

experienced a breakthrough, wash it off, forget it, don't brag about it. It is said that Zen begins *after* the 'spiritual breakthrough'. One could see it as the next stage of development: the Nondual and what have you. I see it as becoming what one is already.

Bluntly put: to become a Buddha is to realize one's human animality, one's inescapable mortality, one's instinctual, refined ability to play, and to play-with-others. Nothing to do with going up the ladder of a human-centred 'spiritual evolution'.

Although I fail to see the validity of Wilber's map, I respect those – some of them colleagues and friends – who find it useful.

### Critique of Manu Bazzano: a rejoinder

John Rowan

I have to say that I do not like the tone in Manu Bazzano's article at all. It all comes across as rather cheap and sneery. But here are some specific objections.

(1) 'There is no soul' in Wilber's work. On the contrary, the soul is the main character in the Subtle level, as described by Wilber in many of his books. The Subtle level of consciousness is the home of all the main spiritual experiences – gods, goddesses, dakinis, archetypes, angels, nature spirits, mystical experiences, dreams and so forth. And the leading character of this level is the soul. The soul can be given many names, such as Higher Self, Antaratman, daimon, anima and so forth, but it is the hero(ine) of this level, according to Wilber. Dreams belong to this realm, and Wilber exhibits a deep respect for it.

(2) Bazzano shows a complete misunderstanding of the tetralemma, which refers to the main teaching of the Madkhyamika school of Buddhism, and is designed to smash every last little bit of ordinary consciousness, resulting in a complete emptiness and loss of everything. One of the most testing experiences of my life was when I was put through this by a sage. Bazzano shows little respect for this great insight.

(3) 'Current Hegelian scholarship' refers to Catherine Malabou and her excellent insights, which also chime in with the recent and very vigorous work of Slavoj Žižek, who is one of my heroes. This recent work concentrates on the dialectic, rather than on the great historical structures, and in my view is much more interesting. I have corresponded at length with Ken Wilber about Hegel, and he too finds him deeply interesting.

Right at the end of Bazzano's piece, he makes two points which I would like to dispute. One is the statement that the object of meditation is not the achievement of some higher state. As I read Buddhism, the object of all the efforts of reading, engagement, meditation and so forth is to reach Nibbana. Bazzano is highly unorthodox in rejecting this. Nibbana was often referred to by the Buddha, and his followers seemed to understand this pretty well. To reject this is to reject too much.

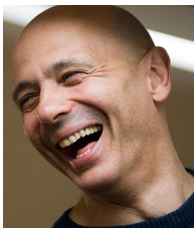
### William West on Bazzano and Rowan

One of West's main points is the adherence to John Heron's critique. I don't feel inclined to answer this in detail, but here are the main lines of a reply.

1. 'It shows no grasp of dynamic dipolarity of inwardness.' This is of course the main thrust of the well-known critique of Michael Washburn, who says that there is a downward movement at a certain point, prior to an upward movement again. This was demolished by someone who actually did some research, published in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, asking people about their own experience of self-development, and who did not find any evidence that this was necessary or, indeed, common.
2. 'This focus on ascent is related to traditional oriental practices.' In Wilber's model there are four basic forms of meditation, all of them useful in moving from the Subtle to the Causal levels of consciousness. They all have the same effect, and all are dedicated to ascent.
3. 'Heron argues that his own experience of spiritual development is not a linear process of ascent.' I can't argue with that – his experience is his experience – but I don't think that is much of an argument against a process which is well demonstrated in Wilber's 80 or so charts in the book *Integral Psychology*. There is also the quite independent research detailed in *Spiral Dynamics*, which is also about linear ascent, and the interesting work of Jenny Wade, which does better justice to the feminine.
4. 'Heron suggests that we can have a working relationship with higher beings on the high subtle level rather than merely pass through this level.' Neither Wilber nor I would quarrel with this – in fact, I would maintain that *all* spiritual experiences are at the Subtle level, because there are no experiences at the Causal level (there is just the one realization that everything is One) and none at the Nondual.
5. 'Heron's model involves ascent and descent and horizontal movement, and that the differing versions of our selves do not need to be discarded for spiritual development.' Of course, as is well known, the Wilber rubric is 'transcend and include', so nothing is discarded.

These seem to be the main points that West makes, and I hope that I have answered them fairly.

### Notes on contributors



**Manu Bazzano** is a psychotherapist, supervisor and visiting lecturer at the University of Roehampton and other colleges and universities in the UK and abroad. He was ordained as a Zen Buddhist monk in both the Soto and Rinzai traditions. He has authored and edited several books, including *Spectre of the Stranger* (2012), *After Mindfulness* (2014) and the forthcoming *Psychotherapy and the Counter-Tradition* (co-edited with Julie Webb), due to be published by Routledge in April 2016. Manu is also the *Self & Society* book reviews editor. Website: [www.manubazzano.com](http://www.manubazzano.com)



**John Rowan** has been working in the field of Humanistic Psychology since 1970, and his book *Ordinary Ecstasy: The Dialectics of Humanistic Psychology* is now in its third edition. He is at present working on a third edition of his book *The Reality Game*, which contains much new material. His work in the field of the transpersonal is now well known, and he has published several chapters in that area in recent compilations. John is life honorary president of the Association for Humanistic Psychology in Britain.

**Professor William West** is a Visiting Professor to the Universities of Chester and Central Lancashire, and is a semi-retired Reader in Counselling Studies at the University of Manchester, where he is most noted for his interest in counselling and spirituality and for his work with doctorate and PhD students. William has published 32 academic papers, 19 book chapters and 25 professional articles. He has written/edited six books, the most recent one being *Therapy, Culture and Spirituality: Developing Therapeutic Practice*, co-edited with Greg Nolan and published by Palgrave in 2015.