractal unfolding of this call and response. Each of these voices is responding, in his or her own way, to problems posed by previous answers to the question of the Many and the One: whether the hegemonic and colonizing tendencies of monist ontologies, for instance, or the relativistic and nihilistic tendencies of pluralist ones. In this effort, each is attempting especially to think beyond deconstruction; to chart paths through and well past the postmodern resistance to presence and ontology; to pronounce the integrity of being anew.

These reflections will be relevant for translineage spiritual practitioners for several reasons. Our view of the relation between the Many and the One, for instance, is inseparable from our perception of our relation to the divine, and the divine's relation to the world. When we are born into or adopt a spiritual tradition, we typically inherit along with it an often quite complex set of ontological commitments. Significant, and sometimes quite disturbing or anguishing, tension or confusion can arise when we choose to embrace and practice across multiple traditions and find ourselves confronted with seemingly incommensurable depictions of the

divine nature, or divergent valuations of the plurality of creation. Identifying the deep ontological presuppositions that inform our traditions' cosmological or theological positions will not be likely, in itself, to resolve the tension, but it can invite an unfolding inquiry into the heart of that tension that itself will be generative and transformative.

Similarly, when we practice across lineages, we may encounter resistance in one or more of these traditions to our doing so. I have been warned on more than one occasion against attempting to graft a sheep's head onto a yak's body! And there is good sense in this—to avoid watering down or distorting a tradition, or to avoid being dashed by waves of incommensurability—but if we have decided, against all "sensible" advice, to take a translineage path anyway, to inhabit different worlds concurrently, or to allow a new one to grow from their mingling, then we may be aided in our efforts by some of the visionary models of being and knowing explored herein.

Related to the above, and as I posited at the beginning of this article, the common interreligious orientations of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism may each be found to imply, and to presuppose, an ontology which reinforces its position and its modes of knowing and valuation. I do not believe there is a deterministic causal relation between one's ontology and one's view of other religions, but I *have* found that any particular articulation of an interreligious orientation will be found to imply certain ontological commitments, and thus ontological inquiry can be helpful in opening and transforming limiting perspectives. The "problem" of interreligious orientation is typically posed in the context of interfaith dialogue, of course, but it is clearly relevant for translineage practitioners. On an individual level, how do we hold and interface with our chosen traditions? How might such an inquiry help further differentiate and individuate them in our lives, as uniquely flowering, wild ecologies? And how might it deepen their interrelations, their folds and imbrications? We will explore several such possibilities in the coming pages.

Participatory Enaction

In recent writings, Jorge Ferrer (2008, 2009) has advocated a participatory model of spiritual enaction as a new paradigm for moving religious studies beyond the impasses of dominant trends in postmodern interreligious scholarship, which tend either to view religious worlds as fully cultural-linguistic constructions, or as incomplete views of a single metaphysical reality. Rejecting both strategies as undermining of the integrity of religious worldviews, he recommends the adoption of a participatory, enactive model of spiritual knowing, and a pluralistic, ontologically "thick" orientation toward spiritual truths. Drawing on the enactive model of cognition developed by Francisco Varela (1991) and Humberto Maturana (1987), and situating it within a participatory sensibility which has informed various premodern and modern philosophies, the participatory-enactive approach denies the Kantian dualism of framework and uninterpreted reality, instead regarding spiritual experiences and other events as ontologically rich enactments or emergences, indelibly shaped but not wholly determined by, or reducible to, our linguistic categories or cognitive frameworks.

In this view, spiritual worlds are *co-created* realities, called forth out of the open, creatively responsive mystery of Being. This model is similar, in some regards, to A.H. Almaas' (2004) notion of the Logoi of Teachings, according to which the various spiritual philosophies and traditions of the world—with their unique realms of experience and soteriological possibilities—are understood, not simply as human constructions, but as the unique flowers of our creative participation with Being. Here, Almaas seems to preserve a sense of spiritual paths as creative revelations, not only of Being, but *by* Being: what emerges is not entirely up to "us."

An enactive, and therefore participatory, co-creative, understanding also informs the latest phase of Wilber's work, of course. While "Wilber-5" is often identified as the post-metaphysical phase of Integral Theory, this is a misleading designation if this is taken to indicate that Integral Theory is averse to ontological thinking or speculation, or that it considers all religious (or other) truth claims to be claims about language

or "merely subjective" experience (a charge that Ferrer [2011] has, inappropriately, leveled against Wilber's work). Wilber-5 involves, among other things, the integration of post-metaphysical and enactive orientations—where enactments are, indeed, ontologically "thick," body-and-world transforming acts or events.[5] Where Wilber's approach differs from Ferrer's is primarily in his AQAL framing (and extension) of enaction: bringing more specificity and clarity to the various modes and stages of enaction available to human beings.

Returning to Ferrer's model: in positing that religious worlds are the "products" of human engagement and interaction with a creative spiritual power or mystery, Ferrer (2009) aims thereby to preserve unity in the midst of the pluralistic profusion of religious worlds. Rather than seeing religious worlds and spiritual ultimates as pre-existing, isolated islands or entities, he asks us to view these worlds as relatively independent, emergent realities called forth by human engagement with an *undetermined* (meaning multiply determinable, not simply indeterminate) spiritual creativity, in and with which we all collectively participate.

While Ferrer (2008, 2009) argues for the necessary acknowledgement of the vital role of human cognition in the manifestation of spiritual realities, it is important to frame it in such a way as to mitigate the latent potential for anthropocentrism that might be invited by such an orientation. One way of approaching this, which is already implicit in the enactive approach adopted by both Wilber and Ferrer, is to stress that, while spiritual worlds are, in part, human enactments, this does not entail the subordination of Being to human consciousness. In other words, Being is not simply a product of human beings: rather, humans have their worlds only in and through and with the creativity of Being. Humans are wholly Being's doing, and humans are the doing of Being, but humans do not exhaust or define Being's creative effulgence.

The Principle of Irreduction

In translineage practice, then, participatory enaction, or integral tetra-enaction, invites us to see spiritual realities, experiences, and soteriological possibilities in enactive terms—as participatory co-creations. And *as* enactions, our spiritual realities and worlds are both continuous with the tradition(s) in which we practice, as well as *discontinuous* (i.e., each enaction is a new, creative emergence out of the mystery). This does not necessarily mark a break with tradition, however; rather, it sees tradition itself as embodying Being's newness, as the simultaneously continuous and discontinuous flow and irruption of Being's creative power, as every "event," every actuality, is.

To unpack this a bit, and to better trace out the implications of this notion for a translineage orientation to spiritual practice, I would like to briefly introduce a concept from Bruno Latour's philosophy that has been helpful to me in clarifying my views on this topic. The view I will ultimately develop in this article is not a Latourian one, but as I hope to demonstrate, the concept has direct bearing on the notion of the dis/continuity of enaction—as well as the related ontological questions of the One and the Many, of Wholeness and Particularity—that I contend are relevant for developing a robust and supple translineage orientation.

The concept I would like to creatively employ is Latour's (1988) principle of irreduction. In short, the principle states that 1) no object, no actor or event or actuality, is ultimately reducible to any other; and concurrently, that 2) it is nevertheless always *possible* to perform, or enact, such reductive analyses, with the knowledge that such reductions come at a cost and will always, by definition, entail a loss in the form of distortion or oversimplification (Harman, 2009). Latour's central insight, in other words, is into the *irreducible particularity* of every actuality or actual occasion. Here is how he describes the first dawning of this insight:

> I knew nothing, then, of what I am writing now but simply repeated to myself: "Nothing can be reduced to anything else, nothing can be deduced from anything else, everything may be allied to everything else." This was like an exorcism that defeated demons one by one. It was a wintry sky, and a very blue. I no longer needed to prop it up with a cosmology, put it in a picture, render it in writing, measure it in

> a meteorological article, or place it on a Titan to prevent it falling on my head ... It
> and me, them and us, we mutually defined ourselves. And for the first time in my life
> I saw things unreduced and set free. (as cited in Harman, 2009, p. 13)

While Latour, to my knowledge, never makes such a connection, I hear in this poetic passage the same flavor of "suchness," the same celebration of the simple, causally liberated being of things, that saturates Zen poetry or art.

On philosophical and ethical levels, I see the recognition of irreducible particularity of actual occasions as an important way of safeguarding the integrity and even autonomy of emergent realities. It accomplishes this 1) by protecting objects or entities from philosophical undermining or overmining, and 2) by guarding against a lurking human will-to-power that might inform an enactive paradigm which is entertained without such recognition. I will address the first point in some depth before turning to the second.

To begin, undermining and overmining are philosophical strategies that seek to explain the appearance or manifestation of ordinary objects through metaphysical appeals to *more real* underlying or transcendent forms or processes (Harman, 2011). Specifically, an undermining approach suggests, reductively, that objects are simply surface appearances, and that their true reality is located in their underlying atomic or molecular components, for instance, or in some deeper structure. By contrast, an overmining approach denies that individual objects or entities really exist, locating reality instead in transcendent processes, dynamic fields, laws, and so on. Both strategies effectively put ordinary objects or entities "under erasure," undermining their reality in favor of some preferred metaphysical strata of being. Latour's epiphany, then, represents a radical breaking with both of these (very common) forms of "elsewhere philosophy," allowing us to see objects with a renewed innocence, "unreduced and set free" (Harman, 2009).

In Object Oriented Philosophy, particularly in Harman's (2009, 2011) post-Heideggerian framing of it, this Latourian irreducibility of things is understood in substantialist terms, with each particular object being defined by an utterly withdrawn, non-relational core or substance. In this understanding, which Harman (2009, 2011) develops out of Heidegger's reflections on the ontological status of "tool-beings" such as hammers, each emergent object retains an essential interiority cut off from all relation to any other objects. In my own thought, however, while I appreciate and want to preserve this insight into the irreducible integrity of things, I would like to do so without appealing, as Harman does, to wholly withdrawn substances or things-in-themselves. To this end, I have found another concept by Joel Morrison (2007) to be useful: his principle of nondual rationalism, which holds that "infinite divisibility equals indivisibility." As Morrison (2007) puts it: "Infinite divisibility necessitates that there can be no fundamental or absolute division because there will always be a deeper level of divisibility, and hence, with infinite divisibility the absolute is fundamentally indivisible" (p. 86).

To relate this to Latour's principle of irreduction, I propose a corollary principle, that infinite reducibility equals irreducibility. To put this succinctly: rather than viewing the irreducible particularity of things as related to Harman's withdrawn substance (i.e., island-like thing-in-itselfness, wholly divorced from all relationship), we can, following Morrison's principle, discover it in the infinite potential for reducibility itself. There is support for the infinite scope of reducibility in Harman's (2011) object ontology:

> [Contrary to Heidegger's contention,] the hammer as a real tool-being is not located
> in the basement of the universe at all, since a layer of constituent pieces swarms
> beneath it, another layer beneath that one, and so forth. Instead of saying that the
> regress into constituent objects is indefinite, I would go so far as to call it infinite, in
> spite of the ban found in Kant's Antinomies on ruling either for or against an infinite
> regress of pieces. After all, to be real means to have a multitude of qualities, both real

and perceived. And given that an object must inherently be a unity, its multitude of qualities can only arise from the plurality of its pieces. Thus there is no object without pieces, and an infinite regress occurs. Despite the easy and widespread mockery of the infinite regress, there are only two alternatives, and both are even worse. Instead of the infinite regress we can have a finite regress, in which one ultimate element is the material of everything larger. Or we can have no regress at all, in which there is no depth behind what appears to the human mind. Both options have already been critiqued as undermining and overmining, respectively. And if the infinite regress is often mocked as a theory of "turtles all the way down," the finite regress merely worships a final Almighty Turtle, while the theory of no regress champions a world resting on a turtle shell without a turtle. (p. 113)

With the positing of infinite depth of objects or constitutive relations—turtles all the way down, reminiscent of Wilber's holonic model—there is clearly no final reduction possible. Where I possibly differ from Harman is in my rejection of the need to posit a withdrawn substance, since I believe Morrison's principle of nondual rationalism can deliver the particularity and integrity of objects that Harman is seeking. Infinite divisibility, as Morrison (2007) argues, amounts to its opposite: indivisibility in and as the absence of any final divisibility; or as I contend, irreducibility in and as the absence of any final reducibility.

My suggestion, in other words, is to hold reducibility and irreducibility at once. In this view, each particular object or entity, as a unique site of the bodying forth of the whole, is infinitely reducible, there being no end to the possible constitutive relations or compositional elements we can trace out. At the same time, each particular, in eluding any final reduction, is also at once absolutely unique and wholly irreducible.

In an interreligious or translineage spiritual context, this notion has at least two interesting implications: 1) It scuttles easy, perennial philosophical, cross-tradition equations of religious concepts or categories, since, while such comparisons can be made—and can indeed be helpful and fruitful—the absolute particularity and integrity of spiritual realities ensures that no such comparison will ever be adequate to capture the fullness of any emergent reality; and 2) this resistance to ultimate reduction suggests, also, that spiritual—or any other—realities cannot be ultimately or finally reduced to any other particular parts or processes, using any of the reductive categories of choice, whether cultural or biological or psychological. Even tetra-enaction, while a useful and powerful concept, cannot finally exhaust or reductively account for the mystery of any particular emergent.

Thus, to relate this back to the concept of participatory enaction, and the concern with the will-to-power that might be masked in an overly anthropocentric interpretation of it: the principle of irreduction, in the reading I have offered here, dashes the pretension that humans, or human practices, can serve in themselves as ultimate explanatory causes of any particular reality, spiritual or not. We are participants, yes, but in a creative mystery that exceeds and eludes any such final reduction.

Lastly, to return to my observation at the beginning of this section that spiritual enactions are both continuous and discontinuous: the continuity of spiritual enactions lies in their infinite reducibility, the unending lines of constitutive or compositional relation that can be traced out from each, unique bodying forth of the whole; and the discontinuity lies in the absolute particularity, the irreducibility of each emergent reality. In being what it is, irreducibly, everything is inviolable, an utter concreteness. If we like, we can view this as an extension—a further democratization—of Marc Gafni's (2011b) notion of the Unique Self. Everything, every enaction, every bodying forth, is, in the sense I have indicated above, a unique self.

This suggests, if we are attentive, a curious entangling of the Many and the One. To help unfold and develop this insight, I will turn now to explore several concepts that are emerging in the field of constructive theology.

Nondual Ontological Pluralism

In a previous article (Alderman, 2011), I introduced several recent attempts to move theology beyond the shortcomings and aporias of modern and postmodern theories of interfaith relations, from Ferrer's (2007) participatory enaction, to S. Mark Heim's (2001) trinitarian pluralistic inclusivism, to Griffin's (2005) deep pluralism, to Raimon Panikkar's (1990) radical pluralism. To this list should be added the recent work of a group of authors who might be referred to, collectively, as the polydox theologians. A recent, representative text for this movement in constructive theology, *Polydoxy* (Keller & Schneider, 2011), presents a wide-ranging series of essays which center, to varying degrees, around three intertwined threads: multiplicity, unknowing or evolutionary open-endedness, and relation, each of which co-implicates the others. This triune set of perspectives lends itself readily to a trinitarian analysis, and several authors take up that task, but the threads are held loosely enough to allow for other articulations as well.

In name, polydoxy is a theology of multiplicity, seeing in multiplicity, not an obscuration or a scattering or division of divinity, but divinity itself or divinity's affirmation—a divine manifold. In spirit, polydoxy is a theology of relation. As Keller and Schneider (2011) write, "Relationality is the connective tissue that makes multiplicity coherent, and it is the depth that makes our relations, all of them, strange and unknowable, even, or especially, in intimacy" (p. 29). In practice, as the previous quote also suggests, polydoxy is aligned, in part, with the traditions of apophasis and revelation—here, finding spiritual sustenance in the posture of unknowing, of ongoing openness to the surprises of relation and evolutionary emergence.

Rather than presenting a singular theological model or theory, such as we find in the works of Ferrer, Heim, or Panikkar, polydoxy enacts a mode of thinking—a holographically unfolding/enfolding logic which demonstrates

> . . .the fold, the *pli*, which distinguishes multi*pli*city from mere plurality. That enfolded and unfolding relationality suggests not a relation between many separate ones but between singularities, events of becoming folded together, intersecting, entangled as multiples. It is such connectivity that allows, indeed implies (im*pli*catio), the becoming coherence of polydoxy. (Keller & Schneider, 2011, p. 21)

How this shows up in the text is as a rich multiplex of divergent and convergent perspectives and themes, circling and crystallizing around the three, co-implicate attractors of multiplicity, unknowing, and relation. In this, the text succeeds in its goal, which is to enact an *integral* field of difference without erasing multiplicity or subsuming it in a single narrative.

While polydoxy is a professedly Christian theological exercise, I believe both its sophisticated mode of execution and its triune—one could say, nondual—onto-epistemology make the text relevant to anyone more broadly interested in the challenges of interfaith relations or an integral, translineage spirituality. In particular, I find the themes of multiplicity, unknowing, and relation quite consonant with an integral, evolutionary understanding; for me, these terms highlight, in fact, three of the implicit strengths of the Integral model: its embrace of epistemological and ontological pluralism, its evolutionary open-endedness, and its co-pronouncement of relation and difference (tetra-enaction). The use of these three terms by the polydox authors to generate multiple compelling cases for a robust religious pluralism thus should be of interest to integral practitioners interested in formulating models of interfaith relations and translineage practice.

I do not have space in this article to review the many offerings in *Polydoxy* (Keller & Schneider, 2011), so I will focus for now on two perspectives that I believe are of special relevance: John Thatamanil's trinitarian model of interfaith relations, and Jean-Luc Nancy's being singular plural.

The Trinity as Generative Locus

In "God as Ground, Contingency, and Relation," John Thatamanil (2011) presents a variation on the triune theme around which the essays in *Polydoxy* are organized. Following the recent trinitarian interfaith models of Raimon Panikkar (1973, 1993) and especially S. Mark Heim (1995), in which the three persons of God are correlated with various representations of the divine nature across multiple religious traditions, Thatamanil (2011) argues that the sacred Trinity provides Christians with the symbolic and ontological resources for conceptualizing a multiplistic theology capable of accommodating diverse, and even seemingly incommensurate, religious orientations. As Thatamanil (2011) notes, the eminent theologian and post-Nicene church father, Gregory of Nyssa, very early on recognized the trinitarian model of divine multiplicity as a "middle way" between the Jewish monistic and pagan pluralistic theologies of the ancient world.[6] More recent trinitarian models, including Thatamanil's, thus build on and extend this understanding, highlighting its implicit relevance for theories of religious diversity.

But while Thatamanil (2011) regards a trinitarian approach to comparative theology and interfaith relations as potentially quite fruitful, he finds that most trinitarian proposals to date suffer from a number of shortcomings. In particular, he identifies six problems which undermine the potential of this approach to move Christian comparative theology beyond the hegemonic inclusivism and relativistic pluralism that many interfaith scholars have critiqued (Griffin, 2005; Heim, 1995; Panikkar, 1990). Rather than listing the problems independently, since they are all interrelated, I will briefly summarize Thatamanil's (2011) critique as follows: In positing pre-formulated trinitarian models, which are developed exclusively out of the resources of the Christian tradition and usually prior to dialogue with other traditions, most of these theologians misrepresent other traditions by assuming a one-to-one correspondence between non-Christian conceptions of ultimate reality and one of the facets of the Christian Trinity, and also by treating other traditions monolithically, failing to recognize the diversity of perspectives present *within* these other traditions. One result of such an approach, and this is the sixth problem he identifies, is that Christianity emerges as inherently superior to other traditions, since only the Christian trinitarian model is imagined to include *all* dimensions of ultimate reality. But while Christianity might indeed be superior to other traditions in some respects, a trinitarian approach framed in these terms would appear to implicitly, and unfairly, stack the deck in Christianity's favor from the outset.

To deal with these problems, Thatamanil (2011) proposes approaching the Trinity, not as a pre-established metaphysical model to which other religions are then related, or into which other religions are simply subsumed, but rather as a suggestive and symbolic "locus for interreligious conversation" (p. 325). In other words, the triune intuition of divine multiplicity within Christianity can be interpreted as providing both *ontological grounds* for theological diversity and a *generative context* for comparative theology and interlineage engagement. As Thatamanil (2011) writes:

> The work of interreligious dialogue is religiously important because it is a way of gathering up differences for the sake of integral vision. If we are to understand how these mysteries might be marked by mutual interpenetration, we must take up interreligious dialogue. Interreligious dialogue cannot be motivated by the proximate work of peacemaking alone but must be seen as vital to the quest for right orientation. We cannot move fully into the life of the trinitarian God apart from a deeper movement into communion with our non-Christian neighbors. (p. 343)

To this end, Thatamanil (2011) suggests adopting a trinity of core ontological terms which he derives, in part, from comparative exploration of three prominent religious traditions: Hinduism, Christianity, and Buddhism. The terms he recommends—*ground*, *contingency*, and *relation*—can indeed be identified with elements of

the Christian Trinity, but importantly, not in equal measure or depth. Thus, he appeals to Advaita Hinduism to elucidate the richness of the term *ground* or *Being*; to Christianity and Judaism to unpack the profound theological implications of *contingency* or *particularity*; and to Madhyamaka Buddhism to plumb the religious and philosophical depths of *relation* or *radical interdependence*.

I do not have the space here to review these terms in detail, but I would like to comment on a few points that are especially relevant to our discussion. First, similar to Wilber's (2006) triune model of Spirit based on three primordial perspectives (I, We, and It; or the First, Second, and Third Faces of God), Thatamanil's model is also based on three ontological or experiential universals: being, contingency or particularity, and relation. *Being* names "the sheer mystery that there is anything at all" (Thatamanil, 2011, p. 332), and in theological contexts is often conceived as the unchanging ground of existence. *Contingency* points to the radical particularity or singularity of things, and also suggests within both Jewish and Christian religious contexts that creation is not merely an illusory expression or appearance within changeless being but a novel emergence that adds to and enriches God or Being. This is a theological relative of the principle of irreduction I discussed above, and is also consonant with an evolutionary understanding of spirituality. *Relation* is the truth that no "thing" stands alone; everything is what it is only in radical interrelationship with everything else. As experiential constants, we can expect being, contingency, and relation to show up, in various ways and with different emphases, across multiple religious traditions; and this, Thatamanil (2011) argues, is exactly what we find. But because they are differently emphasized, both *within* any given tradition's multiple historical lineages as well as *across* religious boundaries, they can and do frequently lead to intra- and interreligious tensions and apparent contradictions. In relation to the latter, Thatamanil (2011) writes:

> The tension between these three mysteries notwithstanding, spiritual life lived in relation to these mysteries need not result in outright contradiction or incommensurability. This assertion is made in the key of faith and not ratiocination which must come later. By way of that latter work of reflection, theologians can and must give an account of the perichoresis of these three mysteries. If reality and divinity bear this trinitarian structure—if ground, contingency, and relation are distinct but not separate—then one would expect that any robust and historically deep tradition can find resources to orient persons to these three dimensions of the Real even if any given strand of a religious tradition typically errs in one direction or the other. (p. 342)

Thus, if these terms are recognized not only as experiential constants or homeomorphically equivalent themes arising within multiple religious and philosophical traditions, but *also* as mutually entailing or interdependent aspects of reality, then the tension between both the terms and the traditions which differently emphasize them is transformed from one of opposition to one of complementarity.[7] As complementary ontological concepts, each of these terms names an irreducible aspect of the mystery of reality (Thatamanil, 2011). Taken together, each can help guard against imbalances or theological errors that might arise when any of these aspects is privileged or taken alone—whether that be a dualistic depiction of the divine as a wholly unrelated, transcendent Other (which Tillich identifies as the self-contradictory notion of an infinite being among beings); or the devaluation of the relative world of form, where relation divorced from contingency and/or ground slides into relativism or nihilism. Interreligious encounter and translineage practice then become *generative contexts* for exploring the multiple dimensions and unplumbed depths of our own being, and for challenging and balancing excesses that might arise from our undue, unconscious privileging of one aspect of reality to the exclusion of others.

As I noted above, Thatamanil's (2011) approach suggestively parallels Wilber's (2006) notion of the Three Faces of God. Although the perspectives emphasized in both of these approaches do not correspond to

each other in a strictly one-to-one fashion, I would suggest that, with a little creative translation, we might be able to relate them as depicted in Figure 2. As Latour (1988) argues, such translation between systems or disciplines necessarily entails a degree of loss or distortion, but it can also be generative of insight. In this case, the three terms Thatamanil recommends would appear to exceed the perspectives usually associated with each of the Three Faces. For instance, while Being might be closely associated with a first-person, Upper-Left quadrant perspective, it cannot be exclusively confined to that quadrant; Relation involves not only the second-person Lower-Left quadrant but also the Lower-Right; Contingency can be identified with the individual, third-person realities of the Upper-Right, but the particularity it names also includes the Upper-Left as Unique Self; and so on. The three terms themselves, as third-person ontological concepts rather than person-perspectives, cannot replace the Three Faces, especially for integral spiritual practitioners, but held alongside the perspectival model, they can call forth or enact theological and experiential riches that might otherwise be missed if one were using the Three Faces approach alone. And both Wilber's and Thatamanil's triune models, in naming irreducible aspects of experience that transcend the boundaries of lineage both within and across religious traditions, allow translineage practitioners to enact integral fields of difference *by embracing important intra- and interlineage tensions as generative and complementary rather than simply contradictory*.

I will return to this suggestion toward the end of this article. For now, I would like to introduce another thinker who will help us reflect more deeply on two of the terms discussed above: contingency and relation, or the nonduality of the Many and the One.
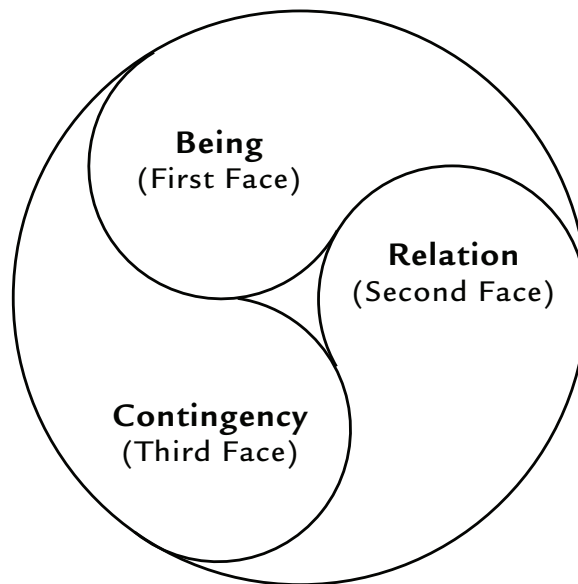

Figure 2. Integral ontological trinity.

Being Singular Plural

"A singular being," Jean-Luc Nancy (2000) writes, "is a contradiction in terms." In the introduction to *Being Singular Plural*, Nancy, whose work informs the thinking of several of the polydox authors, announces his intention to rethink ontology "by giving the 'singular plural of Being' as its foundation" (p. xv). In juxtaposing the three terms, *being singular plural*, as he does, he means to communicate their absolute co-immediacy, without remainder, and without any suggestion of the priority of one over the other. Being-one is only ever being-with-many. What he wants to avoid, then, are the metaphysical models that posit the pre-existence of Being—where an original One is then dispersed into the Many, or an original Many is subsequently gathered

up into One. For Nancy, there is no pre-existence, no state other than being singular plural, which itself, in every "plurisingular" instance, *is* the origin. Here is how Nancy (2000) puts it:

> *Being singular plural* means the essence of Being is only as coessence. In turn, coessence, or *being-with* (being-with-many), designates the essence of the *co-*, or even more so, the *co-* (the *cum*) itself in the position or guise of an essence. In fact, coessentiality cannot consist in an assemblage of essences, where the essence of this assemblage as such remains to be determined. In relation to such an assemblage, the assembled essences would become [mere] accidents. Coessentiality signifies the essential sharing of essentiality, sharing in the guise of assembling, as it were. This could also be put in the following way: if Being is being-with, then it is, in its being-with, the "with" that constitutes Being... Therefore, it is not the case that the "with" is an addition to some prior Being; instead, the "with" is at the heart of Being. (pp. 30-31)

In pronouncing "with" to be the essence of Being, in other words, Nancy distances himself from metaphysical narratives which posit a process of rupture or unification of originary being, but also from narratives which would posit a simple dialectical swinging between oneness and multiplicity. Being is immediately and nondually co-being, co-essence, singular plural. In this understanding, one is always already more-than-one. A one without a second would be less than one, an improper or deficient one. As Morrison (2007), following Buckminster Fuller, expresses this: "Unity [i.e., a unit, a singularity] is plural and at minimum two."

In speaking of the singular plural of being, Nancy has found a way to give voice, as I hear him, to tetra-enaction as ever-present origin. But in speaking this way, he asks us to think the four quadrants at once, to appreciate their radical co-implication. There are not individuals over here and collectives over there. There is the being singular plural of every blooming object or occasion. This view has bearing on, and nicely echoes, the comments I made earlier about individual things, or enactions, being irreducible instantiations of (indeterminate) wholeness. As Nancy writes (2000):

> The singular is primarily *each* one and, therefore, also *with* and *among* all the others. The singular is a plural. It also undoubtedly offers the property of indivisibility, but it is not indivisible the way substance is indivisible. It is, instead, indivisible in each instant [*au coup par coup*], within the event of its singularization. It is indivisible like any instant is indivisible, which is to say that it is infinitely divisible, or *punctually* indivisible. Moreover, it is not indivisible like any particular is indivisible, but on the condition of *pars pro toto*: the singular is each time *for* the whole, in its place and in light of it. (p. 32)

Nancy (2000) does not translate this "for the whole" in terms of *community*—for him, the term has been problematically reified, becoming more often than not an *eclipsing* whole—but he nevertheless finds, in the plural singular of our being-together, that the language of "it" slides ineluctably, and affirmatively, toward the language of "we" (p. 33).

In the plurisingularity and irreducible particularity of tetra-enaction, our respective faith traditions and practice lineages are thus, in their co-essentiality, collegially one (by one), one-with-another.

Generative Dis/Enclosure

Before bringing this inquiry to a close, I would like to gather several of the themes I have explored in this article together under the tabernacle provided by a pair of terms: *generative (en)closure* and *dis-enclosure*.

The first term, generative (en)closure, is one I have been developing in the context of my reflections on ontology, embodiment, and integral enaction. Its complementary term, dis-enclosure, is a Nancian concept that I discovered while working on this article.

The relation of the term, *generative (en)closure*, to autopoietic theory should be clear: An autopoietic system, meaning a "self-making system," exhibits a definitive closure and circularity in its pattern of organization. While "(en)closure" can be read as a noun, signifying a fixed structure or a static condition, I prefer a more active or processual inflection: enclosure as the "act of enclosing." Here, the term is perhaps close to what Eugene Gendlin means by body-constituting, in that both (en)closure and body-constituting are *generative*. Gendlin (in press) explains,

> Body-constituting is a generative body-environment process (without the here-there split)... Everyone agrees that the body is made of environmental stuff, but it was assumed to be separate from the environment, merely perceiving and moving in it. But if we consider the body's formation as a body process, then the body is environmental interaction from the start. The body is identical with its environment in one body-constituting process. (p. 6)

But body-constituting is generative not only in the formation and maintenance of the body; it is active as well in the ongoing differentiation of the environment and the generation of objects. In the process of body-constituting, the body will develop processes that become active only when certain intermittent aspects of the environment are present. When these elements are not present, however, the body nevertheless continues to imply them, and this ongoing implication is generative both of difference within the body and within the environment. As Gendlin (in press) explains:

> Certain processes become differentiated; they occur just with certain parts of the environment. This generates specific environmental objects... For example, sugar, water, and light appear and are incorporated only sometimes. Then the body-constituting with these 'objects' becomes separated from the rest of the process (if the organism didn't die in their absence). Then the body has separate processes just for these parts of the environment. The moment they re-appear, just these processes resume. So we call these differentiated parts of the environment 'objects'. But to think this we need to say that when something implied doesn't occur, the body continues to imply it. Until something meets that implying ('carries it forward', we say), the body continues to imply what was implied and didn't occur. If part of what was implied did occur, then only the part that did not occur continues to be implied. This 'reiterated implying' is a basic concept. It explains how objects in the environment become differentiated. (pp. 6-7)

Gendlin's account is thus quite close to what I mean by generative (en)closure: this active enclosure, this enfolding and implication, is generative of other bodies and forms (i.e., enactive, in a single process of body-world flowering or co-constitution).

But the term, *(en)closure*, is suggestive of more than just the body, which is why I have introduced the term here. It evokes images of sheltering and sustaining structures—of tabernacles and dwellings and temples. What kind of enclosure is a temple? What does it imply? The link here to Gendlinian body-constitution is illuminating: the body is a temple, and the temple is a body that (ongoingly) implies a world. We can similarly see cultures, traditions, teachings, communities of believers in this light: (en)closures which, in and by their

closure, are generative, enactive of difference. Holy days and retreats are generative (en)closures in time. And the sacred objects or realities of a tradition are, in some sense, not simply timeless metaphysical universals, but creative *re*-enactments (Faber, 2011)—both continuous with the past (ongoingly implied within the body of a tradition) and newly emergent or enacted (creatively re-enacted by each generation of practitioners).

To couch these thoughts in terms of the thinkers who have accompanied us through this article: With Ferrer, I see the generative (en)closures of our traditions, churches, and lineages, whether singly or multiply held, each as uniquely embodied means of participatory enaction—as creative expressions of our invocational engagement with spiritual power or mystery. With Latour, I see each generative (en)closure as the rounding of particularity, utterly and liberatingly concrete, both irreducible and always-reducible or -relatable, and I recognize that every difference charges us with an ethical imperative. With the polydox theologians, I see in every generative (en)closure of body and tradition the folding and unfolding of the relational *pli*, which situates us in multiplicities, imbricates us in complementarities, and implicates us in the unknowing of our evolutionary becoming. With Nancy, I see in the generative (en)closure of any particular tradition the singular plural of its being, the "with" that is constitutive of its presence, where its singular presence is always already co-presence, the declaration of the impossibility (and the utter poverty) of the "Only One." And with Wilber, I see generative (en)closure as a holon—already plurisingular, the body of tetra-enaction—which, *as* a holon, can never be mistaken for a (non-holonic) foundation or ultimate, thus releasing it to the ongoing invitation of the divine's becoming.

Which brings us to the second term, *dis-enclosure*, since "release" implies the rupture or interruption of closure. What is en-closed, of course, must one day be un-enclosed. What is en-closed, as an en-folding, is also always already an opening. Dis-enclosure is the marker of the generativity of death in the evolutionary unfolding of our being-together. The gifts of death are many, as Michael Dowd (2009) reminds us: it not only seeds and clears the way for new form, as in the kenosis of a supernova; it is generatively enfolded into the very form(s) we take—in the daily dis/enclosure of cells which *is* our living.

As Nancy (2008) uses the term, dis-enclosure means both opening or emptying—the opening of a closed space, and the kenosis or auto-deconstruction of a worldview or a form. While Nancy (2008) employs the term primarily in the context of an analysis of the modern deconstruction and secularization of Christian culture as the temporal fulfillment of Christianity's identification with the self-emptying God, the term finds broader application in the writings of the polydox theologians (Betcher, 2011; Rivera, 2011). For the purposes of this article, I will focus in particular on Sharon Betcher's (2011) use of the term, which she recognizes as implicitly illuminating the field of the multiple, and which she relates to notions of empathic vulnerability and intercorporeal generosity or obligation.

Regarding the former, Betcher (2011) argues that Nancy's dis-enclosure, in describing the auto-deconstruction of totalizing worldviews, implies or discloses a vision of multiplicity. For the end of totalization is a confrontation with Being's ungrasped excess, or Being's final ungraspability; the coming due of a particular world's IOU to the Kosmos (Wilber, 1995). In revealing and violating the closure of the given world, dis-enclosure discloses existence as vulnerable worlds-in-becoming. As Nancy (2000) might remind us, a world is always already a world-alongside-other-worlds. And dis-enclosure, as both an opening-*of* and an opening-*to*, is a confrontation and emptying of a world into a world, turning on the fulcrum of the plurisingular "with" of Being.

Regarding the relation of dis-enclosure to empathy and generosity, Betcher (2011) suggests that trauma or suffering, as the dis-enclosure or rupture of the apparent sovereignty of the body or the self, is an opening that discloses our interdependence—our vulnerability to, and need for, others. It is an opening that still offers a form of shelter, however, in that it may induct us into a life of care and mutual obligation. Citing several examples of individuals whose disability and chronic suffering had inspired them to new forms of engagement with the world, Betcher (2011) points beneath the endemic alienation and closure of the self-sufficient, post-

modern ego, to the intercorporeal entanglement of our bodies which announces itself in empathy and suffering. It is in these pre-reflective responses that we come to an appreciation of (the need for, the co-implication of) manifold others in the very fold or enclosure of our being:

> Because "pluralism is not enough" (according to Keller), I suggest that the *pli* of Spirit, that "many-one," signals a fertile "fold" (i.e., *pli* or pleat) of difference within immanence itself so as to generate ligatures or obligations. The work of religion within this scene will be that of growing corporeal generosity into a social muscle. Consequently, [my recommended approach] develops the spiritual prosthesis of the practiced vow—the "yoke" or "yoga"—of corporeal generosity to creaturely need within the inter-religious milieu of today's global cities. (Betcher, 2011, p. 91)

Betcher (2011) identifies in this pre-conceptual being-given-over to others, this intercorporeal generosity, not a particular virtue but the *founding* of virtue: the sub-representational condition of our very embodied and social inter-existence. When gathered up into conscious living, however, intercorporeal generosity becomes grounds for a "yoga, or practice, of the open"—a practice of friendship growing from (recognition of) intercorporeal "ligatures of obligation" in which obligation itself is the "sphere of what I [the sovereign ego] did not constitute" (p. 104):

> When one assumes the practice of a spiritual path setting out from the locus of this great open field, then one might experience the beggar or the CEO, like pain, to become one's spiritual teacher. Everything and everyone provides an opening to the practice of generosity, of sympathy at the cellular level. The yoga or obligation of neighbor-love is born of this, develops this generosity as a social muscle. (Betcher, 2011, p. 104)

This is not a practice of sovereignty, of self-making evolutionary subjects, then; it is a practice of vulnerability, of being a "patient of life" (Betcher, 2011, p. 102). But then again, these two are not-two. Dis-enclosure is, in other words, the contradictory vulnerability of each and every (en)closure as inviolable particular. Each particular, in its particularity, bleeds into the implicit—into the field of that which it did not constitute, but which it ongoingly implies in its rounded particularity.

Discussion

How might we relate these thoughts on generative (en)closure and dis-enclosure to integral translineage spiritual practice? I have not inquired with others, but I suspect that many members of the integral community have experienced a profound dis-enclosure in their spiritual lives: the self-emptying or deconstruction of their religion of origin. It is at once a rupture and a crisis of self-sufficiency—*There are so many other views out there! How can I have missed this? How can I continue to ignore it?*—and, perhaps, also an evolutionary step in our traditions themselves. What was special, and native, in the original sacred preserve, bleeds out and finds fulfillment in the concrete, in that "great open" manifold which exceeds and interrupts our boundaries. For Betcher (2011), this violation of religious self-sufficiency, this irruption of vulnerability to otherness that illuminates our interdependency, tills the ground for the growth of a fertile inter-religiosity—where, in the polyphonic field of the postmodern city, each tradition is called again to "remember itself as a practice" (p. 92), as a *way* of living well among ways of living well.

In practicing across traditional boundaries, in whatever translineage mélange we have gathered and cultivated, we are of course very likely transgressing the boundaries, breaking the "closure," of one or all of

our chosen traditions, most of which have not—until recently—attempted to think outside the enclosure of their own self-sufficiency. As interspiritual practitioners, can we find ways to both validate and defend the transgressive audacity of an interlineage practice, *and* to honor and preserve the integrity and precious particularity that each lineage rightly seeks to enforce?

In my reflections throughout this article, I have attempted to practice and communicate this by thinking both *dis-enclosure* and *generative (en)closure* at once, in the contradictory identity of the empty and the full, the many and the one. Nancy's (2008) dis-enclosure, together with his being singular plural, invite us to think our multiplicity, to live and celebrate Being as a being-with that eludes totalization or finalization. In demanding acknowledgement of presence as co-presence, it calls us to recognize that each tradition is in some sense subject to that which exceeds it, and is already infiltrated by an otherness that indebts it to the open, both in terms of its relation to other traditions and to its own future. It reminds us, in other words, that each tradition is always already an interdependent arising and an evolutionary becoming. But a spirituality which only emphasizes openness or relation is in danger of sliding into lifeless diffusion or enervating relativism, and thus requires that we find ways to protect the uniqueness or integrity of our traditions. As I have argued above, I believe we find this not only in Nancy's (2000) being singular plural, but in Latour's (1988) principle of irreduction. Each relative tradition, in its radical and irreducible particularity, presents us with a unique and irreplaceable manifestation of the fullness of Being. When seen as generative (en)closures, each religious tradition becomes a unique tabernacle of Spirit capable of calling forth or enacting precious and inimitable spiritual fruits and soteriological horizons. Thus, while practitioners from multiple traditions may, indeed, describe similar spiritual states and experiences that transgress the boundaries of lineage, revealing a profound oneness in and through the many, the principles of irreduction and participatory enactment call us also to acknowledge and honor the irreducible and irreplaceable particularity of the spiritual visions and transformations afforded by each genuine practice tradition, not as limitations but as manifestations of the co-creative bounty of Spirit.

From my perspective, translineage practice is not especially an issue or problem. It is simply what we are doing, as citizens of an emergent, transcultural society, and somehow it works itself out! But from another perspective, it is indeed a challenge, particularly if we want to travel deeply on our chosen paths, with integral and integrous[8] attention to the demands of each, and to avoid the materialistic and frequently narcissistic default position of postmodern culture: the spiritual consumerism of the global marketplace. If we take this challenge seriously, if we are interested in pursuing an integral, translineage spirituality with rigor and humility, playfulness and finesse, then we are challenged to find new ways of thinking and praxis responsive to this task—where a translineage orientation becomes a praxis-field itself.

My reflections in this article are admittedly open-ended and speculative, but I do not see this as a drawback: I believe speculation is what is called for in this domain. Speculation is not idle; it is generative and opening. It invites us to open what has been prematurely foreclosed—our taken-for-granted ontologies and epistemologies—and to begin to imagine being anew.

In my inquiry into my own translineage orientation, I have explored not only the visions of knowing and being implicit in my chosen traditions, but in Integral Theory as well. In its role as an epistemological meta-system, Integral Theory does not require commitment to any *particular* ontology—part of its role is, after all, to map the unfolding of various ontologies and epistemologies, the play of the Many and the One, over time and across cultures. But in practice, I believe it does have ontological commitments—in theory, to nonduality, which is a commitment I share. In language and presentation, however, integral non-duality, sourced for years in a perennial philosophical orientation, tends at times to slide over into a privileging of the language of the One. For example, enlightenment—for all traditions—is defined equally as the experience of "oneness." Integral Theory itself, as a theory of everything, becomes the "one theory" for all. And Spirit, defined and described as a transcendent and formless emptiness, elusive of any definition, nevertheless in its

very abstract universality, may tilt us in our language and thinking, again, toward an implicit privileging of the logic and the metaphysics of the One.

In naming these tendencies, I am naming my own implication in each such move. This is, indeed, how I have often held and applied Integral Theory in my thought and speech as a translineage practitioner. But in naming these tendencies to slide habitually into some form of monism, I do not intend to indict the language or the logic of oneness; only its unconscious privileging, and its potential reduction of the integral promise to a narrow inclusivism.

In the nondual and multiplistic approaches I have explored here, I hope to have introduced and given voice to a few additional modes of speaking and thinking that will serve as resources for integral practitioners interested in further unfolding and enacting this implicit promise, and in fostering a visionary light capable of nurturing the rare and wild fields of our growing translineage practices.

NOTES

[1] For an excellent discussion of this topic, I recommend watching "Swami Abhishiktananda: An Interview with Raimon Panikkar" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOMcDuHh31g). In the interview, Panikkar lovingly and movingly describes the lifelong struggle of his good friend, Father Henri Le Saux (aka Abhishiktananada), to concurrently walk his chosen Christian and Hindu paths faithfully and with integrity.

[2] Integral Theory's most well-known model of epistemological pluralism is Wilber's (1995, 2007) four-quadrant map, which identifies four fundamental perspectives available to sentient beings (I, It, We, Its) and correlates them with various disciplines, modes of enactment, and phenomenal worlds. In Wilber's more recent work, these perspectives have been subdivided into eight primordial perspectives, forming the basis for a radically non-reductive approach to human knowledge production: Integral Methodological Pluralism, which represents Wilber's (2006) most sophisticated model of epistemological pluralism to date.

[3] For examples of representative ontic categories or mechanisms we may thus transcendentally deduce, see Wilber's (2002) discussion of involutionary givens, Bonnitta Roy and Jean Trudel's (2006, 2011) explication of onto-logics, or Joel Morrison's (2007) discussion of formative protocols.

[4] As a perennial philosophical concern, the relation of the One and the Many has been explored, sometimes with great richness and sophistication, in ancient Greek, Indian, and Chinese thought, and by various ancient and modern Christian trinitarian theologians, to name a few of the most prominent examples.

[5] Wilber (2002) provides a detailed discussion of the epistemological and ontological implications of his tetra-enactive model in "Excerpt A" to the second volume of his *Kosmos Trilogy* (forthcoming).

[6] Swami Abhishiktananda (2007) similarly argues that a trinitarian understanding is properly a nondual one, transcending and including theological ontologies of the Many and the One.

[7] In his writings on intra- and interreligious dialogue, Panikkar (1999) has introduced the notion of *homeomorphic equivalence*. In simple terms, Panikkar suggests that, when we dialogue across radically different hermeneutic frameworks, we should be careful to avoid translating terms indigenous to one tradition into terms familiar to our own (i.e., equating God with terms such as *Brahman* or *emptiness*), as such an exercise almost always entails significant loss or distortion of meaning. Therefore, instead of looking for a one-to-one correspondence in terms of content across traditions (something we are never likely to find), Panikkar recommends seeking out functional correlations among their respective beliefs, symbols, or concepts. Recognizing the homologous functions of key elements of different traditions, discovering them in deep dialogue through a process Panikkar calls *topological transformation*, we allow for the possibility of meaningful interreligious contact and transformative encounter, while taking care yet to respect and preserve the real conceptual differences that exist among religions or cultures (instead of ignoring or whitewashing them in our efforts to promote interreligious harmony).

[8] Although the word *integrous*, meaning "marked by integrity," is not found in most American dictionaries and is listed

as rare or obsolete in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, I believe it is a worthy word to resurrect, especially within integral spiritual practice communities.

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BRUCE ALDERMAN, M.A., is adjunct faculty in the School of Holistic Studies at John F. Kennedy University (JFKU). He received his master's degree in Integral Psychology, with an emphasis on Transpersonal Counseling Psychology, from JFKU in 2005. He teaches Paradigms of Consciousness; Fundamentals of Transpersonal Psychology; Fundamentals of Psychology; Integral Spirituality; Living Systems Theory; and Ethics and Compassion, and has served as a thesis and final integrative project advisor. Prior to working at JFKU, he worked and studied abroad for several years, including teaching courses on creative writing and inquiry at the Rajghat Besant School, a Krishnamurti school in Varanasi, India. His current areas of interest include Integral Theory and practice, transpersonal psychology, integral postmetaphysical spirituality, the time-space-knowledge vision, transformative arts, dream yoga, and interfaith dialogue. When he is not teaching or spending time with his family, he moderates an online discussion forum dedicated to Integral Postmetaphysical Spirituality (http://integralpostmetaphysics.ning.com/).