TOWARDS A META INTEGRAL PHILOSOPHY: MYSTICISM IN THE
PHILOSOPHIES OF BHASKAR, PANIKKAR AND WILBER.

ABSTRACT: In this presentation, I will discuss the central role which mysticism plays in the
philosophies of integral philosophers, Bhaskar, Panikkar and Wilber. As I will demonstrate,
each has a broadly trinitarian philosophy of mysticism. I will explore the importance of
philosophy in their overall visions and projects and how mysticism can be seen as an
evolutionary driver within each philosophy. All three have forms of participative, co-creative
enaction built into their understandings of the evolutionary significance of mysticism. Each
sees a comprehensive, holistic, philosophical vision energised by emerging mystical
experiences with collective social and cultural dimensions as vital for the future of humanity
and the cosmos.

Introduction

A little bit about myself:

I worked for most of my adult life as a social worker for the Australian Government until I
retired in 2011. For many years I have also been a spiritual seeker. My explorations have
included some early use of entheogens, travels in Asia, Europe and latterly the US, mainly for
integral events, as well as studying philosophy, several religions and spiritual movements,
mysticism and its literature, and practicing Christian Meditation within the Catholic
tradition. This was all brought together in a very satisfying way for me by the writings of
Ken Wilber and his integral philosophy.
This paper has largely arisen out of weekly Skype conversations for much of 2012, between myself and a friend Trish Nowland, about Raimon Panikkar’s” The Rhythm of Being” (2010) and Roy Bhaskar’s “ Reflections on MetaReality” (2012a). These conversations were offered as one of the Magellan Courses (2012). They provided me with a supportive, encouraging, intersubjective context for studying these works.

These three philosophers have greatly enlarged my understanding of mysticism,. They all have broadly trinitarian philosophies of mysticism at the heart of and as driving energies within their philosophies. I will discuss the central role which mysticism plays in the philosophies of each.

Roy Bhaskar

In Bhaskar’s “Philosophy of metaReality” (2012b) he discusses metaReality as the dependence and encompassing of the world of duality by non-duality. For him, this non-duality doesn’t depend on any kind of religious belief or faith but is the necessary condition for our daily states and acts. It is a kind of everyday mysticism. It is a form of spirituality which is secular and consistent with any or no faiths.

In PMR, Bhaskar argues that the non-dual sustains the world of duality in three ways: First, as ground-state (and through the connectivity of ground-states in what he has called the cosmic envelope), it is the ultimate ingredient in all other states of being, activity and consciousness. These ground-state qualities of human beings include our potential for creativity, unbounded love, capacity for right action and for the fulfilment of our intentionality in the world. Secondly, certain features of transcendence are essential to the constitution and reproduction of everyday life. Thirdly, non-duality constitutes the fine
structure or the deep interior of any moment or aspect of being or consciousness, with qualities such as bliss, emptiness, suchness, love etc (2012b, Preface, xli, xlii).

Transcendence in metaReality involves identification or unification or unity within an overall context, extending to the whole cosmos. This is what distinguishes the philosophy of metaReality from critical realism, which Bhaskar still sees as the best account of the realm of duality. Non-duality underpins and sustains the latter.

He describes three mechanisms of non-duality, relations of transcendental identification, reciprocity and co-presence. Co-presence is where some other thing is enfolded or implicit in a being. His claim is that all other beings are enfolded within myself, and I am enfolded within all other beings also. It is important because it is the ultimate ontological basis of our possibilities of transcendental identification and the laws of reciprocity, including karma. When generalised, it also explains why we subjectively feel and experience a commitment to the project of universal self-realization, the fulfilment and flourishing of all beings in the universe (2012b. Preface xlix). Reciprocity involves mutuality between beings at the ground-state level, as in like attracts like. Co-presence is identifiable in acts of transcendental identification as in watching TV or being conscious of a tree.

Bhaskar through his critical realism has attempted to re-think being or ontology as progressively and more deeply along 5 successive dimensions: Being as such, as processual, as totality or whole, as including transformative agency and reflexivity, and as incorporating a spiritual aspect (2012b. Preface lix). In the philosophy of metaReality he adds to these two new levels of being: Being as enchanted and as non-dual.

He speaks of three realms of reality: absolute reality, relative reality, and demi-reality.

Underneath the relative world of duality, with all its conflicts, oppositions and alienations, is
always its non-dual ground and mode of constitution. Demi-reality and relative reality depend always on the creativity, loving compassion and capacity for right action of human beings, coming from their ground-states (2012b Preface,liii).

He recognises that relative reality is the world of becoming, which includes absence, negativity, change, differences, process, evolution, and development. For him, metaReality goes beyond thinking being into being being – the ground and truth of reality (2012b, Preface liii).

His strongest claim in his philosophy of metaReality is that one’s objectives in life must be consistent with one’s ground-state, in which there is nothing in one’s being, one’s embodied personality, which is inconsistent with this, and that one’s objectives will eventually lead one to a path of self-realisation and ultimately universal self-realisation and emancipation (2012b, Preface lviii).

He links his principle of self-referentiality with practical mysticism. The former means that we can only act in, through and from ourselves as our point of agency. The latter means that being a non-dual being, or close to it, or as clear and focused as we can, is consistent with being engaged practically and actively in the world, through material embodiment and social transformation towards universal self-realisation (2012b, Preface lxvii). He talks about how transcendental identification and agency are necessary for communication and action in the world. He shows that oppressive alienated social activities and structures are sustained and underpinned by ground-state qualities of love, creativity, co-operation etc (2012b, Chp 1).

He argues that non-dual states and phases of our being in which we show our free, loving nature, are underlying conditions of our dual world of alienation, domination and oppression. The latter is only able to survive because of the virtuous qualities of non-duality which
sustain it. He thinks that we only need to recognise and release this alienated world in order to solve our contemporary crises (2012b, chp 2).

Bhaskar describes love as the expanding, developing, evolving, unifying healing force in the universe, (2012b, p.185). He sees that even conditional, false, selfish, possessive and oppressive forms of love are still forms of love. Further, even ‘non-loving’ emotional states such as anger, hatred, fear, still presuppose some rudimentary form of love which can eventually blossom (2012b, Ch.4). The philosophy of metaReality is one of love, which connects all the elements of the cosmos into a whole, through the cosmic envelope. It embodies a mystical drive to totality, which ultimately must include loving the totality of all beings, although in ways specific to each relationship (2012b, P.192).

Bhaskar asserts that the more one is in one’s ground-state, the more successful one’s actions will be, expressing one’s uniquely embodied personality, effortlessly, spontaneously, and joyously, which will also have a transformative effect on the world (2012b, Chp 5). He talks about the trialectic in which new ways of being, seeing and acting all interact reciprocally with each other.

He argues that both secular and religious emancipation projects lead to a commitment to individual and universal self-realization. He generalises even further by arguing that ultimately one’s intentionality and objectives must be consistent with one’s ground-state, which implies the goal of individual self-realization and leads to universal self-realization. He see enlightenment as part of a continuously unfolding evolutionary process. He characterises the path as one of love, coherence, clarity and emptiness.

With metaReality, he goes beyond modernism, post-modernity and critical realism by showing that concrete singulars are united at the level of their ground-states on the cosmic
envelope, which provides a base for the emancipatory potential of critical realism. He still includes epistemological pluralism, judgemental rationality and ontological realism eg in their applications to religions (2002. p. 346)

He summarises the goal of this emancipatory philosophy of metaReality as being to find that the ultimate perspective is the awareness of the totality or the whole, including the cosmic envelope, which is implicitly enfolded within one. This will embody the reflexive unity of theory and practice, as theory situates and sustains itself within the larger whole, which is the guiding criterion of philosophy for him (2012a, p. 76).

He is very strong about the need to get rid heteronomies, oppressions and alienations which interfere with our ground-states, not only those within our personalities but also within systems and social structures. He advocates disconnecting with them and then clearing their residues. He sees that the only sustainable solution for the future of humanity and the planet is for duality to be rolled back from blocking the non-dual realms. He sees here the crucial importance of philosophical ideas, individual agency and social solidarity working together. He sees this as being made easier by recognising that everything we do in life is sustained by non-duality (2012b. p. 364)

Raimon Panikkar.

I have a brief note about Panikkar

For Panikkar, “the philosophical method is that of thinking, (as) an active and intelligent listening to reality itself – to the Rhythm of Being. The philosopher’s task is to place one’s mind and heart in tune with reality, allowing the very throbbing of Being to pass through one’s spirit and by so doing to change its rhythm” (2010. p. 20). Philosophy for him is an active/passive contemplative form of enactment, of interacting with, being co-responsible for
and influencing the destiny of reality. He sees wisdom as the mystical core of philosophy, requiring an openness to the whole and including the wisdom of love, as well as purity of heart (2010; 1993b, p. 80).

He sees mysticism as the experiential awareness of the whole, the ultimate experience of reality and/or the study of it (2010, p. 244). It always includes our own contingent perspective – touching the infinite at a point, not limited to a theistic notion of reality or to religious or paranormal phenomena (2010).

He speaks of the three eyes of sensual, rational and spiritual experience (2010, p. 247). Only a mutual and harmonious interplay between these three will yield a satisfying experience of reality. Man is a triad of senses, reason and spirit, which correlate with matter, thought and freedom. At times he includes the mystical among these forms of knowledge (2010).

At a deeper level, it is beyond the three eyes, even beyond their experiential awareness when directed not to particular entities but to the entire reality. He wants to defend the position that the locus of mysticism is not knowledge, not even knowledge of Being, but is the realm and home ground of emptiness. (2010, p. 246)

He further sees it as “touching the deepest stratum of the real without the medium of consciousness. It is the groundless ground, on which everything stands and finds its support, and therefore a truly human life depends on it…. The mystical keeps silent and remains in silence, which does not speak…. It is direct experience which puts us into immediate contact with reality but when we become conscious of the experience, so that when we speak of it, we enter the field of consciousness and abandon the mystical It is ineffable, due not to the imperfection of the human intellect but to the nature of reality itself, which is beyond
thinking and language (2010, p. 246-7). He describes the locus of the mystical as “the field of emptiness, rather than knowledge, even that of Being” (2010, p. 248)

“The mystical discloses to us that not all can be reduced to the field of consciousness, that there is a dimension of the real irreducible to the logos. Therefore all our speech about it is a translation, or rather a creation from the field of emptiness, that is received only by those who have understood the transfer and are able to decipher its reality. He sees this as the grandeur and weakness of mysticism. It has no language of its own; it uses a borrowed language. Mystical language has no referent outside itself. Emptiness cannot be a point of reference “ (2010, p. 250).

He is clear that the mystical is open to the “fragility of being human”. Mystical experience needs to be discerned and validated in some way eg “through a tradition, spiritual teacher, guru, mentor, or community of some sort, whether that of love, friendship, church, temple, synagogue, mosque, sangha, which serves as a point of reference” (2010, p. 254). The three eyes, including the testimony of the senses and the demands of the mind, are indispensable to discern whether the experience is authentic, as to whether its fruits are good or bad. He considers it important to hear the affirmations of many traditions and to be open to understanding the testimony of many people to the most intimate personal experience of humanity in the face of the groundless abyss (2010).

His most significant insight is his gradual exposition through many books of his cosmotheandric intuition and principle, that the Divine, the Human and the Cosmic are constitutive dimensions of reality, interconnected, interrelated, each independent in an inter-in-dependent way. This for him is the Rhythm of Being, which cannot be grasped by reason but only through an advaitic (non-dual) experience using the third eye of spirit. He
sees that human beings have the freedom and responsibility to play our roles in the destiny of Being, along with the Divine and the Cosmic (2010).

A brief visualization exercise here, if time permits.

He characterises the symbol of the Divine as having three features: emptiness, freedom, infinitude, which correspond to the Trinitarian paradigm of Father or Silence, Son or Logos, and Spirit or Love, reflecting a real inter-in-dependence (2010, p. 311)

He asserts that God can be experienced mainly by silence, by being, because Being is silent. If we are able to perceive the silent dimension of things we shall be able to become aware of the Divine, not only because the Divine is hidden in silence, but because the Divine is Silence. Silence is not the negation of Being; it is not Non-Being. It is the absence of everything and ultimately the absence of Being. It is prior to Being. To become aware of the silence of Being and the silence of the word is close to discovering the divine dimension (2010, P.324-5, 1979). He is concerned about the human ways of opening up to that experience eg through the practice of the presence of God. This is for him is a discovery of the divine dimension in the act in which we are engaged, God’s transcendence visible in the immanent (2010).

For Panikkar, our only adequate approach to the mystery of the Divine is the silence of all our faculties, body, mind and will, in an experience of the Emptiness of the Divine (2010, p. 325-336) However, there is an awareness of the Divine which allows us to “speak” of it when our logos is not separated from the pneuma (or spirit) (p.337).

The apophatic negative approach to the Divine takes the Absolute absolutely, by dissolving all its kataphatic, affirmative assertions in utter silence and discovering the very Emptiness of the Absolute.
He sees the necessity for combining the apophatic with the kataphatic approaches to the Divine, as neither on its own is convincing. There is a co-experience and positive symbiosis between the two which relativises both. There is always a silence behind any affirmation that makes room for other possible formulations. There is always an implicit word behind any silence that does not permit either nihilism or indifference. He sees the relation between the two as non-dualistic rather than as a problematic dialectic. They are neither one nor two but it is not enough to keep silent in order to be in the truth, and to use words does not necessarily mean to fall into error (2010).

He sees monotheism not as an absolute truth but as a human reaction in the face of the Divine mystery. He sees the Trinity as a way of speaking about the unspeakable in that there is the silence or emptiness of the Father and the love or activity of the Spirit, which if they speak at all, do so through the Logos (2010, P. 249).

Panikkar takes a survey through many religious and philosophical traditions to produce evidence that reality as a whole has a trinitarian structure.

Panikkar extends the notion of the Divine Trinity to include the whole of reality, as Divine, Human and Cosmic (2010). They correspond to faith, hermeneutic and myth (1979). He sees that this broader idea of the Trinity, with its homeomorphic correlations in other religions, may open the door to a fuller Christianity in the third millennium as well as assist in the encounter between Christianity and other religions and cultures. Panikkar sees interreligious and intercultural dialogues as forms of mutual fecundation, which requires us as far as possible to stand within the horizons of our dialogue partners (Panikkar, 1977, 1989, 1999; Prabhu 1996; Yadlapati, 2010)
Christ is the Christian symbol for the whole of Reality, as God, Humanity and Cosmos (2004, p. 144), which Panikkar sees as a christic adventure. Panikkar also calls him the cosmotheandric Christ, in and through whom the whole universe is called to share the Trinitarian perichoresis.

Sharing in the experience of Christ for a Christian eg through a personal I-Thou relationship with Jesus, Christian Meditation, contemplative prayer, and first person union with Jesus, can be mystical and cosmotheandric experiences (1993, 2004). They lead into the silence of the Mystery of the Father, into solidarity with others in the human community and into an expansive awareness of embodiment in the cosmos. He regards contemplation as an essential element in all religions because it corresponds to a fundamental trait of Man. It is not just praying to God but it unifies one’s life by bringing together praxis and theory, action and knowledge, immediate action and effective non-attachment.

His cosmovision has clear sociopolitical, environmental, economic as well as spiritual implications. He urges us to participate in the love and care of the earth and the difficulties of humanity, especially the poorest, most disadvantaged and marginalised, to assume our responsibilities so that the common effort will lead to greater justice and freedom, transforming the cosmos through co-operation with the Divine.

He challenges the prevailing scientific, technocratic and rationalistic mythos of our times. He calls for, sees signs of and, proposes fragments of a new kosmology, story and mythos based on the cosmotheandric insight which situates humanity within its proper place in reality, with its unique role and dignity along with God and the Kosmos, which contains the treasures from human traditions as well as being a dynamic force which weaves together old and new into something we cannot foresee. He has also called this, radical trinity, radical relativity, sacred secularity and advaita. It sees the Divine, the Human and the Cosmic as essential
dimensions of a holistic view of reality, in which “everything is related to everything but without monistic identity or dualistic separation”. (2010. p. 404.)

Ken Wilber

For Wilber “the heart of integral philosophy as primarily a mental activity of coordinating, elucidating, and conceptually integrating all of the various modes of knowing and being, so that even if integral philosophy itself does not deliver the higher modes, it fully acknowledges them, and then invites philosophia to open itself to the practices and modes of contemplatio. Integral philosophy is also by virtue of its comprehensiveness, a powerful critical theory, critical of all less encompassing approaches – in philosophy, psychology, religion, social theory and politics, a theoria that is inseparable from praxis, in all levels, in all quadrants.” (1997, p. 309, n1). His project has been to develop an integral, holistic world philosophy for a holistic Kosmos which is one, undivided, whole and related to itself in every way. (1995, Preface, as quoted by Reynolds, 2004, p.383).

He has been doing this by studying the knowledge, experience, wisdom and reflections of major human civilizations and cultures – pre-modern, modern and postmodern to see what they have to tell us about human potential and growth. He has used all this to create a comprehensive, inclusive, integral map of human potentials, which distils their major components into 5 factors or elements: quadrants, levels, lines, states and types. He claims that the AQAL map, which can be used in many fields including, religion, spirituality and mysticism can help to make sure that all bases are touched. This helps to utilise a further range of resources for any situation for a greater likelihood of success. He asserts that these five elements are present in our own awareness and so by learning to see them, appreciate
and exercise them, we can accelerate our own growth and development and contribute towards a better world.

States of consciousness include the major natural ones, such as waking, dreaming and deep sleep, as well as meditative and mystical states, including the gross, subtle, causal or formless, and non-dual.

Levels or stages represent the major milestones of growth and development, which are permanent once acquired. For Wilber, they are: archaic, magic, mythic, rational, pluralistic, integral and beyond, including illuminative mind, intuitive mind, overmind and supermind.

Lines refer particularly to multiple intelligences eg cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual, which are developmental. Wilber describes four different lines of self- gross, subtle, causal and non-dual. “The non-dual line traces the development of states of subject–object union, from pre-natal to perinatal (eg cosmic fusion) to childhood (eg emotional bonding states) to adulthood (eg flow states) to states/traits of post-formal samadhi to pure non-dual One Taste. “He sees “the non-dual as becoming a permanent trait only with sustained post-formal, post-post- conventional development” (2000, p. 256, n. 18).

He simplifies his 4 quadrants into “I”, “we”, and ‘it”, which he sometimes refers to as the Big Three, the Beautiful, the Good and the True, which can also refer for him to art, religion and science. The quadrants can also refer to self, culture and nature and the levels are body, mind and spirit. So, the Integral model involves the cultivation of body, mind and spirit in self, culture and nature.

For him, the big 3 (I, You/We, It) go all the way down and all the way up. As soon, as Spirit starts to manifest in existence, there is Spirit in 1st person, Spirit in 2nd person,, and Spirit
Mysticism can be seen as an experience of God or Spirit in one or more of these persons: in 1st person as the great I AM, the Supreme Identity, the ultimate Absolute witnessing Emptiness; in 2nd person as the great You, or Thou, the Divine Lover, the all-loving God, to whom I can relate in love and devotion and surrender; in 3rd person as the Great It, or Great System, or Great Web of Life, the Kosmos, as a whole, the great perfection of existence itself, the Is-ness and Suchness of this and every moment (2006, p. 159).

He speaks of mysticism as having an ultimate peak experience in and of the major natural states, in which a person is one with the phenomena in that realm. “To experience a oneness with all phenomena in the gross-waking state is a typical nature mysticism. In the subtle dream state, it is deity mysticism: in the causal un-manifest state it is formless mysticism. To experience a oneness with all phenomena arising in gross, subtle and causal states, is a typical non-dual mysticism.” (2006, P.93). One can have a non-dual state experience at virtually any stage, including magic and mythic, which do not contain phenomena from the higher stages.

It is appropriate, using the Wilber-Coombs Lattice, (2006, p. 90) to consider mysticism as including permanent access to these higher, transpersonal, trans-rational, third tier, stages eg illumined mind, intuitive mind, over-mind and super-mind. Wilber has described his own experiences of the higher stages as respectively, seeing wholes, feeling wholes, witnessing wholes and being the whole.

Wilber acknowledges that that people will only understand his descriptions of higher states and stages if they possess the requisite levels of consciousness and experience for them, often after disciplined training, applying injunctions and practice within communities able to verify their validity.
He defines Enlightenment, which could be considered as the fullest possible experience and expression of mysticism, as: “the realization of oneness with all the major states and structures that are in existence at any given time in history”. (2006, p.248).

He often speaks of there being both an Absolute and a relative “side of the street” when speaking about reality as a whole. On the Absolute side of the street there is Emptiness, unchanging, unqualifiable, timeless, eternal, formless Spirit, which is Freedom, and about which little can be said, but only experienced. On the relative side of the street, the world of form is evolving and going through stages of development and growth. This is Fullness. “So for him Enlightenment is a union of both Emptiness and Form, or a union of Freedom and Fullness. “ (2006, p. 236). In that sense, a fully enlightened human being alive today has a fuller enlightenment than one living 2000 years ago, although the Emptiness would be the same. His AQAL model and maps are ways of expressing and describing our relative, evolving world of form, often passionately and poetically.

Wilber discusses how a leading edge pioneer experiences higher potentials as either temporary peak experiences (or altered states) or as permanent acquisitions (or enduring trait traits or stages). In order for temporary states to become permanent traits and stages —then the pioneer must undergo some sort of learning, growth, and permanent development in those higher potentials. Theses first start out as free and creative novelty at the leading edge of development and evolution. As they are repeated by more holons, they begin slowly to settle into Kosmic habits that are then available to people following after them. He gives the example of the meditative path of the Buddha (2012, Excerpt D)

It seems that we are now at the stage where people at the leading edges of spiritual and mystical development are starting to push more into third tier, what Wilber calls “the frothy,
creative edge”, with new Kosmic patterns and grooves beginning to be formed which may eventually settle into Kosmic habits. This will require tetra-enactions through stable, self-critical collective groups, communities and sanghas, attentive to shadow issues.

Wilber describes three ways to become aware of the interior of another subject: through telepathy, through our shared transcendent Self, and through harmonic empathy and resonance, such as co-presence (2012. Excerpt C.). He advocates three social practices for integral methodological pluralism: non-exclusion, summarised as “everybody is right;” unfoldment (or holarchical development through the pattern of transcend and include); and enactment, which means that subjects, bring forth, enact and experience different phenomena or worlds according to their quadrants, levels, lines, states and types (2012. Excerpt B).

He explains further how this works:

“This necessity of mutual enaction is part of the creative process that simultaneously brings forth multiple subjects, multiple actions (methods), and multiple objects—the “multiplicity” in each case occurring precisely because all three of those are mutually interwoven, and as a new dimension (say, a new subject) evolves, so the other dimensions must resonate (and co-evolve) in order to resonate with the new reality, in order to keep the Wholeness part of the holon Whole. This Wholeness is not the extrinsic sum of separate domains (e.g., epistemology, methodology, ontology), but the dynamic interwoven relationship of intrinsically co-evolving, co-creating, co-enacting internally related holonic dimensions, which must, indeed, resonate with each other or face extinction. It is the reality of mutual enaction that sets up an equal necessity for mutual resonance among these dimensions in a holon, and ensures that all of them co-evolve together, adjusting and re-adjusting to each
other’s reality until a genuine Wholistic resonance occurs among all of them” (2013, Appendix). Such practices and insights can assist in developing a more comprehensive understanding and practice of collective mysticism.

There are now numerous flowerings of evolutionary, collective future mysticism which reinforce Wilber’s point that a transition from second tier to third tier must be enacted collectively and collaboratively as the structures for this are only just beginning to be laid down. Following Wilber’s Integral Methodological Pluralism, Bruce Alderman (2010) has outlined 8 zones or methodologies of religion, spirituality and mysticism, as well as providing helpful opening reflections on translineage practice.

Wiber speaks of Eros as the force of love, which drives and energises the evolutionary process from the Big Bang into our collective mystical future, as Spirit in action. He asserts that an integral vision (2007) is necessary and helpful in order to more effectively, comprehensively and inclusively meet the global challenges of our times and contribute to an evolutionary unfolding to greater dimensions of being and knowing and acting.

Conclusion

Common to the work of all three philosophers are multiple variations on patterns of the triadic structure of reality. They agree that a comprehensive philosophical vision must include non-dual mysticism, contemplation and spirit. For each, beyond what can be said about reality is Silence, Mystery, Emptiness, the unqualifiable Absolute. They also agree that this must be experienced and integrated within the relative realities of our daily lives. This vision must include Spirit along with human and cosmic evolutionary development or Becoming, into emancipating our fullest potential. Each exemplifies bodhisattvic
commitments and objectives of agapic liberating service to and solidarity with humanity, all sentient beings and the Kosmos.

Meta Integral Philosophy is meta integral in that it allows room for pluralistic integral philosophies, such as these, to dialogue, engage and interact with each other. Mysticism show us the deepest and highest levels and structures of reality within each thought system, as well as pointing to the Absolute Emptiness beyond all thought systems. Meta Integral Philosophy is a meta-philosophy because it goes beyond philosophy, supporting and facilitating mystical development, while still grounded within philosophical and cognitive structures. It encourages participative enactions across philosophies and lineages. A Meta Integral philosophy of mysticism can provide spacious, hospitable openings for poly-amorous, co-creative, evolutionary, perichoretic, rhythmic dances of Being, non-being and Becoming.

Notes

1 I have been strongly influenced by Bernard McGinn’s description of the mystical element in Christianity as “that part of its belief and practices that concerns the preparation for, the practice of, and the reaction to, the immediate direct presence of God” (McGinn, B. 1998, p. XV11). Christian mysticism has also been described by Laurence Freeman as “the personal experience of the presence of God” and by Marcus Plested as “the quest for an experience of union with the divine” (in Nataraj, K. (ed.) 2011, pp.1 and 83)

2 Raimon Panikkar was one of the world’s leaders in the philosophy of religion and in interreligious dialogue. He was the author of over 30 books. Born in Barcelona of a Spanish

3 The notion of the pre-existence of Christ as always having been part of the Trinity, as the first expression of the Father’s love, out of His Silence and Being, in and through whom the universe or Kosmos was created, is a central one in Christianity. He can be seen as still immanently present within creation as the Becoming, the coming to be, the Eros, the evolutionary impulse, more than, although personified in Jesus as the leader, emerger, (Delio, 2010), exemplar and chaotic attractor within creation, in unity with the dynamic, spacious, unifying energy of the Spirit.

5 They include Andrew Cohen’s evolutionary enlightenment or mysticism through identification with the Evolutionary Impulse (2006), Craig Hamilton’s Integral Evolutionary Mysticism (2013), Jeff Carreira and Patricia Albere’s “We Mysticism” and Evolutionary Collective (2013), Bonnita Roy’s post dialectical, transpersonal, onto-logical thinking (2013), Ria Baeck’s and Helen Titch Beath’s collective presencing (2013), Thomas Hubl’s evolutionary spirituality (2013) and the interspiritual movement (Johnson, K. and Ord, D. 2012). An extremely powerful and ecstatic experience of this for me was as a member of the audience at Integral What Next as Wilber spoke about the future of the integral movement and the world.
Alderman cites Thatamanil (2011)’s proposal to approach the Trinity as a “locus for interreligious conversation”, if interpreted as providing both ontological grounds for theological diversity and a generative context for interreligious and intralineage engagement.

Thatamanil (2011) suggests using a trinity of core ontological terms, derived partly from Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism. He recommends use of the terms – ground, contingency, relation, also mentioned by Panikkar, (2004, p.169). He sees reality and divinity as bearing this trinitarian structure, with a perichoresis or “dance around each other”of these mysteries, quoted by Alderman (2012, p.61)

Alderman sees similarities and relations between Thatamanil’s trinity and Wilber’s 3 Faces of God, in that both “can allow translineage practitioners to enact integral fields of difference by embracing important intra-and interlineage tensions as generative and complementary rather than simply contradictory” (2012, p. 62).

Keith Bowman’s diagram for Integral Scientific Pluralism (Bowman 2012) could be applied to Integral Mystical Pluralism. Three concentric rings are super-imposed on the 4 quadrants: with the inner ring, Integral Epistemological Pluralism; the middle, Integral Methological Pluralism; the outer, Integral Ontological Pluralism. Such a schema could also add depth and a richer complexity to Alderman’s eight methodologies of spirituality, religion and mysticism.

Wilber quotes Sean Esborn-Hargens talking about how ontological pluralism increases along three axes: epistemological distance, methodological variety and ontological complexity: Who X How X What (2013). Wilber comments that this is fine as long as
there is awareness and recognition that changing the combination of methodologies, the How, will also affect the Who and the What, which Esborn-Hargens acknowledges. This can also apply to mystical developmental enaction.

References


Hubl, T. Website: http://www.thomashuebl.com/en/home.html, Retrieved 05/05/2013


JOHN O’NEILL, B. Soc.Stud, B.A. was born on 5/11/1951, in Maitland, NSW Australia In 1974 he graduated from Sydney University with a Bachelor of Social Studies degree. In 2004, he graduated with a B.A from the University of Newcastle, majoring in Religious Studies and Philosophy. He worked as a Social Worker until his retirement on 7/11/2011, mainly within the Commonwealth Human Services department, in the Hunter Valley. He now keenly pursues his passionate interests in Philosophy, especially Integral Philosophy. He is an enthusiastic member of the integral movement, including Sydney Integral, I-I Australia, Integral Life and MetaIntegral, and has attended 6 major Integral community events in the US. He is a practicing Catholic and Christian Meditator.