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A Reply to Abramson's Response to My "Beyond Mind" Papers and Some Reflections on Wilber V

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The critique of Wilber's twentieth century works presented in my three Beyond Mind papers (Capriles, 2000, 2006, 2009) was written because, upon reading the works in question, I perceived in them misunderstandings of the theory and practice of the higher Buddhist teachings in general and of the Dzogchen teachings in particular that seemed so serious to me, as to arouse an urge to respond to them. As to subsequent Wilber works, I had no plans of addressing them, partly because I was not inclined to read further pieces of writing by the author in question (some of his subjects—e.g., developmental psychology—are foreign to my interests, as I do not find them relevant to spiritual and/or transpersonal development, and on the other hand I find his construal of Buddhism and many of his views on subjects of my interest rather troubling), partly because I did not foresee the turnabout that is currently giving rise to Wilber V, and partly because for a number of years now Venezuelan governmental policies have made it quite difficult for me to buy books in English—and hence I had to become selective and procure only those books that it was imperative for me to read in order to complete the various long works on subjects not directly related to Wilber that I have been preparing since the turn of the century.¹

However, in the lapse between completion of the last paper in the Beyond Mind series and the email announcing that the paper was about to go through the final editing by *IJTS* staff for it to go to press, I went through a series of works by different authors—including two Wilber pieces published in 2000 and one published in 2009—which, upon receiving the news in question, made me partially update the latest of my Beyond Mind papers (Capriles, 2009), making additions and corrections. Even though I was aware that Wilber was undergoing a shift, I had *not* read most of the ensuing works, and I made no moves to overcome difficulties and procure them so as to be able to assess them, as I had no intention to intellectually persecute Wilber—and, even

if I had been intent on critiquing all that he produced, to procure and read his relevant newer works (provided I could have managed to acquire them), and then carry out the required, major overhauling of the paper, would have been impossible in the short time at my disposal.

Then, after the publication of the final paper in the series, author and webmaster of the website *Integral World* Frank Visser² cautioned me that the Beyond Mind papers (Capriles, 2000, 2006, 2009) and the books based on them could be dismissed for failing to address the current Wilber. In response, I prepared the preliminary discussion of Wilber V that Visser published on his website (Capriles, 2010c). A few months after that, Glenn Hartelius, current editor of the *IJTS*, emailed me a reply to the Beyond Mind papers written by reader John Abramson³ (2010) that criticized me for failing to address Wilber V, and Hartelius urged me to prepare a reply to the objections thus raised for a future issue of the journal in question. These two facts made me aware of the need to write this reply, and of including it as a new section on Wilber V in the book I was preparing: *The Beyond Mind Papers: Transpersonal and Metatranspersonal Theory* (Capriles, in press). However, a thorough assessment of Wilber V would have filled a significant number of pages (perhaps less, perhaps more than my assessment of the earlier Wilber), would have made that book much longer than I had originally promised the publishers, and would have delayed its delivery far beyond the specified deadline. Thus this reply to the objections in question—which synthesize the piece published in *Integral World* and the most relevant parts of the initial draft of my original reply to Abramson—will only address general issues in Wilber V and specific points of Abramson's (2010) reply to my papers.

Finally, I duly thank Mr. John Abramson for offering me the possibility to confine myself to precise themes of Wilber V, as well as for the tone of his valuable reply (which, I must acknowledge, is kinder and more

respectful than that of my objections to Wilber). I extend my thanks to author-editors Frank Visser and Glenn Hartelius for their roles in eliciting the production of this reply and the corresponding book section.

A Reply to Abramson

(With a Preliminary Discussion of Wilber V)

The first thing to note is that, although Wilber purportedly abandoned his former pantheistic emanationism,⁴ he has still metaphysically posited a transcendent reality (which, as clearly shown in Appendix I to both *Beyond Mind III* [Capriles, 2009] and the above mentioned upcoming book [Capriles, in press], no Buddhist school or vehicle has ever posited)—insisting that it should flavor the immanent while at the same time being flavored by it. This is apparent in the following passage by Wilber (Wilber & Cohen, 2002, p. 2), which Abramson (2010) cited:

the real key to this discussion, I think, is when you understand that the only way you can permanently and fully realize emptiness is if you transform, evolve, or develop your vehicle in the world of form. The vehicles that are going to realize emptiness have to be up to the task. That means they have to be developed; they have to be transformed and aligned with spiritual realization. That means that the transcendent and the immanent have to, in a sense, flavor each other ... The best of a nondual or integral realization is that we have to basically work on both [the world of time and “the timeless”]. We have to polish our capacity, in a sense, to fully realize emptiness, moment to moment. But it’s the emptiness of all forms arising moment to moment. So we have to have a radical embrace of the world of samsara as the vehicle and expression of nirvana itself.

Moreover, here Wilber continued to incur on an error pointed out in my papers (which Abramson overlooked in his review) and in the aforementioned book—namely that of identifying *samsāra* with the world of form, thereby implying *nirvāṇa* to be a formless condition. The term *world of form* may be understood in at least three different senses: (1) As whatever is configured, including, (a) the continuum of the *tsel* (*rtsal*) mode of manifestation of energy, which involves the ever-changing configuration that samsaric beings experience as phenomena of the physical universe, which is manifest in most experiences of all three realms of *samsāra* (it is manifest in all experiences pertaining to

the realms of sensuality and form, and in most of those pertaining to that of formlessness), but also in most events of nonstatic *nirvāṇa*; (b) the *rōlpa* (*rol pa*) mode of manifestation of energy, involving Thögel and Yangthik visions—and possibly also some (c) phenomena of *dang* (*gdangs*) energy such as mental images, as they manifest in fantasy, imagination, visualization and so on;⁵ (2) as all that involves the figure-ground division, which is characteristic of two of the three realms of *samsāra*—those of sensuality and form—but which could repeatedly arise in the *nirvāṇa* of higher vehicles as well; and (3) as the samsaric realm of form, which excludes all types of *nirvāṇa*, but which may not be identified with *samsāra*, for as just noted, the latter includes the other two samsaric realms as well.

Therefore the *nirvāṇa* of higher vehicles does *not* exclude configurations of any of the three types subsumed under (1), not does it *need* exclude the arising of the figure-ground division discussed under (2). In fact, the Direct Introduction proper to Dzogchen is an initial disclosure of Dzogchen-qua-Base—that is, an instance of Dzogchen-qua-Path—that as a rule, rather than obliterating awareness (of) the sensory continuum, enhances the awareness in question, making it far fresher and more vivid. For its part, the supreme *nirvāṇa* while on the Path as it repeatedly manifests in the practice of Tekchö (first stage in the practice of the *Upadesavarga* series of Dzogchen teachings), which consists in the unconcealment as the *dharmakāya* of the true condition of *dang* energy (i.e., of the basic stuff of thought), rather than obliterating awareness (of) the sensory continuum, results in a bare, fresh awareness (of) the latter. In fact, the instant the *dharmakāya* manifests, whichever thoughts that are occurring at the time—including the superimposed thought-contents that in the preceding moment were conditioning one’s experience—instantly liberate themselves, dissolving like feathers entering fire and thereby cleansing the *doors of perception* so that the sensory continuum may appear as it (is): infinite and holy rather than finite and corrupt. Likewise, higher *nirvāṇa* qua Fruit—including Dzogchen-qua-Fruit, the Fruit of the Inner Tantras of the Path of Transformation and the Fruit of the Mahāyāna—except during sleep in the clear light, during the intermediate state of the moment of death (Tib. *chikhai bardo* [*chi kha’i bar do*]) and so on, *does* involve form in the sense listed as (1): as that which from *one* samsaric perspective I called *the world’s dynamic configuration*.

Consequently, Wilber is right in asserting emptiness to be the emptiness of all the forms that arise from moment to moment, yet he is incorrect in identifying the forms in question with saṃsāra—just as he is wrong in implicitly identifying nirvāṇa with the absence of form, for as noted above what disappears in supreme nirvāṇa is the threefold *avidyā* that in saṃsāra conceals and distorts the true condition of what saṃsāric beings experience as the world’s configuration, and not so the latter. Finally, both Dzogchen and Chán deny that in order to permanently and fully realize emptiness one must transform, evolve or develop what Wilber called *our vehicle*—a term that Buddhism as a whole would reject, for if *one had* a vehicle, then there would have to be someone different from the vehicle to own it, drive it, and so forth, but according to the most basic tenets of Buddhism such owner-driver does not exist (and hence Buddhism refutes it with sophisticated, compelling arguments which include Candrakīrti’s Sevenfold reasoning). In fact, in the vehicles in question, it is the recurrence of realization that progressively transforms the person—making selfish action gradually dwindle and selfless activity benefiting others gradually increase; making the psyche constantly gain in self-consistency; and progressively neutralizing the proclivity for evil, self-encumbering and in general the propensities for delusion and concealment, until these are burned out and Buddhahood obtains. In Dzogchen Atiyoga, that is precisely the function of the repeated reGnition of Dzogchen-qua-Base referred to as Dzogchen-qua-Path, just as in Chán it is the function of the repeated realization of the absolute truth of the Mahāyāna—that is, of the true condition of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. *chöjing* [*chos bdyings*]), of the all-encompassing space where phenomena manifest (Skt. *dharmadhātu*; Tib. *chönyi* [*chos nyid*]), of emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*; Tib. *tönpanyi* [*stong pa nyid*]), and so forth (which, as made clear in the Beyond Mind papers and their respective notes, according to Tibetan Buddhists other than Tsongkhapa and most of his followers, is *not* the experience of nonexistence induced by a negation).⁶

Another of Abramson’s (2010) objections is the following:

Capriles offered a definition of supreme spirituality that would ostensibly include all authentic traditions and overcomes the problems presented in Wilber’s model: “all that is involved in the transition from saṃsara to nirvana” ([Capriles, 2009,] p. 15). I have

argued that Wilber would see such a definition as partial. It apparently takes no account of Wilber’s view that the generation of novel stages of human consciousness in saṃsara is part of the “basic rule” of spirituality which is the uniting of nirvāṇa with saṃsara:

But the basic rule is: resting as emptiness, embrace the entire world of form. And the world of form is unfolding. It is evolving. It is developing. And therefore resting as blissful emptiness, you ecstatically embrace and push against the world of form as a duty (Wilber, 2002b). (p. 184)

The above is related to the same problem of identifying saṃsāra with the world of form and implicitly identifying nirvāṇa with the absence of forms. The truth is that for nearly all Tibetan Buddhists except for Tsongkhapa and his followers, in the context of the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna, saṃsāra consists in relative truth and nirvāṇa in absolute truth, and relative truth (the etymology of which, as shown in the Beyond Mind papers and in the above-mentioned upcoming book of mine, is *obstruction to correctness / thoroughly confused*) absolutely lacks existence and truth—absolute truth being the only truth there [is] (note that even though the concept of the two truths is not widely used in the Dzogchen teachings, these teachings agree that what the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna call relative truth is untrue and nonexistent). As Gorampa put it (corresponding yet not identical translation in Thakchoe, 2007, pp. 144-145):⁷

The relative truths enunciated in those contexts [e.g., in the texts of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti] are nonexistent. Since [in absolute truth] there is no erroneous apprehending subject, this subject’s corresponding object—[relative truth]—does not exist.

Thakchoe (2007, p. 145) rightly asserted this view to be shared by Indian Master Jayānanda and Tibetan Masters Rendawa, Shakya Chogden, Taktsang Lotsawa, Kunchen Pema Karpo, Karmapa Mikyo Dorje, Ju Mipham, and Gendün Chöphel. However, the view in question is not only an interpretation by these Masters, for it is the original view of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and Candrakīrti, as well as of the Tibetan Master Dölpopa and of nearly all Tibetans who do not

follow Je Tsongkhapa—and, most important, it is the one found in the Dzogchen teachings.

At any rate, the relative, albeit nonexistent, inescapably produces suffering, and although both suffering and the one who suffers are untrue and nonexistent, in saṃsāra both suffering and the one who suffers are experienced as absolutely true and important—the very *raison d'être* of Buddhism being that of putting a definitive end to suffering. It does so in the only way possible: by realizing, in nonstatic nirvāṇa, the absolute truth that is the only truth there is, in which neither suffering nor one who suffers or enjoys are experienced, and then coming to the point at which one no longer departs from this truth—never again having the delusive experience of relative truth and the suffering it implies. In fact, since the relative truth that corresponds to saṃsāra and that is a *thoroughly confused* perspective and an *obstruction to correctness* is utterly nonexistent and as such untrue, there is nothing different from nirvāṇa for the latter to embrace: though in saṃsāra a duality between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is perceived by those who have embraced the Buddhist or other similar teachings, in nonstatic nirvāṇa—both as it manifest on the Path and as the Fruit of Buddhahood that consists in the uninterrupted manifestation of the *svabhāvikāya* that was discussed in the evaluation of Wilber IV's four last fulcra in the Beyond Mind papers and the upcoming book—nothing that is not the absolute truth is apprehended and hence no relative truth and no saṃsāra, and hence no duality between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, is perceived. In the words of Kunkhyen Pema Karpo (corresponding yet not identical translation in Thakchoe, 2007, pp. 145-146):⁸

To the extent that remaining obstructions subsist, to that extent multifaceted appearances are perceived during post-Contemplation as illusory, and so forth. However, from the moment all latencies [of previous defilements] are totally [eliminated], relative phenomena are never again perceived. Instead, one ceaselessly dwells on the essence of Contemplation.

However, the knowledge that the only way to definitively quench suffering is to attain nirvāṇa is likely to turn other forms of craving (Skt. *tr̥ṣṇā*; Pāli, *taṇhā*) into craving for self-annihilation in nirvāṇa (Skt. *vibhavātr̥ṣṇā*; Pāli, *vibhava-taṇhā*)—which would sustain saṃsāra, forestalling the occurrence of nirvāṇa. It was merely as an intellectual means to neuter this

samsāra-sustaining craving that Śākyamuni in the Prajñāpāramitāsūtras, and Nāgārjuna and his successors in their Prajñāpāramitā-based Mādhyamaka philosophy, expressed in samsaric, relative terms the perspective of nirvāṇa from which there is no duality between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Abramson's objection is very similar to the criticism of my position that a Nepalese spiritual teacher made in an earlier version of the Transpersonal Psychology entry of Wikipedia, which objected that:

They (Elias Capriles and others) too misses [sic] the game 'cause don't they know what Nagarjuna among many [B]uddhist siddhas say “Where there is neither an addition of nirvana nor a removal of samsara; There, what samsara is discriminated from what nirvana?”⁹

The only truth has always been the absolute truth, and hence realization of this truth does not add anything to what (was) there from beginningless time, whereas relative truth never existed in truth and hence its elimination could not remove anything from whatever (was) there from beginningless time. Likewise, since relative truth / saṃsāra never existed, and nirvāṇa is so only in relation to saṃsāra, there is nothing to discriminate. However, Nāgārjuna was a Mahāyāna Buddhist, and as such he wrote all that he wrote in order to lead beings from saṃsāra to nonstatic nirvāṇa and thus to put an end to the excruciatingly painful illusion of suffering and one who suffers—rather than going to sleep because, since all beings had always been in nirvāṇa, there was simply nothing to do. Therefore, he fully agreed that if one mistakes for nirvāṇa the higher realms of saṃsāra—or the base-of-all where neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa are active but that technically pertains to saṃsāra, for that matter¹⁰—one will not have even the slightest chance to “attain” nirvāṇa and thus to put an end to illusory saṃsāra with the equally illusory yet excruciating suffering and pain it involves. In fact, Buddhism arose because Siddhārtha Gautama realized that his teachers ascended to high samsaric realms—the second, Udraka Rāmaputra (Or Udrako Rāmaputro), reaching to the peak of saṃsāra—but did not go beyond saṃsāra, and aware that this did *not* represent a true liberation he went on to seek the way to put an end to saṃsāra, “attaining” nonstatic nirvāṇa—which *then* made him realize that there was neither a saṃsāra to transcend not a nirvāṇa to attain.

The Prajñāpāramitāsūtras and Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamaka philosophy expressed in concepts the realization of the nonduality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa that takes place in nonstatic nirvāṇa as part of an intellectual, logical method to lead beyond the intellect and its logical fetters. This approach—as valid as many other Buddhist approaches—is in stark contrast with that of the Dzogchen Path, which consists in creating, at the very onset of the Path, the conditions for an extreme experience of saṃsāra to occur and be immediately followed by an instance of the supreme nonstatic nirvāṇa referred to as Dzogchen-qua-Path, so that the individual may, by the same token, have a taste of the spontaneous liberation of Dzogchen, become familiar with the difference between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as perceived from the perspective of saṃsāra, and in the realization of nonstatic nirvāṇa discover the nonduality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa that is realized in nonstatic nirvāṇa only. Repetition of this should eliminate all doubts as to the fact that the true condition of reality is the one that became patent in nonstatic nirvāṇa—and hence that there is no duality between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Once all such doubts have been eliminated, the practitioner is introduced to special yogic means that help all samsaric experiences free themselves spontaneously in nirvāṇa.

Realizing the nonduality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa without going beyond saṃsāra in the occurrence of nonstatic nirvāṇa is of little use, for *so long as saṃsāra is manifest, realization of the nonduality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa cannot be more than an intellectual realization pertaining to relative truth that as such is delusive* (i.e., it is an *obstruction to correctness* in one who is *thoroughly confused*), *which therefore sustains saṃsāra*. Is this that the two critics under discussion want higher Buddhism to achieve?

Then there is the question of whether the above perspective may be categorized as *ascending*, as Abramson suggested. Throughout the papers the latter was replying to, I made it entirely clear that the sense in which Wilber used the terms *ascent* and *descent* is, to say the least, out-and-out secondary in comparison with the metaphenomenological and metaexistential meanings I give these terms—yet all these arguments do not seem to have been taken into account in Abramson's reply. Moreover, not even in Wilber's sense may the view expounded above be characterized as *ascending*, for it does not urge beings to set out to climb toward nirvāṇa in order to escape from saṃsāra (a project that, as noted above, since it would

sustain the relative truth that is the essence of saṃsāra, would do no more than sustain saṃsāra): whereas in the relative reality of saṃsāra there seems to be something to escape from, someone to carry out the escape, an escape, and somewhere to escape to, the reason why methods that make it possible for samsaric experience to initially dissolve, so that absolute truth may be realized in nonstatic nirvāṇa, are applied on the Dzogchen Path, is that only this realization *proves* that there was never a relative truth or a saṃsāra to escape from and a nirvāṇa to attain, and hence that there is no duality between these two conditions—a method that, by comparison, shows the mere intellectual idea of this fact to lack ultimate relevance. In fact, since there is no relative truth or saṃsāra to embrace, only this realization may validly (albeit metaphorically) be called “embracing saṃsāra.”

Besides trying to show the view I expound to be ascending in Wilber's sense of the term, Abramson (2010) attempted to show Wilber V's position *not* to be ascending in the senses I give this term:

Wilber's (2001) end note 1 in *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality*. ... is concerned with Wilber's explanation of the Buddhist “no-self” but its relevance here is the way Wilber weaves some of his theories with an explanation of the Tantric and the Dzogchen Buddhist concepts of emptiness, and how this relates to the nondual state. For example, in relation to Dzogchen, and seemingly in accord with Capriles' work, Wilber commented:

Different meditation practices engineer different states and different experiences, but pure Presence itself is unwavering, and thus the highest approach in Dzogchen is “Buddhahood without meditation”: not the creation but rather the direct recognition of an already perfectly present and freely given primordial Purity.” (Wilber, 2001, pp. 730-731)

As to how Wilber wove into some of his theories an explanation of the Tantric Buddhist and the Dzogchen concepts of emptiness, below, in the discussion of Abramson's (2010) defense of what were previously Wilber's last four fulcra and which are now his final four stages of cognitive development, and in some of the notes to it, I showed that Wilber did not distinguish between the different understandings of emptiness. In particular, the author Wilber cited as his source for his explanation of the successive attainment of the four *kāyas* and hence

of the last four fulcra of his former system and of what now are the last four stages of the cognitive line of development, purportedly follows Tsongkhapa, whose understanding of emptiness was radically different from Wilber's, as well as, (a) from that of Tibetan Masters who are not Tsongkhapa's followers, (b) from the two senses of emptiness in the Dzogchen teachings (namely that of emptiness as the Base's primordial purity and that of emptiness a mere illusory experience), and (c) from emptiness of substances other than the absolute.¹¹ (I will touch upon this point once more below.)

As to the Wilber passage cited by Abramson and reproduced above, it no doubt acknowledges that realization *cannot* be *produced* or *constructed*, yet this understanding is in diametral opposition to Wilber's structural paradigm and metaphenomenologically ascending view, which as shown throughout the Beyond Mind papers is incompatible with the metaphenomenologically descending stance of Buddhism in general and of Dzogchen in particular—and which, as shown here, Wilber has continued to uphold. Thus if it proves anything, it is that Wilber has continued to contradict himself—as evinced by Abramson's (2010) reply, for the passage Abramson cited outright contradicts the following assertion he made:

It is certainly illuminating to consider further why Wilber feels stage development is important, beginning with one way he feels it can be achieved. Wilber muddies the water by claiming that practising meditation is the best, or among the best, means of achieving stage development; in which case following an authentic spiritual path involving meditation practice would automatically result in stage progression, and the issue of pursuing stage development would be redundant.

Awakening is attained without meditation yet meditation is the best way to achieve stage development, which is indispensable for being able to attain Awakening: the contradiction is blatant. Furthermore, although the fact that Wilber acknowledged that stage development may occur as a by-product of meditation seems positive, in a passage cited above he explicitly wrote that, “the only way you can permanently and fully realize emptiness is if you transform, evolve, or develop your vehicle in the world of form”—which seems to imply that one must contrivedly undertake specific actions in order to transform what he referred to as “our vehicle,” rather than waiting for it

to take place spontaneously as an effect of meditation. At any rate, the core problem for me continues to be his strong overvaluation of stage development—which outright conflicts with the metaphenomenological, metaexistential approach, and fails to account for the cases of child prodigies like Mingyur Dorje (the Namchö Tertön [*nam chos gter ston*; in full, *nam mkha'i chos gter ston*] in whom Dzogchen-qua-Path initially manifested during childhood and whose realization soared during his early teens). Most important, though now he has claimed that Buddhahood is “not the creation but rather the direct recognition of an already perfectly present and freely given primordial Purity,” (Wilber, 2001, pp. 730-731, as cited by Abramson, 2010) he has continued to explain it as the creation of a structure—which, being created, according to Buddhist doctrine must necessarily be impermanent and must necessarily pertain to samsāra. (Note that primordial purity is a concept employed in the Dzogchen teachings and borrowed by the Anuyogatantra of the Nyingmapa, the validity of which Wilber's source rejects, and that therefore Wilber would have to choose between, [a] using that source for establishing the progressive attainment of the four kāyas and hence of the last four fulcra of his former system and of what now are the last four stages of the cognitive line of development, or [b] employing the concept of primordial purity that his source abhors and which originally pertained to the Dzogchen teachings, according to which the progression of attainment of the four kāyas occurs in an order contrary to the one posited by Wilber and his source.)

Furthermore, I am surprised that, right after asserting that Wilber does not consider that stage development should be pursued in addition to following an authentic spiritual Path, for it will be furthered by the meditations practiced in most spiritual Paths, Abramson asked himself whether I consider that, “stage development should be pursued *in addition to* following an authentic spiritual Path.” My surprise does not arise so much from the fact that the words *in addition to* outright contradict the above claim that *the best way to achieve stage development is through the practice of meditation*, as from the fact that throughout the papers Abramson reviewed I emphasized the metaphenomenological, metaexistential view, repeatedly making the point that so-called “stage development” has little to do with Awakening, and that in Dzogchen Atiyoga (where the recurrence of Dzogchen-qua-Path spontaneously brings about a most significant transformation, and where, as clearly shown in papers in the Beyond Mind series, this

recurrence can begin in children who have made very little stage development in Wilber's sense) and other Paths that are not gradual there are no rigid stages of realization—the only sequence the Dzogchen teachings posit being that of *dharmakāya–sambhogakāya–nirmāṇ, akāya*,¹² which is the opposite of the one both Wilber and his source establish (a fact that Abramson overlooked in spite of being more conspicuous than many of the points of my system he commented on). Moreover, no Buddhist Path or School has ever asserted its successive stages of realization to necessarily manifest after the attainment of the higher stages of psychological development or, even less so, posited all-embracing developmental schemas (indeed, no such Path or School has ever been concerned with what nowadays is called developmental psychology). (Wilber V's other lines of development are briefly described in the note indicated by the reference mark at the end of this paragraph.)¹³

With regard to the change undergone by Wilber's structural approach to cognitive and spiritual development, Abramson (2010) cited Michael Daniels' (2009) account:

What [Wilber] is saying is [that he was] wrong [in] that he made the mistake—and he admits this very explicitly in the book—of simply adding the stages of the Eastern meditation techniques on top of the stages of the Western psychological model. And he says it almost flippantly in the book:

So ... what we did was simply to take the highest stage in Western psychological models ... and then take the three or four major stages of meditation (gross, subtle, causal, nondual) ... and stack those stages on top of the other stages ... East and West integrated! (Wilber, 2007, p. 88)

However, Wilber V retains and further develops his and Don Beck's version of spiral dynamics as a paradigm of human evolution that supposedly works for ontogenic development as much as phylogenetic evolution, and thus his new system does not radically break away from the structural developmental paradigm criticized above. The paradigm in question is based on the theory of memes as defined by biologist Richard Dawkins, about which biology Professor H. Allen Orr (2004) wrote (in Carlson, n.d.):¹⁴

the selfish meme view hasn't led anywhere. Where are the puzzling phenomena that have been

explained by memes? Dawkins provides no examples and I suspect there aren't any. The truth is that the meme idea, though a quarter-century old, has inspired next to no serious research and has failed to establish a place for itself in mainstream cognitive science, psychology, or sociology. Though laymen often have the impression that scientific ideas die in decisive experiments, far more often they die because they didn't suggest many experiments. They failed, that is, to inspire a rich research program. Though I could obviously be proved wrong, and while I have no problem with the notion that some science of cultural change may be possible, I'm far less confident than Dawkins that memes will play an important role in any such enterprise.

As Richard Carlson (n.d.) has suggested (substantiating his view in a most informed manner), Wilber's and Cowan's evolutionary views seem to stem from their right wing, elitist political stance—which as such, I feel compelled to add, could hardly be more anti-ecological. Since this is not the place to carry out a detailed discussion of this subject (a longer one, though not exhaustive, will appear in the upcoming definitive version of my *Beyond History* [Capriles, 2007a, Vol. III], where I scrupulously draw an ecophilosophy of history and political ecophilosophy), suffice to note that Wilber's paradigmatic example of an “integral politician” is Tony Blair—whose “integrity” revealed itself in his lying to the UK Parliament in order to falsely substantiate his plans to invade Iraq and unleash the spree of destruction that killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and gravely affected our planet's ecosystem (not only through the CO₂ added to the atmosphere, but *even more so* through the use of depleted uranium warheads that has multiplied cancer incidence rates among Iraqi children). Moreover, Wilber spoke of George W. Bush (“even if one does not agree with him”) and the (far less extremist) General Colin Powell approvingly—in this way *implicitly* justifying the aggression to the Iraqi people they engineered, as well as Bush's environmental policies (including his drive to drill in Alaska and all the rest), and so on. Also, instead of outlining a green political program, he has favored the achievement of a synthesis of the views of two of U.S. Presidents who refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol (one of whom, besides, was responsible for unleashing the Iraq war) and those of Blair's and of politicians from other countries in order to

find a “Third Way” that unites the best of liberal and conservative—President Clinton’s Vital Center, George W. Bush’s Compassionate Conservatism, Germany’s Neue Mitte [uniting Gerhard Schroeder and Angela Merkel], Tony Blair’s Third Way, and Thabo Mbeki’s African Renaissance, to name a few. (Wilber, 2000, n.p.)

How can Wilber, in spite of the Bush administration’s environmental, social, and international record, reproduce G. W. Bush’s Newspeak categorization of his own stance as “Compassionate Conservatism”? Wilber ads have referred to him as the “Einstein of consciousness;” it seems to me that the above suggests that a more correct label for him would be that of the “[Yoshihiro Francis] Fukuyama of consciousness”¹⁵ (with regard with Wilber’s political ideas and, in particular, the war in Iraq, cf. also Wilber, 2009).

As to Wilber V’s structural developmental and evolutionary paradigm, in his diagram and exposition of his view of ontogenic unfolding (Wilber, 2007), the first line of development is the cognitive one, which, building on Piaget, has as its lowest rung the sensorimotor; as its second rung, the preoperational / symbolic; as the third, the preoperational / conceptual; as the fourth, the concrete operational; as the fifth, the formal operational; and as the sixth, that of early vision-logic, which he categorized as metasystemic—these six, and the stages at the same level in all other lines, occupying the diagram’s first tier. Then the seventh rung is named middle vision-logic, categorized as paradigmatic, and the eighth is labeled late vision-logic and declared to be cross-paradigmatic—these two filling the second tier. Following that—in the third tier—what one finds is no more than a repeat of the preceding Wilber, for the ninth, called global mind, is no other than what Wilber previously called the psychic level; the tenth is meta-mind, which is what he formerly called the subtle level; the eleventh is overmind, which is no other than what he previously called the causal level; and the twelfth is the supermind, which is what he formerly called the nondual (the names of the last two rungs having been used by “integral” Master Śrī Aurobindo—to whose left-wing social concerns and proposals, as Carlson [n.d.] has noted, Wilber has never alluded¹⁶).

So it is clear that, as noted above, in spite of the greater flexibility of his newer model, and in spite of the above-quoted self-criticism of admitting that

he had taken the highest stage in models of Western developmental psychology and then stacked (what he viewed as) the three or four major stages of meditation on top of it, Wilber is still positing a schema of hierarchical structures, and is still adding what he apparently believes to be the final stages of realization in higher Buddhism, Vedānta, Integral Yoga and so on, to what he holds to be the standard stages of cognitive ontogenic development. Yet his final stages of realization are at odds with higher Buddhism, as systematically explained in the Beyond Mind papers. In fact, Wilber has continued to wrongly identify the final four levels in the ontogenic, cognitive line of development—which as just noted continue to be the four last fulcra of his preceding schema—with the four kāyas as these are said to successively occur in vehicles of the Path of Transformation. This amounts to the negation of the possibility of attaining the far higher realizations of Dzogchen Atiyoga, for as shown in the Beyond Mind papers, the Ati Path of spontaneous liberation begins with a Direct Introduction to the condition that the Path of Transformation calls svabhāvikāya and posits as its last, final attainment, but which on the Path of Ati is no more than the precondition of its practice, and which in the Menngagde or Upadeśavarga series of teachings, is prior both to the practice of Tekchö (*kbregs chod*) that establishes the dharmakāya and to the subsequent practice of Thögel (*thod rgal*) that establishes the sambhogakāya and that at the end begets the nirmāṇakāya—thus establishing the Atiyoga svabhāvikāya (which signifies that the sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya of Dzogchen Ati are levels of realization that stand far beyond the final level of realization of the inner Tantras of Transformation and by no means can be attained through the methods of these Tantras; Namkhai Norbu, n.p.; Capriles, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, in press). The fact that Wilber has completely overlooked the Dzogchen kāyas and the sequence in which they manifest, even though he seems to acknowledge Atiyoga to be the highest Path, is most strange, to say the least.

In the last pages of Abramson’s (2010) paper, the author recurrently reiterated the assertion that the previous last four fulcra that are now the last four levels of the cognitive line of development, *do* correspond to the four kāyas as progressively realized on the Tantric Path of Transformation. True enough, as *clearly stated* in the Beyond Mind papers, a sequence of realization beginning with nirmāṇakāya, continuing with

sambhogakāya and then dharmakāya, and concluding in the svābhāvīkāya that consists in the indivisibility of the first three kāyas, is posited in the Buddhist Tantras of the Path of Transformation. It is surprising that Abramson overlooked the fact, which I strongly stressed in the Beyond Mind papers and which I intend to emphasize again at this point (rather than merely noting that Wilber overlooked the sequence of realization of the kāyas characteristic of the supreme vehicle and posited a sequence characteristic of lower vehicles), that Wilber described the kāyas in a way that is at odds with the conception and explanation of those kāyas proper to the Tantras that make up Path of Transformation. As to how he produced such a bizarre concoction, I had found no clue in his works (including Wilber, 1995, 1996, which were my sources for my critique of what formerly were his last four fulcra). However, Abramson's (2010) reply to the Beyond Mind papers (Capriles, 2000c, 2006, 2009), mentioned the name of the author that, in the *second edition* of his 1995 book *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (Wilber 2001b)—to which I have not had access so far¹⁷—Wilber gave as the source for his understanding of the kāyas, and reproduced some passages by Wilber (2001b) in which he cited the source in question. I must admit I was shocked, for the name Wilber gave is that of the most controversial character within Tibetan Buddhism.¹⁹ The mention of this source can offer the occasion for pointing out two of the genuine problems with his concoction:

(1) The first is that Wilber's descriptions of the fulcra he identified with the kāyas fail to match the way the latter are described in the Anuttarayogatantras and in the writings of Je Tsongkhapa—the latter being, as repeatedly stated, the source of the controversial character that Wilber claimed to have taken as his source. Among the views of Wilber that I have denounced as failures, there is a particular one, however, that could be explained by the fact that Wilber drew from that particular source—namely his description of the svābhāvīkāya. In fact, contradicting his predecessors in the rest of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, Tsongkhapa asserted the svābhāvīkāya / Buddhahood to involve the perception of relative reality. The reason for this oddity is Tsongkhapa's peculiar understanding of Prāsangika Mādhyamaka, according to which entities are not empty of their being this or that entity (and hence *they are the entity referred to by their names*), but only of inherent / hypostatic / reified existence, and hence after delusion

were eradicated, there would still be a relative reality comprising men, women, horses, trees, mountains, pillars, tables, and the rest of phenomena (*lam rim chen mo*, passim; cf. Thakchoe, 2007, pp. 48-53), yet no relative phenomenon whatsoever would be misperceived as inherently / hypostatically existing.²⁰ Since Tsongkhapa and his followers assert relative reality to persist after the eradication of delusion, they relativize Buddhahood by claiming that in it relative and ultimate truth manifest simultaneously (cf., for example, Thakchoe, 2007, pp. 46-58; also ff.)—being, in fact, the only important Buddhists who, so far as I know, uphold this view. (Note that I am not implying that the continuum of sensory appearances dissolves upon Awakening; what actually happens is that Buddhas no longer experience any segment of the sensory continuum as *being this or that*, yet they can certainly pinpoint this or that, and make far more precise distinctions than ordinary beings—their verbal expressions being other-directed assertions (Tib. zhenngo khelen [*gzhan ngo khas len*],²¹ which means that they make them without believing them from the heart to be either true or false.)

However, the above does not account for the rest of the odd explanation of the kāyas and their sequence of manifestation in the Anuttarayogatantras that Wilber gave in his peculiar description of his last four fulcra, for no one within Tibetan Buddhism would assert the nirmāṇakāya to be realized when, while contemplating nature and without any apparent reason, the feeling of separateness spontaneously dissolves for a while (whether this means that the illusion that a mental subject separate from nature is perceiving the latter has *dissolved*, or that the mental subject has *identified with* the object), as Wilber did in his discussion of fulcrum 7 / gross mysticism; moreover, Wilber's description of this fulcrum and corresponding type of mysticism in part fits the experiences of the samsaric formless realms that are the first stage in the arising of saṃsāra from the neutral condition of base-of-all and in part fits the neutral condition in question, both of which, as shown again and again, are non-nirvanic conditions that are often mistaken for the dharmakāya (for the confusion of the experiences of the formless realms with the dharmakāya, cf. Kyeme Dechen [*skye med bde chen*] and Karma Thinle [*kar ma phrin las*]'s notes to Saraha [in Guenther, 1973]; for the confusion of the dharmakāya with the base-of-all, cf. the cite from Kunkhyen Jigme Lingpa [“all-knowing”; *kun mkhyen jigs med gling pa*] in Guenther, 1977, pp. 142-147: “Those who

do not understand it in this way and take the base-of-all for the dharmakāya are like blind men without a guide, erring about in a desert. As they are deluded about the nature of the Base and the Fruit, the Path by which Buddhahood can be realized in one lifetime has been blocked. *Samaya*.” Note that the all-knowing teacher prophesied that this confusion would be a common error in our time—yet are never mistaken for the nirmāṇakāya, for which what are often mistaken are specific experiences of higher regions of the samsaric realm of sensuality (cf. Kyeme Dechen’s and Karma Thinle’s commentaries to Saraha, in Guenther, 1973) or the consciousness of defilements (in the sense the Dzogchen teachings give the term in the same context) that precedes experience of the realm of sensuality in the arising of saṃsāra from the base-of-all.

For its part, Wilber’s description of his fulcrum 8 / subtle mysticism fails to distinguish between the sambhogakāya, the experiences of the samsaric realm of form (cf. Kyeme Dechen’s and Karma Thinle’s commentaries to Saraha, in Guenther, 1973), and the consciousness of the base-of-all (*kun gzhi rnam shes* or *kun gzhi rnam par shes pa*; Skt. *ālayavijñāna*) that immediately precedes the latter in the arising of saṃsāra from the neutral base-of-all (in the sense the Dzogchen teachings give the term in this context).

Also, Wilber’s description of his fulcrum 9 / causal mysticism (a term that could hardly be more absurd, as the dharmakāya with which he identifies it is that which has no *cause* and cannot be itself a *cause*), and which he categorized as formless, fails to distinguish between the dharmakāya, the experiences of the samsaric formless realms, and instances of the base-of-all in the Dzogchen sense of a condition where neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa are active—to which, as shown in the discussion of these fulcra in the last two of the Beyond Mind papers and as may be inferred from a passage from a Mahāyāna scriptural source quoted in that discussion, both the *nirodhasamāpatti* and many of the *nirvikalpa samādhis* he gives as cases of this fulcrum pertain: the dharmakāya is *not* a condition of *nirodha* or cessation in the sense of lack of manifestation or blankness,²² and in particular no one would assert it to correspond to the *nirodhasamāpatti* that according to the Theravāda pertains to nirvāṇa. (In what regards Wilber’s categorization of the dharmakāya as a formless condition, I concede that it may derive from Anuttarayogatantra descriptions of the arising of the clear light that follows the dissolution of the winds in the central channel—which Tsongkhapa explained as the emergence

of “the most subtle mind of clear light”—after the stopping of the coarse levels of consciousness. However, that in Anuttarayogatantra the kāya in question may initially manifests in a *formless, luminous condition* does not at all imply that it may be *reduced to* a formless, luminous condition—just as the fact that *satori* (Chin.–Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *wù*; Wade-Giles, *wu*) may manifest following *kōan* (Chin. Hānyǔ Pīnyīn, *gōng’àn*; Wade-Giles *kung-an*) study does not mean it may be categorized as *an event that occurs following kōan study*. In the same way, that coarse levels of consciousness *stop* in the Anuttarayogatantra’s realization of the dharmakāya does not at all mean that the latter may be reduced to the *nirodhasamāpatti* of the Theravādin tradition: the Mahāyāna Sūtras, Śāstras and so on make it clear that in the vehicle in question *nirodhasamāpatti constitutes a deviation*.)

In general, many other aspects of Wilber’s descriptions of the kāyas are not based on the teachings of any reputed Buddhist author and Master—and, in general, the descriptions in question are blatantly self-contradictory, and the universalization of the sequence of their arising as explained in the Tantras of the Path of Transformation is wholly unwarranted. Thus it is a fact that Wilber has continued to reproduce many of the mix-ups denounced in the assessment of these fulcra in the last two Beyond Mind papers (Capriles, 2006, 2009), which thus fail to correspond to the higher Buddhist realizations with which he has identified them—or to stages in other ancient, traditional systems directed at Awakening, whether Buddhist or non-Buddhist, for that matter. In Wilber V, Wilber has continued to piece together elements from different traditions—not only from different religions, but also from different Buddhist vehicles and schools, thus being comparable to one who, by piecing together the head of an elephant, a snake’s body, and a human intellect, produces a monster existing solely in his or her imagination. (Finally, as clearly stated in the Beyond Mind papers and the book collecting the points made in them, if Wilber follows the source he mentions, then he should flatly reject the validity of the Dzogchen teachings and the Anuyogatantra, as surely does that source, and by the same token he should shun the Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Jonangpa [*jo nang pa*] teachings as a whole, because—as illustrated with a quote from Kunchen Pema Karpo and another one from Gorampa in this reply—these agree that in Buddhahood only the absolute truth manifests, as the relative no longer does so.)

(2) Since, as noted repeatedly, Wilber's source followed Je Tsongkhapa's peculiar understanding of Mādhyamaka Prāsangika, his view of emptiness outright contradicts his source's. In fact, Je Tsongkhapa regarded as ultimate truth emptiness qua emptiness of self-existence (Skt. *svabhāva śūnyatā*; Tib. *rangzhingyi tongpanyi* [*rang bzhing gyis stong pa nyid*])—except in Je Tsongkhapa, who preferred to render it as *rangzhingyi madrubpa* [*rang bzhin gyis ma grub pa*]: the term criticized in Gendün Chöphel, 2005; Gendün Chöphel & Capriles, in press; Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkòng*; Chin. Wade-Giles, *tzu-hsing-k'ung*; Jap. *jishōkū*) as true ultimate truth (Skt. *śūnyatā*; Tib. *tongpanyi* [*stong pa nyid*]; Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *kòng*; Chin. Wade-Giles, *k'ung*; Jap. *kū*). However, unlike Wilber, nearly all Tibetan Prāsangika Masters except for his followers, and the Dzogchen teachings, Tsongkhapa defined emptiness as the *absence of inherent existence*²³—that is, as the absence of the mistaken mode of existence that deluded beings project on what he himself called *merely existing* phenomena (a concept not found in the original Prāsangika teachings),²⁴ thereby *experiencing* the latter as existing *intrinsically, in their own right*—and claimed that the ultimate truth as it manifests on the Path consisted in getting this *absence of inherent existence* to become *present* to the meditator (i.e., to become an *object of cognition*) in the practice of insight (Skt. *vipaśyanā*; Tib. *lhantong* [*lhag mthong*]; Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *guān*; Wade-Giles, *kuan*; Jap. *kan*) meditation that he taught in the *Lamrim Chenmo* and the other *Lamrim* books. Furthermore, as already noted, since a mere absence cannot bear or create anything, this view frontally contradicts Wilber's (2007) view of emptiness as a creative principle that generates all there is and hence as being the same as *Ayin*²⁵—a view that Wilber V reiterated as follows:

the signifier *Ayin* or *Emptiness* has a real referent as disclosed by injunctive paradigm. That is, those who are qualified to make the judgment agree that it can be said that, among other things, Spirit is a vast infinite Abyss or *Emptiness* [experienced through first-person perspective in a causal state],²⁶ out of which all things arise. (p. 268)

Let me emphasize once more that the phenomena of saṃsāra and the qualities of nirvāṇa cannot be borne or created by a *mere absence* (of inherent existence or whatever) such as Tsongkhapa's emptiness. Moreover, Wilber wrote (Wilber & Cohen, 2005, p. 3), “emptiness

or the unborn or the changeless ground,” thus implying emptiness and what he called the “unborn changeless ground” to be the same. Though this is permissible in a Mahāyāna context (and in fact Ju Mipham's use of the term emptiness in that context is not at odds with the concept of ground), *changeless ground* seems to be Wilber's term for Dzogchen-qua-Base, which *is not* emptiness, for the latter (in a specific sense of the term) is no more than one of its aspects (in the twofold classification, it is its primordial purity aspect (Tib. *katak* [*ka dag*]), which in the threefold classification corresponds to the essence (Tib. *ngowo* [*ngo bo*]) aspect, and which is the aspect that somehow may be said to be changeless—the other aspect being its spontaneous perfection (Tib. *lhundrub* [*lhun grub*]), which subdivides into the nature (Tib. *rangzhin* [*rang bzhin*]) and energy (Tib. *thukjé* [*thugs rje*]) aspects. Moreover, Tsongkhapa rejected the concept of a Base, and therefore his ultra-orthodox followers (which is surely how the controversial character Wilber gave as his source for his last four fulcra sees himself) would wholeheartedly reject it as well.

Therefore, Wilber is clearly at odds with his main sources—including both the Dzogchen teachings and the controversial Tibetan character. In fact, Wilber's emptiness is in tune with the Daoist concept of nothingness (Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wú*; Wade-Giles *wu*; Jap. *mu*) and the Chán / Zen concept of the Great Void (Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dàwù*; Wade-Giles, *ta-wu*). This concept seems to roughly correspond to the one expressed by the Skt. *mahāsūnya* (Tib. *tongpa chenpo* [*stong pa chen po*]), as well as to that of the *dharmadhātu* (Tib. *chöjing* [*chos dbyings*] or *chökyijing* [*chos kyi dbyings*])—which, however, in Chinese is (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn) *fajìè* or (Wade-Giles) *fa-chieh*—which are anathema to Tsongkhapa and hence must be so to Wilber's source as well—and to some extent with the primordial purity (Tib. *katak* [*ka dag*]) or essence (Tib. *ngowo* [*ngo bo*]) aspect of the Base in the Dzogchen teachings,²⁷ which, as noted above, Tsongkhapa rejected (note that the Dzogchen teachings compare the Base's essence aspect to the no-thing-ness of a mirror in the sense of being *that which allows awareness to fill itself with appearances and nonetheless continue to [be] no-thing-ness*—which for its part implies that phenomena that manifest in this way are empty of self-existence). The point here is that if one disagrees with an author as to what the ultimate truth is and how it manifests, it is absurd to take him or her as an authority with regard to the way realization develops, for there is

no reason to assume that realization and its imitation—or two different kinds of realization, for that matter—must develop in the same way. Moreover, Wilber did not even follow his source faithfully, for as he quoted from the latter, he added his own terms within brackets, seemingly in order to twist the controversial author's assertions in order to make them fit his own views.²⁸

Abramson (2010) went on with his attempts to vindicate Wilber:

While Capriles correctly pointed out that the nirmanakaya, the sambhogakaya, and the dharmakaya do not fit Wilber's model, it is interesting to note that Wilber's definition of the Subtle and Causal levels provide a possible explanation for this being so. For example, in Capriles' critique of Wilber's inclusion of nirmanakaya in his psychic (i.e., lower subtle) level, Capriles implied that while nirmanakaya may manifest in the gross level (which Wilber's psychic level relates to), it is also of the nondual level in the sense it is Buddha's body. Similarly this applies to the sambhogakaya, and the dharmakaya. Cosmic consciousness is another example of a spiritual state that Wilber asserts to be in his psychic level, but does not, for the same reason as above, appear to fit there. This can be deduced from Daniels' (2005, pp. 200-202) discussion of its apparent misfit where he pointed out that, although cosmic consciousness may manifest in the psychic level in the sense that it relates only to gross phenomena and not to the subtle or causal domains, it is otherwise indistinguishable from "One Taste" or "Ultimate" nondual consciousness which is of the nondual. Thus Capriles' objection to Wilber's ascribing nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya, and dharmakaya to the psychic, subtle, and causal realms respectively can be reframed as a critique of the inherent limitations of Wilber's definition of these levels. But equally, Wilber might claim that most of the spiritual states that he asserts belong to these realms are correctly placed because they do relate to his definitions of those realms; in other words, the above examples appear to be the limited exception. (p. 184)

The above reduces my denunciation of the mismatch between Wilber's last four fulcra and that which the Anuttarayogatantra sees as the four kāyas to its most insignificant aspect, for it overlooks the major, radical mismatches denounced in my exhaustive and

long critique of these fulcra—a few of which were reviewed in point (1) above in this reply—and reduces the denunciation in question to its least significant and striking aspect, namely that "while nirmanakaya may manifest in the gross level (which Wilber's psychic level relates to), it is also *of* the nondual level in the sense it is *Buddha's* body, [and] this applies to the sambhogakāya, and the dharmakāya." As to whether or not Wilber faithfully follows the most controversial character he takes as the source for the last four fulcra in Wilber IV and the last four stages of the line of cognitive development in Wilber V (including those reproduced in Abramson, 2010), I decided to abstain from determining, as this would require me to read the books by the character in question—which I will not waste my time in doing, and which I do not advise others to do.²⁹

Wilber has also continued to maintain the supposed equivalence between the "three great states of consciousness" which are waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep, and the "three great realms of being" he has posited, which are gross, subtle, and causal—a thesis that I refuted in a most clear way in the last two Beyond Mind papers (Capriles, 2006, 2009)—and in general he has continued to overlook the crucial difference between the samsaric formless realms, the neutral condition of the base-of-all, and the nonstatic nirvāṇa of higher Buddhist vehicles (which he does not even refer to in his writings, for he always reduced nirvāṇa to the Theravādan nirodhasamāpatti and still continues to do so), which throughout the three Beyond Mind papers was said to be the most basic and blatant omission, not only of Wilber's system, but of the whole of transpersonal and so-called integral theory.

Because of all of the above, Wilber readers who take him seriously are bound to mistake samsaric experiences for nirvanic levels of realization, and therefore be unable to proceed on any Buddhist Path. Consider Abramson's (2010) explanation of Wilber V's view in these regards:

Wilber's explanation for being able to access any state from any stage of development starts with pointing out, "... the three great states of consciousness (waking, dreaming, sleeping) are said to correspond with the three great realms of being (gross, subtle, causal) ... an idea found in ... Vajrayana" (Wilber, 2002a, p. 1). According to Wilber, different worlds i.e. the three realms of gross, subtle and causal are

disclosed by different states of consciousness, and any different state of consciousness is potentially available at any time and to anyone at any stage of their development, because all humans have access to the waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. But, Wilber explains “stages CANNOT be skipped, because each stage is a component of its successor (this would be like going from atoms to cells and skipping molecules)” (ibid). Going from first person perspective (magical/typhonic stage) to second person perspective (mythic stage) to third person (rational stage) is a process of development where, according to Wilber and supported by researchers such as Jane Loevinger, Robert Kegan and Susanne Cook-Greuter, *stages cannot be skipped*. (Italics my own)

Moreover, the above passage demonstrates the fact, repeatedly referred to here, that Wilber is still positing a very rigid schema of hierarchical structures of the kind denounced throughout the Beyond Mind papers, for he has continued to affirm that stages cannot be skipped, *precisely because each stage is a component of its successor*—which he compared with going from atoms to cells while skipping molecules. Since the structure of each of the stages is *arisen* and *produced* (as all structures necessarily are), as noted in the discussion of Wilber’s last four fulcra in the last two Beyond Mind papers—and no matter how many times he may echo the Dzogchen teachings’ assertion that Buddhahood, rather than a creation, production, or construction, is the direct, bare recognition of an already perfectly present condition—in Buddhist terms his last four *fulcra* or stages are *produced* / *contrived* / *conditioned* / *compounded* / *fabricated* (Skt. *samskr̥ta*; Pāli: *saṅkhata*; Tib. *düje* [’*dus byas*]), and as such are impermanent and pertain to *samsāra*. As to Dzogchen in particular, there is no need to repeat here all of the quotations offered in those papers to demonstrate that on the Dzogchen Path there is no given sequence of realization (including the one from a Richö by Dudjom Rinpoche and the one from the Tantra of the Upadeśavarga or Menngagde [Tib. *man ngag (gyi) sde*] series of teachings called *The Heart Mirror of Vajrasattva* [Tib. *Dorje Sempa Nyinggi Melong (rdo rje sems dpa’ snying gi me long)*], or the examples given that show realization not to depend on maturity—i.e., on developing structures—and hence Wilber to be wrong in this regard (including that of Urgyen Tulku’s teacher and the more striking one of Namchö Mingyur Dorje [*nam chos mi ’gyur rdo rje*]).

Abramson noted that Wilber V relinquished the whole idea of an independently existing Great Chain of Being involving different, self-existing planes of existence, as well as that of eternal or timeless structures of human consciousness.³⁰ However, he has continued to posit a correspondence among the rungs in various lines, which seems to imply that he views them as stages in an overall, integral type of development—and, what is far worse, he has now presented this development as a transition from lower to higher focal points (*chakra*) that he associates to different colors in a schema that, as M. Alan Kazlev (n.d.) notes, is not found in any traditional system. Kazlev (n.d.) wrote:

[The schema in question] is not much more than about thirty years old; the earliest reference I know of is Christopher Hills’ (1977) *Nuclear Evolution*; an elaborate Integral theory that predates Wilber’s AQAL by several decades... Hills’ book seems to have had little or no influence on the wider world, so Wilber’s rainbow chakras are probably based on pop-Osho New Age websites. (n.p.)

Abramson (2010) also noted that Wilber V no longer claims that higher spiritual levels can only be steadily attained and gone through after a considerable progress has been reached along different lines of development, or that it is impossible to “jump” from a low to a high spiritual level. In fact, he made the point that by 2006 Wilber had embraced the Wilber-Combs lattice according to which *in our present age*³¹ people can “advance” to any spiritual *state* at any *stage* of development—thus implicitly disavowing the just mentioned theses. Abramson (2010) cited Wilber (in Wilber & Cohen, 2005, p. 3):

If people get the evolutionary unfolding, they usually haven’t had that experience of prior emptiness or of the unborn or the changeless ground. And because of that, they tie their realization to an evolutionary stage. “I have to be at this stage; then I can realize.” And that’s not it at all, because that ever-present state is ever present, and you can have that realization virtually at any point. But in order to stabilize and ground it, you do indeed have to then grow and develop. So they just understand the evolutionary side of form, and the other folks tend to have the emptiness understood, but very rarely do you get emptiness together with evolutionary form.

The phrase, *of prior emptiness or of the unborn or the changeless ground* was discussed above, where it was noted that Wilber's controversial Tibetan source would not accept an identity between emptiness, the unborn, Ayin, a vast infinite Abyss, and that which Wilber imprecisely calls the *changeless ground*, or Wilber's assertion that it is out of emptiness that all things arise (to begin with, as noted above, emptiness for Tsongkhapa consisted in the presence of the absence of inherent / hypostatic / true existence, and mere absences simply cannot bear anything; likewise, he would not accept the concept Wilber expressed by the phrase *changeless ground*; etc.; cf. the discussion of some of the meanings of emptiness in the corresponding endnote [endnote 22]). As to Wilber's assertion in the cited passage that in order to stabilize and ground realization one has to *then grow and develop*, it implies that child prodigies like Namchö Mingyur Dorje in a matter of months, or at most a few years, should have *grown and developed along the various Wilberian lines of development* as much as a normal individual does over many years. Above it was noted that in any individual who nongradually attains a genuine spiritual realization of higher Buddhism, selfishly-motivated actions gradually diminish while selfless activity for the sake of others increases; the psyche gradually gains in self-consistency; the propensities for evil, self-encumbering and so on are gradually neutralized, and so on—yet none of this implies that in all Wilberian quadrants the individual rapidly progresses through the stages Wilber has posited, or that child-prodigies like Mingyur Dorje will not retain any infantile traits in any Wilberian quadrant.

As noted above, the newer Wilber admits there may be a somewhat freer transit between lower and higher levels in ontogeny as well as phylogenesis, and that development along one line of development does not need to strictly depend on development along the other lines. As Abramson (2010) put it:

The Wilber-Combs lattice separates states (e.g., psychic) and stages (e.g., typhonic-magical, mental egoic) into *different dimensions*. The psychic state is not therefore a higher structure of mental egoic, typhonic or any other stage and consequently does not incur the objection Kelly ascribes to it.

This is an important development, which probably resulted from the huge amount of criticism his phylogenetic views have received (not only from

Kelly [1998], but also from Taylor [2003, 2005] and many others). In fact, Wilber's view on the phylogenetic evolution of both the psyche and society has shifted to a rather here-now perspective based on Rupert Sheldrake's (1981) theories of morphogenetic fields and formative causation, which he formerly rejected—yet to a certain degree he continues to establish a parallel (which is now far looser) between ontogeny and phylogenesis. What is worse, he recently introduced a new evolutionary concept that is not present in any traditional spiritual system whatsoever—namely that a fully Awake individual in previous stages of human evolution would not be fully Awake today. His argument is as follows:

The same structure that 6000 years ago could be said to be fully Enlightened, is no longer so today. Somebody at mythic-membership today is no longer one with the Totality of all Form, because there are “over the head” of amber, the orange and green and teal and turquoise structures. Those are now real, “ontological,” *actually existing structures* in the Kosmos, as real as if they were Platonic eternal givens (except that they aren't), and if a person has not transcended and included those levels in their own development, then there are major levels of reality that they (the amber individuals) are not one with. Even if they master nondual states of a perfect nondual union of Emptiness and Form, even if they master *Ati Yoga* and *thögal* (i.e., thögel [*thod rgal*]) visions and the 5 ranks of Tozan, even if they master centering prayer and the deepest contemplative states, even if they rest constantly in Ayin, they are not fully Enlightened: there are aspects of Form that never enter this person's world, and thus—exactly as we were meant to explain—this person's *satori* is oneness with a partial world. (Wilber, 2007, p. 247)

The fact that Wilber here mixes up the transient freedom from conditioning Japanese Zen calls *satori* (Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *wù*; Wade-Giles *wu*) with Full Awakening (Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *pútí*; Chin. Wade-Giles, *p'u-t'i*; Jap. *bodai*), which is an irreversible condition, is irrelevant to the thread of the present discussion. What is important is that the above is an example of the extreme structural paradigm criticized throughout the Beyond Mind papers as well as in the upcoming book systematizing the arguments of those papers, for Awakening, rather than a structure, is absolute freedom from conditioning by structures, and

at any rate, even if one accepted the thesis that at each new stage of the cognitive or spiritual evolution of the human species new structures arise, Awakening would *not* consist in including all structures arisen in human beings at a particular time, as it lies in having come to *See through* all that is *arisen*, into the *absolute equality of the unborn* in which arisen structures are irrelevant—for one is no longer conditioned by any such structure—and having come to dwell irreversibly, uninterruptedly in this realization. Although I am not against comparing Awakening as it manifests in people of different ages whose psyches are differently structured, this would by no means lead to the conclusion that one who is Awake in a less structured age will not be Awake in a more structured era just because in the more structured epoch there are aspects of Form that never enter her or his world. In fact, for someone who is fully Awake today there will be aspects of Form that never enter his or her world, such as forms manifesting in other planets (whether in our solar system or in those solar systems that have been recently discovered) that might be discovered in the future: will he or she not be fully Awake just because those aspects of Form do not enter her or his world? Awakening consists, not in being *one* with *the whole of Form* existing in one's lifetime—even though it no doubt involves *nonduality with whatever manifests in experience* (including all that may have to do with the imagery characteristic of the individual's time), and freedom from conditioning by it—but simply in being free from the three types of avidyā listed in Dzogchen teachings. Thus also this Wilberian thesis reveals his outlook to be metaphenomenologically ascending and as such to be a case of what Trungpa Rinpoche called spiritual materialism, for it asserts Awakening to lie in embracing produced, conditioned structures, rather than acknowledging it to consist in the irreversible realization of the unproduced, unconditioned absolute nature. Furthermore, there is no reason to assume the existence of the structures Wilber has posited—yet I do not intend to assess each of them in order to accept it or reject it. (Note that those Buddhists who take the concept of the omniscience of Buddhahood literally would object that Buddhas are aware of whatever happens in other planets, but on the other hand would believe that Buddhas are aware of structures in the psyche that would arise in humans in the future, and therefore would claim that they integrate both the knowledge of whatever happens in other planets *and* the structures that will arise in humans of the future—thus discarding Wilber's thesis in this regard.)

It seems to me an outrageous expression of modern *hubris* to believe that one who becomes Awake today has a better or more complete realization than one who became Awake 6000 years ago. Moreover, as it follows from Carlson's (n.d.), most valuable reflections, in Wilber's case this thesis—just as the rest of his rigid evolutionary schema—seems to be motivated by a pronounced right wing political stand. I was shocked and surprised that Wilber (2007, p. 98), rather than trying to guess what were the reasons that led the Dalai Lama to make a certain statement that in all lights was made from the standpoint of some specific others and in order to respond to what he felt were their needs, and thus as what Candrakīrti, and then Jayānanda, Gorampa and others, called an “other-directed assertion” (i.e., without himself adhering either to his own assertion or to an alternative one; cf. the upcoming definitive editions of Capriles, 2004, 2005), dared to assert the lofty spiritual / political leader to have an ethnocentric worldview,³² for by so doing he implicitly placed himself in a spiritual place above H.H.'s, from which he can accurately judge him. I wonder whether this has to do with the fact that the Dalai Lama's political stance as an engaged Buddhist (and even as a Marxist, as documented in the upcoming book synthesizing the ideas expressed in the Beyond Mind papers) conflicts with Wilber's decidedly right wing stance, or whether the latter was conditioned by the anti-Dalai Lama drive orchestrated by the Tibetan character he took as the source for his sequence of realization (for understanding the reasons for this, cf. Clifton with Miller, 1997, and Bultrini, 2008).³³

The same characteristic modern hubris and his right wing stance seem to be patent in Wilber's claim that true ecological awareness can only result from attaining a “high stage of evolution” like the one that in his view humans can finally attain in the current time. As Abramson (2010) admitted, Wilber (2007) has continued to hold that:

the comprehension of more complex aspects of samsara will require correspondingly higher stages of development e.g. the appreciation of ecosystems will only “appear” to someone at a high enough (i.e. post-conventional) stage of development. Thus only people at post-conventional stage development will be prone to make sacrifices to tackle the ecological crisis because people at “lower” stages will not recognise the problem.

Realization has nothing to do with making sacrifices (whether in order to tackle the ecological crisis or with any other purpose); what it does is to dissolve the delusion (and hence the structures, perspectives, and attitudes) at the root of ecological crisis, so that the individual spontaneously, actionlessly works toward the changes necessary for healing the ecosystem. In the same way, as research by P. Descola (1986, 1996), cited in some of the Beyond Mind papers and in the upcoming book with the materials of these suggests, primal human beings cared for the environment for hundreds of thousands of years—at least until the time of the earliest registered ecocides—without this involving a sacrifice, for they seem to have neither objectified the physical reality nor experienced it as inherently alien to themselves, and to have been keenly aware of interconnections—and therefore their spontaneous responses to that reality *improved biodiversity rather than destroying* it. My view is that the same would be the case after the spiritual and social regeneration that I hope will result from the completion of the *reductio ad absurdum* of threefold avidyā achieved in ecological crisis. There is no phylogenetic progress over the ages, just as ontogenic development need not amount to betterment. Abramson (2010) wrote:

Capriles points to the central premise of Wilber's theories of spiritual attainment i.e. they are based on developmental steps leading to Nondual state of Suchness, where some minimum level of attainment of each development step must occur before one can move to the next step. Capriles powerfully refutes this throughout his three part "Beyond the Mind"³⁴ work (that commenced publication in 2000 and concluded in 2009). This refutation draws on the doctrines of Dzogchen Buddhism according to which true Awakening results only from the spontaneous liberation of delusion. This spontaneous liberation, Capriles explains, will manifest generally among humans at the end of the current cycle of evolution by the mechanism of *reductio ad absurdum*. Prior to this the only mechanism for true Awakening is an authentic spiritual path such as Dzogchen. The spontaneous liberation of delusion which can manifest in practitioners of an authentic path *can occur at any stage of development* and Awakening, which can follow repeated occurrences of spontaneous liberation of delusion, can *also occur at any stage of development*.

Remarkably, considering Wilber had held the above view for at least two decades, by 2006 he had admitted it was wrong and his current theories, which make use of the Wilber-Combs lattice, imply he is in agreement with Capriles insofar as people *in our present age*³⁵ can advance to any spiritual state at any stage of their development.

Abramson implied that I claim that spontaneous liberation will manifest generally among humans at the end of the current cycle of evolution as a result of the mechanism of *reductio ad absurdum*, without there being a need for them to follow an authentic spiritual path such as Dzogchen—which I have never claimed, as to do so would amount to making a prophesy, which is something I leave to those who consider themselves prophets (if I had to bet, however, I would bet that people would still need a Path in order to have access to spontaneous liberation). What is worse, his words give the impression that Wilber and I share the same view on human evolution, when in truth he enthusiastically adheres to the version of the myth of progress that modern hubris (in this case in its right wing version) uses to sustain its structured belief-system, whereas I espouse the contrary, traditional view of social and spiritual human evolution as gradual degeneration common to Dzogchen and Tantric Buddhism, as well as to all traditions having the teachings of Shenrab Miwoche as their root.³⁶ Likewise, Abramson (2010) seems to assume that Wilber has a genuine ecological concern, and implies that I *share* this concern with him. He wrote:

Capriles' concern with ecological issues is clear:

The spiritual systems I practice and propound, as all metaphenomenologically / metaexistentially descending Paths, are perfectly nondual; yet ... [also] descending in ... [the senses that]... they have always been profoundly concerned with ecological, social, economic, political, gender, generational, cultural, and other related issues (Capriles, 2009 pp. 7-8)

Wilber and I may coincide in claiming that at some point humankind will have a relatively free, easy access to the unconcealment of our true condition, yet he apparently views this as an unprecedented occurrence, whereas I regard it as the recovery of a capacity that most likely was common to human beings of high Antiquity—and my divergence from Wilber about the

conditions that would make this possible and the time at which it would become possible could hardly be more pronounced. In fact, I claim that, due to the discrepancy between the digital, secondary process code of the left cerebral hemisphere, and the analog, primary process code of the right cerebral hemisphere, the interaction of the two cerebral hemispheres causes delusion to gradually *increase* in the course of the time cycle, making it ever more difficult for delusion to dissolve in Communion and making its evil effects ever more pronounced, until the point is reached at which it becomes evident that the effects of human actions on the ecological, social, psychological, and other planes are the opposite of those that were intended, and hence that the actions in question stem from delusion. By the time the ecological crisis is near from reaching the point of no return—thus showing human attempts to build a technological Eden to have been based on the basic human delusion called *avidyā*—psychological functioning in terms of delusion has been impaired in the human species as a whole to a considerable degree, and hence also on this plane the empirical *reductio ad absurdum* of delusion has been achieved—as a result of which an easier, freer access to the state of Communion may be restored and hence the structures and functioning that developed in the course of degenerative evolution can repeatedly dissolve in Dzogchen-qua-Path, thus gradually diluting themselves. Now, since there is no guarantee that the chaos that the exacerbation of delusion will produce in all fields, rather than bringing about the extinction of our species, will restore our access to the state of Communion and thus bring about our regeneration, one must keep from turning speculation into prophesy. The only thing known for sure is that, given the current degree of disruption of the global ecosystem, the disjunctive between regeneration and destruction is presently being reached.

The Fukuyama of purportedly “ecological” thinking (Wilber), on the contrary, has claimed that the restoration of a freer, easier access of our species to the unconcealment of our true condition, will occur when our spiritual evolution makes us develop the “required structures,” and that this will occur in the *far* future—overlooking, in a seeming purposeful way,³⁷ the fact that if the radical, total transformation that is the condition of possibility of human survival and of the beginning of a new era of spirituality, wisdom, harmony, fulfillment, and equality fails to occur in the very near future, in the short term human society will disintegrate, we will face

unprecedented calamities and, most likely, our species will put an end to its own existence. One may even come to suspect the aim behind this aspect of Wilber’s system to be simply that of forestalling the radical restructuring of the economy, of the social and political order, and of technology, which necessarily will have to be a central aspect of the total transformation in question if the latter will allow us to survive—not caring the slightest bit for the fact that maintaining the *status quo* with its privilege system and its overconsumption would ensure our self-annihilation. Has not the reader ever wondered why Wilber charges so rabidly and furiously against so many “green” authors and trends?

Unaware of all that has been written in this section, immanentists could conclude that it is praiseworthy that Wilber is trying to correct at least one of his fundamental errors, by calling for a naturalistic turn to religion and introducing the concept of intra-physical. Though I fully agree with the call in question, in terms of my system (certainly *not* in those of Wilber’s rigid, modern, progress-oriented view of our spiritual and social evolution) this naturalistic turn would return religion to what it was before the otherworldly turning that gave birth to the gods (cf. Capriles, 2012), and as such it would necessarily imply ceasing to posit a transcendent reality—which, as shown above, Wilber has *not* done, for he has continued to assert the existence of such reality, by calling for “the transcendent” and the immanent to, “in a sense, flavor each other.” (For a substantiation of the fact that Buddhism has never posited a transcendent reality, and that it outright categorizes those who do as extremists, cf. Appendix I in *Beyond Mind III* [Capriles, 2009] and Volume III of the upcoming book [Capriles, in press].) As to the concept of intra-physical, Frank Visser (n.d.) has raised the following questions:

Is intra-physical a physical concept? Then no physicist would subscribe to that notion. Or is it metaphysical? Then what’s the point of calling all this “post-metaphysical”? Isn’t all science supposed to be “post-metaphysical”? So what’s the big deal then? And if he introduces the notion of “intra-physical”, that surely introduces ontology in its wake? For Wilber, “post-metaphysical” primarily seems to refer to “evidence-based,” compared to speculative. If that’s the case, it’s an unfortunate label for a view that explores other experiential avenues than the bodily senses alone.

**Does the End of Metaphysics
Amount to the Eradication of Ontology
or Does it Call for Latter's Transformation
into a Metaontology?**

The last important feature of Wilber V to be discussed here will be his own characterization of his current philosophical position. To begin with, he has claimed to have gone beyond metaphysics by no longer asserting anything to exist independently. However, as Magnus Riisager (n.d.) noted, Wilber still asserts spiritual realities to exist independently in the levels he has posited:

Wilber wishes to hold on to the hierarchy (or holararchy) of developmental levels (structure-stages). As Wilber presents it, we are not just dealing with an arrangement of levels according to how including they are. Wilber assumes that the things and occasions found on the more including levels are more *real* than the things and occasions found on the less including levels. This becomes obvious when Wilber talks about the spiritual realities found on different levels:

The problem is not that spiritual realities don't exist or are hard to prove; it's that their earlier forms exist on lower levels and hence are not *as real* as some of the later levels, but those higher levels *have their own spiritual realities*" (*ibid.*, p. 266—my emphasis).

So Wilber apparently operates with a non-relative measure (of realness) in the Kosmos that is not pre-given.

Riisager (n.d.) also noted that:

Wilber appears to believe that Spirit—in one form or another—will be found (i.e. will exist) on all (not yet evolved) levels; in other words, he doesn't question the presence of Spirit but only the "look" of Spirit (cf. Wilber, 2003, note 26). In addition to this, Wilber postulates the absolute existence of Eros and Agape (Wilber 2006, p. 236, note *).

So Wilber's unavoidable metaphysics includes:

The *hierarchy* (holarchy) of structure-stages (i.e. a measure of realness),

Spirit,

Eros,

Agape,

A morphogenetic gradient in the manifest realm;
a morphogenetic field of potentials, and

Certain prototypical ("archetypical") forms or patterns (e.g. mathematical-physical laws) (cf. Wilber 2003, note 26).

In order to place the discussion in context and then introduce the final bone of contention in this assessment of Wilber V, let me briefly review the interaction among metaphysical and anti-metaphysical trends since René Descartes. The French philosopher elaborated his metaphysics in reaction to the objections to the purported certainty of knowledge raised by the modern skeptics, and in particular by the *nouveaux pyrrhoniens* (New Pyrrhonics; Popkin, 1979), which challenged his religious and metaphysical certainties—possibly to the point of making him experience ontological anxiety and even panic—and which could undermine the project, so dear to him, of achieving technological dominion over the universe through the development of science and technology (Capriles, 1994). His strategy for trying to make his metaphysics immune to skeptic criticism lay in applying the skeptic procedure of methodic doubt, *not* for achieving the skeptic aim of realizing it was not even possible to know whether or not it was possible to know, but in order to find an objective truth that could not be doubted—which he wrongly believed to have found in the intuition of what he called the *cogito*, even though the latter is no more than an illusion produced by the delusory valuation-absolutization of the threefold thought structure and one of the poles of the structure that is the second aspect of avidyā in the division favored by Longchenpa (for a full explanation of the three aspects of avidyā in both the classification I privileged in the Beyond Mind papers and the one Longchenpa and most Dzogchen Masters privileged, cf. the Introduction to Vol. I of Capriles [in press] and notes 55 and 99 to Capriles [2006], among several other works). The French metaphysician then unwarrantedly asserted the phenomenon in question to be a God-created, nonspatial *substance*—and, since the intuition of the *cogito* could not found the world's external existence, he had to breach the core principle of the method he had assumed, and resort to the Christian God to found it.³⁸

Among the resurgences of skepticism after Descartes, an important place is to be allotted to Scottish moderate skeptic David Hume, who deconstructed central categories of Continental metaphysics such as substance—one of his essential contributions being the

deconstruction of the mind's purported substantiality—and causality, among others. Kant claimed that his reading of Hume had shaken his convictions, “awakening him from his dogmatic dream” and leading him to rethink his philosophy on the whole so as to produce a totally new system. Though this is partly true, for Kant was obliged to rethink much of what he had taken for granted, what was mainly shaken by the reading in question seems to have been his *naïve substantiation* of his metaphysical convictions (provided these were really his convictions³⁹), for he seems to have kept the most essential ones among them—such as the belief in the Christian God, in a substantial mind and in substance in general, in objective beauty and goodness, in the possibility of a correct knowledge of most parcels of reality, and so forth—which he substantiated by positing *a priori*s in all the compartments into which he divided the psyche, and claiming that the existence of these *a priori*s implied the objective, true existence of a substantial mind and of substance in general, and of objective truth, beauty and moral law. Thus what Kant's reading of Hume actually did was to force him to express his dogmatic metaphysics in a new way, so as to *give the false impression* that he was respecting the limits of knowledge and producing a non-dogmatic system (for an explanation of how he breached the limits in question, cf. Capriles, 1994, 2007a Vol. I).

The widespread realization of Kant's failure in his purported attempt to produce a metaphysics that would respect the limits inherent in knowledge, thus avoiding dogmatism, is at the root of the characteristically modern project of positivism, the best-known forms of which intended to surpass metaphysics (and even ontology and all that has traditionally gone under the label philosophy), by keeping to supposedly verifiable evidence of the kind the positive sciences deem admissible. In fact, among the different forms of positivism, August Comte's claimed that ontology and the rest of what traditionally went under the label philosophy had to be replaced by an encyclopædia of the positive sciences; much later, at the turn of the twentieth century, the Austrian empirio-criticists produced a science-based critical philosophy that, like the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (which was intended to surpass, by the same token, the whole of the classic dualisms of metaphysics, *and* substantialistic monism), involved an ontology free from the mind-matter dualism; time after that, the neopositivists, including those in the Vienna Circle, circumscribed philosophy to a critical philosophy of science, thus turning it into

a servant and handmaiden of science; some trends of philosophy of language (not Ludwig Wittgenstein's final system, as it asserted language not to match reality and to be a source of delusion⁴⁰) circumscribed the ambit of philosophy to determining whether or not statements are meaningful, and so forth.

Since, unfortunately, most trends within positivism kept the belief in science as the bearer of truth—a trend that reached a paroxysm when philosophy was reduced to a servant of the sciences—in the current era all forms of positivism are widely seen as obsolete remnants of the enthusiasm with science proper to early modernity. In particular, even though most of those philosophers who define themselves as postmodern continue to implicitly uphold the myth of progress that is the root and essence of modernity, as a rule they outright negate that science and philosophy discover truths or that the discourses they produce can achieve an *adaequatio rei et intellectus* (i.e., a concordance of human knowledge with a purportedly independent, factic reality). In fact, this idea runs counter, not only to those trends of philosophy that categorize themselves as postmodern, but in general to the views of a long list of philosophers, scientists, and philosopher-scientists, and that goes at least as back as the Greek Skeptics. (A quite interesting case is that of Wilfred Sellars [1997, 1963], who absorbed and amalgamated elements of British and American analytic philosophy and Austrian and German logical positivism, as well as of American Pragmatism—and, in at least one work [1968], even of Kant's transcendental idealism—and became renowned for having questioned the foundationalist belief in a *given* that may serve as the basis for an *adaequatio intellectus et rei*.)

It was noted that Kant claimed that the Scottish critical empiricist, David Hume, had awakened him from what he called his “dogmatic dream.” Among Hume's alleged discoveries, most relevant at this point is the universally accepted objection to empirical science as the source of “scientific laws,” which nowadays is widely referred to as Hume's law, and which may be enunciated as follows: “one is not entitled to extrapolate the regularities observed in a limited number of cases to the totality of possible cases, thus making it into a law, as one or more of the unobserved cases could contradict the observed regularity.” Moreover, science claims that it derives its purported laws from observation of objective facts, the very existence of which, as noted above, Sellars called into question. For their part, the scientists'

observations are, as Bachelard made it clear (1957) and as so many others have reiterated,⁴¹ utterly conditioned by their expectations—and therefore by their ideologies and wishful thinking. An anecdote told by Edgar Morin (1981) clearly illustrates the extent to which observational judgments are conditioned by ideology: while driving his car into a crossroads, he saw another car's driver disregard the traffic light and, with his car's front bumper, hit a moped that was moving with the green light. Morin stopped his car and stepped down in order to testify in favor of the moped driver, yet when he did so he heard the latter admit that it was him who overlooked the red light and hit the car on the side. Incredulous, the famed thinker examined the car, finding the dent the moped made in the car to be on the latter's side, and concluding that his thirst for social justice and socialist ideology caused him to perceive the event wrongly and invert the facts, even though he had not drunk any alcohol and no other conditions were present that could have distorted his perception. In the case of an experiment planned beforehand, the results are far more doubtful, for the way in which the experiment is set up and the criteria in terms of which the data it yields are assessed are arranged to satisfy the researcher's expectations, as he / she intends to corroborate a theory put forward beforehand.

The above explains why such a conservative thinker as Karl Popper (1961) noted that, if no experience contradicts a theory, scientists are entitled to adopt it *provisionally* as a *probable* truth (thus open-mindedly acknowledging that no scientific theory can be fully substantiated, yet closed-mindedly clinging to the belief in truth *qua adaequatio*), and that the acceptance of a new theory gives rise to as many problems as it solves. Moreover, as it is well-known, on going through the history of science, Thomas Kuhn (1970) noted that from the moment a scientific theory or paradigm is accepted as true, scientific observations begin to contradict it, yet the scientists consistently overlook these contradictions until the point is reached at which contradictions become so abundant and conspicuous that they can no longer ignore them, and hence they must set out to devise new theories and paradigms in order to account for these observations—yet new observations will contradict the new theory or paradigm as well, and hence the process in question will repeat itself again and again. In fact, in the current era the belief that science discovers truths has been demystified to such a degree, that Paul K. Feyerabend (1982, 1984, 1987)—who has shown scientists to often

arrive at their discoveries and theories *by breaking the established procedural rules of science*—placed Western reason and science on the same plane as magic and sorcery.

In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Friedrich Nietzsche (1999) had already left behind the above-discussed idea that human interpretations often do not reflect facts, and had gone so far as to claim that there are no facts that may be or not be matched by those interpretations. In his allegedly “postmodern” period, in which he propounded the active radicalization of nihilism, Gianni Vattimo (1995, p. 50) wrote in this regard:

Nihilism means in Nietzsche “de-valorization of the supreme values” and fabrication of the world: there are no facts, only interpretations, and this is also an interpretation.

All of the above shows that Georges Sorel (1922, 1906, 1908) was right in claiming, between the last years of the nineteenth century and the onset of the twentieth century, that human beings act under the influence of myths, that the sciences are myths, and that the scientific pretensions of Marxism—a focus of his criticism—responded to the force of the myth of science, which prevailed in Marx's time.⁴² It also suggests that Antonio Gramsci (1998, p. 63)⁴³ was equally right in pointing out, in 1948, that to the extent to which one takes the “discoveries” of the sciences as truths in the sense of *adaequatio* of a scientific map to an interpreted territory, the sciences are ideologies. The point is that science and technology are indivisible from the ideological project of modernity,⁴⁴ which initially was associated with the ascending bourgeoisie and at a later stage, through the influence of Marxism, also with the ascending proletariat: as Marcuse (1964) noted, science is by its very nature instrumental, and hence it naturally delivers the means for the domination of the natural environment and other human beings (“From Negative to Positive Thinking: Technological Rationality and the Logic of Domination,” ch. 6 of Marcuse, 1964).⁴⁵ Thus it is not difficult to see why Michel Foucault (1976, 1978) and Gilles Deleuze (1980)⁴⁶ asserted philosophy and science to be *more than ideologies*: for a very long time philosophical systems, and for a shorter time scientific disciplines and theories (according to Deleuze, psychoanalysis played this role at the time he wrote the book in question), have functioned as an “abstract machine or generalized axiomatic” that works as the matrix that makes possible the very existence of power—

their function being that of providing power with the forms of knowledge necessary to sustain the models on the basis of which it will have to structure itself in each period.

As to the logic in terms of which the sciences function, it is evident that from one standpoint a given entity is that entity, yet from a different viewpoint (belonging to a different logical type) it is not that entity (e.g., from a certain standpoint a wooden table is a table, but from other standpoints it is not a table but: an assembly of pieces of wood; a conglomerate of atoms; a piece, singled out for perception, of the continuum that according to Einstein's Field Theory the universe is; etc.)—and that this may at first sight seem to contradict Aristotelian logic (in particular, the conjunction of the principle of the excluded middle and the principle of noncontradiction that Peter Suber [1997] referred to as Exclusive Disjunction for Contradictories [PEDC]). In their noted Theory of Logical Types, Bertrand Russell and A. N. Whitehead (1910-1913) seemingly intended to solve apparent problems of this kind by asserting contradictions between terms to be “real” only when both terms belong to the same logical type, and hence requiring that no element belonging to a logical type different from that of the class being dealt with be included in the class or excluded from it. However, the theory elaborated by Russell and Whitehead was objected by Kurt Gödel (1962), who pinpointed a major problem, not only of the theory in question, but of all *deductive systems*—which, after induction was shown to be nonexistent, has been acknowledged to include all scientific systems—by ideating his incompleteness theorem, which showed all logical systems to necessarily contain at least one premise that cannot be proven or verified without the system contradicting itself ... from which it follows that it is impossible to establish the logical consistency of any complex deductive system without assuming principles of reasoning the internal consistency of which is as open to questioning as the system itself. With a reasoning far more accessible to the general reader, Gregory Bateson (1972) noted that in order not to include or exclude items that do not belong to the logical type being considered, as the theory of logical types demanded, one had to exclude all such items from consideration, which meant that one was excluding them in order not to exclude them and thus was violating the principle one was intent on respecting. Moreover, this implies that, when dealing with the class to which *x* belongs, whatever does

not belong to the same class as *x* cannot be considered either as *x* or as non-*x*—which violates the principle of Aristotelian logic the theory in question was intended to save, for according to it whatever is not *x* is non-*x*. Of course, if one regards the theory of logical types as a mere convention necessary for resolving practical problems, rather than as an attempt to substantiate the supposedly ultimate character of Aristotelian logic, then it will fulfill its purpose—and, at any rate, the problems just discussed may be deemed irrelevant for the validity or invalidity of the empirical sciences.

I would not deny that, in spite of Hume's law and the whole of the above objections, the sciences are as a rule capable of predicting *some types of* events with a considerable degree of reliability, as well as of producing predictable *immediate* effects. However, in the long run they produce effects that altogether contradict the ones they claim to be intent on producing. In fact, as I have noted elsewhere (Capriles, in press, 2007a, etc.), in terms of Korzybski's (1973) semantics, according to which sanity is determined by the structural fit between one's reactions to the world and what is actually going on in the world, and insanity by the lack of such fit, it is necessary to conclude that Śākyamuni Buddha was certainly right when he compared fully fledged avidyā to an illness, and that Candrakīrti hit the mark when he compared this fully fledged avidyā to insanity,⁴⁷ for it gives rise to a severe structural discrepancy between human reactions to the world and what is actually going on in the world: as stated again and again throughout my works, human attempts to achieve satisfaction yield dissatisfaction, efforts to suppress pain produce pain, and efforts to (allegedly) destroy death and all negative aspects of life and build a technological Eden have originated the ecological crisis that is producing major natural disasters and which threatens to disrupt human society and even put an end to human existence in the course of the present century. Thus it seems that Korzybski was wrong when noting, in terms of the famed map-territory analogy, that although the map is not the territory, the map could be correct in the sense of having a structure similar to that of the territory that allows one to successfully deal with the latter—thus achieving the structural fit defining sanity.

Korzybski's criterion coincides with the one that, in the face of Hume's law and the accumulated objections of subsequent epistemologists (cf. Capriles, 1994, 2007a vol. III, 2007b), Alfred Julius Ayer (1981) devised with the

aim of validating the sciences: the one according to which “we are authorized to have faith in our procedure, so long as it carries out its function, which is that of predicting future experience and thus control our environment.” However, in trying to control the environment with the purported aim of creating an artificial Eden and kill death and pain, the sciences and the technology based on them, rather than achieving their declared effect,⁴⁸ have produced a hellish chaos and taken humanity to the brink of extinction—and, moreover, at no moment did they foresee this outcome. Therefore Ayer’s criterion, rather than validating, outright *invalidates* the sciences.

In fact, as already noted, the current ecological crisis has made it evident that the technological application of the sciences in the long run gives rise to effects contrary to the ones they are allegedly intended to produce. Thus to the extent to which the sciences involve a pretension of truth in the sense of exact correspondence of their maps to the territory of the given, or the pretension of improving human lives and producing a technological paradise, it is clear that they are metanarratives involving the denial of their character as metanarratives, and as such they must be denounced as being both myths and ideologies: they are elements of modernity’s myth of progress,⁴⁹ which ecological crisis has proved, not merely to be unrealizable, but to be outright deadly.⁵⁰

The above discussion of the limits of science makes it evident that the positivistic belief that metaphysics will be surpassed and truth will be attained by replacing philosophy with the positive sciences (etc.) could hardly be more misguided. However, in the first half of the twentieth century the initial attempts were made to surpass metaphysics in a way radically different from those proper to *ordinary positivism*—among which at this point it is relevant to briefly refer to those made by Edmund Husserl, who devised phenomenology in the twentieth century sense of the term, and later on some of the Continental philosophers that further developed the discipline in question. Rather than trying to surpass metaphysics by rejecting ontology, as *ordinary positivism* had done, Husserl developed that which he referred to as an *absolute positivism*, which rather than dealing with the so-called “positive knowledge” produced by the sciences, was concerned with essences relevant to *ontology*—his intent being that of producing an *ontology* purportedly based solely on *what appears* (universally accepted sense of the Greek term *phainomenon*) in human experience, which, he believed, as such would be free from unfounded

metaphysical theses. In this he was followed by the rest of twentieth century phenomenologists, whose discipline enjoyed the highest prestige for decades. However, nowadays it is widely acknowledged that the discipline in question fell short of its purported aim.

One of the noted philosophers whose denunciation of this fact made the greatest impact was Jacques Derrida (1967), who asserted phenomenology to be no more than a [crypto]-metaphysics, while referring to the phenomenological emphasis on the supposed immediacy of experience as the “new transcendental illusion.” I endorse Derrida’s assertion, except for one detail, which I discuss in the note appended at the end of this sentence.⁵¹ However, the reason why for me phenomenology is a cryptometaphysics, and the belief in the immediacy of experience an illusion springing from an error analogous to the one that, according to Kant, gave rise to the “transcendental illusion,” is particular to my own perspective. The problem, for me, is that basing ontology exclusively on *that which appears* (phainomenon) in experience is no guarantee that metaphysical constructs will not slip into it, for in samsāra, to which human experience pertains, fully-fledged avidyā causes one to experience *being as given, unquestionable, ineradicable, and somehow absolute*; to experience the *mental subject as being in its own right* and hence as a *substance*, and as *being the thinker of thought, the doer of action and the experiencer of experience*; to experience the *essents one faces* as being *substantial* in Heidegger’s (1996) sense of *making resistance to us* and so on, as *being in their own right* and thus as *self-existent*, and as *being in their own right this or that entity*, and so forth. Hence an ontology elaborated on the basis of samsaric experience alone would not be really free from metaphysical fictions, as it will most likely feature *at least some* of the ones just mentioned (i.e., *given, inherent, somehow absolute being*; a substantial cogito inherently separate from the physical world and even from the human individual’s experiences, thoughts and acts, which thinks thoughts, carries out acts and receives experiences; countless external, physical, substantial and self-existent essents) and probably many other ones.

The above is what, as a rule, occurred with twentieth century phenomenology. The most outstanding, core phenomena of fully-fledged avidyā (or Heraclitean *lethe*) that Edmund Husserl wrongly viewed as *given, ineradicable, self-existent substances, inadvertently turning them into unfounded metaphysical foundations*

of his system, were the purportedly absolute Cartesian cogito and the purportedly substantial noetic-noematic (mental subject / object *in human experience*) schism that is the condition of possibility of the cogito and the axis of all dualistic, allegedly immediate yet actually mediated samsaric experience. Martin Heidegger found Husserl's departure from metaphysics insufficient and set out to carry it as far as he deemed it necessary, whereas Jean-Paul Sartre and others of those who received Heidegger's influence set out to go beyond Heidegger—yet both Heidegger and Sartre, like the bulk of phenomenologists of the last century, failed to go beyond metaphysics, for both of them failed to realize that samsaric human beings are completely deluded, and that the *phenomenon of being* that pervades human experience is no more than a deceptive appearance manifesting in experience that constitutes a pivotal aspect of human delusion, and thus continued to take *being* to be *given, somehow absolute, unquestionable and ineradicable*.

Heidegger, in particular—as I have shown in depth elsewhere (Capriles, 2007a Vol. I)—wholly misunderstood Heraclitus' concepts of *lethe* and *aletheia*, reducing the dialectics between the respective conditions to such a shallow level as to make it insignificant (Capriles, 2007a Vol. I²). In the same way, under the spell of delusion, he overlooked the fact that the true nature of reality, since it cannot be included in a class wider than itself and does not exclude anything, has neither proximate genus nor specific difference (*genus proximum / differentia specifica*), and hence cannot be contained in any concept, including those of being (which, as he himself acknowledged in the Introduction to *Being and Time* [Heidegger, 1996] by citing Pascal, has its specific difference in the concept of nonbeing), nonbeing (which has its specific difference in the concept of being), both and neither (the latter two, beside being positions excluded by logic, being mutually exclusive). Although he rightly identified being with the *phenomenon of being* pervading the whole of the experience that twentieth century phenomenologists deemed immediate but that is actually mediated, he failed to realize the phenomenon in question to be one of the most basic erroneous appearances of the basic human delusion, and taking it to be *given* and true, he went as far as to make the logical mistake of identifying it with the *arche* or true nature of reality.⁵³

For his part, Sartre (1980) seemed to have mistakenly, metaphysically assumed that there was

a *given, absolute being* distinct from the *phenomenon of being*,⁵⁴ and (like Husserl) that the subject-object duality that manifests in human experience—as well as the duality of their respective modes of being—was ineradicable. However, in spite of this, and of Derrida's charges that in his interpretation and usage of Heidegger's concepts he incurred in a psychologism as well as in an anthropocentrism, the French existentialist had invaluable insights that can greatly contribute to the philosophy these times require. Among other things, he clearly showed the cogito not to be a substance (as I have shown elsewhere,⁵⁵ by the same token providing the tools for elucidating Dignāga's important concept of *svasamvitti / svasamvedana / rangrig (rang rig) / awareness [of] consciousness*, and determining how does it relate to the Dzogchen usage of *rangrig / svasamvedana*); he asserted human existence to be drawn toward the *holon*—a term that he used in a sense radically different from Koestler's (1967; Koestler & Smythies, 1970), and that he explained in a way that allows one to identify it with Awakening—as *telos*,⁵⁶ asserting all human actions and so on to be carried out in the hope of achieving the qualities of the condition in question (which, however, he deemed it impossible to attain);⁵⁷ and he deconstructed the pseudo-unity of the *Dasein*, revealing its constitutive elements and the way they interact, in a way that may be most profitable to Buddhist practitioners, and in particular to those who practice Dzogchen. (For an in-depth discussion of all of this cf. Capriles, 2007a Vol. I.)

The above exposed the pretense of twentieth century phenomenology of having gone beyond metaphysics for what it was. Wilber V carried his pretences much farther than the phenomenology in question, for beside pretending to have gone beyond metaphysics—which as Riisager (n.d.) showed, he simply *has not*—he pretends to have gone beyond ontology—on which he, just like some of those who have discussed him so far, seemingly under the spell of so-called postmodern thought, decidedly frowns. In fact, after phenomenology's abortive attempts to produce a nonmetaphysical ontology, Jacques Derrida, claiming to have found the sketching of an end of ontology in Nietzsche, Lacan's Freud and Levinas, undertook what he deemed to be a destruction of metaphysics which, unlike the one Heidegger pretended to have achieved, would be genuine and thorough, and which *would bring ontology to an end* and by the same token open a perspective in

which that which he called *différance*⁵⁸ would find a place. He believed the way to achieve this to consist in doing away with ontological elaborations and circumscribing the task of philosophy to the deconstruction (the French *déconstruction* translates Heidegger's use of *Destruktion* and *Abbau*—in non-Derrida contexts, often rendered in English as *debuilding*) of existing discourses—and in particular of all totalizing metanarratives, which had been a target of so-called postmodern thought ever since Lyotard (1979) introduced this defective label. However, in the first place, in Derrida's writings one finds significant ontological assertions, so that they may be seen as outlining an ontology.⁵⁹ Moreover, at any rate, simply to do away with ontology would be of no use, for as noted above, fully-fledged avidyā gives rise to an experiential ontological confusion that consists in perceiving all *phenomena-that-are-in-the-process-of-being*—that is, all *essents* (German, *Seiende*; French, *étants*; etc.)—as *being inherently, absolutely and in-their-own-right* (i.e., without depending on anything else) *the essents one perceives them as being*, and in experiencing the *being* of essents as a given, somehow absolute reality—all of which has terrible consequences, for not only is it at the root of the *dubkha* that constitutes the First Noble Truth, but its exacerbation, together with the intensification of the figure-ground split that hampers appreciation of interdependences, is the very root of ecological destruction. Although this experiential ontological confusion cannot be eradicated by intellectual means alone, in the case of formally educated people, or of people having an intellectual disposition, the capacity to decidedly, unwaveringly undertake the practices necessary for eradicating the confusion in question will depend on understanding it beforehand to be a confusion rather than the undistorted experience of the true condition of reality, as it is ordinarily taken to be—for only thus can some conviction be obtained that there can be a Path of Liberation, at least to the point to which this is feasible by merely intellectual means. This is the reason why ontological investigation has been a key element in all authentic forms of Buddhism, Taoism, Śaivism, Sūfism, the original Kabbalah, and the other systems I deem conducive to Awakening, and *ineluctably must continue to be so*. (Contrariwise, evolutionary psychology has no role on the Path—this being one of the many reasons why I find Wilber's writings so heavy: because he devotes so much of his reflection to questions that are even more distractive and irrelevant to Awakening than the fourteen

unconjecturable [avyākṛta] questions [avyākṛtavastūni] before which Śākyamuni Buddha remained silent⁶⁰ [which will be briefly discussed in the upcoming book rearranging the materials of the Beyond Mind papers (Capriles, in press, Vol. III, Appendix I and its notes)].

The above is one of the main reasons why in various of my works (most thoroughly in Capriles, 2007a Vol. III, 2012, in press) I have asserted totalizing metanarratives to be vital, though preliminary, aspects of the spiritual therapy required for healing the human mind, society and the ecosystem. However, in order to play this role, they must be structured in such a way as to fulfill the dual purpose of showing the baselessness of the assumptions of common sense—including the assumption that conceptual systems can precisely match reality—and helping one develop the faith necessary to, (1) set out to apply the practices that lead beyond understanding in terms of thought, into the immediate, direct, nonconceptual realization of the true condition of ourselves and the whole of reality, and (2) set out to work toward the technological, economic, political, social, cultural—in one word, *total*—transformation that would help heal the ecological crisis humans have produced (which as noted repeatedly has put at stake the very continuity of human society and even of human existence) and achieve what Tibetan Lama Chögyam Trungpa (1984) called “an enlightened society.” This is why the value of metanarratives exhorting abolition of the delusory valuation of words and concepts, and showing how can this be achieved, depends on their explicit acknowledgement that they are Aśvaghosian uses of language arisen spontaneously from a perspective that does not confuse the maps of words and concepts with the territory—as such being comparable to fingers pointing to the moon that one must not confuse with the satellite, or to rafts for crossing to the other shore (that of nirvāṇa) to be left behind as one reaches it. Furthermore, in order to fulfill their aim, they must make it clear that the task they indicate cannot be fulfilled by playing word games or by *merely* achieving an intellectual understanding of reality, for it requires one to wholeheartedly devote oneself to a spiritual practice of the kind discussed in my works—which cannot be learned in books or Internet courses, for it will work only if one receives its transmission from a good, authentic Teacher holding a true, genuine, uninterrupted lineage originating in the source of the teachings, and set out to apply his or her instructions for going beyond the intellect.

Back to Derrida, a major drawback of his philosophy is that, as David Loy (1987) noted, it deconstructs identity and the pairs of opposites, yet fails to deconstruct that which he called *différance* and which is for him the condition of possibility of all differences—whereas Nāgārjuna, creator of Mādhyamaka philosophy, as early as the beginning of the Christian era, by the same token deconstructed the basis of identity and difference, thus leaving no ontological assumption or basis for ontological assumption unchallenged. In fact, as shown elsewhere (Capriles, 2007a Vol. I), the highest systems of Buddhist philosophy—which are Mahāmādhyamaka and the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Mādhyamaka Prāsangika—and the Dzogchen teachings are totally free from such metaphysical assumptions and thus need not undergo either deconstruction or reconstruction. As I see it, these systems are by the same token antecedents and keys to the production of an ontology free from the belief in the givenness of being and in all of the metaphysical assumptions of phenomenology that would perfectly respond to the needs of the current time. The latter is that which I set out to elaborate in some of my works (the most elaborate being Capriles, 2007a Vol. I) and which I call *metaphenomenology*—which can only be achieved by means of a method of inquiry that, rather than basing its hermeneutics of experience exclusively on the phenomena of samsāra, considers and privileges the metaphenomenon/a of nirvāṇa⁶¹ that shows all of the phenomena of saṃsāra and derived, reified metaphysical assumptions to be baseless illusions.

The *metaphenomenology* in question is also a *metaontology*: an ontology that discerns the nature of being and of the entities which are in the process of being (*essents*), as well as of nonbeing and so on. Whereas Western ontology so far has been based solely on the experience founded on the *phenomenon of being* that is proper to samsāra, what I refer to as *metaontology* is so called because it is principally based on the nirvanic unconcealment of the true condition of both oneself and the rest of reality, in which the *phenomenon of being* has dissolved and thus it has become evident that it was no more than a baseless appearance pervading all experience conditioned by the basic human delusion that, as the Mahāyāna version of the Four Noble Truth makes it clear, constitutes the root of suffering—and which, as I have explained in many works (Capriles, 1986, 1994, 2007a Vol. III and minor works), is the root of ecological crisis as well. Therefore, rather than taking *being* to be *given* or to constitute the true nature of reality, it denounces it—together with the

rest of the phenomena at the root of the assumptions of metaphysics—as one of the most basic deceptive appearances that issue from fully-fledged avidyā.

Moreover, the root and essence of modernity is the myth of evolutionary progress, which, together with many of the metaphysical illusions and mistaken assumptions proper to mainstream Western philosophy, continues to underlie a great deal of so-called postmodern thought—including most works that have attempted so-called “postmodern” reconstructions of the deconstructed (many of which have done so on the basis of a Heidegger-inspired hermeneutics). This is also the case with Wilber V, who claimed to have produced a post-metaphysical reconstruction of primordial traditions that in his view can salvage the latter’s essence while shedding their ontological baggage, yet continues to be under the spell of the modern myth of progress and of so many of his former metaphysical assumptions—including otherworldly ones!

Furthermore, the task Wilber undertook could hardly be more pointless and futile, for as shown above, millennia ago both the higher forms of Buddhist philosophy and the Dzogchen teachings deconstructed whatever needed to be deconstructed—unlike Derrida, including not only identity and difference, but the condition of possibility of difference as well. If there remained anything to do in our time, it would be to express the viewless view of the systems of Buddhist philosophy and the Buddhist Path in question in an up-to-date, re-elaborated way, as a result of confronting them with the concepts and views of Western philosophy from its onset until our time—which is precisely what I have attempted in so many of my works (for a thorough exposition of what I call my *metaphenomenological, metaexistential metaontology*, cf. Capriles [2007a Vol. I]; for an in-depth discussion of the blemishes of so-called postmodern philosophy and a thorough explanation of what I view as genuinely post-modern, cf. Vol. III of the same work [Capriles, 2007a Vol. III] and my most recent book in Spanish [Capriles, 2012]).

As to overly metaphysical spiritual traditions—including Perennialism, which in contrast with the above-refuted, wrong use of the term *postmodern* by a rich philosophical fauna, Wilber now apparently views as premodern—Visser (2003) deems it extremely doubtful that the essence of the traditions in question will come across in Wilber V’s version, which the author claims to have freed of untenable teachings and categorizes as post-

metaphysical. With regard to the same traditions, Visser (2003) said as well that Wilber's latest writings obliterate the difference between (exoteric) standard mythical religious beliefs, and their (esoteric) mystical or so-called occult reformulations, making the point that the reasons why modernity rejects most of the premodern heritage must be carefully weighted—even though he views the attempt to reframe perennialism into a form that is not offensive to either modernity or postmodernity as an interesting exercise.

Even though the fact that Wilber carried out this radical reshaping of his system amounts to acknowledging that he was altogether wrong in so much of what he formerly asserted, in one of the Integral Life Newsletters of the last months of 2010 he wrote that in spite of it he has *always been right!* Since among the views that have remained unchanged through the successive Wilbers, some of the central ones are his view of our phylogenetic spiritual and social evolution as betterment and progress, and his view of our ontogenic development as occurring along different lines in a rigid structural schema where advancement along the various lines is to a considerable extent interdependent—and, for the last two decades, also his association of the four highest levels to the four kāyas of higher Buddhist systems—it is to be assumed that it is these views (which were shown throughout the Beyond Mind papers, the upcoming book systematizing their contents, and this reply, to be altogether wrong) that have always been right. (A Buddha is right even when he makes what scientists would see as conventionally incorrect assertions, for He is free from delusion and hence is error-free, and He makes those assertions without believing them to be conventionally true; however, Wilber is *not* a Buddha.)

Conclusion

As given to understand above, a thorough assessment of Wilber V would require an altogether new work, as its intent is so ambitious—yet it would be currently impossible to produce it because the new system by Wilber is in the process of being built (one of the few works publicly published in what is presumably its definitive form being *Integral Spirituality* [Wilber, 2007]). At the time of writing this, the reader interested in exploring Wilber V may consult Wilber (2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2007, 2010), Wilber and Cohen (2002, 2005), all the works cited in this section and many of those posted in Visser's Site, *Integral World*, and Reynolds' (n.d.) eulogy of Wilber.

Reply to Abramson and Thoughts on Wilber V

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Notes

1. The difficulty in buying foreign books in Venezuela stems from draconian foreign currency restrictions implemented by the Chavez government (each Venezuelan citizen who applies for it, is allotted a very small sum of foreign currency every year for use with credit cards in Internet shopping) and the fact that it is hard for University professors to buy foreign books with black market foreign currency, for the latter is extremely expensive, and since the government has not adjusted salaries proportionally to inflation, income has dwindled considerably in real terms—and, at any rate, I am not aware of any way to do Internet shopping with cash. As noted in the regular text, even in the absence of this difficulty, I would not procure and read all Wilber works as he publishes them, as his views are only relevant to my writings on transpersonal theory and practice, which is only one subject among the many I address in my books.

I strongly doubt I will produce critiques of any further turns in Wilber's system, but if I did, it must be taken for granted that I would not do so immediately after these new turns take place.

2. Visser (2003) is the author of Ken Wilber: Thought as Passion. His Website's Internet address is <http://www.integralworld.net>
3. The name is the same as that of the author of Overdo\$ed America, but I assume this to be no more than a coincidence.
4. This refers to Wilber's former claim that the world came out from a supramundane source yet continues to be one with the latter.
5. If the term "form" (Skt. *rūpa*) were circumscribed to the forms perceived through the five universally acknowledged senses—thus including the so-called material forms of *tsel* (*rtsal*) energy and the luminous, yet intangible forms of *rölpa* (*rol pa*) energy* but not so phenomena of *dang* energy such as the mental images involved in fantasy, imagination, visualization and so on, then it would no doubt be necessary to exclude the latter. However, here I am using the word form in the sense it has in common English, which includes all sorts of configurations and patterns—no matter whether or not they are perceivable through the five universally acknowledged senses.

*In general the Dzogchen teachings do not assert phenomena of *rölpa* energy to be perceived through the eyes; however, here I must address the views of contemporary science, according to which those visions, just like hallucinations (induced by whichever means), are perceived through vibrations of the rods and cones that are not "induced" by the impact of light coming from outside the body.

6. The Pramāṇavāda tradition of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti—assimilated by the Indian Svātantrika Masters and, in Tibet, by nearly all Mādhyamikas—distinguishes between two types of negation: (1) nonaffirming, nonimplicative or absolute negation (Skt. *prasājyapratisheda*; Tib. *megag* [*med dgag*]), and (2) affirming, implicative or relative negation (Skt. *paryudāsapratishedha*; Tib. *mayindag* [*ma yin dgag*]).

The negation that is categorized as nonaffirming, nonimplicative or absolute is said to be the one that negates the object of negation without implying anything else: it is defined as "a negative which is such that the term expressing it does not suggest in place of the negation of its own object of negation another, positive phenomenon which is its own object of negation" (Hopkins, 1983, p. 723). This type

of negation is often illustrated by statements such as there are no flowers in the sky or there are no real falling hairs (the second one applying to a person that suffers from myodesopsia and confuses muscæ volitantis or floaters with falling hairs)—which, however, are uncertain examples, for the first statement implies the existence of the sky, the second implies that of a perceiver and the world in general (for there can be no experience of falling hairs without a perceiver, hairs—even if these are not “actually falling”—and the rest of relative phenomena of the world), and as a rule the statements used to illustrate this kind of negation always imply the existence of something else.

On the other hand, affirming, implicative or relative negation is said to imply something else: it is defined as “any negation of an object, quality, etc. that implies the assertion of some other facts.” Common examples of this type of negation are statements such as, “for the last thirty years the fat man Devadatta has not eaten during daytime,” which implies that he has been eating during the night (as otherwise he would not be fat, and, moreover, unless he were a Rasāyana yogi [Tib. *chülen naljorpa (bcud len rnal 'byor pa)*], he would have died within months), or “this man is not a Brahmin (Brāhmaṇa),” which implies that he is empty of Brahminhood but not so of manhood, and that he either belongs to another of the Hindu castes, or has no caste whatsoever and thus is either a non-Indian, an Indian dalit or “oppressed” (i.e., one of those that Brahmanism calls “untouchable” and that Gandhi referred to by the Rgveda-contradicting euphemism, harijan or “child of god”), or an Indian *ādivāsi* (“primal inhabitant”: an aboriginal with a tribal way of life).

Je Tsongkhapa viewed the apprehension of what he deemed to be the ultimate truth as it manifests in the Contemplation state of the superior bodhisattva, as involving a nonimplicative, nonaffirming or absolute negation—which, since negation is conceptual and can be entertained in secondary process only, or, in the terminology of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇavāda tradition, as well as in that of the Dzogchen teachings, it is a universal, abstract concept of an entity [resulting from a mental synthesis] (Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *dönchi [don spyi]*), amounted to positing as the ultimate a conceptual experience (which by being stabilized through pacifying meditation, so that no

coarse, discursive thoughts [i.e., what Dignāga and the Dzogchen teachings call word sound patterns resulting from mental syntheses that are audio categories (Skt. *śabdāsāmānya*; Tib. drachi: *sgra spyi*)] arise, is made to pass for a nonconceptual realization—and asserted this type of negation to be a distinguishing feature of Prāsangika. However, Jamgön Mipham correctly asserted the reduction of the ultimate truth to a negation of this kind to be a special emphasis of the Svātantrika system (which, moreover, and as stressed repeatedly, in this system is asserted to give rise to the provisional, conceptual ultimate that it refers to as categorized ultimate [Skt. *pariyāyaparamārtha*; Tib. *namdrangpai dōndam (rnam grangs pa'i don dam)*] and that it regards as a provisional, conceptual appearance that nonetheless may constitute a step on the way to the true absolute truth—namely the uncategorized absolute [Skt. *apariyāyaparamārtha*; Tib. *namdrang mayinpai dōndam (rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam)*], which is free of any conceptual fabrications [Skt. *nisprapañca*; Tib. *thödrel (spros bral)*]). Furthermore, Mipham made it clear that the negation involved is not truly an absolute, nonimplicative, nonaffirming one. In fact, since Tsongkhapa’s object of negation was inherent / hypostatic existence, which is utterly nonexistent—as such being like a hare’s horn—and he required the purportedly merely existent phenomenon on which the inherent / hypostatic existence had been projected, to persist after the wrong mode of existence projected on it dissolved, the negation in question must imply the existence of the purportedly “merely existent phenomenon” that is the basis on which one projects the false mode of existence that is negated, and hence must be an implicative / affirming negation.

Mahāmādhyaṃkā and Uma Zhentongpa (*dbu ma gzhan stong pa*; Skt. reconstruction, *paraśūnyatāvāda*) use a negation in their discursive explanations of voidness that is clearly of the affirmative or implicative kind, for it negates all that is not the dharmakāya, or Buddha-nature, or *dharmatā*—i.e. the true condition of reality—while leaving this condition unnegated: the dharmakāya (of however one calls the absolute) is said to be empty of substances other than itself. However, negation, either of this or of another kind, certainly does not take place in the Contemplation state of

this school—even though Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltzen may have failed to stress this fact. Paradoxically, Tsongkhapa disqualified Dölpopa because of his use of an affirming, implicative negation—which, as shown above, is the type of negation he himself used, even though he asserted it to be of the alternative type!

The above is the reason why Gendün Chöphel illustrated nonimplicative, nonaffirming, absolute negation with the simultaneous negation of the four extreme positions regarding being: because such negation does not allow the mind to entertain, hypostatize and reify any concept whatsoever, and hence it may lead the reasoning / understanding mind to collapse together with the whole of its conceptual comprehension (cf. the upcoming, enlarged, revised versions of a couple of works of mine: Capriles, 2004, 2005 [the latter in Chöphel, 2005].)

Mipham also made it clear that the Prāsangika absolute is not the result of a negation of any kind. John Pettit (1999) wrote (terms in brackets my own additions):

According to Mipham, [purportedly] absolute negation is a suitable way to conceptualize the absolute for beginners, but because it is still a conceptual formula, it does not represent the final significance of nonelaboration (Skt. *nishprapañca*; Tib. *trödrel* [*spros bral*]). It is a mere nonsubstantiality (Tib. *ngos med*), as opposed to substantial existence (Tib. *ngos po*). It corresponds to the analytical wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*; Tib. *sherab* [*shes rab*]) of the post-meditative state and is adequate to emptiness as an object of ... thought but not to the nonconceptual gnosis of sublime equipoise (Skt. *āryajñāna*; Tib. *phag-pai yeshe* [*'phags pa'i ye shes*]).” (p. 109)

Moreover, the experience of voidness produced by what Tsongkhapa viewed as an absolute negation involves the illusion of substantiality, for as Gendün Chöphel rightly noted, within *saṃsāra* all experiences involve the illusion in question—and the apprehension of the subtle concept (i.e., the universal, abstract concept of an entity that results from a mental synthesis [Skt. *arthasāmānya*; Tib. *don spyi*]) of what Tsongkhapa called non-inherent existence would be no exception to this rule. So

what results from this is the illusion of a substantial insubstantiality!

Above, reference was made to Mahāmādhya-maka, to Uma Zhentongpa, to the Tibetan Master who used these terms to refer to his own understanding of Mādhyamaka—Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltzen (*dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan*, 1292-1361), founder of the Jonangpa (*jo nang pa*) School—and to the fact that they assert the absolute to be empty of substances other than itself. However, readers who are not familiar with the different interpretations of Mādhyamaka probably failed to fully understand their position.

On most occasions, this Master and school explained the absolute (Skt. *paramārtha*; Tib. *döndam* [*don dam*]) as a positivity—yet sometimes they explained it as a negation of the implicative kind. Although Dölpopa’s contribution to Buddhist philosophy is immeasurable, as he helped unravel the highest meaning of both Mādhyamaka and Third and Second Promulgation canonical sources, the fact that he alternatively explained the absolute as a positivity and as a negation, amounted to positing extreme views that fall short of the mark. Moreover, he went so far as to assert the dharmakāya to be self-existent, which is even more extreme, for as I have noted elsewhere (Capriles, 2004; cf. the upcoming, definitive version) in the context of putting forward my own version of Mahāmādhya-maka, the dharmakāya may not be legitimately said to be either existent or nonexistent—and hence far less may it legitimately be said to be self-existent or inherently nonexistent. However, for all of this to be properly understood, first of all the reasons why Dölpopa occasionally explained the absolute as an implicative negation must be made clear.

The Samdhinirmocanasūtra distinguishes three so-called “natures”: (1) what it refers to as absolutely true, abiding nature (Skt. *pariniṣpanna*; Tib. *yongdrub* [*yongs grub*]), which is the ultimate; (2) what it calls dependent nature (Skt. *paratantra*; Tib. *zhenwang* [*gzhan dbang*]), which is whatever arises from causes and conditions other than itself (hence its name), or arises without being able to remain by its own power more than a moment, or is produced from the seed (Skt. *vāsanā*; Tib. *bagchag* [*bag chags*]) that is its own respective internal latency, and which is thus held to consist in the interdependent arising

of both subject and its manifold objects; (3) what it calls imputational nature (Skt. *parikalpita*; Tib. *kuntag* [*kun brtags*]), which consists on the thought-contents one superimposes on phenomena of the dependent nature, and which it holds to be the real source of defilements because it is the perception of sensory data as being inherently this or that that activates the passions. (This classification is not self-evident, for one questions how can there be an interdependent arising of the different entities that make up the dependent nature in the absence of the superimposition of thought-contents on sensory data.)

At any rate, the sūtra in question makes the point that what it calls dependent nature is an ultimate non-nature (*paramārthanisvabhāvatā*; Tib. *dōndampa ngowonyi* [*don dam pa ngo bo nyid med pa*]) in that it is not the ultimate. However, since the absolutely true, abiding nature must be an agent of purification on a Path, and the source of defilements is said to be the nature it calls imputational nature, which consists on the concepts one superimposes on the dependent nature—for as noted above it is the perception of sensory data as being inherently this or that that activates the passions—various passages in that sūtra reduce the absolutely true, abiding nature to the mere lack of the imputational nature. In other words, the absolutely true, abiding nature is reduced to the fact that entities of the imputational nature do not exist “by way of their own character” (Skt. *svabhāvalakṣaṇasiddhi*; Tib. *ranggi tsennyikyī drubpa* [*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*])—to which most Gelugpas would add, “as the referents of a conceptual consciousness.” To express it differently, it reduces the absolutely true, abiding nature to the mere fact that entities of the dependent nature are not what one experiences them as being when an imputational nature is projected on them. On the basis of this fact, both the Cittamātrins and Je Tsongkhapa (the latter, in his interpretation of Cittamātra), reduced the absolutely true, abiding nature to a purported nonaffirming, nonimplicative, absolute negation—which Mādhyamika-Svātantrika-Yogācāras of the Śāntaraksita-Kamalaśīla tradition, modifying the object of the negation, posited as an ultimate, though not so as the true and final absolute that they called uncategorized absolute (Skt. *aparyāyaparamārtha*; Tib. *namdrang mayinpai dōndam* [*rnam grangs ma*

yin pa'i don dam]) and that was free of conceptual fabrications [Skt. *nisprapañca*; Tib. *thōdrel* (*spros bral*)]): for them it was no more than a categorized ultimate (Skt. *paryāyaparamārtha*; Tib. *namdrangpai dōndam* [*rnam grangs pa'i don dam*]) that they rightly identified as a provisional, conceptual appearance, which, nonetheless, in their view could be a step on the way to the true absolute truth.

In the context of their own system, Cittamātrins may as well posit a purported nonaffirming, nonimplicative, absolute negation as the ultimate, but it would be illegitimate—to say the least—to posit a negation of the kind (even if it negated an object slightly different from that of the Cittamātras) as the absolute truth [Skt. *paramārthasatya*; Tib. *dōndam denpa* (*don dam bdem pa*)] of the Mādhyamaka Prāsangika, which has been established by this school to be utterly free of conceptual fabrications [Skt. *nisprapañca*; Tib. *thōdrel* (*spros bral*)]). And nonetheless this was what Tsongkhapa did, for throughout his writings he reduced the ultimate of the Prāsangikas to the presence of an absence, while bitterly criticizing the definition of the absolute as free of conceptual fabrications. (For clarification of these points with the exception of the last, cf. Hopkins, 2002; for the last point, cf. the upcoming definitive versions of Capriles, 2005, 2004.)

Back to Dōlpopa, his conception of the absolute as an implicative negation is indivisible from his conception of the absolutely true, abiding nature (Skt. *pariniṣpanna*; Tib. *yongdrub* [*yongs grub*]) posited by Third Promulgation Sūtras, which is in stark contrast to both the Cittamātrins' and Tsongkhapa's. In fact, on the basis of higher Third Promulgation canonical sources (which include the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, the *Mahābherihāraḥaparivartasūtra*, the *Angulimālasūtra*, *Suvarṇaprabhāsaśūtra*, the *Lankāvatārasūtra*, the *Āryaśrīmālādevīsimhanādanāmamahāyānasūtra* and others), of Tantras (such as the Kālacakra tantra and the Hevajratantra) and of higher Indian Mahāyāna texts (such as, e.g. Maitreya's *Ratnagotravibhāga / Uttaratantraśāstra* [Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra]) and so on, Dōlpopa established the ultimately abiding nature (Skt. *pariniṣpanna* or *pariniṣpanna-lakṣaṇa*; Tib. *yongdrub* [*yongs grub*] or [*chōnyi*] *yongdrubkyi tsennyi* [(*chos nyid*) *yongs grub kyī mtshan nyid*]): (1) to be the dharmakāya

or the Buddha-nature; (2) to be endowed with Buddha-qualities; and (3)—citing a passage from the Angulimālasūtra—to be empty not only of the imaginary projections proper to the imaginary nature (Skt. *parikalpita* or *parikalpitalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *kuntag* [*kun brtags*] or *kuntagkyi tsennyi* [*kun brtags kyi mtshan nyid*])—which are the source of the passions and which in terms of the Pramāṇavāda tradition are general configurations / general collections of characteristics (Skt. *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *chitsen* [*spyi mtshan*])—but also of the relative phenomena that constitute the other-produced nature (Skt. *paratantra* or *paratantralakṣaṇa*; Tib. *zhenwang* [*gzhan dbang*] or *zhenwangi tsennyi* [*gzhan dbang gi mtshan nyid*]), which in terms of current, popular interpretations of the Pramāṇavāda of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti are specifically characterized phenomena, self-patterns or inherent collections of characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *rangtsen* [*rang mtshan*]). He wrote with regard to the absolutely true, abiding nature which (is) the Buddha-nature endowed with the qualities of Buddhahood (in Hopkins, 2002, p. 286):

Of what is it devoid? It is devoid of whatever is an imputational or an other-produced nature, conventional forms and so on. (Hopkins, 2002, p. 286)

It was on the basis of the indisputable fact that all phenomena of both the dependent nature (Skt. *paratantra*; Tib. *zhenwang* [*gzhan dbang*]) and the imaginary nature (Skt. *parikalpita*; Tib. *kuntag* [*kun brtags*]) are utterly natureless (Skt. *asvabhāva* / *svabhāvato nāstikam*; Tib. *ngowonyi machi panyi* [*ngo bo nyid ma mchi pa nyid*] / *ngowonyi mepa* [*ngo bo nyid med pa*]), and that therefore the Buddha-nature that is the absolutely true, abiding nature is free from all possible substances other than itself, that Dōlpopa came to concede that it was legitimate to identify the absolute (Skt. *paramārtha*; Tib. *dōndam* [*don dam*]) with emptiness—but only if emptiness were understood as the total absence of substances other than the absolutely true, abiding nature (Skt. *pariniṣpanna*; Tib. *yongdrub* [*yongs grub*]) which is the Buddha-nature endowed with the qualities of Buddhahood, and hence if emptiness were understood as an implicative negation excluding both the dependent and imaginary natures, yet

maintaining the absolutely true, abiding nature.

I fully agree that the absolutely true, abiding nature (Skt. *pariniṣpanna*; Tib. *yongdrub* [*yongs grub*]) is the Buddha-nature endowed with the qualities of Buddhahood, and that this nature is free from purported (yet nonexistent) substances of both the dependent and the imaginary natures, and hence from all possible substances other than itself—and that therefore Cittamātrins were wrong in concluding, on the basis of the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* alone, that whereas phenomena of the imaginary nature are natureless, the same is not the case with phenomena of the dependent nature—thus mistakenly implying the absolutely true, abiding nature not to be empty of what, by implication, would be substances of the dependent nature, and thereby implying that the specifically characterized phenomena, self-patterns or inherent collections of characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*; Tib. *rangtsen* [*rang mtshan*]) of the Pramāṇavāda are true, independently existing realities (no wonder, then, that most Tibetan doxographers classified Dignāga and Dharmakīrti as Cittamātrins).

However, as noted above, viewing the absolutely true, abiding nature as either a positivity or a negation of any possible kind, is as inadmissible to me as Je Tsongkhapa's and the Cittamātra School's respective conceptions of the absolute as a purportedly nonimplicative negation. John Pettit (1999, pp. 109-110), following Lipman (1981), expressed the ideas Ju Mipham laid out in his commentary to Śāntaraksita's *Madhyamakālamkāra* (translation adapted to my terminology) as follows:

the definitive absolute (*don dam mtshan nyid pa*) must be understood as the nonconceptual absolute that is revealed (to) superior (Skt. *ārya*; Tib. *phagpa* [*'phags pa*]) bodhisattvas in their Contemplation state (Skt. *samāhita*; Tib. *nyamzhak* [*mnyam bzhaq*]). The indivisibility (Skt. *yuganaddha*; Tib. *zungjug* [*zung 'jug*]) of appearance and emptiness is the [true] absolute, [which (is)] nonconceptual [and hence nondual], and [which (is)] the content of the nondual primordial gnosis of superior bodhisattvas. [In fact,] this is the absolute according to Candrakīrti's Prāsangika Mādhyamaka, which is accessed by a valid Gñition investigating the

nonconceptual absolute. As it is free from mental fabrications (Skt. *nisprapañca*; Tib. *trödrel* [*spros bral*]), it is beyond affirmation and negation.” (Note that instead of saying that the true absolute is the indivisibility (Skt. *yuganaddha*; Tib. *zungjug* [*zung ’jug*]) of appearance and emptiness I myself would have said instead that it is unutterable, yet involves the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness.)

Since affirmation and negation are relative to each other, the absolute, which is that which is not relative, simply could not be either positive or negative. In fact, since the absolute may not be conceived in the dichotomous terms of secondary process—that is, in terms of concepts—it could not involve negation. Also, since, as emphasized by Buddhist logic, in logical terms positivity results from the negation of a negation, the absolute could not be positive either.

For Dölpopa’s views, cf. Dol-bo-ba (2006), Hopkins (2002) and Stearns (2010).

7. *Dbu ma spyi don nges don rab gsal*, p. 446b. In *The Complete Works of the Sakya Scholars*, vol. 12. Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 1969. Thakchoe’s translation had conventional instead of relative. Here one of the phrases in brackets inserted by Thakchoe was deleted and another one inserted instead, as I felt his view as a Tsongkhapa follower was affecting his interpretation and hence his translation of Gorampa’s words. For evaluating this translation, cf. the Tibetan original in the next paragraph of this note.

The Tibetan original reads: *zhes pa’i skabs nas bstan pa’i kun rdzob bden pa ni med de | yul can mthong ba brdzun pa med pa | de’i yul med pa’i phyir ro ||*. Thus readers knowing Tibetan may appreciate that the translation offered is faithful to the original.

8. *Kun mkhyen pad ma dkar po, dbu ma’i gzhung gsum gsal byed*, p. 121 (Saarnath, UP, India: Kargyud Student’s Welfare Committee). For evaluating this translation, cf. the Tibetan original: *ji srid sgrub pa’i lhag ma yod pa de srid du | rjes thob pas snang ba’i sna tshogs ’de dag sgyu ma lta bu la sogs par snang la | nam bag chags thams cad yongs su dag pa na rnam pa thams cad du kun rdzob kyi chos snang ma myong ba rang bzhin nyid la dus thams cad du mnyam par ’jog pa yin no ||*. Thus readers knowing Tibetan may appreciate that the translation offered is faithful to the original.

9. The grammatical errors were in the Wikipedia text as accessed on September 2, 2010.
10. Was Nāgārjuna aware of the concept of the neutral condition of the base-of-all? According to the traditions of the Nyingmapa (*rnying ma pa*) School of Tibetan Buddhism codified in the authoritative treatise *Feast for the Erudite: A History of the Dharma* (Chöjung Khepai Gatön [*chos ’byung mkhas pa’s dga’ ston*]) written by Pawo Tsuglag Threngwa (*dpa’ bo gtsug lag phreng ba*: 1504-1566), Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva were lineage holders in one of the two main lines of transmission of Dzogchen Atiyoga (Cf. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, 1988)—which some have taken to imply that the Mādhyamaka is a philosophical explanation, adapted to the gradual Mahāyāna, of the essential View of Dzogchen Ati.
11. Tib. *zhentong* (*gzhan stong*); reconstructed Skt. *paraśūnya*: literally emptiness (i.e., lack) of extraneous substances, the meaning of the term is that of the Tibetan *zhengyi ngöpo tongpanyi* (*gzhan gyi dngos po stong pa nyid*)—emptiness of substances extraneous [to the single true nature of reality]. To Dölpopa, this implied the absolute nonexistence of the paratantra posited by the Cittamātras. Cf. note 4 (for more detail, cf. Chöphel & Capriles, 2013, and the upcoming definitive versions of Capriles, 2004, 2005).
12. Actually, the teachings in question also posit a sequence of sixteen levels (Skt. *bhūmi*; Tib. *sa*), but do so mainly to show that after the final achievement of the Anuyoga, which is the highest attainment after those proper to Dzogchen Ati, a practitioner of Dzogchen Ati still has a distance to travel—which will involve going, while in this life, through the intermediate state of the true condition of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā antarābhava*; Tib. *chönyi bardo* [*chos nyid bar do*]), as it is in that state that Thögel is applied. (However, this does not mean that practitioners of Dzogchen Ati must first practice the other vehicles: the supreme vehicle has its own, especially swift methods for attaining its realizations.)
13. A second line of development is the Graves-inspired one that Wilber has called values / spiral dynamics, having as a first rung, on the right, one that is centered on survival and that is at the same level of the first rung of the first line; as a second rung on the right, what he called the kin spirits, corresponding to the first rung on the left, which is the one he called magic-animistic—both of which are the level of the

second rung in the first line; as a third rung on the right what he called the power gods, corresponding to the second rung on the left, which is the one he called egocentric—both of which are the level of the third rung in the first line; as a fourth rung on the right what he called the truth force, corresponding to the third rung on the left, which is the one he called absolutistic—both of which are at the level of the fourth rung in the first line; as a fifth rung on the right what he called the strive drive, corresponding to the fourth rung on the left, which is the one he called multiplistic—both of which are at the level of the fifth rung in the first line; as a sixth rung on the right what he called the human bond, corresponding to the fifth rung on the left, which is the one he called relativistic—both of which are at the level of the sixth rung in the first line; as a seventh rung on the right the one he called flex-flow, which is at the level of the seventh rung in the first line; and as an eighth rung on the right the one he called global view, which is at the level of the eighth rung in the first line—with what he called the systemic as the sixth rung on the left, placed between the corresponding seventh and eighth rungs of both the first line and the right of the second line (this second line hence not reaching beyond the eighth level of the first line, and thus not reaching the third tier).

The third line is the Kegan-inspired one of orders of consciousness, beginning with Orders 0, 1st, 2^d, 3^d, 4th and 4.5, which are, respectively, at the level of the six lower stages of the first line and of the right side of the second line, and ending with the 5th Order, which lies at the level of the eighth stage of both the first line and the right of the second line. This line thus does not reach the third tier.

The fourth is the Loevinger/Cook/Greuter-inspired line of self-identity that includes eight rungs referred to as symbiotic, impulsive, self-protective, conformist, conscientious, individualistic, autonomous and integrated, which are at the level of the eight lower rungs of the first line and the right of the second line, followed by an ninth stage, called construct-aware—at the level of global mind in the first line—and a final, tenth stage, called ego-aware—which lies at the level of meta-mind on the first line. The last two rungs are within the third tier.

The fifth is the Gebser-inspired line of worldviews, which goes from the archaic (at the level

of the first rung of lines one, three and four, as well as of the right of the second line) through the magic (between the second and third rungs of the first, third and fourth lines, and of the right of the second line), the mythic, the rational and the pluralistic (at the level of the fourth, fifth and sixth rungs of the first, third and fourth lines, as well as of the right of the second line, respectively), up to the integral (at the level of the systemic on the left of the second line). This line does not reach into the third tier.

Finally, the sixth is the Fowler-inspired line of stages of faith, going from (0) the one he called undifferentiated (at the level of the first rung of the first, third, fourth and fifth lines, as well as of the right of the second line), through (1) the magical (at the level of the second rung of the first, third and fourth lines, as well as the right of the second line), (2) the mythic-literal (at the level of the third rung of the first, third and fourth lines, as well as of the right of the second line), (3) the conventional (at the level of the fourth rung of the first, third and fourth lines, as well as of the right of the second line—which as already noted are at the level of the third rung of the fifth line), (4) the individual-reflexive (at the level of the fifth rung of the first, third and fourth lines, as well as of the right of the second line, and at the level of the fourth rung of the fifth line), (5) the conjunctive (at the level of the sixth rung of the first, third and fourth lines, as well as of the right of the second line, and of the fifth rung of the fifth line), and (6) the universalizing-commonwealth, which is at the level of the systemic at the left of the second line and of the integral on the fifth line. Hence this line does not reach into the third tier, either.

14. H. A. Orr is Shirley Cox Kearns Professor of Biology at the University of Rochester.
15. Yoshihiro Francis Fukuyama, reported to be a State Department publicist and often referred to as such, is the author who became famous for his book *The End of History and the Last Man* (Fukuyama, 1992), in which he proposed that there were no longer alternatives to Capitalist, anti-ecological consumerism—which, were it true, would mean that there are no alternatives to the self-destruction of our species.
16. Though Carlson omitted these facts, Aurobindo moved within extreme left-wing anarchist circles in France and then, back in India, adopted one of the

most extreme positions among activists of the independence movement. It was after he received death threats that he abandoned his activism and went into seclusion, devoting himself solely to spiritual practice, teaching and writing.

17. The only version of the book in question I have is [a photocopy of] the 1995 original edition, as Bolivarian Venezuela's foreign currency restrictions prevent me from buying all books published by transpersonal and integral theorists. Moreover, even in the absence of these impediments, I would not buy all of Wilber's works as he publishes them, as I have so much to read for the research at the root of the several books I am writing; moreover, Wilber is a secondary matter in my writing, which must address many far more important views and points—and, moreover, for me reading him is not a pleasant task.
18. The source Wilber (2001b, note 1, pp. 717-741) gave for his presentation of the progressive attainment of the four kāyas is none else than the infamous Geshe Kelsang Gyamtso (usually written without the “m” in Gyamtso; cited repeatedly by Wilber in the same note, pp. 726-729), leader of the most recently created Tibetan Buddhist School, which is universally viewed by Tibetans (except for members of the school in question) as the terrorist organization that committed a bloody triple murder against important associates of the Dalai Lama and that has repeatedly tried to murder the illustrious Buddhist Master and Tibetan political leader. Concerning these accusations, cf. the original Newsweek article (Clifton & Miller, 1997) and the book with the exhaustive investigation by Raimondo Bultrini (2008), among other sources.
19. This is the reason why, in spite of conceding that the etymological meaning of both the Sanskrit term *samvrti* and Tibetan term *kundzob* (*kun rdzob*), which as a rule are rendered as relative or, in Gelugpa translations, conventional, was the one offered in Vol. I of *The Beyond Mind Papers: Transpersonal and Metatranspersonal Theory* (Capriles, in press) and notes to Vol. II of the same book—namely that of all-concealing, which for me has the implication of all-distorting—in his *Tsashé Tikchen Rigpai Gyamtso* (*rtsa shes tik chen rigs pa'i mrgya mtso*, pp. 402-403 [Saarnath, UP, India: Gelugpa Students Welfare Committee, 1992]; cf. Thakchoe, 2007, p. 47) he asserted relative or conventional reality not

to be always all-concealing / all-distorting. This is because he posited a mere existence which in his view was warranted, valid, and correct, and an inherent / hypostatic existence that he deemed to be a mere illusion and as such unwarranted, wrong and invalid—for it was the most basic manifestation of the unawareness cum delusion that the Buddha Śākyamuni called *avidyā* (Pāli: *avijjā*; Tib. *ma rig pa*). This assertion of a mere existence that was a relative, yet not all-concealing / all-distorting reality was contested by nearly all non-Gelugpas, and with the passing of time it was objected even by a number of Gelugpas.

20. The Tibetan *zhenngo khelen* (*gzhan ngo khas len*) is related to the Sanskrit *paraprasiddha* (Tib. *zhenla drakpa* [*gzhan la grags pa*] or simply *zhendrak* [*gzhan grags*]), though it does not have exactly the same meaning. The assertions called *zhenngo khelen* are the opposite of self-directed assertions (Tib. *ranggyü dukhe lenpa* [*rang rgyud du khes len pa*])—which for its part is related to the Sanskrit *svaprasiddha* and the Tibetan *rangla drakpa* [*rang la grags pa*] or simply *rangdrak* [*rang grags*]), though it does not have exactly the same meaning. Since Tsongkhapa does not accept the existence of other-directed assertions, he redefined the term in such a way that all assertions are of the kind that the original Prāsangika called self-directed.
21. This would be correct if *nirodha* were understood as the mere cessation of suffering that constitutes the Third Noble Truth (Skt. *duhkha-nirodha-āryasatyā*), yet is utterly wrong when understood in the sense of lack of manifestation or blankness—which is what the *nirodha* of *nirodhasamāpatti* that Wilber takes as paradigmatic is.
22. For the Mādhyamaka Prāsangika School emptiness is, indeed, emptiness of self-existence (Skt. *svabhāva śūnyatā*; Tib. *rangtong* [*rang stong*] or *rangzhangyi tongpanyi* [*rang bzhin gyi stong pa nyid*])—except for Je Tsongkhapa, who preferred *rangzhangyi madrubpa* [*rang bzhin gyis ma grub pa*]; Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zìxìngkòng*; Wade-Giles, *tzu-hsing-k'ung*; Jap. *jishōkū*). As noted in the regular text after the reference mark for this note, Je Tsongkhapa and the great bulk of his Gelugpa brethren—and recently also the so-called New Kadampas, headed by the reported source of Wilber's last four fulcra—on the basis of the Svātantrikas' categorized

(conceptual, lower, provisional) ultimate truth (Skt. *aparyāyaparamārtha*; Tib. *namdrang mayinpai dōndam* [*rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam*]) that is found through the method of insight meditation (Pāli: *vipassanā*; Skt. *vipaśyanā*; Tib. *lhantong* [*lhag mthong*]; Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn: *guān*; Wade-Giles, *kuan*; Jap. *kan*) expounded in the *Bhāvanākramas* by Svātantrika Masters Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, misunderstood the Prāsangika emptiness as consisting in the presence of an absence—namely, as being the absence of the “inherent / hypostatic or true existence” we mistakenly project on and perceive in all entities, which they assert to become present in the insight meditation that Je Tsongkhapa borrowed from the *Bhāvanākramas* by the aforementioned Svātantrika Masters, when applied on the basis of the system devised by Tsongkhapa.

On the contrary, according to the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* (which the Chinese attribute to Nāgārjuna and is extant in Kumārajīva's Chinese translation only), the Dzogchen teachings, the original Indian and the non-Gelug Tibetan understanding of Mādhyamaka Prāsangika, and the Mahāmādhyamaka School, the absolute is not a mere emptiness of self-existence. In particular, Nyingmapa Masters have insisted that such an emptiness cannot be the absolute truth, because the latter, which is fully patent in Buddhahood, is the source and true condition of everything and, in particular, is the source of the qualities inherent in Buddhahood—whereas emptiness thus conceived cannot account for the manifestation, either of the universe or of the qualities proper to Buddhahood.

For example, according to Sakyapa Master Gorampa Sönam Sengé (*go rams pa bsod nams seng ge*: 1429-1489), absolute or ultimate truth is no other than primordial gnosis (Skt. *jñāna*; Tib. *yeshe* [*ye shes*]) itself (Thakchoe, 2007, p. 13), which rather than being the presence of a mere absence, is a fully active plenitude. He wrote (cited in Thakchoe, 2007, p. 15; the translation was adapted to the terminology used in this book):

Here in the Madhyamaka system, the object itself cannot be divided into the two truths. Relative truth and absolute truth are established in terms of modes of apprehension (*mthong tshul*): in terms of the [spurious mental] subject

apprehending falsehood and the Awareness apprehending truth; or of mistaken and unmistakable apprehensions (*'khrul ma 'khrul*); or of deluded or undeluded apprehensions (*rmongs ma rmongs*); or of erroneous or nonerroneous apprehensions (*phying ci log ma log*), or of valid Cognition or invalid cognition (*tshad ma yin min*).” (Ngedön Rabsel [*nges don rab gsal*], p. 375b; careful substantiation in p. 375b-d.)

The view according to which the absolute or ultimate truth is no other than undeluded primordial gnosis, and relative truth is the deluded perspective of the obscured consciousness of sentient beings, is shared by the most widely acclaimed Masters of all Tibetan Schools except for the Gelug: Longchen Rabjampa, Sakya Paṇḍita, Rongtön Shakya Gyaltzen, Ju Mipham, Taksang Lotsawa, Shakya Chogden, the Eighth Karmapa Mikyö Dorje, Gendün Chöphel and so on (all of these Masters except for Gendün Chöphel are listed in Thakchoe [2007, p. 15]; as for Chöphel, cf. Chöphel [2005]).

The great Nyingmapa Master Rongzom Paṇḍita (Rongzompa Chökyi Zangpo [*rong zom pa chos kyi bzang po*]), rather than positing emptiness as the absolute truth, asserted the latter to consist in the true condition of [all] phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. *chönyi* [*chos nyid*]). However, this should not be taken to mean that the absolute truth is not or cannot be emptiness, for both terms are often regarded as synonyms. In fact, Ju Mipham agreed that emptiness may be the absolute truth, but only if emptiness is not understood as a negation. Karma Phuntsho (2005, p. 9; terminology adapted to the one used in this book) wrote:

The Gelugpas understood the ultimate qua emptiness to be an absence of inherent existence and therefore a nonimplicative negation...

[Ju] Mipham, on the contrary, argued that the absolute qua emptiness, in its highest form, is not merely an absence of inherent existence. He enumerated two kinds of ultimate, the conceptual, provisional ultimate (Skt. *paryāyaparamārtha*; Tib. *rnam grangs pa'i don dam*) and the nonconceptual definitive absolute (Skt. *aparyāyaparamārtha*; Tib. *rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam*), and relegated the mere absence of inherent existence to the level

of conceptual, provisional ultimate, which, also known as the ultimate that is concordant [with the absolute (condition)] (Skt. *paramārthānukūla* [-*paramārtha*]; Tib. *döndampa dang thunpai döndampa* [*don dam pa dang mthun pa* ('i don dam pa))), eliminates only partial extremes and serves as a step on the way to the nonconceptual, definitive absolute. The nonconceptual, definitive absolute qua final emptiness, which is the *quidditas** and the absolute nature of things, he argued, is reality free from all fabrications (Skt. *prapañca*; Tib. *spros pa*) and extremes (Skt. *anta*; Tib. *mtha*'). He also used terms such as total indivisibility (Tib. *zung 'jug chen po* [Skt. *mahāyuganaddha*]), Total Middle Way (Tib. *dbu ma chen po* [Skt. *mahāmādhyaṃkā*]), Resultant Middle Way (Tib. 'bras bu'i dbu ma [Skt. *phalamādhyaṃkā*]) and Equality (Tib. *mnyam nyid* [Skt. Skt. *samatā*; Tib. *mnyam nyid*) to refer to this.

To be or not to be are both extremes, and emptiness as the philosophical middle way, Mipham argued, must transcend the extremes of being and nonbeing, existence and nonexistence, negation and affirmation, and even the empty and the nonempty. Even to perceive emptiness itself would be wrong, for there is nothing (not even that nothing!) to be perceived. To conceive a thing called “emptiness” in discerning emptiness is a gross reification, the wrong understanding Nāgārjuna repudiated in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, XIII/8 and XXIV/11.

For his part, Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltzen (*dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan*), his Jonangpa followers and many non-Gelug, rime (*ris med*: non-sectarian) Tibetan Masters adhering to Mahāmādhyaṃkā, posit voidness as the absolute truth. However, as stated in a previous note, the voidness they posit as the absolute is the emptiness of substances other than the dharmakāya, or the Buddha-nature, and so forth (Tib. *zhentong* [*gzhan stong*]; Skt. reconstruction, *paraśūnyatā*)—which is a view both Tsongkhapa and his great Sakyapa critic, Gorampa Sönam Senge (*go rams pa bsod nams seng ge*, 1429-1489) most emphatically rejected (among other sources, cf. Hopkins, 2002; Cabezón, 2003).

The intent behind my criticism is not to make Wilber embrace the non-Gelug understanding of the absolute, but to expose his confusion and contradictions, for if he embraced the standard Gelug description of the progressive attainment of the four kāyas, then by implication he was adopting the standard Gelug view of the ultimate as emptiness qua presence of an absence, from which the description in question is inextricable—but then he is forbidden from identifying it with the Base of Dzogchen, which is not a mere voidness, or with Ayin, which is not a mere absence. Also, if he embraced the non-Gelug views according to which the absolute is primordial gnosis, the dharmatā, or an emptiness that is not a mere absence, and so forth, or the related Dzogchen view according to which the complete manifestation of what the Mahāyāna calls the absolute (the Dzogchen teachings place no emphasis whatsoever on the concept of “absolute”) is the Base, Path and Fruit of Dzogchen, then the absolute cannot be Tsongkhapa's emptiness (which, at any rate, does not match Wilber's descriptions of emptiness) and, by implication, Wilber may not adhere to Tsongkhapa's description of the progressive attainment of the kāyas, as the latter is inextricable from Tsongkhapa's conception of the ultimate truth. In other words, once more Wilber incurred in the repeatedly denounced error of viewing incompatible concepts pertaining to incompatible systems as being just the same, as though he were a bootstrapper who has produced a superior synthesis of all teachings—when what he has actually done is to obliterate the most essential distinctions in Buddhism and in this way produce a confusion that may block advance on the Path to Awakening.

*The term *quidditas* is understood here in the sense of the Aristotelian *to ti en einai* or “that which [an essent] was before having come into being”—i.e., that which it (is) in truth—rather than in the Thomistic sense of form that, united to matter, determines what a thing is, or in the sense of essence in which the term is generally understood in Western philosophy.

23. In some sūtras that negate existence, one finds the term “existence” qualified by an adjective or by an adverb; for example, in the Sutra of Transcendent Discriminating Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Stanzas (Skt. *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*; Tib.

[short] *Bum Do* [’bum mdo]; [middle] *Sherphin Tongtrak Gyapa Do* [sher phyin stong phrag brgya pa mdo]; [in full] *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag brgya pa mdo*) one can find the term “existence” categorized as “absolute” or “ultimate” (Skt. *paramārtha*; Tib. *döndam* [don dam]). Likewise, in the works by Nāgārjuna, in a few occasions he referred to the existence he negated by the term “self-existence” (Skt. *svabhāva*; Tib. *rangzhin* [rang bzhin]). However, in the works by Candrakīrti the term “self-existence” is found quite a few times, as it was Candrakīrti who first posited a need to make the meaning of the term “existence”—that is, what is to be negated—more specific, and in quite a few occasions actually did so.

The insight (Skt. *vipaśyanā*; Tib. *lhantong* [lhag mthong]) meditation Je Tsongkhapa taught as a means to purportedly arrive at emptiness as conceived by the Mādhyamaka Prāsangika was the one taught in the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* (a Third Promulgation text that the Cittamātra—the lower, “idealist” school of the Mahāyāna—takes as its root canonical source and that is a key source for the Mādhyamaka Svātantrika Yogācāra as well [and for Mahāmādhyamaka, which, however, contextualizes its teachings])—which, as stated in a previous note, he adopted in the version that Svātantrika-Yogācāra Masters Śāntaraksita and Kamalaśīla produced in their respective *Bhāvanākramas*. Thus overlooking the indivisibility between Path and Fruit emphasized in the *Śūrangamasūtra*, among other canonical sources, he employed a method of a lower system to purportedly arrive at a realization of a higher system. So it does not seem to be a mere coincidence that he taught the difference between “mere existence” and “inherent / hypostatic / reified existence,” which seems to be related to that between (1) the nature that the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* and the Cittamātra philosophical school calls dependent nature (Skt. *paratantra*; Tib. *zhenwang* [gzhan dbang]) and (2) the nature that the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* and the *Cittamātra* philosophical school call imaginary nature (Skt. *parikalpita*; Tib. *kuntag* [kun brtags]).

In fact, as stated in a previous note, Tsongkhapa understood the qualification of existence as true in the Tibetan term *denpar yöpa* (*bden par yod pa*) or as inherent / hypostatic / reified in the Tibetan term *rangzhingyi yöpa* (*rang bzhin gyi yod pa*) to mean that there was another kind of existence that was not true

or inherent, and hence he coined the term “mere existence” (Tib. *yöpa tsam* [yod pa tsam]) to refer to it—which is to some extent similar to the mode of existence that the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* and the Cittamātra school attribute to the dependent nature (the definition of which is, however, less specific). An example of “mere existence” was the presence in the world of the corporeal pattern one typically calls pot, and the actuality and functionality of this corporeal configuration, which Tsongkhapa viewed as the “merely existent pot.” An example of the illusion of inherent existence or true existence—which above I compared with imaginary nature, even though it is not exactly the same—was the delusive apprehension of the same corporeal configuration as having a self-nature (Skt. *svabhāva*; Tib. *rangzhin* [rang bzhin]) and hence as being a self-existent pot. Having taken the distinction between these two senses of the term existence as the key to the correct understanding of Mādhyamaka, Tsongkhapa systematically categorized as inherent / hypostatic / reified, or as true, the existence that was the object of negation in Mādhyamika refutations (though of course he did not insist that these qualifiers should be introduced into the Tibetan translations of traditional texts each and every time the term existence was used, and he did not introduce them each and every time he himself used the term in his own texts).

However, though at first sight the distinction may seem quite sound, the truth is that it is hardly applicable to the experience of sentient beings. In fact, so long as threefold avidyā and hence saṃsāra is active, whenever one perceives something as existing or as being (or think of something as existing or as being), the super-subtle thought-structure attributing existence or being to that entity is delusorily valued, giving rise to what the Geluggas refer to as the “illusion of inherent existence” or “illusion of true existence.” Therefore, for sentient beings in saṃsāra the term “existence” always refers to a delusive phenomenon that manifests in their mental continuum—which is roughly what Tsongkhapa, on the basis of writings by Candrakīrti, systematically called inherent existence or true existence. Conversely, when one goes beyond saṃsāra one no longer perceives anything as existing or as being.

To express it in my own terms, what is normally understood by being is the delusive phenomenon

that results from the delusory valuation-absolutization of the concept of being, whereas what one normally understands by nonbeing is the delusive phenomenon that results from the same concept's delusory valuation-absolutization when a negation is affixed to it—and when this delusory valuation does not occur there is no phenomenon of being and hence no nonbeing. Since the Mādhyamikas were not heedless people who contradicted the laws of logic for the sake of it, it is clear that by denying both existence and nonexistence they were asserting the delusive character, both of the experience of being or existence that results from delusory valuation-absolutization of the concept of being, and of that of nonbeing or nonexistence. Thus there is no need to categorize the negated existence as inherent or the negated nonexistence as utter.

The above term and the distinction at its root were rejected by followers of Candrakīrti other than those who followed Tsongkhapa, often before the latter placed an emphasis on it. Among the former it is worth mentioning Indian philosopher-practitioner Jayānanda and Tibetan philosopher-practitioners such as Longchen Rabjam, Gorampa Sönam Sengé, Rendawa, Rongtön Shakya Gyaltzen, Tatsang Lotsawa, Shakya Chogden, Ju Mipham, and Gendün Chöphel (Thakchoe, 2007, p. 61)—and, among twentieth century non-Tibetans, Stcherbatsky, Lindtner, Poussin, Singh and Murti, who insisted that the appearance of existence is always the appearance of inherent existence, for no beings experience an existence that is not the illusion that Tsongkhapa called inherent existence, and that it is therefore superfluous and at the same time misleading to emphasize the distinction the founder of the Gelug School stressed. In fact, all of the aforementioned Tibetan Masters have placed a strong emphasis on the etymology of the word that is regularly rendered as relative or conventional (truth), *samvrti* (*satya*); in Gorampa's version (Thakchoe, op. cit., pp. 48-49):

In the first [etymological explanation of] *samvrtisatya*, *sam* is [an abbreviated form] of *samyag*, meaning 'reality,' and *vrti* means 'to conceal.' Since it conceals the true meaning of reality, delusion—the [mistaken] conception of true existence—is a model of *kunzob* (*kun rdzob*

[the Tibetan translation of *samvrtisatya*)... *Satya* (*denpa* [*bden pa*]) means 'truth.' It is truth in the sense that it appears true from the perspective of deluded consciousness. (pp. 48-49)

Gorampa juxtaposed verses 6:23 and 6:28 of Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* to show that the "perceiver of falsities" mentioned in 6:23 is whoever is under the power of the *timug* (*gti mug*)—bewilderment or concealer—referred to in 6:28 (Thakchoe, op. cit., p. 67).

Translated into Third Promulgation terminology, the above signifies that the absolutely true, abiding nature (Skt. *pariniṣpanna*; Tib. *yongdrub* [*yongs grub*]) is empty, not only of the imaginary nature (*parikalpita*; Tib. *kuntag* [*kun brtags*]), as the Cittamātrins inferred on the basis of many passages of the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, but also of the dependent nature (Skt. *paratantra*; Tib. *zhenwang* [*gzhan dbang*]), as Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltzen concluded mostly on the basis of the higher Third Promulgation Sūtras. (Tsongkhapa's interest in this regard was whether this emptiness was asserted from a conventional or an ultimate perspective: like Bhāvaviveka, he needed it to be conventionally existent while at the same time being ultimately nonexistent.)

Finally, as stated in a previous endnote, the Svātantrikas from whom Tsongkhapa borrowed the meditation whereby in his view ultimate truth was to be realized—namely Śāntaraksita and his disciple, Kamalaśīla—like most Svātantrikas (and like the Prāsangika Mipham, referred to above in this regard) distinguished between two ultimates: the true absolute truth, called uncategorized absolute (Skt. *aparyāyaparamārtha*; Tib. *rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam*), which is free from conceptual fabrications (Skt. *nisprapañca*; Tib. *spros bral*), and an ultimate that was not the true absolute truth, for it was conceptual—and thus was called the categorized ultimate (Skt. *paryāyaparamārtha*; Tib. *namdrangpai döndam* [*rnam grangs pa'i don dam*]) or ultimate that is concordant [with the absolute (condition)] (Skt. *paramārthānukūla* [*-paramārtha*]; Tib. *döndampa dang thunpai döndampa* [*don dam pa dang mthun pa'i don dam pa*]) because it was intended to be an approximate concept that could be used to gain a conceptual (and as such by definition

imprecise and deforming) understanding of the true absolute truth.

Well, whereas the above Svāntrikas viewed the emptiness that resulted from the meditation they taught and that consisted in the presence of an absence, as a provisional approximation to the true absolute (i.e., as a categorized ultimate that is concordant with the absolute) after which the nonconceptual, direct realization of the true absolute truth (namely of the uncategorized absolute) had to be realized, Je Tsongkhapa asserted the presence of an absence that manifested at the term of the analysis to be the only and therefore the true ultimate truth, after which no other ultimate had to be realized. Therefore, Je Tsongkhapa's purported Prāsangika view in this regard was not only in disagreement with the genuine Prāsangika, but was also considerably lower than the view of the Svāntrikas.

24. However, this view is in agreement with Mahāyāna teachings other than Tsongkhapa's, such as those that refer to the true condition of our human selves and the whole of reality by terms such as: (1) true condition of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. *dezhinnyi* [*de bzhin nyid*]) / thatness (Skt. *tathatā*; Tib. *chönyi* [*chos nyid*]); Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēnrú*; Wade-Giles, *chen-ju*; or Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúshì*; Wade-Giles, *ju-shih*; Jap. *shinnyo* or *nyoze*; (2) kernel of Buddhahood (Skt. *tathāgatagarbha*; Tib. *dezhin shegpai nyingpo* [*de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po*] / Skt. *sugatagarbha*; Tib. *desheg nyingpo* [*de gshegs snying po*]; Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *rúláizàng*; Wade-Giles, *ju-lai-tsang*); (3) Buddha-nature (Skt. *buddhatā* or *buddhatva*; Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *fóxiàng*; Wade-Giles *fo-hsing*; Jp. *butsushō* or *bushō*] / *bhūtatathatā*; Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēnrú*; Wade-Giles, *chen-ju*; Jap. *shinnyo*); (4) [with the emphasis on the disclosure of the condition in question] absolute truth (Skt. *paramārthasatya*; Tib. *nam drangpai dōndam* [*rnam grangs pa'i don dam*]; Chin. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *zhēndì*; Wade-Giles, *chen-ti*; Jap. *shintai*] / Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, *dìyīyì*; Wade-Giles, *ti-i-i*; Jap. *shogitai*]; etc.)—so long as the truth in question is not identified with a negation or with the presence of a mere absence. Moreover, it is also in agreement with the view of those who, like Ju Mipham, among many others, have identified the ultimate as emptiness yet do not understand the latter as consisting in a negation / an absence's presence.

The Dzogchen teachings make it clear that the true condition of both ourselves as humans and the whole of reality is the Base of Dzogchen, which is the full, genuine referent of the Mahāyāna concepts listed above—all of which fall short of the condition of Dzogchen, as both the understanding and the realization of this condition obtained in Mahāyāna Buddhism are partial (cf. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu [1984]; Capriles [2000, 2003]). In particular, qua Buddha-nature or kernel of Buddhahood it is fully actual, and it is said to involve two aspects, which are primordial purity or *katak* (*ka dag*), which is emptiness, and spontaneous perfection or *lhundrub* (*lhun grub*).

At any rate, it is this Base that Wilber called the unborn, changeless ground—even though as noted above the Base in question is not at all the same as emptiness (and far less as the presence of an absence), for according to these teachings emptiness is no more than an illusory experience (Tib. *nyam* [*nyams*]) on the Path or, if understood with regard to the Base, Path and Fruit of Dzogchen, only one of its aspects: it is the primordial purity or *katak* aspect, which has spontaneous perfection or *lhundrub* as its counterpart—the latter involving the spontaneous arising of experience and consummate spontaneous functions of the manifest. (Note that Wilber spoke of understanding emptiness, when the emptiness that is important on the Path, rather than an understanding, is a nonconceptual realization.)

25. The words within the brackets express my explanation of an abbreviation Wilber used instead
26. In the same paragraph of the regular text I noted that emptiness—not qua illusory experience, nor qua an entity's nonexistence or lack of self-existence, but in reference to the Base—is only one of the latter's aspects—namely the primordial purity (Tib. *katak* [*ka dag*]) or essence (Tib. *ngowo* [*ngo bo*]) aspect. If the emptiness that Wilber posited were the same as the primordial purity / essence aspect of the Base, identifying it with “the unborn or the changeless ground”—that is, with the Base—would amount to identifying an aspect or part of a whole [emptiness thus understood] with the whole itself [the Base of Dzogchen]—which would be a major logical error.
27. As stated in a previous endnote, Wilber (2001b, note 1, pp. 717-741) gave as the source for his view on the progressive attainment of the four kāyas, none else than infamous Geshe Kelsang Gyamtso

(second name usually written without the “m;” cited repeatedly by Wilber in the same note, pp. 726-729), who leads the most recent Tibetan Buddhist School, universally viewed by Tibetans (except for members of the school in question) as a terrorist organization that committed a bloody triple murder against associates of the Dalai Lama and that has repeatedly tried to murder the illustrious Tibetan Master-leader. Regarding these accusations, cf. the original Newsweek article (Clifton & Miller, 1997) and the exhaustive investigation by Raimondo Bultrini (2008), among other sources.

Furthermore, to his quotations of his dubious source Wilber added phrases in brackets such as “[which are both subtle-level illuminations]” and “[causal cessation],” which are very likely to distort the author’s intended meaning.

At any rate, the edition I have of *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* is the 1st (Wilber, 1995) rather than the 2nd, which is the one that Abramson (2010) used (namely Wilber, 2001b) and the one featuring the notes he referred to. Since due to foreign currency limitations it is so difficult to buy foreign books in Venezuela, and since I have so much to read for the research at the root of the several books I am writing, and reading Wilber is for me a rather unpleasant task, I never bought that 2nd ed.

28. Personally, I do not read the works in questions because time limitations make me be highly selective with what I read (and, moreover, I would certainly not use my extremely limited access to non-Venezuelan currencies to buy his books). As to my advice to others, it comes from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and other important Masters, who warn students against all possible contacts with anything having to do with the Gyalpo demon that the character in question and his associates worship, on the grounds that such contacts have the potential of making the individual susceptible to that demon and other beings of its class. If the reader finds this strange, he or she may refer to my non-magical explanations of the inner meaning of the term “demon” in Chapter I of the upcoming book synthesizing the contents of the Beyond Mind papers (Capriles, in press) and my non-magical explanation of the inner meaning of guardians and elementals elsewhere (Capriles, 2000, 2003). (In my retreats in the higher Himalayas a series of circumstances made me enter in conflict with

worshippers of that Gyalpo demon, and strange events took place which included the destruction of buildings and human lives; since the account of this conflict would make a most interesting reading, I might write it down at some point.) As to the alleged dangerousness of the character in question, I have repeatedly directed readers to the original Newsweek article (Clifton & Miller, 1997) and to the exhaustive investigation reported in Bultrini (2008).

29. In fact, in Wilber (2007), Appendix II, “Integral Post-Metaphysics” (p. 234), one reads:

1. It is not justified to maintain that levels of reality exist as consciousness-independent structures just waiting to be discovered; rather, if there exist levels of reality, they exist as structures of human consciousness (that are co-constructed by subjects),
2. The verification methods for the existence of these structures of consciousness must involve demands for objective evidence (modernity’s contribution) and intersubjective grounding (postmodernity’s contribution), and
3. If structures of consciousness exist, they are not eternal and timeless structures but ‘forms that have developed in time, evolution, and history’. (p. 234, emphasis in original)

30. Note in Abramson (2010):

But not historical eras. Although Wilber agrees that people of previous eras can advance to spiritual states irrespective of their stage of development, he continues to posit (as in *Up from Eden*, 1981) that some of the most “advanced” spiritual states were not attained in previous eras—i.e., the most advanced state increased from psychic in the “magic” era, through subtle and causal in succeeding eras, and only reached non-dual in the current era. This is clearly completely at variance with Capriles degenerative view of evolution. Also Capriles would maintain true Awakening/non-dual states were potentially available, in any era, to anyone, at any stage of development, following an authentic (e.g. Dzogchen) spiritual path.

31. Wilber did so in the context of “proving” that, however much meditation accelerates stage develop-

ment, cultural factors can potentially be a dominant breaking force.

32. As noted repeatedly, the character in question is accused of killing three associated of the Dalai Lama and of being behind at least three murder attempts against the great Tibetan spiritual and political leader. Once more I refer the reader interested in understanding the reasons for this, to Clifton with Miller (1997) and the exhaustive investigation reported in Bultrini (2008).
33. The actual title is “Beyond Mind,” for the term “mind” is used to refer to a functioning or a condition (as in “beyond fear”) rather than to a substance (as in “beyond the ocean”).
34. Cf. endnote 23.
35. True enough, he mentioned that for me the accessibility of Communion will result from a *reductio ad absurdum*, and inserted a note that may give a clue to readers, but readers who are not very familiar with my views, and/or who do not read the notes, will miss this point.
36. Someone so informed as Wilber must necessarily be aware of the ecological situation of this planet and its consequences, and hence if he writes as though everything could continue to be the same for very long time without this resulting in our species’ self-destruction, he must necessarily be doing so on purpose. If he were not, then he would seem to be wearing blinders without noticing them.
37. “Since God is totally Good, He cannot deceive us, and hence he could not have instilled in us the belief in an external, physical reality if the latter were nonexistent.”
38. Allegedly, at least one letter by Kant was found recently in which he confessed not to believe any of the postulates of his own system, and to have produced the latter by order of a high political authority. However, most of those who hold Kant’s system dear, assert the letter to be apocryphal.
39. In the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, which represents his first period, Wittgenstein (1961) asserted language to be incapable of expressing reality, yet he still pretended to use language in order to distinguish atomic propositions that do not represent atomic events from those that do represent them and thus clarify the misconceptions produced by language, reaching a point at which language could finally be discarded (thus not being so far from the alternative

trend in the philosophy of language). In his second period, principally represented by the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein (1972) noted that humans suffer from a bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language that gave rise to false problems—or that placed us in false labyrinths—that then philosophers would try in vain to solve, and declared all that he had written in his first period to be a product of the bewitchment in question, insisting that we had to rid ourselves from this bewitchment (and thus setting himself in a position that could hardly be more distant from that of the alternative trend in the philosophy of language) and in this way rid ourselves of the false problems seen from the labyrinths produced by language.

It must be noted that, although the Vienna Circle claimed to follow Wittgenstein, the latter asserted logical positivism to be a gross misreading of his writings, and went so far as to read poetry during the Circle’s meetings.

40. A perfect *adæquatio* or matching is impossible because, as shown in Vol. I of *The Beyond Mind Papers: Transpersonal and Metatranspersonal Theory* (Capriles, in press), conceptual maps are digital, whereas the territory they interpret is analog (the discrepancy between these two being aptly illustrated by the relationships between a digital photograph, which is discontinuous, and what it represents, which is continuous and to which therefore it cannot correspond: if the number of dpis is extremely high, one may get the illusion that it looks roughly alike, but as soon as one zooms in all one sees is a combination of squares of different colors having no resemblance whatsoever with reality); because the territory is holistic, whereas the maps of language are lineal and fragmentary; and because from different viewpoints different maps are equally valid and, for the same reason, equally incapable of perfect correspondence with what they represent. However, the problem arises when the fragmentary outlook the Buddha (*Udāna*, *Tathāgatarbhasūtra*) represented with the fable of the men with the elephant takes its perceptions to fit the undivided, holistic territory they interpret—and in general when one confuses the map with the territory or takes it to perfectly correspond to it, as happens when the basic human delusion that the Buddha called *avidyā* and Heraclitus called *lethe* is active. Cf. also Capriles (2004) and other works.

41. Sorel's apology of violence is to be rejected with all of one's might.
42. Gramsci (1998) wrote: "In reality science is also a superstructure, an ideology."
43. As shown in Appendix I to *Capriles* (in press), science and technology were being developed long before the modern age in Greece, and were particularly dear to the Pythagorians, to whose ideology they were associated at the time. However, Christianization suspended the project until the Modern Age, when it was revived in its present form, in the way expressed in the section of the regular text to which this note was appended.
44. I discussed this thesis by Marcuse (which he put forward in ch. 6 of Marcuse [1964], "From Negative to Positive Thinking: Technological Rationality and the Logic of Domination") elsewhere (*Capriles*, 2007a Vol. III).
45. Deleuze is criticized in two different sections of Sokal & Bricmont (1999); however, the theory according to which philosophy and the sciences are "more than ideologies" is not among the objects of this criticism.
46. In his Commentary to Āryadeva's *Catuhśataśāstrakārikā*, the *Catuhśatakārikā*, Buddhist Mādhyamika-Prāsangika Master and philosopher Candrakīrti told the fable of a king that consulted a famous astrologer, who predicted that a rainfall of "maddening water" would pollute the reservoirs in his kingdom, as a consequence of which all who drank from them would be driven insane. Consequently the king commanded that a giant, covered reservoir be built for him to drink from, and warned his ministers and subjects, telling them to prepare a protected supply of water and avoid drinking the deranging water. However, the subjects, unable to build reservoirs as big as the king's, or even as the ministers', exhausted their reserves quite rapidly, and soon had to drink contaminated water. Since the king and the ministers behaved quite differently from the subjects who drank the maddening water, the latter concluded that the former had become insane. Then, when the ministers used up their reserves, they also had to drink the deranging water—upon which the rest of the subjects "realized" the ministers had come to their senses, and all agreed the only one who was still insane was the king. Hence in order to keep his kingdom and avoid being impeached and put into an asylum, the king had no option but to drink the polluted water (Trungpa, 1976; Chöphel, 2005; Sūfi version in Shah, 1970).
47. It has been alleged that the project of modernity, rather than being aimed at begetting a technological Eden, was intended to allow the ruling class to increase its exploitation of the rest of human society, and that the ideal of the technological Eden was no more than a façade or a pretext. However, it does not seem likely that the promoters of the project in question (or at least the majority of them) were intentionally deceiving others in this way—and since the wealthiest and most powerful people and their descendents would be destroyed together with the rest of society, the project's effects would indicate delusion to have been at its root even if the interpretation discussed in this note were correct.
48. It is well known that the initial philosophical elaboration of the project of modernity was carried out in its empiricist version by Francis Bacon, and in its rationalist version by René Descartes. Later on, positivism gave a different expression to it, and the same did the grand systems of modernity, among which the most renowned are Hegel's and Marx's. In general, almost all philosophers of the modern era (with exceptions such as Georges Sorel and a few others) elaborated different versions of the myth in question.
49. A lengthier discussion of this subject is featured in *Capriles* (2007a, Vol. III); my initial discussion of the subject appeared in *Capriles* (1994) and there is an ample discussion of it in the Introduction to *Capriles* (2012).
50. That which Kant called "transcendental illusion(s)" consisted in going beyond the empirical use of the categories of the Understanding and applying these categories to "transcendent objects"—which most key twentieth century phenomenologists did not posit. However, according to Kant, the transcendental illusion stood on subjective principles that seemed to be objective; provided that one understands the term subjective as referring to whatever manifests in the individual's mind—that is, thoughts, representations, mental phenomena—as different from all that is not merely thought or representation, this is the core error of phenomenology.
51. In *Capriles*, 2007a Vol. I, I undertook an exhaustive discussion of the defects of phenomenological and

existential twentieth century thought, on the basis of a careful hermeneutical analysis of the essential works of the thinkers concerned.

53. In spite of having received important influences from Buddhism and Daoism, and of having claimed that Zen Buddhism broadcaster D. T. Suzuki was saying exactly what he tried to say throughout his works (May, 1996; Saviani, 2004), in itself Heidegger's concept of being (*das Sein*) was not only contradictory, but contrary to Buddhist theory as well. In fact, on the one hand he identified it with the *arché* which is the underlying principle and true condition of the universe and which may be the same as the true nature of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā*; Tib. *chönyi* [*chos nyid*]) or perhaps the all-encompassing space in which phenomena manifest (Skt. *dharmadhātu*; Tib. *chöjing* [*chos dbyings*]) of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which does not exclude anything and has no limits (so that, as Nāgārjuna made it clear, it cannot enter into the concept of being, that of nonbeing, that of both-being-and-nonbeing or that of neither-being-nor-nonbeing)—and which is an absolute that as such is impossible to eradicate. Yet on the other hand he asserted it to be a phenomenon that is elicited whenever we think of, listen or pronounce the word being—thus contradicting its identification with the *arché*, for whatever the mind conceives has limits (for it is defined by proximate gender [*genus proximum*] and specific difference [*differentiam specificam*]), and therefore could not be the limitless *arché*, *dharmatā* or *dharmadhātu*. Furthermore, as shown elsewhere (Capriles 2007a vol. I, 2007c, and other of my works), that which manifests when one thinks of, listens to, or pronounces the word “being” is the most basic delusive appearance of *samsāra*. (In the same work, on the basis of several of Heidegger's key works, I exposed what from the standpoint of Buddhism and Dzogchen are the German philosopher's core philosophical errors, and discuss the numerous books giving proof of the influence he received from Buddhism and to some extent from Daoism, as well as of the fact that he believed his philosophy to be congruent with the systems in question.)
54. In Sartre (1980) the French philosopher does not reduce being to the phenomenon of being (in his view [Sartre, 1980] the phenomenon of being is not the being of the phenomenon), but implies it to be a kind of absolute that precedes human experience

and is independent from the latter (in fact, since he asserts the being of the human individual that he calls *être-pour-soi* to arise in [preexisting] being, in his view being cannot depend on human experience). Although he avoided the error of making of the absolute an “absolute of knowledge,” effectively deconstructed the Cartesian-Husserlian *cogito*, and offered concepts and descriptions I have used to great profit in various works (Capriles, 1994, 2007a vol. I, 2012), he breached the phenomenological epoché in various ways. Cf. Capriles (2007a Vol. I).

55. For a short discussion of the way in which Sartre managed this, cf. Capriles (2010); for an in-depth treatment, cf. Capriles (2007a Vol. I) and perhaps also Capriles (2004).
56. However, Sartre's *holon, soi* or Self is definitively not Aristotle's immovable motor, which was for the Greek philosopher the final cause (*telos*) of human existence. In Sartre (1980), pp. 137-8, one reads:

The relation between value and the for-Self is very particular: [value] is the being that [the for-Self] is to be insofar as it is the foundation of its own nothingness of being [i.e. nonbeing]. And if [the for-Self] is to be this being, it is not so under an external constraint, or because value, like Aristotle's first motor, would exert upon it a de facto attraction, or by virtue of a character received from its being; rather, it is that it makes itself be in its being as having to be this being.

57. Sartre defined the *holon* in a way that makes it seem the same as Awakening, even though his definition of the term is internally contradictory—this being the reason why I had to redefine it (Capriles, 2007a Vol. I, 2012). In fact, Sartre used the term *holon* in a sense very different from Koestler's (1967; Koestler & Smythies, 1970), to designate the Totality characterized by fullness, plenitude, and coincidence with itself that being-for-Self tries to attain through all of its endeavors, which involves what the French philosopher inaccurately called the “translucency of consciousness proper to being-for-Self” simultaneously with the “coincidence with itself” characteristic of being-in-itself, and which is beyond the duality between these two modes of being. Sartre likened this Totality unto the God of Catholic theologians, and the characteristics he attributed to it coincide with those of

Awakening—except for some basic problems in his definition that were problematized and resolved in Capriles, 2007a Vol. I, and for the fact that Sartre deemed it to be impossible to attain.

In fact, Sartre deemed the holon to be unattainable, and throughout his books he dealt solely with the experiences and ontological structures of samsāra; etc. However, he was right in noting that all that being-for-Self does for attaining the Self / holon maintains it as being-for-Self and thus as being-at-a-distance-from-the-Self / holon—this being the reason why he asserted being-for-Self to be unhappy consciousness unable to overcome its inherent condition of unhappiness. Thus being-for-Self has no choice but to elude this unhappiness by means of bad faith (self-deceit)—authenticity (in the sense of not eluding anguish and shame by means of bad faith) being therefore, in Sartre’s view, impossible to achieve in a continuous way.

58. This term was coined by Derrida for expressing a particular type of difference (*différance*), which he said is rather the condition of possibility of difference; he made this term differ in spelling but not in pronunciation from the French term *différence* (“difference”) in order to mark a sharp difference of meaning. As just noted, *différance* is not merely difference; it is supposed to be that which makes differences possible and which constitutes all signs as signs (i.e., as something that refers to something supposedly different from itself). In order to further explain what is *différance* I would have to use other Derridean terms and explanations which then would need to be explained, so I direct readers who are not familiar with Derrida’s thought to Capriles (2007a Vol. III).
59. In fact, no one could deny that throughout his works Derrida has outlined an ontology. For a sample of how this is so, suffice to mention his statement that, “the thing itself is a sign.” He wrote (Derrida, 1967, in the English version [1976 / 1998], *Ch. Linguistics and Grammatology*, p. 49):

Peirce goes very far in the direction that I have called the de-construction of the transcendental signified, which, at one time or another, would place a reassuring end to the reference from sign to sign. I have identified logocentrism and the metaphysics of presence as the exigent, power-

ful, systematic, and irrepressible desire for such a signified. Now Peirce considers the indefiniteness of reference as the criterion that allows us to recognise that we are indeed dealing with a system of signs. What broaches the movement of signification is what makes its interruption impossible. The thing itself is a sign.

De-ontologizing entities itself implies and bears an ontological position according to which there are no ultimate, truly existing entities as such—which would make of Derrida’s philosophy a meta-ontology as I have defined the term (Capriles, 2007a Vol. I, etc.) if this de-ontologization were brought to its last consequences, and if it involved methods for dissolving the experience of entities as ultimate, truly existing as such.

60. These questions occur in several places in the Nikāyas: they are discussed in detail in Khuddaka Nikāya, III: Udāna; and they appear twice in Majjimanikāya, I [sutta 72]; once in Samyuttakāya, III and once in Samyuttakāya, IV; once in Dīghanikāya 9 [Potthapāda Sutta] and once in Dīghanikāya 29 [Pāsādika Sutta]. For his part, Nāgārjuna discussed them in Mūlamādhyamakakārikāh, XXVII, and—if the Chinese were right that he authored the Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra—also in the latter.
61. The event(s) of nirvāṇa could be equally regarded as countless or as a single one, for although in nirvāṇa no differences apply, language has to distinguish among different moments. Thus metaphenomenon is as valid and as wrong as metaphenomena—terms in which the prefix meta indicates that they are not mere appearance (*phainómenon*), as they unveil the true condition of reality.

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