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In Memoriam
William Braud, Ph.D.
November 26, 1942—May 13, 2012

Editor’s Note

Remembering William Braud (1942–2012): Recollections from a Student and Friend

Revision and Re-Enchantment of Psychology: Legacy of a Half a Century of Consciousness Research

Organizational Soul-Thieves: A Shamanic Take on Bureaupathology

The Experience of Grace: Divine Assistance in Making a Change

Toward a General Theory of Enaction: Biological, Transpersonal, and Phenomenological Dimensions

On the Question of Sanity: Buddhist and Existential Perspectives

Book Reviews

Transforming self and others through research. Transpersonal research methods and skills for the human sciences and humanities. R. Anderson and W. Braud

Soul to soul: Communications from the heart. G. Zukav

Growing whole: Self-realization for the great turning. M. Young Brown

Manuel clinique des expériences extraordinaires [Clinical manual of exceptional human experiences]. [Written in French]. S. Allix and P. Bernstein

Series: Wisdom of the transpersonal. H. Marshall

Books Our Editors are Reading

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EDITOR’S NOTE

With deep sadness yet joyous remembrance we open this issue with Jay Dufrechou's heartfelt essay tribute to William Braud, respected scholar, author, researcher, educator, colleague, friend and a compelling presence in the maturation of the transpersonal movement and field. How befitting that in this same issue Miles Vich, former long-time editor of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, offers a review of Braud’s recent book, co-authored with Rosemarie Anderson *(Anderson & Braud: Transforming Self and Others Through Research: Transpersonal research methods and skills for the human sciences and humanity)*, written before knowledge about William Braud’s passing.

One may want to read Dufrechou’s tribute and Vich’s book review in tandem with each other; each has the potential to enrich one’s engagement with the other. *Transforming Self and Others* …had been preceded by the authors’ earlier book *(Braud & Anderson, 1998), Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences: Honoring human experience.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Other books reviews include Gary Zukav’s *Soul to Soul*, reviewed by Sahibou Oumarou; *Growing Whole: Self-realization for the great turning*, authored by Molly Young Brown and reviewed by Joshua Rutt, and from the UK long time transpersonalist Hazel Guest reviews a series of publications edited by Hazel Marshall, entitled *Wisdom of the Transpersonal*. In addition, for readers who have some degree of fluency in French, Fabrice Nye has reviewed the *Manuel Clinique des Experiences Extraordinaires [Clinical Manual of Exceptional Human Experiences]* by authors Stéphane Allix and Paul Bernstein. The review, however, is in English.

As a lead into the articles, transpersonal pioneer Stanislav (Stan) Grof, in legacy like manner, offers a window into his half a century (plus) of consciousness research and the manner in which his repeated observations have led him to challenge some enduring assumptions about the nature of consciousness, the genesis of disorders, and other matters. Although such a feat is compressed into an article length essay, nevertheless those new to the transpersonal field as well as more seasoned readers will benefit from thinking and reflecting with him, especially upon future research vistas that he illuminates and, accordingly, move forward in pursuing relevant research agendas for the field and beyond.

As a concluding article, Ken Bradford explains to the reader that his discussion herein is the third and final article in his examination begun several years ago (including an article in this journal) regarding the “theory and practice of psychological diagnosis,” in which he has suggested re-visioning diagnosis and questioned the DSM. In this article he tackles the question of the underlying...
meaning of “sanity” from which diagnosis proceeds and offers challenging questions and considerations for clinicians as well as researchers.

Another veteran transpersonalist and member of the Editorial Board for the journal, Jenny Wade, has teamed up with clinician and emerging scholar Jacelyn Bronte in an exploratory study that investigated the experience of grace or Divine assistance, especially in making a positive change, an area they stressed is a “universal yet under-researched” phenomenon. For their research, the change must have manifested and stabilized in the participants’ lives. Findings illuminated discernible categories of life experiences with which they were struggling and vivid vignettes draw the reader into those experiences, revealing some patterns regarding the dynamics of the experience.

The voices of several first time authors to this Journal are equally strong. David Kowalewski, in a concerned voice, raises and attunes our antennae to a malady permeating an array of organizations—bureaupathology, an environment in which, he warns, employees can lose their souls (or their souls can be “stolen”). Their life force and psychospiritual integrity becomes compromised, a phenomenon that can foster pathologies in an organization. He offers a shamanic organizational paradigm, an integral part of which is the understanding of energy-fields, and concludes with concrete suggestions for both prevention and healing.

Samuel Malkemus addresses and explains the topic of enaction and its origin, as a paradigm currently permeating academic discourse in a variety of fields. Drawing from multi-disciplinary sources, he offers depth as well as breadth in ushering the readers into a deep discussion of the unfolding nature of the human experience as both biological and spiritual beings, moving in relationship (action) to the world around them. As the title suggests, he embraces biological and phenomenological as well as transpersonal dimensions in offering a “general theory of “enaction.” This article is one that would benefit from being studied not just read. Multiple readings may bring a deeper understanding and appreciation of the topic and its importance to the transpersonal community.

Finally, our time-honored Books Our Editors are Reading section offers appeal to a broad array of reader interests. As always, we welcome feedback.

MB
Falls Church, VA USA
ATP Audio Archives Now Available

ATP is working hard to manifest its mission to expand and disseminate the theory and practice of transpersonal psychology by working with Richard Page of Conference Recording Service and John McKenzie of Eleaders to digitize 200 ATP presentations from Stanislav Grof, Charles Tart, Jeanne Achterberg, Ram Dass, Huston Smith, Francis Vaughan, June Singer, Stanley Krippner, Larry Dossey, Joanna Macy, David Whyte, Terry Tafoya, David Steindl-Rast, Michael Harner, Jim Fadiman, Rachel Remen, Mathew Fox and many others.

ATP members can now use their password to visit the members only portion of the ATP Web site and listen to these keynote talks and workshop presentations from the last 16 years of ATP Conferences. This is in addition to being able to access the complete 35 years of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology online.

Your membership in ATP is helping to preserve our transpersonal heritage. ATP possesses a dozen boxes of conference tapes from the past 30 years of ATP conferences, and some boxes of tapes from ITA conferences donated by Stanislav and Christina Grof by Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, and Maslow that seem to be only copies. Some are reel-to-reel tapes and quite fragile. ATP has made the commitment to have them digitized for the web site. Donations to this project are quite welcome and tax deductible. Contact David Lukoff with any questions, problems or donations (both old tapes and money to support the Audio Archives are welcome and tax deductible).

Recorded Presentations Include:

- Jerenemiah Abrams
- Meeting the Shadow: The Hidden Power of the Dark Side

- Jeanne Achterberg, Ph.D.
- Healing Relationships

- Margar Arnedo
- The Art of Sexual Ecstasy: Opening the Door to Transpersonal Sexuality

- Rossmaria Astorga, Ph.D.
- Celtic Chalice: Envisioning an Ancient Tradition

- Jeanneek Armstrong
- Ecpalpsychology From the Roots: Part 1

- Margar Arnedo
- The Hand of Integration & Vision

- Lauren Arterci, D.Min
- The Spirit of Transformation

- Linda Todd Baca
- Eco

- Steve Blackman
- The Alchemy of Humor

- Jean Shinoda Bolen
- Alchemy Vessels, Magical Kingdoms (or Daemons), Sacred PlACES

- Szymon Bocian
- The Future of Transpersonal Psychotherapy

- Sylvia Boorstein, Ph.D.
- Psychotherapy and Spiritual Direction: A Continuum

- Kenneth Bradford, PhD
- Eliciting Natural Resilience

- Gary Brown, M.D.
- Psychodrama and Psychotherapy

- Mark Bryan
- The Artist’s Way

- Julia Cameron
- The Artist’s Way

- Don Campbell
- The Soul in Sound

- Sw. Chandrashekharan
- Spirituality, Sleep and Sexuality

- Allan Chinen, M.D.
- Fairytales/Masculine & Feminine

- Judith Cornwell
- Mandala: Awakening the Soul to Inspired States of Consciousness

- Brant Comerford, PhD
- Psychotherapy as Karma Yoga

- Arthur Daikman
- The Meaning of Human Life: Clinical Applications of a Transpersonal Perspective

- Larry Dossey, MD
- Recovering the Soul:... (Continued)

- Jeff Edson, PhD
- A Transpersonal Approach to Transpersonal Psychology

- Patricia Ellert
- The Importance of Addressing Addictions in Transp. Psych.

- James FBI
- Prayas and Gita: The Dawn of the Shadow

- Peter Ferriero, PhD
- Non-Qualifying

- Matthew Fox
- Transpersonal Psychology and the Global Challenge

- Robert Frager
- The Self-Concept of the Ego-Self Psychology and Its Applications

- Karen Andrews Francis
- Childhood Stasis Recovery as a Path to Divine Union

- Marc Friedman
- The Graf Mystery: The Quest for Personal and Planetary

- Ronald Girolami, PhD
- The Spirit of St. Francis and Deep Ecology

- Judith Guinan, M.A.
- Jewish Mysticism as a Battle for Psychotherapy

- Veronika Goodchild, PhD
- What the Program for Extraordinary Research has Learned About Mind-Extended

- Leslie Gray
- Ecopsychology From the Roots: Part 1

- Ray Greenhalgh
- Music and Sound

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- Decarvation in the Process of Spiritual Awakening

- Charles Grof, M.D
- Psychodrama and Psychotherapy

- Christine Grof
- Addiction, Attachment, and the Human for God

- Stanislav Grof, M.D
- Psychology of the Future

- Anna Halpern
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- Tobi Hart
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- Psychiatry and the Transpersonal at the Millennium

- Michael Hutton
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- Dwight Lusty, Ph.D.
- Christian Contemplative Vision

- Ronald Jure, Ph.D.
- Confronting Shadow as Teacher of Spirit

- Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D.
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- B. Kepron
- Ecology and Transpersonal Psychology

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- The Kabalah and Transpersonal Psychology

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- Spiritual Coaching

- Paul Landwehr
- The Emergence of Ken Wilber’s Integral Psychology

- Frank Lawlis, Ph.D
- Transpersonal Approaches to Pain

- Michael O. Leverst, MD
- Healing from Within: Working with Inner Voices

- Francis O. Lu, M.D.
- Spiritual Emergence in the DSM

- Winifred Lucas
- The Function of Regression Therapy in the Transpersonal Journey
REMEMBERING WILLIAM BRAUD (1942–2012):
RECOLLECTIONS FROM A STUDENT AND FRIEND

Jay Dufrechou, J.D., Ph.D.
Helena, Montana


I first encountered William at a presentation he gave with Genie Palmer and Arthur Hastings, during orientation for my entering cohort in the doctoral program at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP). It was late summer of 1995, long before we were Sofia University. I had found ITP as a means to permit the unfolding and containment of intensely-felt spiritual experience, which I later came to understand as spiritual emergency (Grof & Grof, 1989). With the good graces of my wife, I had stopped working as a lawyer to embrace full time transpersonal studies, even though we had three young children. I was not so much looking for a doctorate in transpersonal psychology as a means to frame and continue what was happening to me. Conducting research was the furthest thing from my mind. ITP was not accredited at the time and I did not care in the least. As a child of the sixties and seventies, I even saw the push for accreditation looming on the horizon as some kind of selling out.

The presentation was in the dojo at the old building on San Antonio Road. As we did then, everyone was sitting on the floor, leaning against pillows along the walls or in chair-backs. William and Arthur were representing the faculty (and Genie was the dissertation coordinator), in describing research at ITP. This discussion included the Transformation Research Project (TRP) that was just beginning, an attempt to study changes in students during the ITP experience. In an earlier meeting, Arthur had told us ITP would “take us apart and put us back together again.” Then, as now, the school focused on education of the whole person, including the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, community-relational and creative aspects of being and becoming. As William wrote much later in “Educating the ‘More’ in Holistic Transpersonal Higher Education: A

E-Mail: jay@dufrechoulaw.com
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30+ Year Perspective on the Approach of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology” (Braud, 2006b), the school aimed to help students recognize there is “More” to our “ways of knowing, being and doing, and More to our nature and worldview, than commonly is recognized in conventional academic education” (p. 134, referencing William James’s (1902/1985) understanding of “More”).

In those days, ITP education was largely experiential. We learned to meditate at a Buddhist center in the Santa Cruz Mountains, took each other apart in a course known as Group Process (the best academic experience of my life), and learned to heal ourselves as a means for healing and serving others. Bob Frager taught Aikido as a model for peacefully handling conflict (as he still does). Jim Fadiman hosted an ongoing class in Sufism where the only rule was that you noticed, and had the opportunity to share, what happened to you in your body and mind when somebody read a Sufi story or poem. Charley Tart taught Mindfulness. Yoga, Psychodrama, and Body Psychology were in the curriculum along with Transpersonal and Developmental Psychology. Oh, and yes, there was some learning about research, followed eventually by writing a dissertation, at least by those who stuck around that long. There is nothing in the world like experiential education, described by William as follows:

Because many of the components of whole-person learning are based on specific and concrete experiences, much of whole-person learning is experiential in nature. “Experiential” learning is fully and deeply lived, immediate, and embodied; it tends to be particular and concrete. It is distinguished from forms of learning (e.g., academic or intellectual forms) that are further removed from what is to be known—i.e., that are mediated—and that tend to be more abstract and cognitive. (p. 137)

I was always amazed at how well William understood whole-person, experiential learning when the man was world class in “abstract and cognitive.” Rosemarie Anderson, William’s intellectual partner at ITP and dear friend for nearly two decades, was her usual succinct self in summarizing: “all of us knew he was smarter than most” (Anderson, in press). I understood William as a classic Five in the Enneagram personality system, described by various authors as the observer, the thinker, the sage, the wise person – a “head type” (Goldberg, 1996; Palmer, 1988; Riso, 1987; Wagner, 1996). Enneagram theorist Michael Hampson (2005) describes the Five as a “head-heart combination,” who is “very conscious of the inner life of head and heart” (p. 64). According to Hampson, the strategy of the Five is “to think it through first”; the path to redemption is to “engage with ‘ordinary’ people and the wider world,” to “see the wisdom in the ordinary,” to appreciate “the wisdom of ordinary humble goodness” (p. 67, 191).

I gradually came to understand William as having transformed himself in a way similar to what transpersonal psychology might offer mainstream academics by playing along with mainstream rules. In transitioning from a rational, quantitative-only world view into the transpersonal, William had
managed to think himself out of the primacy of thinking as a way of knowing. On matters of the heart, he could articulate the logistics, paths, and potentials with the best of them. I see William’s intellectual evolution as an embodiment of where I hope science could be heading. This involves a return to “ordinary life.” In 1998, William recalled introducing himself at a professional conference: “I heard myself saying that I seemed to be on four simultaneous trajectories in my life and work: from matter to spirit, from experimental to experiential, from quantitative to qualitative, and from seeking to service” (Braud & Anderson, 1998, pp. x–xi).

At the research presentation in the dojo, William happened to start talking about the fact that he, Genie and Arthur each had a connection to New Orleans – he loved that kind of coincidence. Arthur was an undergraduate at Tulane, Genie worked for a time at Charity Hospital, and William, like me, was born in New Orleans. Then, as now, I paid attention to synchronicities so the New Orleans factor worked on me as William described the Transformation Research Project’s goal of studying the transformation process in the first two years of ITP’s holistic experiential education. When the meeting ended, I found myself (who was not so interested in research) walking up to William, kneeling down next to him, introducing myself – including that I was originally from New Orleans – and volunteering to assist on the Transformation Research Project. William looked at me with those dark, kind, bespectacled eyes, his face timeless and ageless behind his gray-white beard, and nodded. Without talking about it, William got the New Orleans part completely, said he had been hoping someone would volunteer, and recommended that we meet in his office at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning.

That began two years of near weekly meetings with William, always early in the day, always the same day of the week, to discuss the TRP; but of course our discussions covered all matters in the universe. My meetings with William grounded me during a time when my life was tumultuous and full of spiritual inflation. I could talk about feeling “energy” and getting information psychically – things that were happening to me at the time – and William would ask questions and help put things into a broader, inquiring context. He was genuinely interested in the phenomena I was describing and helped me separate from them enough to regain some equilibrium. He did not intend this; it simply flowed from his maturity and ability to look at experiences with minimal attachment or need. William was extraordinarily kind and cheerful, but a reserved man, private, not your therapeutic-type of teacher and not New-Age-y in the least, although of course he found esoteric topics the potential subject of legitimate inquiry. William was a scientist: curious, interested in verification, parsimonious in terms of what could be inferred from what, and never accepting of conclusions based on a desire to believe – though like me and Fox Mulder of X-Files, I think William did “want to believe” (although not so much about aliens).

Unlike many of us now in the transpersonal field, William had trained, like Rosemarie, in “hard core” experimental psychology – what they would jokingly refer to as “running rats,” also known as research in the areas of
learning, memory and motivation. After undergraduate studies in psychology at the University of New Orleans, including coursework in physics, William completed his doctorate in experimental psychology at the University of Iowa in 1967. He taught psychology at the University of Houston for several years, where his research interests included psychophysiology and biochemistry of memory. William left his tenured Associate Professorship to direct research at the Mind Science Foundation in San Antonio. His research included parapsychology; health and well-being influences of relaxation, intentions, imagery and positive emotions; and psychoneuroimmunology. Early in my weekly conversations with William, it occurred to me “this guy looks familiar” and I found his picture and a description of his work in a book that had been on my shelf for a few years (and which I had actually read, cover to cover): *Parapsychology: The Controversial Science* (Broughton, 1991).

William was one of the leading psi researchers in the world for many years. A running theme in our weekly discussions concerned “psychic abilities.” It was given between us that psi existed; we were talking about the techniques and parameters for discernment of “real” information from the “noise” of personal psychological input and projection. Another of our favorite topics was synchronicities, which William, following Jung, described in a 1983 paper as meaningful coincidences often accompanied by a feeling of numinosity (Braud, 1983). Like a good scientist, William proposed a quantitative method for studying synchronicities, based on his experience “that they tend to occur in series and that such series can be recognized before they are completed” (p. 6). His idea was to notice the beginning of a series then keep track of future occurrences that resonate with the series, along with a means for evaluating the probability of such occurrences. From present perspective, this strikes me as hilariously William – I can envision the probability tables. Nonetheless, my experience, like William’s, was that synchronicities run in packs, often when matters with significant psychic energy come into consciousness (Jung, 1973). More recently, as I shared with William, I have associated synchronicities to some extent with particular astrological transits.

Along with many other fine researchers, William left a body of work strongly suggesting the reality of nonlocal interconnection if viewed objectively. His book, *Distant Mental Influence: Its Contributions to Science, Healing and Human Interactions* (2003), culminated and recapitulated his years of studying the interaction between human consciousness and living systems. The papers included in the book, in William’s words, present empirical evidence that:

> Under certain conditions, it is possible to know and to influence the thoughts, images, feelings, behaviors, and physiological and physical activities of other persons and living organisms – even when the influencer and the influenced are separated by great distances in space and time, beyond the reach of the conventional senses. (p. xviii)

William introduced me to the concept of exceptional human experiences (EHES), a term coined by his friend Rhea White (1997, 1998) to include psychic experiences but also the many numinous occurrences in our ordinary lives that
fall outside the parameters of consensus, material-world-only reality. Like Rhea, William was interested in what happens if people incorporate those experiences into their realities and allow their lives, in a sense, to follow them. This was of course what I was trying to accomplish by coming to ITP – and what William was assisting all those mornings in his office. What happens is that your personal paradigm shifts in an embodied sense, not because you read something but because your understanding of the world changes as experiences begin making sense only in another paradigm. Something shifts when you start moving from “psychic occurrences” to “human experiences.” My own inflated buzz about the paranormal eased into some kind of embodied personal prayer for healing of my psychological, social, and even historical wounds. This was a sobering and often excruciating process, greatly assisted by the experiential ITP program of the time, including those discussions with William.

William had joined the ITP faculty in the fall of 1992. Rosemarie Anderson arrived the same year, which was part of the bond they formed. As William wrote, his move to ITP coincided with a decreasing interest in the certainties that the laboratory could provide about general principles and mechanisms that might underlie psychological processes and experiences and a growing interest in the experiences themselves, as they occur in everyday life – and various ways people understand and appreciate their experiences and attribute meanings and interpretations to them and the strong impacts that exceptional experiences can have on health, well-being, and development. (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. xii)

Much student research at ITP explored transformative or exceptional human experiences. The environment was rich for the day-to-day envisioning of research methods appropriate for transpersonal studies. William recalled an early meeting with other faculty members to discuss what might be “the ideal ITP dissertation” if the research were to honor the “six facets of human functioning (intellectual, somatic, emotional, spiritual, relational, and creative expression)” (Anderson & Braud, 2011, p. 72). He suggested such a dissertation would involve “a variety of alternative modes of knowing, being and doing” – and offered “the metaphor of conducting a dissertation project using ‘multiple eyes’ (ways of knowing), ‘multiple brains’ (ways of working with and understanding one’s data), and ‘multiple mouths’ (ways of expressing and communicating one’s findings)” (p. 73). Less than a year before joining ITP, William had attended the January 1992 Athens Symposium on Science and Consciousness in Greece. He recalled:

As part of that meeting, the invited researchers, working in small groups, were asked to consider the question, “What is consciousness?” After I sat in silence for a while, pondering that question, these thoughts arose: Consciousness is an experience, consciousness is a conceptualization, consciousness is a process with an atmosphere, and consciousness has consequences or fruits – all occurring, all interacting, all changing, all to be honored, each incomplete without the others, all contributing to the whole. Later, I recognized that this
fourfold consideration could be applied not only to consciousness but also to any topic or experience that one wished to study. (p. 73)

William’s vision for transpersonal research joined forces with a similar vision arising in Rosemarie. As student and friend of them both, I remember an energetic mutual motivation that pushed forward the transpersonal research endeavor into a concrete reality. I was in a Quantitative/Qualitative Research course taught jointly by William and Rosemarie, where their formal collaboration began. They were the kind of teachers who could finish each other’s sentences and effortlessly build upon the observations, understandings and innovations of the other. Rosemarie attributes their ease in working together, in part, to their similar training – which left them with shared language and “intellectual imprinting.” She also emphasizes the fun they had together. After all, they were both from rational mainstream worlds and found themselves sitting on the floor of a dojo, a place where administrative staff sometimes sprinkled “pixie dust” on entering Ph.D. candidates.

Rosemarie recalls the joy of working with William: “Our teaching together was to share a state of being; we both spoke from our hearts and minds. Fresh to the impetus of creating transpersonal research methods, our conversations in class were akin to how we spoke in private to each other.” She has allowed me to share that she once kidded William, “You are the only male colleague I know at your age who deserves by any standard to be called an old boy and isn’t!” William smiled, paused a moment, and quietly said, “Yes, I gave up on privilege in some other lifetime.”

I have noticed in my travels that some of us in transpersonal studies have arrived in this place – at least in part – because we chafe against “left brain” academics. Sometimes this means – to be brutally blunt – we just are not so great at the rigors of analyzing quantified information and drawing parsimonious inferences. Many of us are not exactly breaking the charts on sensate function – we may prefer to avoid taxing ourselves with the details of quantification and the headache of remembering what methods actually allow what kinds of claims within the scientific model. This was certainly not the case with William and Rosemarie. They understood mainstream experimental psychology and the paradigm governing its theories and methods so thoroughly and intricately they had come out the other side. Through understanding the limits of the positivist paradigm – and knowing from their own experiences and wide studies the vast and varied experiential potential of humanity – they began to envision a broadening of research approaches and methods to draw upon our more whole selves and to serve the great present human need for transformation.

Out of their intellectual partnership arose two research books. Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences: Honoring Human Experience (Braud & Anderson) was published in 1998. This first book sets forth the vision of transpersonal research as an expansion of conventional research, introduced five new transpersonal research methods “crafted to accommodate the nature of spiritual and transcendent experiences,” and provided rich and varied examples of transpersonal methodological innovations, mostly involving
research conducted at ITP (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 29). In part a collaborative effort with the transpersonal/ITP community, three of the new methods and the thirteen methodological examples (alternative ways of knowing, working with data, and communicating findings) were authored by former students or transpersonal colleagues. As William and Rosemarie noted, a principle holding the book together was the understanding of empirical as “closer to its etymological roots to include all experience” (p. 29).

Among the transpersonal methods introduced in the first book – and further explicated in subsequent publications – were William’s Integral Inquiry (Braud, 1998, 2011) and Rosemarie’s Intuitive Inquiry (Anderson, 1998, 2011a, 2011b). Rosemarie’s method, consistent with the archetypal energy of prophecy, allows one to lean into the future, to envision through succinct interpretations what may be emerging in particular human experience, what lies beyond the known and must be appreciated through discernment of past and present – and intuition about the possibilities inspired. Rosemarie’s writing – and contribution to their joint endeavors – drew upon the skill of concision. In contrast, consistent with the archetypal energy of the sage, William’s writing tended to cover all possible implications and parameters of an issue. As Rosemarie once put it to me, William tended “to cover all four corners.” I understood this to describe his tendency to write in a manner that enclosed knowledge on a topic comprehensively, as if everything were already in the room, the “rug” of the topic reaching all four corners of the enclosure. Often, his writing did strike me as designed to pre-answer any question that would come up, to “cover all the bases” to use a more common metaphor. I always thought Rosemarie said this to me in part as a warning that if I tried to emulate William and get all those four corners I would never finish my dissertation.

Consistent with the character of an Enneagram Five, William wanted to know everything about something and to recognize in his work the many prior understandings of the “something” in our history. Given the man’s breadth and depth of knowledge and reading, including science, philosophy, mysticism, and many aspects of psychology, this led to a great deal of information in his writings. The home page of William’s website contains quotes from William James, Carl Jung, Evelyn Underhill, and F. W. H. Myers. Throughout the site can be found gems of wisdom from many of the more ancient wise ones, as well as pertinent quotes from poets, novelists, and scientists of various times. Intimately familiar with many of the tranpersonally relevant insights of our ancestors, William cautioned researchers, when gathering literature, to resist the “temptation to restrict attention to a too-limited time window” (Anderson & Braud, 2011, p. 93.) He wrote:

This seems to be but another aspect of a pervasive syndrome of overvaluing the latest new thing. Such time-limited literature review suggests that knowledge has an expiration date – that findings and thoughts older than five years or so can be discounted as no longer valid or applicable. Although progress undoubtedly has been made in many areas (chiefly in terms of technology), there are many instances in which early thinking and work rival, and sometimes even surpass, more recent efforts. (p. 93)
William was interested in the future, but he also wanted to hold onto all that we have brought with us. In the Preface to his first book with Rosemarie (Braud & Anderson, 1998), William expressed gratitude for the “number and diversity of the research approaches encountered at different points in my career” (p. xi). Then, gently, as though he wanted to offend none of them, he conceded, “gradually…the limitations of each method became evident, and it was time to explore other, more appropriate tools” (Braud & Anderson, p. xi). It was very much William to hold onto the old while embracing the new. He knew this was partly related to his character:

An aspect of my temperament – akin, perhaps, to some sublimated hoarding instinct – did not allow me to discard any of the previous tools. After all, these were excellent tools, well adapted to their respective purposes, and it seemed a shame to abandon any of them. So my collection of methods – my toolbox – grew progressively larger, its contents remaining handy, awaiting future opportunities to be of use. (p. xi)

An aspect of William’s wisdom was his understanding of the necessity (and beauty) of multiple perspectives. William knew from experience that the particularities of understanding flowed from perspective and focusing of a lens. He envisioned everything in the universe – past, present, future – as swirling together, including research methods. He wrote:

Still another aspect of my temperament – which I whimsically call my Cajun-Taoist nature – kept me from seeing any of these diverse methods as incompatible or antithetical to one another. I saw them as complements: one providing what another lacked, each an essential yet incomplete part of the whole. For me, the methods were interlocked in an embrace, not of conflict or battle but of dance – swirling together to the tune of “both-and” rather than “either-or.” (p. xii)

The particular method William articulated, Integral Inquiry, encouraged the blending of any and all methods appropriate for a particular research project. Methods were expanded for possible inclusion of the different channels of human experience. Research was held as an invitation for transformation of all those involved – researcher, participant, and reader. While Integral Inquiry was William’s personal approach, the following articulation of transpersonal research – covering all four corners, if you will – was the result of years of collaboration, and yet fundamentally all William. As the opening description of Integral Inquiry in the second research book, Transforming Self and Others Through Research: Transpersonal Research Methods and Skills for the Human Sciences and Humanities (Anderson & Braud, 2011), William wrote (and I have added spacing between some sentences and clauses in the attempt to make it easier to take in the description, which is dense in its completeness):

This approach includes and integrates aspects of the research enterprise that conventional research approaches deliberately keep separate. Inclusion and integration take place in three major areas.
First, a research session may simultaneously provide opportunities for knowledge gain for the discipline; clinical, educational and other benefits for the research participants; and psycho-spiritual growth and the possibility of transformational change for the researcher (and also the research participants and for the eventual readers of the research report).

Second, a greater understanding of the topic of inquiry is made possible through attention to the nature of experiences, their history and conceptualization, their dynamic unfolding and the processes that facilitate or inhibit them, and their outcomes or fruits.

Third, in the course of the investigation, the integral inquirer practices many complementary forms of knowing, being, and doing – including conventional, tacit, intuitive, body-based, feelings-based, and direct forms of knowing; ordinary and nonordinary states of consciousness; analytical/linear and nonanalytical/nonlinear ways of working with data; and alternative ways of expressing findings (themes, narratives, metaphors, similes, symbols, and nonverbal creative expressions).

(Braud, 2011, pp. 71–72)

If William and Rosemarie’s first book described a vision for transpersonal research, the second book leaves a mature, seasoned template for rigorous transpersonal investigation of topics that matter. (Transforming Self and Others Through Research is reviewed by Miles Vich in this issue of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology.) As the title suggests, the book is for researchers as people interested in the expansion of their lives and ways of being in the world, as well as broadening of their research skills to include the various modalities of being, knowing, and communicating recognized in what we can now call transpersonal research methodology. Some of the possibilities for preparedness and skills of the transpersonal researcher, described at length in the book, include: “intention, quietude and slowing, attention and mindfulness”; inclusion of “visual, auditory, visceral, and movement-related senses in research”; attention to “unconscious processes, direct knowing, and empathic identification”; and incorporation of “play, creative arts, and embodied writing” (pp. vii–viii).
As rigorous a transpersonal research praxis William and Rosemarie articulated, their offerings of epistemologies, approaches, conceptions, methods, and specific practices for researchers were variegated, open, and intended for evolution – just like spirituality itself, at least when not reified into dogmatic religion. What weaves together the mature vision of the second book is the recommendation that researchers hold an intention to transform self and others in positive ways – in important part through attention to their whole-person, embodied lives as lived moment to moment. William and Rosemarie closed the second book: “If we want to help create a kind world, a generous world, a peaceful world, a beneficent world to all the creatures that inhabit our beautiful blue globe – as researchers and scholars, we must first become the qualities of kindness, generosity, peacefulness, and beneficence we want” (p. 317).

This was how I remember William – as this type of scholar. All of our lifetimes are short enough. In his seven decades on earth, William managed to publish over 293 writings, including professional articles, book chapters and the three books. Consistent with his generous spirit and that of his wife Winona Schroeter, most of his writings remain available at http://inclusivepsychology.com. Typical of William, he organized his “archived papers” into general topics: extended research methods and approaches; parapsychology, psi research, and psychical research; consciousness studies; spirituality; exceptional human experiences; and transpersonal studies. While writing diligently, he also generously served ITP students as teacher, committee member and Dissertation Director for many years. Rosemarie considers him one of the best copy-editors she has ever known. From my own experience, I know William read student work with the utmost of care and provided exhaustive, specific comments for improvement. To the extent there is technical quality to the ITP dissertations of the 1990s and early 2000s, William must be remembered. In addition, I was not the only student mentored by William with interest and kindness; there were many – he is missed by numerous individuals and by a community.

As William grounded me, he helped ground ITP in its own time of incipient transformation. The school was the brilliant love child of many people, including founders Bob Frager and Jim Fadiman, as well as many other gifted teachers, administrators and scholars. The Transformation Research Project (Braud, Dufrechou, Raynolds & Schroeter, 2000) was important in documenting the value of ITP education during consideration of the school for accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. WASC representatives were very impressed by the school’s attempt to measure the effectiveness of whole person and experiential learning. William contributed heavily to the detailed work necessary for what was eventually a successful WASC application. I remember William quietly and unobtrusively preparing documentation and drafting responses to repeated requests for information. He did this without fanfare and without claiming any leadership role in the school’s trajectory toward mainstream acceptance.

My meetings with William ended with my completion of residential coursework and my family’s move from California to Montana. But our dialogue
continued. During the long years of the Bush II Presidency, William and I exchanged many exasperated emails. He wrote a lot about “mendacity,” which amused me greatly. To my mind, with that word, we were back to our roots in the American South – who other than Southerners rant about the mendacity of a leader who happens to be a Yankee pretending to be a Southerner, for gain. I suspect William’s exasperation with the mendacity of those times was rooted in his trust in the decency of what he called “ordinary folk.” His integrity did not take well to the manipulation of ordinary people into fear, hatred, and war – for goals William and I suspected were unnecessary, destructive, and enmeshed with issues of power, greed and hubris.

Ultimately, William’s willingness to respect other people may have been the salient feature of his personal paradigm shift. This may also have involved a movement toward the ordinary. He wrote about his transition toward trust with respect to research:

[My] earlier stance was characterized by a quest for a high level of certainty about my findings, concerns with fine-grained nets of causality (what “really” caused what?), and much concern about not fooling myself. This was accompanied by an attitude of excessive caution, skepticism, doubt, and mistrust – especially of people’s “merely anecdotal” subjective reports. The newer stance involved less concern with certainty about fine-grained mechanisms or paths of causality but greater feelings of trust – trust that things were as they appeared to be and trust that people could be aware and discerning enough to be able to give valid accounts of their experiences and their impacts. (Braud & Anderson, 1998, pp. xii)

In his new approach, William was more trusting of research participants “to remain free from self-deceptions in presenting their accounts of what was going on in their lives and their world,” more trusting of himself “to make responsible judgments” about his findings “without excessive reliance on the automatic decisional tools that sophisticated designs and statistics had previously provided,” and more trusting of readers of research “to weigh evidence on their own subjective scales, exercise sound judgment, and reach valid conclusions about presented findings” (Braud & Anderson, 1998, pp. xii–xiii). William had not lost his interest in reality. Rather, his experience and the depth of his thinking led him to understand that reality was multi-faceted, multi-dimensional, and woven together from infinite perspectives. He also knew that, paradoxically, all perspectives and experiences blend together into a whole. My ITP training, including what I learned from William, taught me that we will not better understand reality through separation and objectification but, rather, through trusting our own experience, and that of others, enough to delve deeply into its intricacies and observe its transformation. This trust – in some ways a leap of faith – may be what social science requires in order to help humanity really grow up and out of our tendencies toward the mendacious.

In 2002, William and Rosemarie both transferred to the Global Program of ITP, creating an online, low-residency doctorate. I had just finished my dissertation and was back to working full time in the law, this time drawing
heavily on transpersonal skills in work as a mediator and with those “difficult 
people” Genie Palmer once observed many of us ITP alums end up serving. When William and Rosemarie went “global,” I tagged along with them, moonlighting from the job that paid the bills, first as a “mentor” (reader, workshop leader, and “holder of space” for students in the first two years of the program), then as sometimes dissertation committee member and teacher of courses in later program years. William continued his indefatigable role with students, primarily teaching and supervising research. His shift to the Global Program allowed him to return to his beloved Texas, where he and Winona had more space, were closer to nature, and once again had dogs living with them.

William was kind enough to keep up with me as with many former students. He never missed wishing me a happy Mardi Gras, always including in his greeting the New Orleans maxim laissez les bons temps roulez (let the good times roll). I tended to email him when I could not remember something or wanted to know something and knew he would know. I also continued to share synchronicities with him, particularly a “good one” or a “run of them.” He was always appreciative and insightful. One experience in particular will be forever merged with my memory of William. I had told William years ago that in my early days of spiritual awakening, I would be somewhere and suddenly have an insight or numinous moment, then look down and find a penny. William appreciated the pennies, perhaps in part because pennies are the smallest denomination of money, very unassuming. At some point in later years, I told him that when I had pennies in my pocket, I started dropping them surreptitiously, for others to find. He observed that I was becoming the Johnny Appleseed of synchronicities.

Around four years ago, I started traveling to England for workshops in Holotropic Breathwork, facilitated by the Grof Transpersonal Training Program. I returned to breathwork after many years in part as a means of coping with enormous stress and non-stop disciplined effort surrounding building my own law/mediation practice. As with all things, the real work was on myself, including learning to release fear, anger, and defensiveness into patience, stamina, and acceptance of the never-ending chaos and need in the arena of my work (and I will note, for anyone with astrological interest, that this time of personal-professional transformation coincided with Pluto transiting over my natal Saturn).

Holotropic Breathwork is of course available in the United States, but I wanted to expand myself, and experience deep work, in another country. This was in part a response to the mendacity William and I had lamented. Let me share that there were times “on the mat” in breathwork when I was screaming and cursing with a particular Vice President in mind, asking a facilitator to put pressure on my ears to relieve something like an embodied inner ear trauma from having heard too many things I didn’t believe. I wanted to experience connection with some of the many people from around the world who I intuited were like me, believing in a potential for humanity not based in fear or need to dominate. While there is a certain amount of affluence in being able to
fly to England from Montana (though SkyMiles help), I simply wanted to experience myself as a citizen of the world, not of any one country, un citoyen du monde, one of us humans.

My initial experience in the UK had been everything I wanted and more. It was time for me to return home. I left my London hotel very early one morning to get the tube to Heathrow, feeling a profound sense of belonging and gratitude. It was still dark. I was on the verge of emotion, envisioning possibilities, including a coming together of peoples globally. I crossed a street in the Seven Dials area and was stunned to see the sidewalk glimmering with pennies, lit up by a street lamp. British pennies of course, but similar to ours, just a bit larger. A girl child’s plastic coin purse lay nearby, fallen and open. I stopped short, leaned against a wall, and wept – some for the child’s loss but mostly in gratitude for seeing so many pennies. I soon emailed William about the experience, which he appreciated in the way only William could have appreciated. My memory of him now is forever wrapped up with those pennies spread all over the sidewalk, unexpected, glimmering, a bit like a constellation of stars.

William appreciated the small things, the just enough. Perhaps my favorite piece of his writing is “Experiencing Tears of Wonder-Joy: Seeing with the Heart’s Eye” (Braud, 2001). The article begins: “A series of coincidences brought me here. I have come to this shop, in a part of this city that is new to me, in search of icons and incense” (p. 99). The shop was closed, but William entered the Russian Orthodox Cathedral next door and was greatly moved to watch the liturgy, which involved singing and candles, along with the incense and icons he had been seeking. Then, as he wrote:

The liturgy ends. As the celebrants disappear into the sanctuary and close the gates and doors, I feel a sadness – a sense of loss. But now, a tall, solitary burning candle is placed outside the holy of holies. Tears fill my eyes, and along with the tears come gooseflesh and feelings of chills and thrills – a tingling feeling in my spine, arms, shoulders, neck, and back. My breathing becomes slightly irregular. The tears intensify. I gaze at the single, tiny flame through watery eyes, as the chills continue. What has just happened has profound meaning for me. The celebrants have disappeared into the secret, holy place; they, and what they represent, are no longer accessible. Yet the single burning taper remains. I feel the sun has been taken away, hidden; but the spark remains as reminder and promise of the greater light that, although unseen, may be subtly sensed. The solitary candle is a tiny spark symbolic of, reflecting, a great sun within. Eventually, the tears stop; the chills cease caressing my spine. I feel a profound gratitude. (pp. 99–100)

About this form of sacred tears, William wondered: “Could the experience of wonder-joy tears be the equivalent of the soul’s feathering confrontation with forms of beauty that evoke reminiscences of a supermundane realm?” (p. 103). William listed some of his personal triggers of wonder-joy tears, including
Finding a small bit of milk, unexpectedly, in the refrigerator, when I ‘knew’ there was none left, and it being just enough to go with cereal – being overjoyed at such a simple surprise and being grateful that I could be moved by something so simple; knowing that my wife would appreciate this and be similarly moved, and that this simplicity is something we share. (pp. 103–104)

When I find the unexpected “just enough,” I think of William and his unintentional mentoring of me in humility and gratitude. Though it cannot be forced, I suspect there are few things more likely to save us humans than appreciation of “just enough.”

Another of William’s triggers of wonder-joy tears involved a memory from his trip to Athens mentioned above. Tears came to him from:

Appreciating the meaning of certain buildings at the Acropolis in Greece – how truths and lessons were dramatized, communicated in permanent structures. Connected to this was a feeling of the meaning of the gods, goddesses, and archetypes; an anger and frustration at not having been taught such simple, true things many, many years ago; and a delight that I had at last seen and understood such simple, true things. (p. 104)

Other triggers of his wonder-joy tears were: “As part of my work, reading proposals and dissertations in which the goodness and spiritual light of the writer shines forth from the pages” (p. 104) and “Witnessing anything that is truly honest, open, free from guile or craft” (p. 103). Another of his recollected wonder-joy tears involved an email I sent him years ago about something my daughter said to me out of the blue, with no schooling in reincarnation: “Reading a message about someone’s 4-year-old daughter who asks her father, ‘When I’m old and then I die and then I’m a baby again, are you going to be my daddy again?’” (p. 105).

Another was: “A student reading, in one of my classes, the ‘Tale of the Sands,’ a Sufi story in which I recognized so much more this time than on other occasions – especially the wind/spirit connection and the role of surrender, trust, letting go of the concrete body, of individuality, in order to move into another realm” (p. 104). I also understand the “Tale of the Sands” (Shah, 1993, pp. 23–24) as a metaphor for transformation from this life to another – and I want it to be about reincarnation. In my meetings with William, on a number of occasions, I tried to get him to tell me that we humans reincarnate. I wanted him to tell me, “Yes, Jay, we come back; we never really die.” He wouldn’t go there. He would never say never about much of anything, but what he told me, at least, was that he suspected it was more like a drop of water returning to the ocean. Maybe that was his unwillingness to ask for more than “just enough,” an ultimate humility, which could be a lesson to those of us New Agers greedily expecting an endless series of “lives.”

In 2006, William wrote a book chapter for a collection of essays on the survival of human consciousness, “Conversations about Survival: Novel Theoretical, Methodological, and Empirical Approaches to Afterlife Research” (Braud,
2006a). His ideas were presented through a fictional conversation between seminar participants. As usual, just about all the four corners for the possibilities of investigating survival were suggested, including what was to my mind basically (and hilariously, to me) a recommendation that we communicate with apparitions and ask them whether there is an after-life. That was so William. If this had come up in one of our discussions, I would have given him back his “drop back into the ocean” theory and observed: it does not follow from the existence of apparitions that a permanent afterlife also exists; it could be that deceased people sometimes linger in an apparition state but eventually pass over into a place where individuality dissolves. William would likely have responded, “Nevertheless, they may know more about the after-life possibilities than we do.”

Interesting to me was his suggestion in the chapter that “mind” and “consciousness” might be considered dynamic processes rather than static entities, verbs more than nouns. In his closing quote from Aurobindo, William’s fictional alter-ego suggested what William may have come to believe: “The psychic when it departs from the body, shedding even the mental and vital on its way to its resting place, carries with it the heart of its experiences...something essential that it gathered from them, what might be called the divine element for the sake of which the rest existed” (p. 93, quoting Aurobindo, 1970, pp. 451–452). This makes sense to me; and also jives with my growing sense from astrology that we may come back into this plane at a time and place where energies are constellating that pick up where we left off, so to speak.

William retired in 2010, a bit earlier than he expected. He joked about receiving “time off for good behavior.” The tongue-in-cheek reference to early parole did not suggest lack of appreciation for his teaching and involvement with students, but acknowledged some weariness from the level of concentration and diligence with which he had worked for many years. He was also excited to have more time to read and write, in peace. Many of us were heartbroken to learn of William’s diagnosis of cancer of the throat not more than a year after his retirement. His treatments left him uncomfortable though he maintained optimism and continued the gift of his online presence to friends and former colleagues. While he was in treatment, fires raged near his house in Bastrup, Texas, requiring prolonged evacuation and fear of losing his home. In an email to those many people concerned about him and Winona, he wondered, with continued sense of humor, “What next, locusts?” William and Winona’s home was spared, though properties close by were destroyed. He expressed wonder and gratitude for what seemed to many of us a very small favor.

A few years ago, I began describing to William my growing interest in astrology. Winona, with her own interest and experience in astrology, was gracious enough to send me a reading of my natal chart. My association with the Holotropic Breathwork community took me deeper into astrology, which I described to William from time to time. Participating in one of my synchronicities, William recommended that I become familiar with the work of Keiron Le Grice, editor of Archai: Journal of Archetypal Astrology and...
author of *The Archetypal Cosmos: Rediscovering the Gods in Myth, Science and Astrology* (2010). Another friend, Tim Read, publisher of new transpersonally oriented works in the United Kingdom through Muswell Hill Press, made the identical recommendation around the same time. I had also independently come across an article written by Stan Grof (2009/2011) on “Holotropic Research and Archetypal Psychology,” published in *Archai.* (Stan follows up on this and related matters in an article in this issue of the JTP entitled *Revision and Re-Enchantment of Psychology: Legacy of a half a century of consciousness research.*)

A few months after William’s passing, I was having a meal with Keiron at Croydon Hall, a retreat center in Somerset, UK. I had spent time with Keiron twice previously, but we had originally been unable to schedule a meeting this trip. Then, through a series of strange events, Keiron was called upon at the last minute to fill in as lecturer in archetypal astrology at the Grof Transpersonal Training workshop I was attending. I had “breathed” that day, which led to my experiencing sores in my mouth, perhaps due to the release of toxins in the breathwork. Keiron and I were left alone at the table. As I was talking to Keiron, I realized “this is a whole lot like talking to William.” Although Keiron is fifteen years my junior, while William was about the same number of years my senior, there was an easy compatibility in matter-of-fact discussion of spiritual-esoteric matters as part of life – a shared curiosity and exchange of stories. There was good will without attachment or expectation. Although I was greatly enjoying the conversation, I had difficulty talking without pain due to the situation of my mouth. Then I remembered that one of William’s primary discomforts during his illness and treatment was mouth sores. My situation paled in comparison to his suffering, but I felt deeply connected to him.

I realized I needed to tell Keiron about my friend William Braud who had passed a few months ago. Among other things, I described my sense of William, year after year, pouring his wisdom, clarity, integrity, compassion and kindness into his work with students – “reading all those papers, one after the other, making lengthy and supportive comments, helping to carry people forward.” Keiron, who teaches transpersonal topics himself, now often in online settings, nodded, his eyes filled with tears. He knew exactly what I meant and knew exactly how much giving is involved. Strangely, I was convinced that somehow William had guided me to Keiron because he knew he was leaving and thought I might need a friend of a particular type. To Keiron, I joked, trying to talk without hurting my mouth, “Perhaps we were all monks together in some other life.”

William passed on May 13, 2012. Nine days prior, an email came to friends and former colleagues from his address, which I assumed Winona had sent at his request. The heading was “a truly amazing video.” The message contained a link to a short film by Louie Schwartzberg, presented as one of the TEDtalks in 2011, titled *The Hidden Beauty of Pollination* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cq5eK1). The video provides breath-taking close-ups of hummingbirds, bees, bats, and butterflies flying around, pollinating flowers
and plants. In his introduction to the video, Schwartzberg talks about the co-evolution of flowers and pollinators over 50 million years, noting that beauty and seduction are some of nature’s tools for survival. Near the end of the brief film, thousands upon thousands of butterflies are flying against the background of enormous trees, shimmering orange and black against blue sky and green leaves. The last image is full screen of one Monarch butterfly, very slowly opening and closing its wings. Upon receiving the email, I watched the video, in tears, and understood that William and Winona knew he was nearing his transition. My prayers shifted.

I consider it synchronistic that I began writing this tribute to William in the days before the winter solstice of 2012, when the great Mayan “end of the world” was prophesized to occur. If William were still at the end of that email, I would certainly have written him about the coming (end?) days to wish him the best for the possible apocalypse. He would have responded in kind, though the teacher in him might have been tempted to explain the likely deeper, and more real, meaning of what the Mayans expected. That would likely have involved a prophesy that when universal polarities shifted, there would be the possibility of a new world based on turning within, a return to understanding the primacy of consciousness, our source in spirit, and inter-connection at non-material levels. My own prophesy: from such turning within – and the deeply difficult psychological work that follows – comes the hope for some necessary shifts in the outer world.

In 2007, William and Rosemarie (Anderson & Braud) authored a short visionary paper titled “Transpersonal Research from a Global Perspective.” They proposed

a transpersonal vision for research in ITP that (a) honors the world’s wisdom psychologies, (b) invites all these psychologies to help us “reinvent” ourselves as a global community, (c) affirms our interdependence on one another and the natural world, (d) furthers the well-being of the natural world, and (e) encourages all people to become perfectly themselves in their own time and place. (p. 2)

Among their observations in the paper was that:

From a global perspective, important research projects would be those that might increase our understanding of the nature of factors that can contribute to a healthy and sustainable world, identify and promote processes (both individual and societal, local and nonlocal) that can best satisfy the world’s greatest needs, and that can help reduce tendencies that act as barriers to the satisfaction of those needs. (p. 2)

In remembering William and their work together, Rosemarie said they had both long ago reached the point where they each just “did the next thing.” No hoopla, a lot of concentration, but minimal struggle – and no drama. Strangely, my friend Keiron had just told me the same thing a few months prior – I had asked something about his approach to life and he said, word for
word, “I just do the next thing.” I think I understand what this means. Something about trust, surrender, service, non-attachment, and getting out of my own way. William is no longer with us, at least not as we knew him in matter, but the rest of us have our work cut out for us if we are going to “reinvent ourselves as a global community.” It will not be easy. That said, maybe we just need to get out of our own way – to get over ourselves, as my kids would say – and just do that next thing. And, as William recommended to me every Mardi Gras, laissez les bons temps roulez.

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The Author

Jay Dufrechou earned his Ph.D. in Transpersonal Psychology in 2002 from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP), now Sofia University. His prior education includes a B.A. in English with emphasis on Creative Writing from Stanford (1980) and a law degree from the University of California, Berkeley (1984). With his wife of 31 years, Jay lives in the mountains outside Helena, Montana, where elk are sometimes on the hill above his home and coyotes often wake him up at night with their calling. It is cold in the winter, but that reminds him of all those prior lives in the ice ages. Jay works as a lawyer and mediator in the field of workers’ compensation, which typically involves advocating for medical treatment and wage replacement for people with limited means and no health insurance. Jay is also adjunct faculty for Sofia University, sitting on dissertation committees and teaching Transpersonal Research Ethics and a course assisting students in their first draft of a research proposal. He hopes in the foreseeable future to complete a book tentatively titled, Grieving for Nature, Grieving for Self: Coming Home to Nature through the Body, based in part on his ITP dissertation.
REVISION AND RE-ENCHANTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY: LEGACY OF HALF A CENTURY OF CONSCIOUSNESS RESEARCH

Stanislav Grof, M.D.
Mill Valley, California

ABSTRACT: Drawing on observations from more than fifty years of research into an important subgroup of non-ordinary states of consciousness that he calls “holotropic,” the author suggests a revision of some basic assumptions of modern psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy. The proposed changes involve the nature of consciousness and its relationship to matter, dimensions of the human psyche, the roots of emotional and psychosomatic disorders, and therapeutic strategy. In the light of the new observations, spirituality appears to be an essential attribute of the human psyche and of existence in general. An important and controversial subject that could be only tangentially addressed in the context of this paper is the importance of archetypal psychology and astrology for consciousness research.

MODERN CONSCIOUSNESS RESEARCH AND THE DAWNING OF A NEW PARADIGM

In 1962, Thomas Kuhn, one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century, published his groundbreaking book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Kuhn, 1962). On the basis of fifteen years of intensive study of the history of science, he demonstrated that the development of knowledge about the universe in various scientific disciplines is not a process of gradual accumulation of data and formulation of ever more accurate theories, as usually assumed. Instead, it shows a clearly cyclical nature with specific stages and characteristic dynamics, which can be understood and even predicted.

The central concept of Kuhn’s theory, which makes this possible, is that of a paradigm. A paradigm can be defined as a constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques shared by the members of the scientific community at a particular historical period. It governs the thinking and research activities of scientists until some of its basic assumptions are seriously challenged by new observations. This leads to a crisis and emergence of suggestions for radically new ways of viewing and interpreting the phenomena that the old paradigm is unable to explain. Eventually, one of these alternatives satisfies the necessary requirements to become the new paradigm that then dominates the thinking in the next period of the history of science.

The most famous historical examples of paradigm shifts have been the replacement of the Ptolemaic geocentric system by the heliocentric system of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo; the overthrow of Becher’s phlogiston theory...
in chemistry by Lavoisier and Dalton; and the conceptual cataclysms in physics in the first three decades of the twentieth century that undermined the hegemony of Newtonian physics and gave birth to theories of relativity and quantum physics. Paradigm shifts tend to come as a major surprise to the mainstream academic community, since its members tend to mistake the leading paradigms for an accurate and definitive description of reality. Thus in 1900 shortly before the advent of quantum-relativistic physics, Lord Kelvin purportedly declared in an address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science: “There is nothing new to be discovered in physics now. All that remains is more and more precise measurements.”

In the last five decades, various avenues of modern consciousness research have revealed a rich array of “anomalous” phenomena – experiences and observations that have undermined some of the generally accepted assertions of modern psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy concerning the nature and dimensions of the human psyche, the origins of emotional and psychosomatic disorders, and effective therapeutic mechanisms. Many of these observations are so radical that they question the basic metaphysical assumptions of materialistic science concerning the nature of reality and of human beings and the relationship between consciousness and matter.

**Holotropic States of Consciousness**

In this article, I will summarize the conclusions from more than half a century of research of an important subgroup of non-ordinary states for which I coined the name “holotropic.” Before I address this topic, I would like to explain this term that I will be using throughout this article. All these years, my primary interest has been to explore the healing, transformative, and evolutionary potential of non-ordinary states of consciousness and their great value as a source of new revolutionary data about consciousness, the human psyche, and the nature of reality.

From this perspective, the term “altered states of consciousness” commonly used by mainstream clinicians and theoreticians is not appropriate, because of its one-sided emphasis on the distortion or impairment of the “correct way” of experiencing oneself and the world. (In colloquial English and in veterinary jargon, the term “alter” is used to signify castration of family dogs and cats.) Even the somewhat better term “non-ordinary states of consciousness” is too general, since it includes a wide range of conditions that are not relevant from the point of view of the focus of this article, such as trivial deliria caused by infectious diseases, abuse of alcohol, or circulatory and degenerative diseases of the brain. These alterations of consciousness are associated with disorientation, impairment of intellectual functions, and subsequent amnesia; they are clinically important, but lack therapeutic and heuristic potential.

The term “holotropic” refers to a large subgroup of non-ordinary states of consciousness that are of great theoretical and practical importance. These are the states that novice shamans experience during their initiatory crises and later induce in their clients for therapeutic purposes. Ancient and native cultures
have used these states in rites of passage and in their healing ceremonies. They were described by mystics of all ages and initiates in the ancient mysteries of death and rebirth. Procedures inducing these states were also developed and used in the context of the great religions of the world – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

The importance of holotropic states of consciousness for ancient and aboriginal cultures is reflected in the amount of time and energy that the members of these human groups dedicated to the development of “*technologies of the sacred,*” various procedures capable of inducing them for ritual and spiritual purposes. These methods combine in various ways drumming and other forms of percussion, instrumental music, chanting, rhythmic dancing, changes of breathing, and cultivation of special forms of awareness. Extended social and sensory isolation, such as stays in a cave, desert, arctic ice, or in high mountains, also play an important role as means of inducing this category of non-ordinary states. Extreme physiological interventions used for this purpose include fasting, sleep deprivation, dehydration, use of powerful laxatives and purgatives, and even infliction of severe pain, body mutilation, and massive bloodletting. By far the most effective tool for inducing healing and transformative non-ordinary states has been ritual use of psychedelic plants.

When I recognized the unique nature of this category of non-ordinary states of consciousness, I found it difficult to believe that contemporary psychiatry does not have a specific category and term for these theoretically and practically important experiences. Because I felt strongly that they deserve to be distinguished from “altered states of consciousness” and not be seen as manifestations of serious mental diseases, I started referring to them as *holotropic.* This composite word means literally “oriented toward wholeness” or “moving toward wholeness” (from the Greek *holos* = whole and *trepo/*trepein = moving toward or in the direction of something). The word holotropic is a neologism, but it is related to a commonly used term *heliotropism* – the property of plants to always move in the direction of the sun.

**Holotropic States and the Spiritual History of Humanity**

The name holotropic suggests something that might come as a surprise to an average Westerner - that in our everyday state of consciousness we identify with only a small fraction of who we really are and do not experience the full extent of our being. Holotropic states of consciousness have the potential to help us recognize that we are not “skin-encapsulated egos” – as British philosopher and writer Alan Watts called it – and that, in the last analysis, we are commensurate with the cosmic creative principle itself. Or that – using the statement attributed to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, French paleontologist and philosopher – “we are not human beings having spiritual experiences, we are spiritual beings having human experiences.”

This astonishing idea is not new. In the ancient Indian Upanishads, the answer to the question: “Who am I?” is “Tat tvam asi.” This succinct Sanskrit
sentence means literally: “Thou art That,” or “You are Godhead.” It suggests that we are not “namarupa” – name and form (body/ego), but that our deepest identity is with a divine spark in our innermost being (Atman) which is ultimately identical with the supreme universal principle that creates the universe (Brahman). Hinduism is not the only religion that has made this discovery. The revelation concerning the identity of the individual with the divine is the ultimate secret that lies at the mystical core of all great spiritual traditions. The name for this principle could thus be the Tao, Buddha, Shiva (of Kashmir Shaivism), Cosmic Christ, Pleroma, Allah, and many others. Holotropic experiences have the potential to help us discover our true identity and our cosmic status (Grof, 1998). Sometimes this happens in small increments, other times in the form of major breakthroughs.

MODERN CONSCIOUSNESS RESEARCH AND PSYCHOLOGY OF THE FUTURE

Psychedelic research and the development of intensive experiential techniques of psychotherapy in the second half of the twentieth century moved holotropic states from the world of healers of preliterate cultures into modern psychiatry and psychotherapy. Therapists who were open to these approaches and used them in their practice were able to confirm the extraordinary healing potential of holotropic states and discovered their value as goldmines of revolutionary new information about consciousness, human psyche, and nature of reality. I became aware of the remarkable properties of holotropic states in 1956 when I volunteered as a beginning psychiatrist for an experiment with LSD-25. During this experiment, in which the pharmacological effect of LSD was combined with exposure to powerful stroboscopic light (“driving” or ”entraining” of the brainwaves), I had an overwhelming experience of cosmic consciousness (Grof, 2006). This experience inspired in me a lifelong interest in holotropic states; research of these states has become my passion, profession, and vocation. Since that time, most of my clinical and research activities have consisted of systematic exploration of the therapeutic, transformative, heuristic, and evolutionary potential of these states. The five decades that I have dedicated to consciousness research have been for me an extraordinary adventure of discovery and self-discovery. I spent approximately half of this time conducting psychotherapy with psychedelic substances, first in Czechoslovakia in the Psychiatric Research Institute in Prague and then in the United States, at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center in Baltimore, where I participated in the last surviving American psychedelic research program. Since 1975, my wife Christina and I have worked with Holotropic Breathwork, a powerful method of therapy and self-exploration that we jointly developed at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. Over the years, we have also supported many people undergoing spontaneous episodes of non-ordinary states of consciousness - psychospiritual crises or “spiritual emergencies,” as Christina and I call them (Grof & Grof 1989, 1991).

In psychedelic therapy, holotropic states are brought about by administration of mind-altering substances, such as LSD, psilocybin mescaline, and
tryptamine or amphetamine derivatives. In holotropic breathwork, consciousness is changed by a combination of faster breathing, evocative music, and energy-releasing bodywork. In spiritual emergencies, holotropic states occur spontaneously, in the middle of everyday life, and their cause is usually unknown. If they are correctly understood and supported, these episodes have an extraordinary healing, transformative, and even evolutionary potential.

In addition, I have been tangentially involved in many disciplines that are, more or less directly, related to holotropic states of consciousness. I have spent much time exchanging information with anthropologists and have participated in sacred ceremonies of native cultures in different parts of the world with and without the ingestion of psychedelic plants, such as peyote, ayahuasca, and Psilocybe mushrooms. These explorations involved contact with various North American, Mexican, South American, and African shamans and healers. I have also had extensive contact with representatives of various spiritual disciplines, including Vipassana, Zen, and Vajrayana Buddhism, Siddha Yoga, Tantra, and the Christian Benedictine order.

Another area that has received much of my attention has been thanatology, the young discipline studying near-death experiences and the psychological and spiritual aspects of death and dying. In the late 1960s and early 1970s I participated in a large research project studying the effects of psychedelic therapy in individuals dying of cancer. I also have had the privilege of personal acquaintance and experience with some of the great psychics and parapsychologists of our era, pioneers of laboratory consciousness research, and therapists who had developed and practiced powerful forms of experiential therapy that induce holotropic states of consciousness.

My initial encounter with holotropic states was very difficult and intellectually, as well as emotionally, challenging. In the early years of my laboratory and clinical research with psychedelics, I was bombarded daily with experiences and observations, for which my medical and psychiatric training had not prepared me. As a matter of fact, I was experiencing and seeing things, which—in the context of the scientific worldview I obtained during my medical training—were considered impossible and were not supposed to happen. Yet, those obviously impossible things were happening all the time. I have described these “anomalous phenomena” in my articles and books (Grof 2000, 2006).

In the late 1900s, I received a phone call from Jane Bunker, my editor at State University New York Press, which had published many of my books. She asked me if I would consider writing a book that would summarize the observations from my research in one volume that would serve as an introduction to my already published books. She also asked if I could specifically focus on all the experiences and observations from my research that current scientific theories cannot explain and suggest the revisions in our thinking that would be necessary to account for these revolutionary findings. This was a “tall order,” but also a great opportunity. My seventieth birthday was rapidly approaching and a new generation of facilitators was conducting our Holotropic Breathwork training all over the world. We needed a manual.
covering the material that was taught in our training modules, and here was an offer to provide it for us.

The result of this exchange was a book with a deliberately provocative title: “Psychology of the Future.” The radical revisions in our understanding of consciousness and the human psyche in health and disease that I suggested in this work fall into the following categories:

1. The Nature of Consciousness and Its Relationship to Matter
2. Cartography of the Human Psyche
3. Architecture of Emotional and Psychosomatic Disorders
4. Effective Therapeutic Mechanisms
5. Strategy of Psychotherapy and Self-Exploration
6. The Role of Spirituality in Human Life
7. The Importance of Archetypal Astrology for Psychology

In my opinion, these are the areas that require drastic changes in our thinking. Without them, the understanding of psychogenic emotional and psychosomatic disorders and their therapy will be superficial, unsatisfactory, and incomplete. Psychiatry and psychology will lack genuine comprehension of the nature and origin of spirituality and of the important role that it plays in the human psyche and in the universal scheme of things. Many potentially healing and transformative experiences will be misdiagnosed as psychotic and treated by suppressive medication. In addition, a large array of the experiences and observations from the research of holotropic states will remain mystifying “anomalous phenomena”, events that according to the current scientific paradigms should not occur. It will also be difficult for mental health professionals to accept the therapeutic power of psychedelic substances, mediated by experiences that are currently seen as psychotic—as indicated by the terms experimental psychosis, psychotomimetics, or hallucinogens used by mainstream clinicians and academicians—rather than germane expressions of deep dynamics of the psyche.

Considering my own initial resistance to the bewildering experiences and observations from the research of holotropic states, as well as phenomena associated with them (such as astonishing synchronicities), it would not surprise me if the above suggestions encounter strong resistance in the academic community. This is understandable, considering the scope and radical nature of the necessary conceptual revisions. There is a strong tendency in mainstream academic and clinical circles to “confuse map and territory” and consider current theories concerning consciousness and the human psyche in health and disease to be a definitive and accurate description of reality (Bateson, 1972). We are not talking here about a minor patchwork, technically called “ad hoc hypotheses,” but a major fundamental overhaul. The resulting conceptual cataclysm would be comparable in its nature and scope to the revolution that physicists had to face in the first three decades of the twentieth century when they had to move from Newtonian to quantum-relativistic physics. And, in a sense, it would represent a logical complement to the radical changes in understanding of the material world that have already happened in physics.
In the history of science, individuals who suggested such far-reaching changes in the dominant paradigm have not enjoyed very enthusiastic reception; their ideas were initially dismissed as products of ignorance, poor judgment, bad science, fraud, or even insanity. I am now in the ninth decade of my life; this is the time when researchers often try to review their professional career and outline the conclusions at which they have arrived. More than half a century of research of holotropic states—my own, as well as that of many of my transpersonally-oriented colleagues—has amassed so much supportive evidence for a radically new understanding of consciousness and of the human psyche that I am willing to take my chance and describe this new vision in its entirety, fully aware of its controversial nature. The fact that it challenges the most fundamental metaphysical assumptions of materialistic science should not be a sufficient reason for rejecting it. Whether it will be refuted or accepted should be determined by unbiased future research of holotropic states.

**The Nature of Consciousness and its Relationship to Matter**

According to the current scientific worldview, consciousness is an epiphenomenon of material processes; it allegedly emerges out of the complexity of the neurophysiological processes in the brain. This thesis is presented with great authority as an obvious fact that has been proven beyond any reasonable doubt. However, if we subject it to closer scrutiny, we discover that it is a basic metaphysical assumption that is not supported by facts and actually contradicts the findings of modern consciousness research. We have ample clinical and experimental evidence showing deep correlations between the anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry of the brain, on the one hand, and states of consciousness, on the other. However, none of these findings proves unequivocally that consciousness is actually generated by the brain. Even sophisticated theories based on advanced research of the brain, such as Stuart Hameroff’s suggestion that the solution of the problem of consciousness might lie in understanding the quantum processes in the microtubules of brain cells on the molecular and supramolecular level (Hameroff, 1987), falls painfully short of bridging the formidable gap between matter and consciousness and illuminating how material processes could generate consciousness.

The origin of consciousness from matter is simply assumed as an obvious and self-evident fact based on the metaphysical assumption of the primacy of matter in the universe. In the entire history of science, nobody has ever offered a plausible explanation as to how consciousness could be generated by material processes, or even suggested a viable approach to the problem. We can use here as illustration the book by Francis Crick (1994) *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul*; its jacket carried a very exciting promise: “Nobel Prize-winning Scientist Explains Consciousness.”

Crick’s “astonishing hypothesis” was succinctly stated at the beginning of his book: “You, your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules. [Who
you are is "nothing but a pack of neurons" (p. 3) At the beginning of his book, "to simplify the problem of consciousness," Crick narrows it to the problem of optical perception. He presents impressive experimental evidence showing that the visual perception is associated with distinct physiological, biochemical, and electrical processes in the optical system from the retina to the suboccipital cortex. There the discussion ends as if the problem of consciousness was satisfactorily solved.

In reality, this is where the problem begins. What is it that is capable of transforming chemical and electric processes in the brain into a conscious experience of a reasonable facsimile of the object we are observing, in full color, and project it into three-dimensional space? The formidable problem of the relationship between *phenomena* (things as we perceive them) and *noumena* (things as they truly are in themselves—Dinge an sich) was clearly articulated by Immanuel Kant (Kant, 1781/1999). Scientists focus their efforts on the aspect of the problem where they can find answers—the material processes in the brain. The much more mysterious problem—how physical processes in the brain generate consciousness—does not receive any attention, because it is incomprehensible and cannot be solved.

The attitude that Western science has adopted in regard to this issue resembles the famous Sufi story. On a dark night, Mullah Nasruddin, a satirical Sufi figure, is crawling on his knees under a street lamp. His neighbor sees him and asks: "What are you doing? Are you looking for something?" Nasruddin answers that he is searching for a lost key and his neighbor offers to help. After some time of unsuccessful joint effort, the helper is confused and feels the need for clarification. "I don’t see anything! Are you sure you lost it here?" he asks. Nasruddin shakes his head; he points his finger to a dark area outside of the circle illuminated by the lamp and replies: “Not here, over there!” The helper is puzzled and inquires further: “So why are we looking for it here and not over there?” “Because it is light here and we can see. Over there, we would not have a chance!”

In a similar way, materialistic scientists have systematically avoided the problem of the origin of consciousness, because this riddle cannot be solved within the context of their conceptual framework. The idea that consciousness is a product of the brain naturally is not completely arbitrary. Its proponents usually refer to a vast body of very specific clinical observations from neurology, neurosurgery, and psychiatry, to support their position. The evidence for close correlations between the anatomy, neurophysiology, and biochemistry of the brain, and consciousness is unquestionable and overwhelming. What is problematic is not the nature of the presented evidence but the conclusions that are drawn from these observations. In formal logic, this type of fallacy is called *non sequitur*—an argument in which its conclusion does not follow from its premises. While these experiments clearly show that consciousness is closely connected with the neurophysiological and biochemical processes in the brain, they have very little bearing on the nature and origin of consciousness.

The fallacy of attributing the cause of consciousness solely to material and biological processes can be illustrated by looking at the relationship between
the TV set and the television program. The situation here is much clearer, since it involves a system that is human-made and its operation well known. The final reception of the television program, the quality of the picture and of the sound, depends in a very critical way on proper functioning of the TV set and on the integrity of its components. Malfunctioning of its various parts results in very distinct and specific changes of the quality of the program. Some of them lead to distortions of form, color, or sound, others to interference between the channels, etc. Like the neurologist who uses changes in consciousness as a diagnostic tool, a television mechanic can infer from the nature of these anomalies which parts of the set and which specific components are malfunctioning. When the problem is identified, repairing or replacing these elements will correct the distortions.

Since we know the basic principles of the television technology, it is clear to us that the set simply mediates the program and that it does not generate it. We would laugh at somebody who would try to examine and scrutinize all the transistors, relays, and circuits of the TV set and analyze all its wires in an attempt to figure out how it creates the programs. Even if we carry this misguided effort to the molecular, atomic, or subatomic level, we will have absolutely no clue why, at a particular time, a Mickey Mouse cartoon, a Star Trek sequence, or a Hollywood classic appear on the screen. The fact that there is such a close correlation between the functioning of the TV set and the quality of the program does not necessarily mean that the entire secret of the program is in the set itself. Yet this is exactly the kind of conclusion that traditional materialistic science drew from comparable data about the brain and its relation to consciousness.

There actually exists ample evidence suggesting exactly the opposite, namely that consciousness can under certain circumstances operate independently of its material substrate and can perform functions that reach far beyond the capacities of the brain. This is most clearly illustrated by the existence of out-of-body experiences (OOBEs). These can occur spontaneously, or in a variety of facilitating situations that include shamanic trance, psychedelic sessions, hypnosis, experiential psychotherapy, and particularly near-death experiences (NDEs). In all these situations consciousness can separate from the body and maintain its sensory capacity, while moving freely to various close and remote locations. Of particular interest are “veridical OOBEs,” where independent verification proves the accuracy of perception of the environment under these circumstances. In near-death situations, veridical OOBEs can occur even in people who are congenitally blind for organic reasons (Ring & Cooper, 1999; Ring & Valarino, 1998). There are many other types of transpersonal phenomena that can mediate accurate information about various aspects of the universe that had not been previously received and recorded in the brain (Grof, 2000).

Materialistic science has not been able to produce any convincing evidence that consciousness is a product of the neurophysiological processes in the brain. It has been able to maintain its present position only by ignoring, misinterpreting, and even ridiculing a vast body of observations indicating that consciousness...
can exist and function independently of the body and of the physical senses. This evidence comes from parapsychology, anthropology, LSD research, experiential psychotherapy, thanatology, and the study of spontaneously occurring holotropic states of consciousness. All these disciplines have amassed impressive data demonstrating clearly that human consciousness is capable of doing many things that the brain (as understood by mainstream science) could not possibly do and that it is a primary and further irreducible aspect of existence.

**Cartography of the Human Psyche**

Traditional academic psychiatry and psychology use a model of the human psyche that is limited to postnatal biography and to the individual unconscious as described by Sigmund Freud. According to Freud, our psychological history begins after we are born; the newborn is a *tabula rasa*, a clean slate. Our psychological functioning is determined by an interplay between biological instincts and influences that have shaped our life since we came into this world – the quality of nursing, the nature of toilet training, various psychosexual traumas, development of the superego, our reaction to the Oedipal triangle, interpersonal dynamics in the nuclear family, and conflicts and traumatic events in later life. Who we become and how we psychologically function is determined by our postnatal personal and interpersonal history.

The Freudian individual unconscious is also essentially a derivative of our postnatal history; it is a repository of what we have forgotten, rejected as unacceptable, and repressed. This underworld of the psyche, or the *id* as Freud called it, is a realm dominated by primitive instinctual forces. Freud described the relationship between the conscious psyche and the unconscious using his famous image of the submerged iceberg. What we thought to be the totality of the psyche is just a small part of it, like the section of the iceberg showing above the surface. Psychoanalysis discovered that a much larger part of the psyche, comparable to the submerged part of the iceberg, is unconscious and, unbeknown to us, governs our thought processes and behavior.

Many of Freud’s theoretical speculations and therapeutic claims have been seriously questioned by mainstream theoreticians and clinicians. However, his general model of the psyche, limited as it is to postnatal biography and the individual unconscious, has been adopted by modern psychology and psychiatry. In the work with holotropic states of consciousness induced by psychedelics and various non-drug means, as well as those occurring spontaneously, this model proves to be painfully inadequate. To account for all the phenomena occurring in these states, we must drastically revise our understanding of the dimensions of the human psyche. Besides the *postnatal biographical level* that it shares with traditional psychology, the new expanded cartography includes two additional large domains.

The first of these domains can be referred to as *perinatal*, because of its close connection with the trauma of biological birth. This region of the unconscious
contains the memories of what the fetus experienced in the consecutive stages of the birth process, including the emotions and physical sensations involved. These memories form four distinct experiential clusters, each of which is related to one of the stages of childbirth. I have coined for them the term Basic Perinatal Matrices (BPM I-IV). BPM I consists of memories of the advanced prenatal state just before the onset of the delivery. BPM II is related to the first stage of the birth process when the uterus contracts, but the cervix is not yet open. BPM III reflects the struggle to be born after the uterine cervix dilates. And finally, BPM IV holds the memory of the emerging into the world, the birth itself. The content of these matrices is not limited to fetal memories; each of them also represents a selective opening into the areas of the historical and archetypal collective unconscious, which contain motifs of similar experiential quality. Detailed description of the phenomenology and dynamics of perinatal matrices can be found in my various publications (Grof, 1975, 2000).

The official position of academic psychiatry is that biological birth is not recorded in memory and does not constitute a psychotrauma. The usual reason for denying the possibility of birth memory is that the cerebral cortex of the newborn is not mature enough to mediate experiencing and recording of this event. More specifically, the cortical neurons are not yet completely “myelinized” - covered with protective sheaths of a fatty substance called myelin. Surprisingly, the same argument is not used to deny the existence and importance of memories from the time of nursing, a period that immediately follows birth. The psychological significance of the experiences in the oral period and even “bonding” - the exchange of looks and physical contact between the mother and child immediately after birth - is generally recognized and acknowledged by mainstream obstetricians, pediatricians, and child psychiatrists (Klaus, Kennell, & Klaus 1995; Kennell & Klaus, 1998).

The myelinization argument makes no sense and is in conflict with scientific evidence of various kinds. It is well known that memory exists in organisms that do not have a cerebral cortex at all. In 2001, American neuroscientist of Austrian origin, Erik Kandel, received a Nobel Prize in physiology for his research of memory mechanisms of the sea slug Aplysia, an organism incomparably more primitive than the newborn child. The assertion that the newborn is not aware of being born and is not capable to form a memory of this event is also in sharp conflict with extensive fetal research showing the extreme sensitivity of the fetus already in the prenatal stage (Moon, Lagercrantz, & Kuhl, 2010; Tomatis, 1991; Whitwell, 1999). The most likely explanation of this striking logical inconsistency in the thinking of clinicians and academicians with rigorous scientific training is psychological repression and resistance in regard to the terrifying memory of biological birth.

The second transbiographical domain of the new cartography can best be called transpersonal, because it includes a rich array of experiences in which consciousness transcends the boundaries of the body/ego and the usual limitations of linear time and three-dimensional space. This results in experiential identification with other people, groups of people, other life forms, and even elements of the inorganic world. Transcendence of time
provides experiential access to ancestral, racial, collective, phylogenetic, and karmic memories. Yet another category of transpersonal experiences can take us into the realm of the collective unconscious that the Swiss psychiatrist C. G. Jung called archetypal. This region harbors mythological figures, themes, and realms of all the cultures and ages, even those of which we have no intellectual knowledge (Jung, 1959).

In its farthest reaches, individual consciousness can identify with the Universal Mind or Cosmic Consciousness, the creative principle of the universe. Probably the most profound experience available in holotropic states is identification with the Supracosmic and Metacosmic Void, primordial Emptiness and Nothingness that is conscious of itself. The Void has a paradoxical nature; it is a vacuum, because it is devoid of any concrete forms, but it is also a plenum, since it seems to contain all of creation in a potential form. This experience seems to be related to the concept of the PSI or Akashic field formulated by world-famous system theorist and philosopher Ervin Laszlo. According to him, it is a subquantum field which is the source of all creation and in which everything that happens remains holographically recorded. Laszlo equates this field with the concept of quantum vacuum that has emerged from modern physics (Laszlo, 2003, 2004).

The existence and nature of transpersonal experiences violates some of the most basic assumptions of materialistic science. They imply such seemingly absurd notions as relativity and arbitrary nature of all physical boundaries, nonlocal connections in the universe, communication through unknown means and channels, memory without a material substrate, nonlinearity of time, or consciousness associated with all living organisms, and even inorganic matter. Many transpersonal experiences involve events from the microcosm and the macrocosm, realms that cannot normally be reached by unaided human senses, or from historical periods that precede the origin of the solar system, formation of planet earth, appearance of living organisms, development of the nervous system, and emergence of homo sapiens.

Having spent more than half a century studying transpersonal experiences, I have no doubt that many, if not most of them, are ontologically real and are not products of metaphysical speculation, human imagination, or pathological processes in the brain. It would be erroneous to dismiss them as products of fantasy, primitive superstition, or a manifestation of mental disease, as has so frequently been done. Anybody attempting to do that would have to offer a plausible explanation why these experiences have in the past been described so consistently by people of various races, cultures, and historical periods. He or she would also have to account for the fact that these experiences continue to emerge in modern populations under such diverse circumstances as sessions with various psychedelic substances, during experiential psychotherapy, in meditation of people involved in systematic spiritual practice, in near-death experiences, and in the course of spontaneous episodes of psychospiritual crisis. Detailed discussion of the transpersonal domain, including descriptions and examples of various types of transpersonal experiences can be found in my various publications (Grof, 1975, 1985, 1987, 2000).
In view of this vastly expanded model of the psyche, we could now paraphrase Freud’s simile of the psyche as an iceberg. We could say that everything Freudian analysis has discovered about the psyche represents just the top of the iceberg showing above the water. Research of holotropic states has made it possible to explore the colossal rest of the iceberg hidden under water, which has escaped the attention of Freud and his followers, with the exception of the remarkable renegades Otto Rank and C. G. Jung. Mythologist Joseph Campbell, known for his incisive Irish humor, used a different metaphor: “Freud was fishing while sitting on a whale.”

**THE NATURE, FUNCTION, AND ARCHITECTURE OF EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS**

To explain various emotional and psychosomatic disorders that do not have an organic basis (“psychogenic psychopathology”), traditional psychiatrists use a superficial model of the psyche limited to postnatal biography and the individual unconscious. They believe that these conditions originate in infancy and childhood as a result of various emotional traumas and interpersonal dynamics in the family. There seems to be general agreement in schools of dynamic psychotherapy that the depth and seriousness of these disorders depends on the timing of the original traumatization.

Thus, according to classical psychoanalysis, the origin of alcoholism, narcotic drug addiction, and manic-depressive disorders can be found in the oral period of libidinal development, obsessive-compulsive neurosis has its roots in the anal stage, phobias and conversion hysteria result from traumas incurred in the “phallic phase” and at the time of the Oedipus and Electra complex, and so on (Fenichel, 1945). Later developments in psychoanalysis linked some very deep disorders - autistic and symbiotic infantile psychoses, narcissistic personality, and borderline personality disorders – to disturbances in the early development of object relations (Blanck & Blanck, 1974, 1979). As I mentioned earlier, this does not apply to Rankian and Jungian therapists who are aware of the fact that the roots of emotional disorders reach deeper into the psyche.

The above conclusions have been drawn from observations of therapists using primarily verbal means. The understanding of psychogenic disorders changes radically if we employ methods that involve holotropic states of consciousness. These approaches engage levels of the unconscious, which are out of reach of verbal therapy. Initial stages of this work typically uncover relevant traumatic material from early infancy and childhood that is meaningfully related to emotional and psychosomatic problems and appears to be their source. However, when the process of uncovering continues, deeper layers of the unconscious unfold and we find additional roots of the same problems on the perinatal level and on the transpersonal level of the psyche.

Various avenues of work with holotropic states, such as psychedelic therapy, Holotropic Breathwork, or psychotherapy with people experiencing spontaneous psychospiritual crises, have shown that emotional and psychosomatic...
problems cannot be adequately explained as resulting exclusively from postnatal psychotraumatic events. The unconscious material associated with them typically forms multilevel dynamic constellations for which I have coined the term systems of condensed experience or COEX systems (Grof 1975, 2000). A typical COEX system consists of many layers of unconscious material that share similar emotions or physical sensations; the contributions to a COEX system come from different levels of the psyche.

More superficial and easier available layers contain memories of emotional or physical traumas from infancy, childhood, and later life. On a deeper level, each COEX system is typically connected to a certain aspect of the memory of birth, a specific BPM; the choice of this matrix depends on the nature of the emotional and physical feelings involved. If the theme of the COEX system is victimization, this would be BPM II, if it is fight against a powerful adversary or sexual abuse, the connection would be with BPM III, for a positive COEX comprising memories of deeply satisfying and fulfilling situation BPM I or IV and so on.

The deepest roots of COEX systems underlying emotional and psychosomatic disorders reach into the transpersonal domain of the psyche. They have the form of ancestral, racial, collective, and phylogenetic memories, experiences that seem to be coming from other lifetimes ("past life memories"), and various archetypal motifs. Thus therapeutic work on anger and disposition to violence can, at a certain point, take the form of experiential identification with a tiger or a black panther, the deepest root of serious antisocial behavior can be a demonic archetype, the final resolution of a phobia can come in the form of reliving and integration of a past life experience, and so on.

The overall architecture of the COEX systems can best be shown using a clinical example. A person suffering from psychogenic asthma might discover in serial breathwork sessions a powerful COEX system underlying this disorder. The biographical part of this constellation might consist of a memory of near drowning at the age of seven, memories of being repeatedly strangled by an older brother between the ages of three and four, and a memory of severe choking during whooping cough or diphtheria at the age of two. The perinatal contribution to this COEX could be, for example, suffocation experienced during birth because of strangulation by the umbilical cord twisted around the neck. A typical transpersonal root of this breathing disorder would be an experience of being hanged or strangled in what seems to be a previous lifetime. A detailed discussion of COEX systems, including additional examples appears in several earlier publications (Grof, 1975, 1987, 2000).

**Effective Therapeutic Mechanisms**

Traditional psychotherapy knows only therapeutic mechanisms operating on the level of the biographical material, such as weakening of the psychological defense mechanisms, remembering of forgotten or repressed traumatic events, reconstructing the past from dreams or neurotic symptoms, attaining
intellectual and emotional insights, analysis of transference, and corrective experience in interpersonal relations. Psychotherapy using holotropic states of consciousness offers many additional highly effective mechanisms of healing and personality transformation, which become available when experiential regression reaches the perinatal and transpersonal levels. Among these are actual reliving of traumatic memories from infancy, childhood, biological birth, and prenatal life, past life memories, emergence of archetypal material, experiences of cosmic unity, and others.

I will illustrate this therapeutic dynamics by the story of a participant in one of our workshops at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, whom I will call Norbert. At the beginning of the workshop, Norbert complained about severe chronic pain in his left shoulder and pectoral muscle that had caused him great suffering and made his life miserable. Repeated medical examinations, including X-rays, had not detected any organic basis for his problem and all therapeutic attempts had remained unsuccessful. Serial Procaine injections had brought only brief transient relief for the duration of the pharmacological effect of the drug.

Norbert’s session was long and very dramatic. In the sharing group, he described that there were three different layers in his experience, all of them related to the pain in his shoulder and associated with choking. On the most superficial level, he relived a frightening situation from his childhood in which he almost lost his life. When he was about seven years old, he and his friends were digging a tunnel on a sandy ocean beach. When the tunnel was finished, Norbert crawled inside to explore it. As the other children jumped around, the tunnel collapsed and buried him alive. He almost choked to death before he was rescued by the adults who arrived responding to the children’s alarming screams.

When the breathwork experience deepened, Norbert relived a violent and terrifying episode that took him back to the memory of his biological birth. His delivery was very difficult, since his shoulder was stuck for an extended period of time behind the pubic bone of his mother. This episode shared with the previous one the combination of choking and severe pain in his left shoulder.

In the last part of the session, the experience changed dramatically. Norbert started seeing military uniforms and horses and recognized that he was involved in a fierce battle. He was even able to identify it as one of the battles in Cromwell’s England. At one point, he felt a sharp pain in his left shoulder and realized that it had been pierced by a lance. He fell off the horse and experienced himself as being trampled by the horses running over his body and crushing his chest. His broken rib cage caused him agonizing pain, and he was choking on blood, which was filling his lungs.

After a period of extreme suffering, Norbert’s consciousness separated from his dying body, soared high above the battlefield, and observed the scene from a bird’s eye view. Following the death of the severely wounded soldier,
whom he recognized as himself in a previous incarnation, Norbert’s consciousness returned to the present time and reconnected with his body, which was now pain-free for the first time after many years of agony. The relief from pain brought about by these experiences turned out to be permanent.

**Strategy of Psychotherapy and Self-Exploration**

The most astonishing aspect of modern psychotherapy is the number of competing schools and the lack of agreement among them. They have vast differences of opinion concerning the most fundamental issues, such as what are the dimensions of the human psyche and what are its most important motivating forces; why do symptoms develop and what they mean; which issues that the client brings into therapy are central and which are less relevant; and, finally, what technique and strategy should be used to correct or improve the emotional, psychosomatic, and interpersonal functioning of the clients.

The goal of traditional psychotherapies is to reach intellectual understanding of the human psyche, in general, and that of a specific client, in particular, and then use this knowledge in developing an effective therapeutic technique and strategy. An important tool in many modern psychotherapies is “interpretation”; it is a way in which the therapist reveals to the client the “true” or “real” meaning of his or her thoughts, emotions, and behavior. This method is widely used in analyzing dreams, neurotic symptoms, behavior, and even seemingly trivial everyday actions, such as slips of the tongue or other small errors, Freud’s “Fehlleistungen” (Freud, 1960a). Another area in which interpretations are commonly applied is interpersonal dynamics, including transference of various unconscious feelings and attitudes on the therapist.

Therapists spend much effort trying to determine what is the most fitting interpretation in a given situation and what is the appropriate timing of this interpretation. Even an interpretation that is “correct” in terms of its content, can allegedly be useless or harmful for the patient if it is offered prematurely, before the client is ready for it. A serious flaw of this approach to psychotherapy is that individual therapists, especially those who belong to diverse schools, would attribute very different value to the same psychological manifestation or situation and offer for it diverse and even contradictory interpretations.

Because of the great conceptual differences between the schools of depth psychology, the question naturally arises which of them has a more correct understanding of the human psyche in health and disease. If it were true that correct and properly timed interpretations are a significant factor in psychotherapy, there would have to be great differences in the therapeutic success achieved by various schools. Their therapeutic results could be mapped on a Gaussian curve; therapists of the school with the most accurate understanding of the psyche and, therefore, most fitting interpretations would have the best results and those belonging to orientations with less accurate
conceptual frameworks would be distributed on the descending parts of the curve.

To my knowledge, there are not any scientific studies showing clear superiority of some schools of psychotherapy over others. If anything, the differences are found within the schools rather than between them. In each school there are better therapists and worse therapists. And, very likely, the therapeutic results have very little to do with what the therapists think they are doing – the accuracy and good timing of interpretations, correct analysis of transference, and other specific interventions. Successful therapy probably depends on factors that do not have much to do with intellectual brilliance and are difficult to describe in scientific language, such as the “quality of the human encounter” between therapists and clients, the feeling of the clients that they are unconditionally accepted by another human being, frequently for the first time in their life, or the strength of hope and expectations that the client feels during the therapeutic process.

In their remarkable comprehensive books Jerome Frank, Julia Frank, and Renato Alarcón discussed the challenges associated with the attempts to measure the effects of psychotherapy and to contrast schools and related theories with one another (Frank & Frank, 1993; Alarcón & Frank, 2011). They showed clearly the difficult methodological problems that these endeavors encounter. Meta-analyses have produced some evidence that psychotherapy can have positive effects, but failed to detect significant differences between the therapeutic success of various competing schools of psychotherapy or of experienced therapists and novices.

The lack of generally accepted theory of psychotherapy and of basic agreement concerning therapeutic practice is very disconcerting. Under these circumstances, a client who has an emotional or psychosomatic disorder can choose a school by flipping a coin. With each school comes a different explanation of the problem he or she brought into therapy and a different technique is offered as the method of choice to overcome it. Similarly, when a beginning therapist seeking training chooses a particular therapeutic school, it says more about the personality of the applicant than the value of the school.

The problem with many of the psychotherapeutic schools is that they correctly describe the dynamics of a certain level of the psyche but lack the understanding of the phenomena from other levels and try to interpret them in terms of their own conceptual framework. For example, Freud’s system was limited to postnatal biography and the individual unconscious; he was not aware of the paramount importance of birth and of the collective unconscious. He referred to birth memories as birth fantasies and tried to interpret archetypal/mythological and parapsychological phenomena in terms of his model limited to postnatal biography. Otto Rank, who discovered the psychological importance of the trauma of birth, offered explanations of archetypal (mythological and religious) motifs that described them as derivatives of perinatal dynamics. C. G. Jung, who discovered and described the vast domains of the historical and archetypal collective unconscious was
unable to see the psychological importance of the birth trauma. In an interview with Dr. Richard I. Evans, he laughingly dismissed Otto Rank’s theory: “Oh, birth is not a trauma, it is a fact; everybody is born” (Jung, 1957). An effective psychotherapeutic system has to recognize and respect all the levels of the psyche. The unconscious content that is explored and processed, as it unfolds from session to session, is determined by the client’s own process. The therapist needs to have a broad enough conceptual framework to be able to accompany the clients to any level of their unconscious psyche – biographical, perinatal, and/or transpersonal and support their respective experiences (Vaughan, 1993).

It is interesting to see how therapy using holotropic states of consciousness can help us to avoid the dilemmas inherent in the situation described above. The alternative that this work brings actually confirms some ideas about the therapeutic process first outlined by C. G. Jung. According to Jung, it is impossible to achieve intellectual understanding of the psyche and derive from it a technique that we can use in psychotherapy. As he saw it in his later years, the psyche is not a product of the brain and is not contained in the skull; it is the creative and generative principle of the cosmos (anima mundi). It permeates all of existence and the individual psyche of each of us is teased out of this unfathomable cosmic matrix. The boundaries between the anima mundi and the individual psyche are not absolute; they are permeable and can be transcended in holotropic states. The intellect is a partial function of the psyche that can help us orient ourselves in everyday situations. However, it is not in a position to fathom the deepest mysteries of existence and comprehend and manipulate the psyche.

There is a wonderful passage in Victor Hugo’s Les Misérables: “There is one spectacle grander than the sea, that is the sky; there is one spectacle grander than the heavens; that is the interior of the soul.” Jung was aware of the fact that the psyche is a profound mystery and approached it with great respect. It was clear to him that the psyche is infinitely creative and cannot be described by a set of formulas that can then be used to correct the psychological processes of the clients. He suggested an alternative strategy for therapy that was significantly different from using intellectual constructs and external interventions.

What a psychotherapist can do, according to Jung, is to create a supportive environment, in which psychospiritual transformation can occur; this container can be compared to the hermetic vessel that makes alchemical processes possible. The next step then is to offer a method that mediates contact between the conscious ego and a higher aspect of the client, the Self. One of Jung’s tools for this purpose was active imagination, involving continuation of a dream on the analyst’s couch and its analysis in statu nascendi (von Franz, 1997), rather than retrospective analysis of the dream from memory. This was different from Freud’s interpretation of dreams using memories that were sometimes months or even years old. The communication between the ego and the Self occurs primarily by means of symbolic language. In Jung’s own words, “active imagination is a process of consciously dialoguing with our unconscious for the production of those contents of the unconscious which lie, as it were, immediately...
below the threshold of consciousness and, when intensified, are the most likely to erupt spontaneously into the conscious mind” (Jung 1969, p. 67). In this kind of work, healing is not the result of brilliant insights and interpretations of the therapist; the therapeutic process is guided from within the client’s psyche.

In Jung’s understanding, the Self is the central archetype in the collective unconscious and its function is to lead the individual toward order, organization, and unity. Jung referred to this movement toward highest unity as the individuation process. The use of holotropic states for therapy and self-exploration essentially confirms Jung’s perspective and follows the same strategy. The facilitators create a protective and supportive environment and help the clients enter a holotropic state. Once that occurs, the healing process is guided from within by the clients’ own inner healing intelligence and the task of the facilitators is to support what is happening.

This process automatically activates unconscious material, which has strong emotional charge and is sufficiently close to consciousness to be available for processing on the day of the session. This saves the facilitators the hopeless task to sort out what is “relevant” and what is not that plagues verbal therapies. They simply support whatever is spontaneously emerging and manifesting from moment to moment, trusting that the process is guided by intelligence that surpasses the intellectual understanding which can be obtained by professional training in any of the schools of psychotherapy.

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY IN HUMAN LIFE

The leading philosophy of Western science has been monistic materialism. Various scientific disciplines have described the history of the universe as history of developing matter and they accept as real only what can be measured and weighed. Life, consciousness, and intelligence are then seen as more or less accidental side-products of material processes. Physicists, biologists, and chemists recognize the existence of dimensions of reality that are not accessible to our senses, but only those that are physical in nature and can be revealed and explored with the use of various extensions of our senses, such as microscopes, telescopes, and specially designed recording devices, or laboratory experiments.

In a universe understood this way, there is no place for spirituality of any kind. The existence of God, the idea that there are invisible dimensions of reality inhabited by nonmaterial beings, the possibility of survival of consciousness after death, and the concept of reincarnation and karma have been relegated to books of fairy tales and handbooks of psychiatry. From a psychiatric perspective to take such things seriously means to be ignorant, unfamiliar with the discoveries of science, superstitious, and subject to primitive magical thinking. If the belief in God or Goddess occurs in intelligent persons, it is seen as an indication that they have not come to terms with infantile images of their parents as omnipotent beings they had created in their infancy and childhood and project them into the Beyond. Moreover, direct experiences of spiritual
realities, including encounters with mythological beings and visits to archetypal realms are considered manifestations of serious mental diseases – psychoses.

The study of holotropic states has thrown new light on the problem of spirituality and religion. The key to this new understanding is the discovery that in these states it is possible to encounter a rich array of experiences which are very similar to those that inspired the great religions of the world – visions of God and various divine and demonic beings, encounters with discarnate entities, episodes of psychospiritual death and rebirth, visits to Heaven and Hell, past life experiences, and many others. Modern research has shown beyond any doubt that these experiences are not products of fantasy or pathological processes afflicting the brain, but manifestations of archetypal material from the collective unconscious, and thus germane and essential constituents of the human psyche.

For example, Jung’s concept of the archetypal collective unconscious was inspired by the fact that the dreams of his neurotic patients and visions of his psychotic patients often contained mythological motifs from cultures of which they had no intellectual knowledge. I have been able to confirm Jung’s observation in my own work with psychedelic substances, Holotropic Breathwork, and with individuals experiencing spiritual emergency (Grof 2006). Similarly, past life experiences often bring specific information about historical periods and countries about which the subjects previously had no intellectual knowledge. Out-of-body experiences in near-death situations have all the characteristics that the Tibetan Book of the Dead attributes to the bardo body, immaterial essence that one becomes at the time of death. Although these experiences are accessed intrapsychically, in a process of experiential self-exploration and introspection, they have objective existence outside of the everyday personality of the subject.

To distinguish transpersonal experiences from imaginary products of individual human fantasy or psychopathology, Jungians refer to this domain as imaginal. French scholar, philosopher, and mystic, Henri Corbin, who first used the term mundus imaginalis, got the inspiration for this concept from his study of Islamic mystical literature (Corbin, 2000). Islamic theosophers call the imaginal world, where everything existing in the sensory world has its analogue, ‘alam a mithal,’ or the “eighth climate,” to distinguish it from the “seven climates,” regions of traditional Islamic geography. The imaginal world possesses extension and dimensions, forms and colors, but these are not perceptible to our senses as they would be when they are properties of physical objects. However, this realm is in every respect as fully ontologically real as the material world perceived by our sensory organs and experiences of it can be verified by consensual validation by other people.

In view of these observations, the fierce battle that religion and science have fought over the last several centuries appears ludicrous and completely unnecessary. Genuine science and authentic religion do not compete for the same territory; they represent two approaches to existence, which are complementary, not competitive. Science studies phenomena in the material
world, the realm of the measurable and weighable, spirituality and true religion
draw their inspiration from experiential knowledge of the imaginal world as it
manifests in holotropic states of consciousness. The conflict that seems to exist
between religion and science reflects fundamental misunderstanding of both.
As Ken Wilber has pointed out, there cannot possibly be a conflict between
science and religion, if both of these fields are properly understood and
practiced. If there seems to be a conflict, we are likely dealing with "bogus
science” and "bogus religion” (Wilber, 1982). The apparent incompatibility is
due to the fact that either side seriously misunderstands the other’s position
and very likely represents also a false version of its own discipline.

Any scientific attempt to make relevant and valid judgments about spiritual
matters has to include research of holotropic states of consciousness, since it
requires intimate knowledge of the imaginal realm. In his ground-breaking
essay, *Heaven and Hell*, Aldous Huxley suggested that such concepts as Hell
and Heaven represent intrapsychic realities experienced in a very convincing
way during non-ordinary states of consciousness induced by psychedelic
substances, such as LSD and mescaline, or various powerful non-drug
techniques (Huxley, 1959). The seeming conflict between science and religion
is based on the erroneous belief that these abodes of the Beyond are located in
the physical universe - Heaven in the interstellar space, Paradise somewhere in
a hidden area on the surface of our planet, and Hell in the interior of the earth.

Astronomers have created and used extremely sophisticated devices, such as
the Hubble Space Telescope, to explore and map carefully the entire vault of
heaven. Results of these efforts, which have of course failed to find God and
heaven replete with harp-playing angels and saints, have been taken as proof
that such spiritual realities do not exist. Similarly, in cataloguing and mapping
every acre of the planetary surface, explorers and geographers have found
many areas of extraordinary natural beauty, but none of them matched the
descriptions of Paradises found in spiritual scriptures of various religions.
Geologists have discovered that the core of our planet consists of layers of solid
and molten nickel and iron, and that its temperature exceeds that of the sun’s
surface. This certainly is not a very plausible location for the caves of Satan.

Modern studies of holotropic states have brought strong supportive evidence
for Huxley’s insights. They have shown that Heaven, Paradise, and Hell are
ontologically real; they represent distinct and important states of consciousness
that all human beings can under certain circumstances experience during their
lifetime. Celestial, paradisean, and infernal visions are a standard part of the
experiential spectrum of psychedelic inner journeys, near-death states, mystical
experiences, as well as shamanic initiatory crises and other types of “spiritual
emergencies.” Psychiatrists often hear from their patients about experiences of
God, Heaven, Hell, archetypal divine and demonic beings, and about
psychospiritual death and rebirth. However, because of their inadequate
superficial model of the psyche, they misinterpret them as manifestations of
mental disease caused by a pathological process of unknown etiology. They do
not realize that matrices for these experiences exist in deep recesses of the
collective unconscious psyche of every human being.
As I mentioned earlier, an astonishing aspect of transpersonal experiences occurring in holotropic states of various kinds is that their content can be drawn from the mythologies of any culture of the world, including those of which the individual has no intellectual knowledge. C. G. Jung demonstrated this extraordinary fact for mythological experiences occurring in the dreams and psychotic experiences of his patients. On the basis of these observations, he realized that the human psyche has access not only to the Freudian individual unconscious, but also to the collective unconscious, which is a repository of the entire cultural heritage of humanity (Jung, 1956, 1959). Knowledge of comparative mythology is thus more than a matter of personal interest or an academic exercise. It is a very important and useful guide for individuals involved in experiential therapy and self-exploration and an indispensable tool for those who support and accompany them on their journeys (Grof, 2006).

The experiences originating on deeper levels of the psyche, in the collective unconscious, have a certain quality that Jung referred to as numinosity. The word numinous – first used by Rudolf Otto - is relatively new and neutral and thus preferable to other similar expressions, such as religious, mystical, magical, holy, or sacred, which have often been used in problematic contexts and are easily misleading. The term numinosity applied to transpersonal experiences describes direct perception of their extraordinary nature; they represent “mysterium tremendum et fascinans” or the “wholly other”—something that cannot be usually experienced in our everyday states of consciousness. They convey a very convincing sense that they belong to a higher order of reality, a realm which is sacred.

In view of the ontological reality of the imaginal realm, spirituality is a very important and natural dimension of the human psyche and spiritual quest is a legitimate and fully justified human endeavor. However, it is necessary to emphasize that this statement applies to genuine spirituality based on personal experience and does not provide support for ideologies and dogmas of organized religions. To prevent misunderstanding and confusion that in the past compromised many similar discussions, it is critical to make a clear distinction between spirituality and religion.

Spirituality involves a special kind of relationship between the individual and the cosmos and is, in its essence, a personal and private affair. By comparison, organized religion is institutionalized group activity that takes place in a designated location, a temple or a church, and involves a system of appointed officials who might or might not have had personal experiences of spiritual realities themselves. Once a religion becomes organized, it often completely loses the connection with its spiritual source and becomes a secular institution that exploits human spiritual needs without satisfying them.

Organized religions tend to create hierarchical systems focusing on the pursuit of power, control, politics, money, possessions, and other worldly concerns. Under these circumstances, religious hierarchy often dislikes and discourages direct spiritual experiences in its members, because they foster independence and cannot be effectively controlled. When this is the case, genuine spiritual life
continues only in the mystical branches, monastic orders, and ecstatic sects of the religions involved. People who have experiences of the immanent or transcendent divine open up to spirituality found in the mystical branches of the great religions of the world or in their monastic orders, not necessarily in their mainstream organizations. A deep mystical experience tends to dissolve the boundaries between religions and reveals deep connections between them, while dogmatism of organized religions tends to emphasize differences between various creeds and engender antagonism and hostility.

There is no doubt that the dogmas of organized religions are generally in fundamental conflict with science, whether this science uses the mechanistic-materialistic model or is anchored in the emerging paradigm. However, the situation is very different in regard to authentic mysticism based on spiritual experiences. The great mystical traditions have amassed extensive knowledge about human consciousness and about the spiritual realms in a way that is similar to the method that scientists use in acquiring knowledge about the material world. It involves methodology for inducing transpersonal experiences, systematic collection of data, and intersubjective validation.

Spiritual experiences, like any other aspect of reality, can be subjected to careful open-minded research and studied scientifically. There is nothing unscientific about unbiased and rigorous study of transpersonal phenomena and of the challenges they present for materialistic understanding of the world. Only such an approach can answer the critical question about the ontological status of mystical experiences: Do they reveal deep truth about some basic aspects of existence, as maintained by various systems of perennial philosophy and transpersonal psychology, or are they products of superstition, fantasy, or mental disease, as Western materialistic science sees them?

Official psychiatry makes no distinction between a mystical experience and a psychotic experience and sees both as manifestations of mental disease. In its rejection of religion, it does not differentiate between primitive folk beliefs or the fundamentalist literal interpretations of religious scriptures and sophisticated mystical traditions or the great Eastern spiritual philosophies based on centuries of systematic introspective exploration of the psyche. Modern consciousness research has brought convincing evidence for the objective existence of the imaginal realm and has thus validated the main metaphysical assumptions of the mystical world view, of the Eastern spiritual philosophies, and even certain beliefs of native cultures.

**The Importance of Archetypal Psychology and Transit Astrology**

The greatest surprise I have experienced during the fifty some years I have been involved in consciousness research was the discovery of the extraordinary predictive power of astrology. Because of my strict scientific training, my initial skepticism concerning astrology was very strong and persistent. The idea that stars could have anything to do with states of consciousness, let alone events in the world, seemed too absurd and preposterous to be taken seriously. It took
years and thousands of convincing observations to accept this possibility; it required nothing less than a radical revision of my basic metaphysical assumptions about the nature of reality. Since I am aware how controversial and charged this issue is, I do not think I would have included the discussion of astrology in this presentation, if it were not for the fact that Richard Tarnas has published three remarkable books on his meticulous ground-breaking research: The *Passion of the Western Mind*, *Prometheus the Awakener*, and *Cosmos and Psyche* (Tarnas, 1993, 1995, 2006).

Over the last thirty years, Rick and I have jointly explored astrological correlations of holotropic states. My main task has been to collect interesting clinical observations from psychedelic sessions, Holotropic Breathwork workshops and training, mystical experiences, spiritual emergencies, and psychotic breaks. Rick’s main focus has been on astrological aspects of holotropic states of consciousness. This cooperation has brought convincing evidence that there exist systematic correlations between the nature, timing, and content of holotropic states of consciousness and planetary transits of the individuals involved. Transit is an astrological term for significant angular relationship between the position of the planets at the time of the experience and their position in the individual’s birth chart. The most important among these angular relationships are conjunction (0 degrees), sextile (60 degrees), square (90 degrees), trine (120 degrees), and opposition (180 degrees).

The first indication that there might be some extraordinary connection between astrology and my research of holotropic states was the realization that my description of the phenomenology of the four basic perinatal matrices (BPMs), experiential patterns associated with the stages of biological birth, showed astonishing similarity to the four archetypes that astrologers link to the four outer planets of the solar system – BPM I to Neptune, BPM II to Saturn, BPM III to Pluto, and BPM IV to Uranus. It is important to emphasize that my description of the phenomenology of the BPMs was based on clinical observations made quite independently many years before I knew anything about astrology.

Even more astonishing was the discovery that in holotropic states the experiential confrontation with these matrices regularly occurs at the time when the individuals involved have important transits of the corresponding planets. Over the years, we have been able to confirm this fact by thousands of specific observations and discover further astrological correlations for many other aspects of holotropic states. Because of these surprisingly precise correlations, astrology, particularly transit astrology, turned out to be an invaluable instrument for consciousness research.

This is a vast and extremely important topic and I cannot do it justice in the context of this article; this will have to wait for future publications and require experienced professional astrologers. But I will say at this point a few words concerning my present understanding of the dynamics of holotropic states, spontaneous or induced by various means, and their relation to astrology. We have repeatedly found that consciousness of the individual, who enters a
holotropic state, seems to be influenced by the archetypal fields associated with the planets transiting at the time the individual’s astrological chart. The experience will then be governed by the COEX system which has the corresponding archetypal quality.

Depending on the power of the archetypal energies involved, the depth and intensity of the experience, and the number of previous exposures to holotropic states, the emerging material will consist of selections of biographical, perinatal, and/or transpersonal memories and motifs combining in various, often very creative ways these archetypal characteristics. Although this cursory comment will in no way convince readers who have no previous knowledge of astrology, it might serve as inspiration and instigation for experienced astrologers to verify these observations by their own research.

For those readers interested in attempting independent verification, it is important to emphasize that the prediction, although extraordinarily accurate, will be archetypically predictive rather than concretely predictive. One of the striking properties of the archetypes illustrated by Richard Tarnas’ pioneering research is their complex multivalence. Each archetype and archetypal combination has a rich spectrum of meanings, while at the same time remaining true to its own specific nature (for example, although Saturn and Neptune each have a wide array of meanings, an experienced astrologer would never confuse any essential elements associated with one of these archetypes with those of the other).

In my present understanding, archetypal astrology is the long-sought Rosetta stone of consciousness research, providing a key for understanding the nature and content of present, past, and future holotropic states, both spontaneous and induced. I now strongly believe that responsible work with holotropic states combined with archetypal astrology as a guide represents probably one of the most promising trends in psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy.

References


The Author

Stanislav Grof, M.D., is a psychiatrist with more than fifty years of experience in research of non-ordinary states of consciousness induced by psychedelic substances and various non-pharmacological methods. Currently, he is Professor of Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco, conducts professional training programs in Holotropic Breathwork and transpersonal psychology, and gives lectures and seminars worldwide. He is one of the founders and chief theoreticians of transpersonal psychology and the founding president of the International Transpersonal Association (ITA). In October 2007, he received the prestigious Vision 97 Award from the Dagmar and Václav Havel Foundation in Prague and in 2010 the Thomas R, Verny Award for his pivotal contributions to pre- and perinatal psychology. Among his publications are over 150 papers in professional journals and the books *Beyond the Brain; LSD Psychotherapy; The Cosmic Game; Psychology of the Future; When the Impossible Happens; The Ultimate Journey: Healing Our Deepest Wounds; Spiritual Emergency; The Stormy Search for the Self; and Holotropic Breathwork* (the last three with Christina Grof).

Scholarly work by an author who is an Eastern Catholic priest very familiar with the original languages involved.


Tibetan lama whose work explains the experience of how one becomes enlightened. His writing is lucid, clear, learned, and experiential. He is in the Dzog chen tradition and is gaining a very large following worldwide.

... Paul M. Clemens


Easier to read, best notes; far more valuable explication of psychopathology than the *DSM*.


... Jim Fadiman


... Stanislav Grof


... Michael Hutton
ORGANIZATIONAL SOUL-THEIVES: A SHAMANIC TAKE ON BUREAUPATHOLOGY

David Kowalewski, Ph.D.
Missoula, Montana

ABSTRACT: Both social scientists and organizational practitioners are baffled that organizations not only fail to work according to design but often engage in pathological behaviors. The puzzle stems from a narrow, purely rationalist, approach, and so a metarational one is needed. I offer a shamanic organizational paradigm, exploring the ancient notion of soul-loss and suggesting how organizations can steal their personnel’s life-force and thereby foster pathologies because of compromised psychospiritual integrity. I end with suggestions for prevention and healing.

KEYWORDS: organizations, bureaucracy, bureaupathology, shamanism, soul-loss, soul-theft, management spirituality.

How can well-meaning people, in organizations aimed at our betterment, do such atrocious things to themselves, each other, their communities, and the environment? The question puzzles both social scientists and organizational practitioners. It seems irrational—pathology flows from organizations led and staffed by some of the world’s best and brightest. Whereas the typical organization begins its life by claiming to operate in the public interest, many wind up in a morass of adverse unintended consequences. Something happens ‘twixt the intent and the result, but what?

I propose that the purely rationalist organizational paradigm has resulted in a syndrome known as bureaupathology, which is best treated by an organizational paradigm based on shamanism, a psychospiritual perspective of ancient principles, guidelines, and practices but one currently enjoying a renaissance (Eshowsky, 1998).

While “spiritual,” it is far from “religious,” presenting no theological elite, strict dogma, written ritual, or conversionist élan. It suggests that an organization can steal soul parts from its personnel for its own aggrandizement, and so ignore their needs and those of others as it abandons its original serving motive for a self-serving one. As a result, it stops contributing to the wider energy system and instead, narcissistically, promotes only its own growth, becoming a cancer on the body public.

I first describe the origin and syndrome of bureaupathology. Then I lay out the shamanic perspective on the soul and its destiny, describing soul-loss by way of theft. Next I show how both motive and opportunity shape the organizational thief. I then offer a set of warning signs at both individual and collective levels.
Finally, to prevent and heal the thievery, I propose a set of metarational therapeutics.

The article is based on published works as well as workshops, conferences, and seminars on bureaucracy and shamanism. For illustrative purposes, I have included comments from an “expedient sample” of personnel who experienced soul-loss during their careers in major organizations (Gurr, 1972, p. 40). From such samples—small, low-cost, nonrandom selections of cases sharing properties relevant to an exploratory study—researchers can test assumptions, ferret out a phenomenon’s parameters, and collect initial evidence.

**Bureapathology**

Max Weber (1922/1978) was one of the first to warn against modern organizations that are based exclusively on rationality, since they could easily became obsessed with routinization, regulations, and resistance to change, eventually leading to soulless, disenchancing, and dehumanizing outcomes. Since that time, horrific events issuing from large bureaucracies, like the politicide against “enemies of the people” by Stalin’s apparatchiks in the 1930s, seemed to have proven him right.

Not surprisingly, then, other scholars began expressing full-blown concern with what has become known as “bureapathology.” The notion has a long pedigree, traceable to Victor Thompson’s work (1961) on managerial insecurity, a phenomenon causing such “bureapathologies” as rigidity, territoriality, and lack of initiative (p. 153). Insecure bureaucrats, he posited, appropriate organizational power to satisfy their own psychic needs, with negative consequences for the organization as well as the public. Indeed, later empirical research on 566 managers in private and public organizations showed that insecurity leads directly to bureapathic obsessions like overregulation (Bozeman & Rainey, 1998).

Subsequent works laid out further symptoms of the “bureapathic” syndrome, such as inertia, authoritarianism, and goal displacement (Caiden, 1991a, p. 2; Giblin, 1981, p. 22; Neugeboren, 1991, p. ix). One study documented no less than 175 “bureapathologies,” which were not caused by the incompetence of individuals but by “systematic shortcomings” at the level of the collective (Caiden, 1991b, p. 490).

Yet little has changed. Indeed, direct attacks on bureapathic organizations seem to have little effect. An expose of the FAA for corruption, waste, negligence, and other faults (Schiavo, 1998), for example, appears to have been totally ignored, since a decade later an even more scathing critique documented these and other maladies, such as mismanagement, unaccountability, and falsification of documents, all leading to insufficient regard for the flying public (Misic, 2011). Bureaucratic inertia, again it seems, wins the day.

In this article I focus on a core set of bureapathic symptoms, namely those which are most recognizable (evidenced by scholars and public alike), extensive

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(seen in many types of organizations), correlated (found together in a single organization), and consequential (having serious and widespread adverse outcomes). These include complacency, creative deficiency, inertia, mindless following of orders, intolerable labor demands, depression and suicide, overregulation, hypocrisy, fraud, abuse of power, self-protection, secrecy, obstruction of oversight, cover-ups, corruption, and persecution of dissidents within and opponents without.

Certainly all organizations are potentially bureaupathic, and many if not most show at least a few of the symptoms. In this article, an organization is said to be bureaupathic if these symptoms are numerous (suggesting a broad syndrome, e.g., the many types of legal violations by Waste Management, Inc.); pervasive (found across levels and functions of the organization, suggesting many personnel acting as a single unit and not just rogue individuals, e.g., FEMA’s performance before and during Hurricane Katrina); and persistent (continuing over a long period despite changes of personnel, e.g., the prolonged cover-ups of pedophilia by the Vatican). In short, the bureaupathic organization abandons its self-proclaimed destiny of service to others by way of the legal, efficient, humane delivery of needed public goods and services, and instead operates in its own interest, in the process doing irreparable harm to many creatures. In a word, it violates its own honor code.

**Organizational Soul-Theft**

But why? All the conventional, exclusively rationalist, approaches to bureau-pathology appear to have failed, that is, the modern paradigm of privileging the logical mind and thus efficiency, control, and manipulation often makes matters worse. The countless managerial schools, reinventions of government, prosecutorial crackdowns, and long marches through the institutions all ignore the metarational root. Indeed the fact that irrationalities flow from the most rationalized of human collectives offers a big clue to bureaupathy: we need to look for nonrational or metarational approaches to grasp the irrational behavior.

The most ancient, global, and arguably most useful such tradition is shamanism, which engages not merely the rational but also the metarational realm. The shamanic paradigm is increasingly taken seriously in quantum physics and elsewhere (Wolf, 1991). In transpersonal psychology, ecopsychology, and deep ecology, scholars are demonstrating the validity of shamanism and related traditions (Grof, 2005; Kowalewski, 2000, 2002 & 2004; Krycka, 2000; LeShan, 1995; Tart, 2009; Walsh, 2007). In medicine, research has shown shamanic practices to have measureable health benefits (Harner & Tryon, 1996; Vuckovic, Gullion, Ramirez, Schneider, & Williams, 2007).

According to the shamanic organizational paradigm, when humans constitute themselves as an organization, they become a single distinct energy-field which can, with ample motive and opportunity, steal the souls of its personnel, both managers and workers alike. If an organization’s public image is its light side,
soul-theft is its shadow side. As a result, an organization is able to induce its soul-lost personnel to commit the most vile acts in the guise of the good.

How so? To shamans, the soul is our vital essence, the force that enables us to pursue our destiny, namely our soul’s purpose of personal enlightenment and empowerment for the sake of service to the earth (Kowalewski, 2012c). When we follow our unique spiritual path, we maintain integrity, our character remains intact, and we are heroes in our own minds (Cousineau, 1999). But if we lose parts of our soul, we can easily stray off that path, ethically dis-integrating.

The hero encounters many dangers, but the greatest is insecurity in the face of danger. Serious threats to wellbeing, especially trauma, can cause parts of the soul to split off and seek refuge in the metaphysical realm. Insecurity can arise from societal threats like economic collapse, crime waves, war, and natural disasters, and from personal threats like rape, parental abuse, loss of job, and vehicle accidents. Many are the reasons for a soul part to “bail out.” The deeper the insecurity, the more likely is soul-loss and hence pathological behavior.

A soul part splits off to reduce pain, the soul giving up part of itself so the person can best attend to the needs of physical survival. The part flees to metaphysical reality, and there waits to be re-membered by the soul in physical reality. Traditionally, it has been shamans who enter an altered state of consciousness to journey to the metaphysical realm to retrieve soul parts for clients (Ingerman, 1991; Kowalewski, 2012b).

In traditional cultures, soul-loss is seen as a common psychospiritual disease (Grim, 1983). Mayans, for example, consider soul-loss or susto a prevalent illness (Arvigo & Epstein, 1995; Avila, 1998). In modern culture, jilted lovers lose parts of their souls, as evidenced in the lyrics of popular songs. In clinical psychology, soul-loss falls under the rubric of dissociation (Dell, 2001). But as one shamanic practitioner notes, psychologists may know that something is “missing” from the dissociating client but have no idea “where it went” and find treatment difficult (Ingerman, 1998; see also Narens, 2002; Wangyal, 2002b).

Shamans do not just see the individual soul but a broader set of energy-fields as well, including those of organizations, in their journeys, waking visions, and dreams. According to Hawaiian shaman Serge Kahili King (1985), such collective energy-fields or aumakua are everywhere, animating nation, community, family, club, church, committee, and so on. As Siberian shaman Biven Mamota (2003) noted, every group of interacting humans has a “common aura” which affects the group’s members, whose energies become entrained into common behaviors. For example, women who have closely interacted with each other over time commonly experience simultaneous menstruation. A Chinese shaman put it bluntly: “Does a company have a soul? … Yes!” (Sha, 2003, pp. 138–139).

An organization, then, is a distinct energy-field, a metaphysical organism. Its personnel may come and go, but the entity remains intact; it is a collective
memory storehouse. If consciousness is an emergent property of systems of many individual physical parts, as some scholars posit, should we be surprised that an organization too has a mind of its own (Hameroff, 1994)? Thus, an organization does not merely take on a life of its own; it is a life of its own. It has a mind of its own no less than other “superorganisms” recognized by biologists, such as bee hives and bird flocks (Moritz & Southwick, 1992). Indeed whole human societies, as one biologist put it, “have cultural and social morphic fields which embrace and organize all that resides within” (Sheldrake, 1987, p. 321).

Shamans, then, are proudly guilty of the academic sin of “reification,” namely the assigning of intentionality to collectives (Stelter, 1976). Indeed, despite Herculean efforts by social scientists to slay this primitive dragon, it keeps rearing its beautiful head, as evidenced by such backhanded acknowledgements as “corporate culture,” “groupthink,” and “enmeshed family systems.” Whatever the moniker, organizations have long been understood as holistic entities, more than the sum of their parts. Just as some sociologists have talked about “emergent” norms and behavior of a collectivity, which cannot be reduced to those of its individuals, now the physical sciences are speaking the same language.

_Emergent behavior associated with wholes in organic matter cannot be explained in terms of the collections of parts… A single-cell organism, for example, is a whole that displays emergent behavior associated with life that … does not exist in the mere collection of its parts. The list of emergent behaviors … has now become quite long._ (Nadeau & Kafatos, 1999, p. 12)

In biogeology, the earth is increasingly seen as a single organism (Lovelock, 1979). In nonlinear quantum theory, 2+2 may equal 5 or more, a system’s behavior being more than the sum of its parts (McTaggart, 2007). When renowned physicists support the “re-emergence of emergence,” even the most skeptical sit up and take note (Clayton & Davies, 2008). The Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) team has shown that the joint attention of a group of individuals can make random number generators behave nonrandomly (Nelson, Bradish, Dobyns, Dunne, & Jahn, 1998; see also Jahn, Dunne, Acunzo, & Hoeger, 2007; McTaggart, 2002). Several PEAR experiments have found the “collective effects” of “collective resonance” to be several times stronger than individual ones (Jahn & Dunne, 2005, pp. 195 & 212). Related research has revealed similar anomalous “collective consciousness” effects (Mason, Patterson, & Radin, 2007, p. 295).

Complexity theory offers additional underpinning for the notion. Interacting parts in a wide range of systems can spontaneously create an order and functionality from the bottom up, without any central planner being involved. The emergent property is found to be independent of its parts, such that it cannot be deducible from, reduced to, or identified with them. It is different from the parts in kind, not just degree. The system of micro-level actions of the parts “self-organizes,” so to speak, a macro-level pattern that is often totally unexpected. The “new whole,” in turn, can affect the parts (Holland, 1999;
Kauffman, 1996; Page, 2009). So, even if shamanic reification were untrue, today’s science sees it as a useful way to view groups, namely as collective energetic templates or fields for action, as regions or auras of distinct identity and influence, acting the way magnets act on individual iron filings.

According to shamanic logic, moreover, organizations as energy-fields in their own right can steal the soul parts of their personnel. Soul-theft is a common form of soul-loss, being reported among Tibetans (Wangyal, 2002a), Evénés (Alekseev, 1997), Mayans (Arvigo & Epstein, 2001), Amazonians (Hill, 1992), Native-Americans (Martin, 1978), Inuits (Wood, 2009), and other peoples (Eliade, 1964). An organization becomes such a thief when it falls off its destiny’s path. “[S]pirit possession and bad energies,” writes one contemporary shamanic practitioner, “can be detected in … political parties, corporations, and even … an entire nation” (Beery, 2012, p. 37). In Mayan culture, for example, a village is periodically dismantled to purge toxicities so they will not “eat” its members and so the vitality of the community can be restored (Prechtel, 2003). An imperial mother-country is said to steal the souls of its colonized peoples, as evidenced in their “colonial mentality” (Fanon, 1998). As one shaman recently put it, whole peoples today are suffering “cultural soul-loss” and so need “soul-retrieval” (MacLeod, 2012, p. 18).

**Motive and Opportunity**

Like other crimes, organizational soul-theft arises from motive and opportunity. Many are the motives. An organization mobilizes the energies of its personnel to serve a self-proclaimed destiny—serving some public interest. It becomes pathological, though, when its original motive wanes and it starts requiring manipulated and sacrificial energies to feed its own power.

The bigger the organization, the greater the need to coordinate large workforces and memberships, and so the stronger the motive for soul-theft. Because the physical means of such coordination in past times—war, slavery, serfdom—have lost legitimacy, they have been largely replaced by manipulative “soft power.” Some industrial psychologists, for example, sacrifice their healing mission to the organizational soul-thief’s obsession with increasing the efficiency of “human capital.” Soul-theft, then, is especially prevalent in large modern organizations. Big Brother may no longer be beating you up, but you better keep a tight grip on your soul (see also Whiteley, 2009).

Too, the bigger the organization, the more inflated its ego compared to smaller groupings. As such, power easily becomes an end in itself instead of a way to serve. This is the meaning of “power corrupts.”

The bigger the organization, the harder it falls. We almost expect small businesses to fail, for example, but the fall of a big corporation represents a huge humiliation to all concerned. Personnel, then, are pushed to worship the false god of the organization instead of pursuing their unique destinies. According to one interviewee who spent 30 years working in major companies:
As far as the corporate world is concerned, “the more soul-loss the better” has been my experience. It took me way too long to realize that they would have made me work 24/7 if they could have figured out how.

In the shamanic tradition, sacrifice—which literally means “to make sacred”—of the self is not merely dangerous but indeed absurd and sacriligeous, since the self is already sacred. To sacrifice one’s own self, then, is to violate one’s sacredness, one’s very integrity, and so to fall off the path of destiny. Instead, the task of the self is to harmonize its destiny with the public-serving destiny of the organization.

Big organizations also demand relocation to far-flung branch facilities, such that some personnel, uprooted from their beloved bioregions, lose parts of their vital essence. From the shamanic perspective, the soul is nourished by the landscape in which roots have been sunk but is deprived of that vitality when forced to leave it. Loss of landscape weakens inscape.

The higher that personnel rise in an organization, the greater the likelihood their soul parts will be stolen. Indeed, a soul part appears to be lost with every step up the hierarchy, the price of benefits from promotion often being more self-sacrifice. Upwardly mobile personnel start to feel, literally, that they have sacrificed their souls at the altar of the organization. According to the CEO of a big defense contractor:

To get where I am today … I had to give myself away… . Each time I advanced in rank, I lost another piece of myself…. One day I … looked back at my life…. I had given away so much of myself … that there was nothing left. The corporation and the military own me (Braden, 1997, p. 118).

In the words of one interviewee, “With each benefit, more of my soul was taken away—I felt like I was becoming a monkey trained to perform.” Exactly—that was the whole point. Managers, having lost parts of their own souls, find complicity in soul-theft easy. No wonder so many bosses are called “heartless”—they, poor souls, really are. The organization as thief needs above all to control its leaders, who in turn are lauded for facilitating the appropriation of workers’ souls, thereby enhancing their own careers and the power of the organization.

Especially theft-prone are organizations headed by charismatic leaders, who can easily elicit sacrifice, indeed enthusiastic soulful sacrifice, from their followers. Perhaps this is why the organizational legacies of charismatic leaders so often turn out less than admirable, such as those of Adolph Hitler’s Nazis and Jim Jones’ People’s Temple.

Not only are the motives for soul-theft many, but also the opportunities. Thievery occurs if the spiritual doors of personnel are left open for the thief. Self-sacrifice is more likely, for example, in cultures rewarding hard work over sane health.
Traumatic events experienced by an organization make personnel more insecure and thus vulnerable. Such happenings can include the sudden loss of a popular CEO, a long and bitter labor dispute, the denial of a patent application, or a class-action suit by consumers.

Personnel most prone to theft are those so deeply insecure that they crave protection. As one interviewee put it, “I felt that if I did all the right things, I would be taken care of.” These personnel fear walking alone on their unique path and “long to belong,” as one interviewee told me, even if to a thief. The organization becomes a protective parent to whom they surrender their own destiny. In effect, they give up control over their life’s journey to the organization, willingly abdicating their soul-responsibility.

Big organizations offer especially ripe opportunities for soul-surrender by attracting a disproportionate number of insecure personalities eager to lose themselves in a large mass of people. Also, inside the maze of big organizations, personnel often feel lost and find it easier to follow the organization’s power instead of their own. Their vital essence, then, is more likely to be overwhelmed by the organization’s imperatives.

The narrow compartmentalization of big organizations also makes it likely that personnel will feel like lifeless cogs, thereby undermining what psychologists call “locus of control” and encouraging the surrender of control to the organization. As a longtime bank manager told me:

*I've always felt more in control of my essence when the number of people-interactions was less. In a smaller organization I was usually involved with many aspects of its wellbeing, and so had more feelings of involvement, value, and contribution.*

The bigger the organization, the more material benefits and social prestige it can offer insecure souls, and so the more likely it will be pedestalized. These personnel sell their souls to the organization as sacrifice, trading freedom for security, which is not as difficult as it sounds. It is far easier in the short term to blindly follow someone else’s path than to struggle on one’s own. Walking the path of destiny, thereby staying true to one’s honor code, is appropriately called a hero’s journey.

The big organization in particular, then, exerts a seductive magnetic pull that draws soul parts away from already insecure personnel for its self-serving priority—albeit allegedly for “the cause.” To one interviewee: “Big organizations want to become an employee’s universe, and once this happens, their control over the employee becomes much easier.” The lesson is clear: Be careful of what you pedestalize—it may steal your soul. Every big organization has golden handcuffs hanging from its belt.

**An Early Warning System**

Yet like many crimes, soul-theft only occurs after individual and collective warning signs have appeared. Individually, personnel feel stress; the
incongruence between their destiny’s demands and those of the organization widens. They know, deep down, that they should sacrifice nothing to anything that is not their unique path. In the early stages of soul-theft, however, victims deny the problem. The thief comes silent in the night. Only when symptoms have accumulated to the crisis level does awareness arise.

Symptoms take physical, psychological, and philosophical forms—they occur throughout the person’s whole energy-field. Physically, as studies in psychoneuroimmunology have shown, people who have strayed from their path compromise their immunity, making their bodies fair game for microbes (Solomon, 1990). But these “findings” have deep shamanic roots. In Africa it is well known that soul-theft victims are vulnerable to disease (Credo Mutwa, 1996). Soul-lost personnel, lacking the totality of their vital essence and engaging in workaholic sacrifices for the organization, sooner or later show signs of fatigue. The more self-sacrificing the victims, the faster the burnout; they have literally sacrificed their vital essence. Other symptoms such as migraines and skin disease appear (Ingerman, 1998).

Common as well are addictions to alcohol and drugs, consumed to fill the void left by the stolen soul parts. Victims expect the substances to provide the ecstasy missing from walking their own paths. Addiction also reflects a self-destructive anger at having let parts of one’s vital essence be stolen. Victims blame—and take it out on—themselves. Soul-stealing organizations eat their own.

Psychologically, symptoms include anxiety, robotic social interaction, and depersonalization of relationships with family, friends, and neighbors. With each loss of vital essence, victims experience more and more emotional disconnection and eventually psychic numbing. As they lose more of their essence to the organization, they have less vitality for their families and communities. As one interviewee told me:

_The negative effects are first felt by the family. They receive less time, energy, attention, loyalty, and love, as more is demanded by the organization and given by employees. Later, employees are devastated as they realize that their loss will never be returned by the organization. The family has been fractured forever. Employees have the “organizational family,” but the home life has a vacancy._

Should we widen our notion of “organized crime family”?

Previously close and affectionate links in the organization are replaced by Machiavellian manipulations, especially at higher levels. Excessive caution and servility appear, evidencing a need for protective security, as do refusal to take responsibility, passing the buck, and covering one’s posterior at all costs—all these fears being fed by a wasteful bevy of lawyers, spin-doctors, and security squads.

Philosophically, victims typically identify with the thief, just as hostages manifest the Stockholm syndrome—which is exactly what the power-seeking
thief wants. Victims also develop an inordinate attachment to material goods, preferring having to being. They try to fill the void left by the stolen soul parts with expensive cars, houses, and vacations. Some go into debt, especially by way of gambling, thereby deepening dependence on the thief’s payroll. Might office pools be diagnostic?

Soul-theft is also evident in the lack of ecstasy—bureaucrats are hardly known for their ecstatic behavior. Obvious too is the lack of the heroic. Few bureaucrats are ever accused of too much courage, with the exception of that despised deviant, the whistleblower. Loss of soul is loss of character.

Yet identification with the seemingly protective thief eventually fades, and a psychospiritual crisis ensues, a crisis of meaning itself. In the words of one manager-interviewee:

“I kept part of my integrity, which prevented me from falling into the abyss, but I woke up one day realizing I had lost part of myself. I didn’t know what it meant but the sense was very clear. Fortunately I found my way to spiritual practices.”

Victims start feeling betrayed by the organization. The realization of having sacrificed to a false god hits home. From the shamanic perspective, however, this is far from being “bad” and in fact shows the soul’s yearning for integrity. The victim wants to re-member, to be whole again. The worst thing one could do is to suppress the symptoms with psychopharmacology or psychotherapy. The crisis is the soul re-calling itself to its path. It forces a life-examination, the big question being whether one’s life is congruent with one’s destiny (Roth, 1997).

The victim does not feel “all there.” As one interviewee told me, “I felt I no longer had a life of my own, that I had lost something vital.” Victims feel an emptiness because part of their soul really is gone. They feel a loss of—literally—integrity. This is reflected in the law of diminishing emotional returns from material rewards: victims realize that their souls have been hijacked in return for more stuff, which will never satisfy their hearts. Since the soul, for the sake of security, has abandoned the heroic journey towards its destiny, it feels a loss of meaning. “The more benefits I got,” one executive told me, “the less satisfied I felt; I found myself singing that Peggy Lee song, ‘Is That All There Is?’” Victims start feeling trapped, that their troubles cannot be solved, and perception darkens.

As they realize they have given control over their lives to the organization, they literally feel they are, in the words of one interviewee, “out of control.” Soon, therefore, motivation, responsibility, and work performance decline. Resentment, its seed planted in the breeding ground of self-sacrifice, grows along with disillusionment and cynicism. As one interviewee put it, “I felt that the only way out was to get myself fired.”

Collectively, symptoms also appear. Organizational sickness is well known. Reports of mass psychogenic illness, such as bites from nonexistent insects,
characterize some big organizations that make sacrificial demands on personnel (Benson, 1996; see also McTaggart, 2002). In Asian factories of multinational corporations imposing heavy labor requirements, workers experience simultaneous hallucinations, faintings, and other disruptions requiring total shutdown (Kowalewski, 1997).

The organization shows excessive self-protectionism, determined to survive at all costs. The resolve takes the form of nondecision and refusal to take responsibility for failures and malfeasance. Darkness, expressed in paranoid secrecy, enshrouds the organization as it disconnects from the wider community.

After the organizational thief has cached a critical mass of soul parts, a major turning point is reached. Personnel stop operating the organization and it starts operating them. They perform their duties automatonically, as if in a dream. At this juncture the collective, just like the individuals, is truly out of control, taking on a momentum beyond anybody’s direction. It engages in destructive behaviors that nobody seems to have planned and nobody knows how, or has enough integrity, to stop. It is now a leviathan. As one interviewee put it, “I felt like the system was running me around.” Out of the sacrifices of personnel and those close to them come the sacrifices of communities, consumers, foreign countries, and the environment. Once an organization becomes a successful soul-thief, ruthless downsizings, political purges, and other adverse consequences are not far behind. Soul-theft seems a necessary condition for bureaucratic nightmares like the CIA’s Phoenix, FBI’s COINTELPRO, Pentagon’s Abu Graeb, Union Carbide’s Bhopal, and BP’s Gulf of Mexico.

Personnel, however, feel little guilt; psychopathy is in fact comorbid with dissociation. Having disconnected and numbed themselves emotionally, they suffer from compassion-deficit, caring little for those damaged by their organizations (Emory & Oltmanns, 2000; Hare, 1993). Personnel who have—literally—lost their integrity have little problem with organizational crimes. They rightly take the Nuremberg defense. Since they have followed the organization instead of their own destiny, they can truthfully say, “I was just following orders.” Heroic humans, in contrast, take orders only from their destiny.

But eventually, in the metaphysical as in the physical realm, crime does not pay. The organizational soul-thief experiences a crisis and engages in self-destructive behavior. As vitality declines, as personnel defect and rebel, as the costs of malfeasance rise, and as the broader public revolts, the heavens administer to the thief its just desserts. The true gods will not be mocked—this is a social law.

**SHAMANIC THERAPEUTICS**

Purely rational fixes for bureaupathology—by definition—can be manipulated or evaded by anyone smarter than their creators. The shamanic paradigm, in contrast, insists that both the soul and its thief must be engaged in the metarational realm. As one psychologist noted:
To understand ... an organization, a new dimension needs to be added ... . 

Spiritual values ... though vaguely felt and rarely addressed ... structure events ... Organizations are ... not simply bodies, but dreaming bodies. ... We need to be shamans ... to solve the ... problems. (Mindell, 1992, pp. 14–16)

Shamanic treatment entails, then, a radical rethinking of the ways to deal with the ills of modern life. Among today’s shamans, the notion is growing that to heal individuals one-by-one is not enough (Hinton, 2012; Reddy, 2011). The crises are so numerous, complex, severe, global, and growing, and the world’s population is expanding so fast, while the number of shamans is so few, that simply healing individuals without healing the larger structures that affect them is a fool’s errand.

Not surprisingly, then, some managers have in fact become “corporate shamans” (Whiteley, 2002). As one shamanic consultant put it, the aim is to heal the whole organization as a single energy-field.

This work reminds me of an anthill. The organism is not the ants themselves, but the anthill community containing all the ... energy ... within. (Brennan, 2012, p. 34)

In family counseling, for example, practitioners increasingly try to heal the whole “energy field” constellation (Manne, 2009). Yet this “new” approach is just the latest installment of a long tradition. Among Peruvian shamans, according to researcher Jose Luis Herrera, collective healing has long been known to restore individual health:

Serve the collective ... and ... you heal the individual ... . Becoming an Altomesayok [shaman] is a big undertaking ... for those whose guiding mythology is ... individuality... . The focus is on the collective ... . (Bryon, 2012, p. 16)

In a word, shamanic soul-doctors need to treat the organization as a single unit, realigning it with its original purpose and so returning it to its heroic path of destiny.

Realize, though, that shamanism is about methods not prescriptions. In each specific case, shamans as well as their clients journey to the spirits for help (Kowalewski, 2012a). That said, the following suggestions for prevention and healing are offered as a general framework consistent with the shamanic paradigm.

For prevention, managerial education needs overhauling to minimize motive and opportunity by encompassing the metarational aspects of organizational dynamics. Teaching spirituality to managers is now taken seriously (Barnett, Krell, & Sendry, 2000; Biberman & Tischler, 2008; Karakas, 2011), with the added benefit of organizational success (Tischler, Biberman, & McKeage, 2002; Duchon & Plowman, 2005). A shamanic focus harmonizes organizational growth with health, and material prosperity with spiritual fulfillment. Trainees learn to be wise and not just smart; the rational approach may be

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mind-full but is soul-empty. They learn to balance metarational energetics with bureaucratic control.

Future managers are groomed as specialists in the organization’s vitality, as facilitators of the destinies of its workers. The shamanic organization harnesses the mythopoetic energies of its personnel, not their boring routines. Vitality is not “morale”—which is easily faked—but instead the healthy exuberance of the organization’s energy-field. Such vitality is evident when the organization is following its path of service. Its signs are affordances, acknowledgements, and similar accommodative paranormalities (Kowalewski, 2000). It declines if the organization deviates from that path, at which point omens appear.

Managerial students learn to foster authenticity instead of conformity, in order to encourage a protective integrity. They learn that a healthy organization exists as a means to help individuals fulfill their destinies, not an end that replaces them.

They discover that leadership cannot be reduced to career advancement but rather consists of heroic acts. They learn that the most fulfilling reward for a leader is honor, not pay. They recognize the point at which organizational loyalty stops and legitimate whistleblowing begins.

Anti-theft systems would be taught.

- **Downscaling** treats the correlation of size with theft. A healthy organization bifurcates and decentralizes as soon as symptoms of soul-theft appear. Small is shamanically beautiful, offering personnel a greater sense of responsibility and control over their destiny’s path and so more prospects for creativity.
- **Reshuffling** recognizes that destiny paths are mighty crooked roads, and therefore that permanent tasking is counterproductive. Longevity, managers would realize, is not life, just the ticking of a clock. A healthy organization encourages task-groups made up of destiny-mates, people whose soul-affinities mesh. In such groups, coordination is natural so managerial control is less necessary—at great savings to the organization. In short, a healthy organization periodically reshuffles itself to coordinate work on the basis of metaphysical attraction.
- **Restructuring rewards** involves shifting toward authenticity and away from materiality. A healthy incentive system honors unique expressions of soul, namely the most effectively creative ideas, practices, products, and policies, so as to discourage soul-loss and encourage the following of each person’s path. Rewards are offered for the most soulful acts of service.
Diagnosing energetics entails assessing subtle pathological cues within the organization such as “stuck energy” and “out-of-control energy.” Social scientists and industrial psychologists can conduct energy-audit surveys, paying special attention to questions like, “To what degree do you regret having expended energy for the organization?” Shamanic counseling can help personnel return to their paths.

Passing the talking stick in a “soul circle” sets hearts right in formulating policies and performing tasks. “[P]ower,” shamans say, “moves in a circle” (Jansson, 2012, p. 30). Personnel can meet to raise metaphysical awareness and construct their harmonic group path. They might pass the stick to ferret out early signs of soul-loss. Sharing deep experiences with a sympathetic group sensitizes vital essences. Pathological organizations operate in the dark, so anonymous “confessions to the gods” can expose manager spying, secret file-keeping, and enemy lists, as well as worker sabotage, thievery, and goldbricking. All these modalities of “circle sociology” can help prevent soul-theft (Kowalewski, 2000).

For healing, soul parts need to be liberated and reintegrated into personnel’s souls. To this end, spiritual practices consistent with shamanism can be introduced.

- **Soul-retrieving** entails the journeys of shamans into the metaphysical realm to free stolen soul parts from the thief, then the return of those parts to the clients’ souls. Because of its effectiveness, soul-retrieval is now used as a form of psychotherapy (Ingerman, 1998).
- **Healing the thief.** Journeying shamans work not only to retrieve soul-parts from a thief but also to heal the culprit. Another possibility is joint journeys of trained members of the organization to do the job. In shamanic terms, the organizational soul is thus returned to its path of destiny to serve the public interest.
- **Soul-remembering** can then be done in ceremonies, with groups meeting to reintegrate their stolen parts and reconstitute a vital community. Each person could re-call their destiny, asking how it can best be pursued in the organization for the collective project. Such practices allow personnel to re-member their natural selves and recover authenticity. A mask ceremony, for example, might allow personnel to remove, symbolically, any false faces they had been wearing in the organization, and to replace them with masks showing their true paths for the sake of acknowledgement and acceptance by co-workers.
- **Developing integrity** involves deprogramming personnel from sacrificing to false gods. The proud motto might be, “Never sacrifice your destiny to a self-serving organization.” Personnel might atone for all the victims of their misguided sacrifices.
- **Reconnecting to the wider community** recognizes that the soul is only “all there” when it is fully connected to, not blocked from, the single energy web that is the universe. Personnel can be encouraged to keep old bonds, and form new ones, outside the organization. Deep connections with nature in particular can be supported, which in turn allows for the unlocking of psychic powers of use to the organization (Kowalewski, 2002, Organizational Soul-Thieves 177).
Personnel are never told, in the interests of globalization or anything else, to uproot themselves from their beloved bioregions and live somewhere else—unless it is truly their destiny. Bioregional bonding loosens a thief’s hold on the soul part and strengthens the soul on its path.

**The Shamanic Organizational Paradigm**

Purely rationalist approaches to bureaupathology have failed, so I have offered a shamanic take on the problem. A century of high-quality research has shown that humans are as “paranormal” as they are normal, as “spiritual” as they are material, as “metaphysical” as they are physical, as “metarational” as they are rational (Radin, 2006). Any approach to bureaupathology, then, must engage the mystical domain.

Some of the worst horrors in the modern world have been committed by soul-sick organizations, and such acts are commonly called evil and perhaps rightly so. At least we need to acknowledge and engage the spiritual dimension of the problem. At the same time, the answer cannot be found in religious organizations, which can sometimes steal their own members’ souls and whose historical record, therefore, has been less than exemplary (e.g., witch hunts by Protestantism, aggressive wars by Islam, illegal settlements in Palestine by Judaism). Instead, shamanic practices—which speak to our souls but which lack a bureaupathic agenda—offer a useful way to avoid and remedy such soulless behaviors.

As such, an organization is best served if its individuals are soul-filled and working from a state of vital integrity. It is not merely more efficient when everyone is playing with a full metaphysical deck, but it energizes its original self-proclaimed destiny—serving the public interest.

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The Author

Twice a Fulbright scholar and twice an NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities) grantee, David Kowalewski is Professor Emeritus of Alfred University, where he has taught courses on Political Psychology, Corporate Crime, Scientific Research Design, Psychic Policing, Deep Ecology, and related topics. His work has appeared in Journal of Psychohistory; Crime, Law, and Social Change; Journal of Instructional Psychology; Public Administration Quarterly; Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion; and Journal of Police Science and Administration. He is a graduate of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies’ Three-Year Program in Advanced Shamanic Initiation. He thanks Tom Nault and Jaclyn Sakamoto for comments on earlier drafts.
THE EXPERIENCE OF GRACE: DIVINE ASSISTANCE IN MAKING A CHANGE

Jacelyn C. Bronte, Ph.D.
Oakland, CA

Jenny Wade, Ph.D.
Novato, California

ABSTRACT: One of the most universal yet under-researched human impulses when faced with seemingly unmanageable conditions is to ask for Divine assistance to effect a change. The purpose of this qualitative study examined how 25 people aged 22–66 experienced grace as Divine assistance in making a positive change in their lives, especially what convinced them that the change had been the result of some Divine agency. Thematic analysis of in-depth interviews of experiences ranging from choosing a graduate school to the spontaneous recovery from a life-threatening illness revealed four common components of grace: mode of transmission, which includes intuition, other people, audition, vision, felt presence, and dreams; subjective impulse to change, which comprises guided movement, cessation, spontaneous surrender, and effortlessness; emotional experience, which includes enlivenment, surprise, and love; and external effects, comprising accelerated timeline, synchronicity, and positive impact on others. The experiences clustered somewhat across presenting problems, fulfilled needs, and increased self-efficacy while propelling people forward in the change process.

One of the most universal human impulses when faced with seemingly unmanageable conditions is to ask for Divine assistance to effect a change, something even nonreligious people often do when they are suffering. The notion of grace as Divine assistance occurs in most religions (e.g., Galatians 4:6–7; Genesis 60:2; Lotus Sutra 5; Qu’ran 1.1., 12.64; Rig Veda 7.100.4; Vitargastava 13.1). Without reviewing the massive literature on grace as Divine assistance, the five largest religions describe what humans can accomplish with or without grace, and whether and to what extent they can obtain grace through their own efforts, with the emphasis on effecting spiritual progress rather than on help negotiating earthly life’s challenges (c.f., Bakker, 1965; Bloom, 1964; Blumenthal, 1987; Chethimattam, 1987; Craig, 1985; Dreyer, 1990; Du Preez, 1989a, b; Dumoulin, 1970; Fransen, 1965; Hummel, 1969; John, 1970; Koenig, 1982; Noble, 1997; Ochs, 1992; Palihawadana, 1982; Sharma, 1978; Unno, 1998; Water, 2002).

This exalted view of Divine assistance in transformation may also be inferred in the writings of transpersonal theorists regarding psycho-spiritual change (e.g., Assagioli, 1976; Maslow 1968, 1971), including those of two psychologists who have developed change theories specifically involving grace: Meissner, a Roman Catholic priest and psychiatrist, (1966, 1987) and Almaas, a

From an object relations framework, Meissner claimed that although God exists outside the objective dimension, the subjective experience of God evolves throughout life, and is a real experience of the subjective touching the objective (1966). According to Meissner (1987), object relationships are an integral part of human nature, and relating to the Divine (God) is subject to the same dynamics and maturity individuals have for other objects: “The psychic process of creating and finding God continues through the course of the human life cycle. Thus, the characteristics of the God representation are shaped following the epigenetic and developmental law” (1987, p. 45). Thus, people develop an internal God-representation, and it is through grace that people may be assisted in maturing or perfecting themselves, not only in this relationship but also in other object relationships within the ego: “But from a supernatural perspective, the capacity to enter into a divine relationship must be given as a special gift out of God’s loving initiative….This capacity through grace could be understood as building on, enhancing, and elevating our natural capacity for object relationships” (Meissner, 1987, p. 28).

Thus ego supports psychological development while grace, as a separate force, supports the development of spiritual qualities:

Grace does not force the ego to act, nor does it replace the ego’s proper function with a Divine activity. Its healing effect is precisely to enable the ego to mobilize its own latent resources and direct them to purposeful action. (1987, p. 23)

Meissner theorized that the development of the ego and grace are recursive: “the action of grace is directed to the formation through ego-activity of a spiritual identity, and that spiritual identity can be regarded as an enlargement, development, or elevation of personal identity” (1987, p. 54).

Almaas (1994) also considers grace inherent to human development, which is a quest to realize Essence or the Essential Self: “True identity is the identity with all essence, with all reality. This very moment is the center, and from there you can see that you are nothing but grace” (1990, p. 47). According to this theory the true and timeless Self becomes obscured or cut off as the ego and personality develop and become the predominant focus of the psyche, but meditation and service can facilitate the dissolution of identification with the ego: “This marks the Divine realm of Essence where grace and mercy begin descending into consciousness” (1984, p. 46). While Almaas did not directly state what kind of changes happen as persons begin to experience Essence, he did describe an aspect of the Essence he called the Will Essence, which “feels like sense of solidarity of inner support, of determination and confidence” (1994, p. 300) that might be needed in order to persist in the quest for realization.

Psychological research on grace or on Divine assistance is rare, even though studies have called attention to the dearth of research on spiritual issues and

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psychotherapeutic processes and outcomes (e.g., Clements & Ermakova, 2011; Poloma & Pendleton, 1991; Rosenfeld, 2011; Worthington, Kurusu, McCollough, & Sandage, 1996). Most studies that could be considered to involve some aspect of grace or Divine assistance focus on coping or well-being and perceived locus of control (e.g., Clements & Ermakova, 2012; Jackson & Bergeman, 2011; Tix & Frazier, 1998; Wachholtz & Sambamoorthi, 2011) rather than on how people experience aid from Spirit or determine that they indeed have received some kind of Divine beneficence. If believers and nonbelievers alike pray for Divine help, are their prayers answered, and if so, what makes them believe that help came from a supernatural source rather than through some more mundane agency? The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate what kinds of experiences are interpreted as Divine grace in making a change, especially what convinces people that the change is a result of Divine agency rather than other means.

Other than the biographies of avatars, saints, spiritual teachers, and the scattered personal testimonials in popular literature, only three systematic studies bear on phenomena related to Divine assistance, all defined differently: “feeling grace” (Gowack, 1998), “Divine guidance” (Kaplan, 2005), and “inspiration” (Thrash & Elliot, 2004). Their different approaches produced diverse results, but nevertheless some commonalities can be discerned.

Gowack (1998) interviewed 12 participants who had “felt grace” (not operationally defined) while voluntarily serving the terminally ill. This phenomenological study examined how grace was experienced under such circumstances. Grace in those circumstances was characterized as feeling present in the moment, often with heightened awareness; feeling oneness or connection, often without fear; feeling blessed and/or loved; feeling energized; feeling guided; feeling peace; and feeling joy. It is notable that the demand characteristics of attending the terminally ill may be more reactive and responsive to the dying person, and thus may differ considerably from situations that are more goal-oriented, such as actively seeking Divine aid of some sort.

Indeed in Kaplan’s (2005) grounded theory of “Divine guidance” as described by 9 spiritual teachers, the experience was divided up into three distinct aspects: seeking, receiving, and following Divine guidance. Receiving Divine guidance, the phase most relevant to the current study, was distinguished from ordinary experience by a perceptual shift or felt sense that might involve insight for life changes and transformation variously conveyed through supernatural flow, an inner voice, dreams, intuition, meaningful signs and wonders, intuition, synchronicities, peak experiences, visions, and an energetic sense.

The only large study about a related concept was conducted by Thrash and Elliott (2004) in three phases to examine their hypothetical definition of inspiration. They postulated that inspiration was characterized by three elements: (a) transcendence, defined as an orientation toward something more important or better than mundane concerns; (b) evocation, defined being evoked by another and unwilled; and (c) motivation, defined as a drive to
express or make manifest that which is newly apprehended. All three phases of their study were conducted with psychology students who received extra credit for their participation. All three phases involved mixed methods; narratives were subjected to text analysis, and quantitative data were subjected to ANOVA and some factor analysis. The first and second phases, involving 148 and 221 participants, respectively, differentiated inspiration from baseline and from other positive-affect-activating experiences. In the first phase participants attended two small-group sessions one week apart in which they were asked to recall vividly an experience of inspiration (not defined to participants) or an everyday experience, and complete instruments that assessed affect, task involvement, spirituality, meaning, and volitional control. Since “inspiration” was not defined to participants, their narratives covered a range of experiences, including artistic or scientific insight, discovering a vocation or calling, role models who influenced participants to higher endeavor, or the realization that greatness might be personally attainable. The second phase followed the same procedure except that inspiration was defined to participants as “a breathing in or infusion of some idea, purpose, etc. into the mind; the suggestion, awakening, or creation of some feeling or impulse, especially of an exalted kind” and the baseline condition was replaced by a positive-affect-activating condition defined as “being enthusiastic, interested, determined and excited” (p. 963). Additional instruments were administered to assess state openness and extraversion, triggering events, controllability, and responsibility appraisal. The third phase was designed to replicate and refine results from the first two. One hundred and five participants were asked to fill out trait questionnaires and to complete on-line diaries each day for two weeks regarding three different conditions (baseline, activated positive-affect experiences, or inspiration) during the previous 24-hours.

The results from Thrash and Elliott’s (2004) research relevant to the current study are that across all three phases of the study, inspiration was distinct from baseline or positive-affect-activating experiences. Inspiration consistently involved greater transcendence and less personal responsibility, which included being both inspired by some other agent and inspired to new action. Thus the three elements postulated by the authors to distinguish inspiration were supported by the results. The authors consistently avoided references to the supernatural or the utilization of spiritual language throughout the article, and regretfully, no detail was given from any of the narratives; however, they noted that inspiration was positively and significantly correlated with an enhancement of spirituality, meaning, and metaphysical concerns according to quantitative scores and presumably supported by text analysis of the narratives.

In summary, according to the few studies of some form of Divine assistance, it is a distinct experience involving non-ordinary qualities and positive affect that differentiate it from more mundane events. “Divine guidance” and “inspiration” also includes an impulse to action. However, no study actually addresses the experience when people believe they receive Divine assistance to better their life conditions, perhaps the focus of most prayers. It is a significant area of interest for transpersonal psychology, whether it involves the study of spiritual realization or psychotherapy to realize greater potential. Without attempting
to prove anything about the objective validity of Divine intervention, this study asked what is the experience of receiving Divine assistance (or grace) in making a positive change, and what about those experiences seems to indicate that the change is the result of Divine agency?

**Method**

For purposes of the study, grace was construed as the experience of assistance from a supernatural or Divine force outside the self to which was attributed an outcome of positive change, defined as an improvement in some aspect of the individual’s life that excluded causing intentional pain, loss, or suffering to others. This definition was not shared with participants who were recruited for having experienced “Divine grace” or “Divine assistance” within the last 3–24 months. The limited period was chosen to ensure recollection was still fresh as well as that the change had been established. Volunteers had to be 21 years old and fluent in English. Further screening determined that they succeeded in making a positive change they attributed to a supernatural force, and that the change was still manifest in their lives.

Respondents were located using a networking approach of distributing letters and flyers to friends, colleagues, spiritual communities, and 12-step meetings for Alcoholics Anonymous, Nicotine Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Overeaters Anonymous in the San Francisco Bay area. Low response to posted flyers led to visiting various spiritual communities to announce the project personally or to have a leader of the community do so and pass out flyers.

Basic demographic information was secured during the screening process, and qualified participants participated in in-person, semi-structured interviews lasting up to two hours. The interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions (see Appendix) to elucidate as much information as possible without prompting. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using standard thematic analysis since this was an exploratory study to identify the type and quality of the experiences.

**Results**

Sixty-five people volunteered, but many were excluded because their change did not fall within the time criterion or had not been sufficiently established to be considered successful. The final sample consisted of 25: 15 women and 10 men aged 22 to 66 years (mean age 45.92 years). The majority (21) were Caucasian, with 2 each Asian and Hispanic. Ten were married; 9 were single and not dating; and 6 were single but in a relationship with a significant other. The sample was well educated with 5 holding doctoral degrees, 8 master’s degrees, 9 bachelor degrees, and 3 with some college and/or associates degrees.

Most (22) had grown up with some religious affiliation: Roman Catholic (10), Protestant (5), Jewish (4), Hindu (2), and Unitarian (1). At the time of the
study, the largest group (6) described themselves as spiritual but having no religious affiliation, followed by Unity (4). Three each were Roman Catholic and Buddhist; 2 each, Protestant, Sufi and eclectic; and 1 each, Jewish and Christian/Buddhist. All 25 engaged in meditation (21) and/or prayer (19), most daily, at the time of the study, but two were not engaged in spiritual activities or affiliations of any kind before their experience of grace.

Participants were asked to describe the circumstances leading up to the experience of grace and give a detailed account of the experience. For a few, most aspects of their lives were going well and pressure was felt in only one area, such as career. For more participants, life posed multiple problems. For example, Joyce, a divorced 59-year-old librarian and leader in her spiritual community, had had to take in her mentally disabled adult son when her ex-husband had died the previous year. In her one-bedroom home, privacy was now nonexistent, and she was no longer independent. Soon after, her elderly mother, who lived in another country, sickened and died. At the same time Joyce began rapidly gaining a lot of weight and felt crushing exhaustion owing to an undiagnosed illness. All of this combined to produce spiritual aridity: “I don’t remember God that year at all. …It was just me and my anger and pain and fat and my son. … Totally devastated.” The prevailing life circumstances that warranted a change were grouped into five categories—logistical, psychological, addiction, illness, and unclassified (an outlier not reported further here)—based on what participants identified as the primary focus of their dilemma. In Joyce’s case, for instance, it was her illness.

The logistical group (10, 8 f, 2 m) was defined as facing a life path decision to choose a course of action that was unclear or blocked. These involved going to graduate school or difficulty graduating; determining how to work and go to school; and finding a new place to work or live. For example, 56-year-old Kabir was distressed by adverse management changes at work. His colleagues were bailing out of the company at a rapid rate. Despite supportive relationships and a positive spiritual life, he said, “Things were closing in… I’d wake up at 2 or 3 in the morning and have cold sweats. I’d sit and I had prayer beads. … I couldn’t get back to sleep. … I’d lost twenty pounds.” He wanted to quit his job but could not figure out how he could pay his insurance and bills.

Seven participants (3 f, 4 m) were focused on psychological issues, attempting to heal or resolve an emotive process: troubled relationships, loss, isolation in a new city, anxiety, and a costly professional mistake. For example, Rachel, a 58-year-old retired nurse was facing a number of life changes that were causing her apprehension. Her husband was about to retire, and she was afraid having him around the house would be burdensome because of his emotional neediness. She worried that her chronic pain condition would interfere with a cruise they had planned. Worst of all, dreams about her younger sister’s death when they were both children made it impossible for her to sleep. Although her sister had died accidentally, Rachel had always felt complicit in her death. In another example, Duncan, a physician, missed a cancer diagnosis at work. He felt “very upset or depressed… a great deal of guilt and shame.”
Four participants (2 f, 2 m) were struggling with addiction, only one of whom recognized his behavior as problematic. Leah, for instance, a married psychiatrist with a busy practice had had her personal life completely change after giving birth to twins. Her friendships and marriage were altered by motherhood, and her family of origin became much more involved in her life, yet she could not let go of taking on more at work. Her grandmother’s recent death had affected her spiritually: “I loathed God. … and had practically become hopeless.” Exhausted by new demands, Leah nevertheless adhered to unrealistic norms of self-sacrifice. She was “burnt out and exhausted. …social organizations, professional organizations, I was so over-committed, it was ridiculous. … I was a total workaholic … I couldn’t say no, not only at work, but to my friends, anyone.” Similarly, Anthony, a 38-year-old graphic artist, with no spiritual practice or religious affiliation, knew his life was in turmoil but was unaware that his drinking was a problem. The ad agency where he worked kept downsizing and finally laid him off; his marriage was “inconsistent….We could go along three or four days, and it was okay, and then another three or four days it was horrible, and I wanted to get out of it.” He now went to the bar every day to “deal with the stress.” He thought he might want to stop drinking: “Actually I didn’t think, ‘Quit drinking’. … It was, ‘Control drinking.’”

Three participants (2 f, 1 m) were struggling with a physical illness. Hilda, a 66-year-old divorcee was on social security. She had moved to a new city near her daughter’s place of work, but a week later, her daughter was transferred, and shortly after that, Hilda had to give up her car because she could no longer afford it. Then suddenly her legs swelled rapidly like “elephant legs” she had to be rushed to the emergency room. Within two days, she had gained 50 pounds of water weight. She went into kidney failure and was in excruciating pain. A battery of specialists finally diagnosed laptoymolisis, a muscle-wasting disease that could very well kill her.

Not surprisingly, especially given the multiple stressors for many respondents, their primary emotions reported just before the experience of grace were fear (11, 5 f, 3 m), uncertainty (11, 10 f, 1 m), distress, (9, 4 f, 5 m), self-doubt, (7, 5 f, 2 m), resistance (6, 4 f, 2 m), grief (5, 3 w, 2 m), anger (5, 2 f, 3 m), desperation (5, 2 f, 3 m), depression (4, 1 f, 3 m), and—the one positive emotion—calm (3, 1 f, 2 m). The types of feeling varied by situation. The dominant emotion for the logistical and illness groups was uncertainty; for the psychological group, distress; and for the addiction group, anger. Despite the negative tone, most of these orientations inspired behavior that ultimately led to the change, usually pleas for Divine assistance. For example, Cathy, who had a chronic problem of waking in the middle of the night, said, “I got so desperate, that I finally asked God for help.” However, for some, even though a course of action might be clear, such as going to graduate school, fear and self-doubt blocked them, leading them to ask for answers or assurance.

The experiences of grace or Divine assistance varied considerably, but all involved a series of four dynamics distinct from normal activity: modes of transmission, which marked the identifiable start of the experience; the
participant’s *subjective impulse* in response; a distinguishing *emotional experience*; and finally *external effects* that seemed to affirm the subjective experience.

The *mode of transmission* is the channel or manner through which the participants received Divine assistance that led them to understand the experience as grace. Many of these combined various altered-state phenomena. Nineteen (12 f, 7 m) reported an unusual realization resembling *intuition*, defined as a sense of knowing without the use of, or independent of, the reasoning process: “I just knew,” “it felt right,” or “inner guidance.” Rachel, driving home after a therapy session, got a message to telephone an estranged sister: “We haven’t spoken in years because she wanted it that way … [and] I just knew that I needed to make this move and call her.” Billy, a chiropractor who had been working in another doctor’s office for nine years, for no apparent reason was informed that his contract would not be renewed. A year later he still felt angry, betrayed, and also frustrated with his rented location even though his practice was still going well. Spiritually he was frustrated, too: “Anytime I prayed before and really asked for guidance…it always happened, and now the months were going on and nothing happened.” Then one day, when he and his wife were meditating, they each got an answer: “It felt right that I was going to find my own building to move into… It was time to buy my own building….We just knew.”

Six participants (3 f, 3 m) described their transmission of grace as receiving an important *message through other people*, usually in the form of encouragement or information they needed to proceed. Karen, beset by barriers to entering graduate school, reported how a colleague’s casual remark suddenly revealed a direction to pursue and “by the response I was getting from the outside world that that was the direction to go even though there was an obstacle in the way.” Joe, on the other hand, attributed his experience of grace to a spiritual teacher capable of causing transformative processes by his very presence or will.

Another six (2 f, 4 m) had *audition* experiences of a voice not attributable to natural, environmental sources or their own thoughts providing direction. During a yoga class, Khoba’s anguish about losing his girlfriend was overwhelming.

In an act of desperation I asked inside myself…, “Is it meant to be?” And I got an answer from a source that I refer to as God … this voice had a vibrational power to it that was like on a sensory mode more than I could handle. It was extremely powerful and empowering … directly in the center of my chest. … The voice said, “It is, but not right now.” I jumped up … and looked around the room and initially felt, “Who said that?” … There probably wasn’t a person within range of me closer than 6 feet. Everybody was doing their poses in yoga. Nobody was paying attention to me. So I knew that voice came from inside.

Two participants (1 f, 1 m) had *visions*, defined as an image that appears credibly or vividly to the mind, though not actually present, and is attributed to

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the Divine. Both were accompanied by audition, and one was multimodal. After a day of asking for “a really big sign” regarding which graduate school to attend, Mary lay sleeping when “it felt like someone grabbed me by the shoulder and picked me up and threw me … out of my bed.” She saw a robed woman she took to be the Virgin Mary who told her to go into the living room. There Mary saw an acceptance letter, that she had just finished reading from one of the schools, was literally on fire. She fetched some water and threw it on the flames, but the fire flared up instead, burning her right breast through her nightshirt. Then it extinguished. The letter was completely destroyed, but none of the papers or books next to it were singed, nor was her nightshirt, though her flesh was burned and hurting. The vision told her, “You’re going to be taken care of if you go to [the school from which the acceptance letter came]. … You will remember what has happened because of the burn on your breast. …”

Two participants (1 f, 1 m) experienced a felt presence, defined as a particular sensation or impression of a supernatural being in the immediate vicinity that cannot be discerned by the senses. According to Paul,

I’m not alone. Like there’s a presence. … There’s nothing I can see. I can just feel it. … This was the third time it happened, so I knew what it was. … So in my body I could feel energy or heat or your hair stands on end and things like that. … And it’s all over my entire body and it’s usually accompanied by crying of some sort. Not necessarily weeping crying. … More or less like the realization of the Divine that I’m in touch with that.

Finally two women had dreams that brought a Divine message. Leah, the self-proclaimed workaholic, dreamed she was in France around World War I when a man resembling Carl Jung looked at her very seriously and said twice, “If you go to Calais you will be killed.” She believed him, and not knowing where Calais was in the dream, said to herself, “I’ll just have to look at the signs, so if I see a sign saying Calais coming up, I’ll have to get off the train.” She awakened knowing that her “life was. …heading toward some terrible end results, that I had to change course. …Whatever idea I had to escape this route was not going to work.”

Some experiences were short, discrete events, like the dreams, but others spanned days. Billy’s intuition to set up his own clinical practice, for instance, was followed by months of synchronicities supporting his decision, discussed below.

Subjective impulse describes the inner experiences of grace that propelled or fostered change during or immediately after the transmission. The most common subjective impulse (13, 8 f, 5 m) was guided movement, defined as feeling drawn or led into a new course of action. Polly described “a pulling and a willingness.” Ananda volunteered to be a prayer chaplain, saying, “It was just like I felt compelled to offer.” Anthony said, “After hearing that voice, I said, ‘Okay, I will quit drinking.’ … For some reason, I felt very motivated to not drink.”

For some (5, 3 f, 2 m) the subjective impulse was cessation, the stopping of dysfunctional behavior or unhealthy conditions. Raymond, the only one of the
addiction group to acknowledge that he had a problem, was worried about his daily dependency on marijuana, which was altering his sleep patterns, increasing his junk food consumption, and changing his temperament, “crankiness, short-temperedness, that sort of thing.” But he felt helpless to change it: “Pot has become my new god. I remember thinking that, and it was sort of a resigned sort of thing.” Then craving just evaporated:

I asked in my meditation for this [smoking pot] to be gone. ... I don’t remember experiencing any sensation. ... All I know is that the ... smoking went away. Just went away. ... I didn’t seek it anymore after that point. ... The whole drive for it was completely gone.

Luke and Hilda’s diseases spontaneously resolved. Luke’s cancer had metastasized to his bones, with lesions in his cervical vertebrae, pelvis, and all over his rib cage. Then one day when he went in for an appointment,

The technician took one set [of x-rays] and then ... another. He said, “I shot this twice. I thought this was a machine problem.”... [Then Luke saw his doctor Pat who] shows me the film. And there’s ... nothing here [in his chest]. ... [The doctor] says, “What are you doing?” And I say to him, “Prayer, every day.” I say, “Come on, Pat, tell me why. There were more than ten spots there. So, Pat, where are they? What happened?” He says, “I don’t know.”

Five participants (3 f, 2 m) reported spontaneous surrender, letting go of their typical behaviors, expectations or attachment to outcome without conscious effort. Heather, mourning the end of a relationship, said, “[Grace was a] willingness to fully embody, energetically, and spiritually to fully give over ... just opening my heart to this pain and grief.” According to Ananda, trying to adjust to the isolation, great expense, and culture shock of a new city, “My journey of grace I would say is one of defrosting, letting go of clutching rationality.” Quan Yen, struggling with an eating disorder and her first romance after a divorce, said: “I am no longer sitting there with my mind closed and my cynicism running amok. I’m just open to what might be happening.”

The last category, effortlessness (5, 2 f, 3 m), is defined as the sense that change occurred without the participant’s exertion or agency (“it just happened”). According to Anthony,

It really comes down to a lack of anything I did. ... I quit drinking and began exercising. I have never maintained a consistent workout program for more than a week or two, but this time I just kept going. ... It was weird ... I didn’t do anything different.

Subjective impulses were specific to the type of presenting problem, with most reporting only one type of impulse, though the addiction group experienced three. The logistical and psychological groups tended to report guided movement; the addiction and illness groups, cessation; the psychological, spontaneous surrender; and the addiction group, effortlessness.

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The next aspect of the internal experience of grace was the emotional. For many, the grace experience felt profound and affirming, including a sudden shift from the negative emotions they had been feeling initially. The majority (14, 6 f, 8 m) were *enlivened*, defined as a positive or affirming emotion with increased energy or enthusiasm: “very enlivened … resonance coupled with excitement, and a little bit of bliss” and “a sense of Divine energy that was going into my body and replenishing it.” Nine participants (6 f, 3 m), most of whom did not have an intuition experience, were *surprised*, including feeling startled or frightened: “It was scary to feel such a presence,” and “I think I was in shock or something.” Another nine (6 f, 3 f) felt *love*, variously described as “all-engulfing, all surrounding love,” “love and support and caring community. … coming from beyond [God] as well,” and “floating on something much bigger than me and lighter and much more love-filled.” Eight (4 f, 4 m) were *comforted*. According to Heather, “[I was] feeling God right there and completely nurturing me.” Joyce described, “physical comfort in my body… It was God the Mother wrapped around me.” Five (3 f, 2 m) reported *calm* or peace, such as “this wonderful, wonderful peaceful feeling came over me” and “all of sudden my mind slowed down and I felt very, very calm.” Four participants (2 f, 2 m) felt *humbled*. When Olivia’s answer to her dilemma appeared within only a few minutes of her heartfelt prayer, she said, “I was humbled. … I just walked out to my car and started bawling.” For three (2 f, 1 m), the emotional experience included *pain*, usually the knowledge that grief avoided or denied must be embraced. Paul, awakened by a bright light and strong physical sensation, was told to remain with his girlfriend and allow her to leave him (something he had never done before): “It would be very painful for me, and that’s what I needed to heal for all the other times I bailed before I could get hurt.” Heather’s experience involved allowing herself to feel grief completely, which she had feared would kill her. The addiction group expressed the fewest emotional experiences.

Finally 15 said grace unfolded or assisted them through *external events* or activities outside their control in three distinct ways, which validated their internal experience and convinced them that Divine grace was involved. Twelve (6 f, 6 m) reported an *accelerated timeline* of the outcome events. Hilda, who had been unable to move from bed or chew food, was released from the hospital after a week and went home from rehabilitation unassisted after two weeks. According to her, “Everyone was amazed at how fast I was able to do everything.” When Ananda volunteered to be a prayer chaplain, “I went from pre-contemplation to contemplation to action within seconds.” Ten (6 f, 4 m) referred to *synchronicities*, defined as coincidences they believed were meaningfully related. Billy described a “whirlwind” of synchronicities that came together suddenly in the months following his intuition for him to buy and remodel a building as the base for an independent practice: “Getting a loan … contractors and painters … other chiropractors called me, saying, ‘I want to work for you.’ … No matter how intense … it was all extremely smooth.” Similarly, Daisy said, “Over and over and over, things fell into place. Every time I put a problem out it got solved.” Finally, three participants (2 f, 1 m) believed others involved in their situation were positively affected by grace, too: “The ripple of how it affects everybody. Not just me but when it’s
right, its right for everybody.” Although the accelerated timeline was the most common across all problem types, the logistical group had proportionally more external experiences, whereas the psychological group reported the least.

In summary, the presenting problem was the greatest determiner of trends in the experience of Divine assistance. Four elements characterized the experience of grace: (a) its mode of transmission, including intuition, other people, auditory, vision, presence, and dreams; (b) a subjective impulse that was the actual change element, including guided movement, cessation, spontaneous surrender, and effortlessness; (c) the emotional experience of grace, which included feeling enlivened, startled, loved, comforted, calmed, humbled, and sometimes pained; and (d) external effects of grace in the objective world, including an accelerated timeline, synchronicities, and positive impact on others. Typically, the people received a message from the Divine, which was followed by a type of Divine inner impulse that led to a change, which varied across problem groups. The logistical and psychological groups were guided to act or pursue a particular direction. The psychological group felt that grace helped them let go of preconceived ideas, and the addiction and illness groups experienced a spontaneous end to undesirable conditions or actions. The addiction group also experienced a sense of effortless change. The majority of people described grace as a feeling of being enlivened and loved by the Divine, and many were surprised that Spirit contacted them. Last, the change was supported when events in the material world happened faster and more easily than expected.

**Discussion**

The cumulative experiences of this exploratory study sample yielded new information about what may be one of the most common spiritual phenomena of the human condition, how people experience grace as Divine assistance in effecting a positive change. The small exploratory sample, with its bias for race, education, and religious background, is not generalizable, nor was it intended to be. Nevertheless, the results support the three studies that have examined similar phenomena (Gowack, 1998; Thrash & Elliott, 2004; Kaplan, 2005).

Gowack’s (1998) research on “feeling grace” when serving the terminally ill identified “feeling blessed and/or loved,” “feeling energized,” and “feeling peace” (p. 160), none of them operationally defined, but supported by direct quotes that match the feelings of love, enlivenment, and calm identified in the current study as an aspect of grace. Furthermore Gowack distilled a number of categories into his final theme “feeling present in the moment, often with heightened awareness” (p. 160), a label that seems to stress presence and receptivity, which would be more consistent with attending the dying, than the goal-orientation of making a change in this study. Nevertheless quotes Gowack used to create his “feeling present” category support Divine assistance phenomena, such as the intuition and felt presence modes of transmission, respectively: “I didn’t need to ask—I just knew” (Gowack, 1998, p. 172), and “especially the presence—a sense that the Divine was present” (p. 174) and “It
[grace] found me and that was something of a surprise. It was something other than self-determined” (p. 172). Gowack also created a “feeling guided” category that included quotes suggesting the intuition mode of transmission as well as aspects of subjective impulse in the current study, such as this one: “I just suddenly found myself connected into and acting from a very deep place, a place that just ‘knew’ what … to do….You’re doing it with a sense of knowingness but not in a way that your mind is directing it” (Gowack, 1998, p. 185).

Kaplan’s (2005) research of spiritual teachers receiving Divine guidance most nearly parallels the help with a life path decision sought by logistical group in the current study compared to the groups seeking to resolve psychological issues, addiction, or illness. Nevertheless the degree of consistency between Kaplan’s results and this study is not easy to assess since Kaplan’s categories are not operationally defined, nor does the author give many examples to illustrate them. For instance, Kaplan’s most common forms of Divine communication are labeled perceptual shift, felt sense, insight, and thought-sense, which have no easily discernible counterparts to the current study. However, almost half of Kaplan’s sample identifies hearing an inner voice, dreams, intuition, and visions that are very likely comparable to the audition, dreams, intuition, and vision modes of transmission in this study. It is further possible that Kaplan’s revelation may be similar to intuition or vision in the current study, and that his outer voice might be similar to the voice Khobe reported “hearing” so loudly he initially thought someone had spoken in the yoga studio. Similarly Kaplan’s inner dictation, one of the few categories illustrated with a quote, seems very like the inner voice of the current study or intuition: “The voice that I hear is similar to an inner dictation. Sometimes it’s like getting a green light; sometimes it’s just an inner sense of knowing” (Kaplan, 2005, p. 115).

Kaplan (2005) also identifies but does not define emotional categories likely to be comparable to ones in this study, such as heart-opening, interconnectedness, and love; consolation or comfort; and calmness, perhaps counterparts of love, comfortable, and calm, as defined here.

The greatest areas of discontinuity between Kaplan’s (2005) study and this one involve the absence of the enlivenment that was the predominant emotional reaction in this study, followed by being surprised. Possible explanations could involve differences in sampling and the conditions reported. In the first place Kaplan’s spiritual teachers may have been starting from a place of greater equanimity than the lay people in this study, most of whom were beset by problems that baffled, frustrated, or overwhelmed them with negative emotion. Second, the difference in demand characteristics between asking for Divine “guidance” in Kaplan’s study and Divine “assistance” in this one may have introduced mitigating artifacts. The largest group in this study involved logistics, which were more like questions of guidance than of other forms of aid, and those problems tended to be much less emotionally charged. Finally Kaplan’s spiritual teachers may not have been surprised by their experiences of Divine guidance because they were starting from a greater presumptiveness of
spiritual authority than the lay people in the current study. They may, like the Gowack (1998) participant quoted above, have had humbler expectations of a direct connection with the Divine.

Regarding Thrash and Elliott’s (2004) three-part study of inspiration, it is difficult to draw direct comparisons with the experience of Divine assistance since they omitted all narrative detail, including identifying themes. Nevertheless, all three of their samples did distinguish inspiration as a discrete event characterized by receptivity to illumination from an external agency (most often associated with the supernatural) for a higher purpose. From their quantitative correlation of inspiration with enhanced spirituality, meaning, and metaphysical concerns, a connection with Divine can certainly be inferred. Their narrative identified inspiration as helping with life-path calling or vocation and affirming personal potential, which would seem consistent with results in this study. Furthermore inspiration was always accompanied by unusual positive affect and an impulse to manifest or express that new realization in the world, similar to the emotional effects noted in this study as well as the subjective impulse.

Significantly, not all participants in the current study believed in Spirit at the time of their experience of Divine assistance, and of those who did, the connection to Spirit ranged from hatred and anger to love and closeness. Moreover, only one of the participants in the addiction group even recognized a need for help. Divine assistance was given independent of spiritual beliefs, devotion or “good works,” which seems to contradict much of the theological literature but falls squarely within the traditions that allow for grace freely given to the “undeserving.” In terms of the psychological literature, Meissner’s (1966) description of the way the relationship with God evolves as part of humanity’s developmental process suggests that belief or a positive connection with Spirit may be not be a prerequisite for grace. The experience of grace did positively influence the participants’ relationships with the Divine by strengthening, renewing, and for some, confirming, “Yes, there is a God.”

The results support the psychological literature that suggests that grace is part of a personal growth process. Some participants were experiencing a new emotion or trying to resolve an old emotional issue that was inhibiting psychological growth. Others were confronting extending themselves beyond their comfort zone. “[Grace’s] healing effect is precisely to enable the ego to mobilize its own latent resources. … Grace raises man to a new level of existence” (Meissner, 1987, pp. 8–23). Further, the experience of grace enhances a process that may be driven by the unconscious striving for health and fulfillment (e.g., Maslow, 1968), especially since four participants were not attempting to change, despite high levels of stress. According to William James (1902/1977),

Yet all the while the forces of mere organic ripening within him are going on towards their own prefigured results, and his conscious strainings are letting loose subconscious allies behind the scenes, which in their way work towards rearrangement; and the rearrangement towards which all these
deeper forces tend is pretty surely definite, and definitely different from what he consciously conceives and determines. … When the new centre of personal energy has been subconsciously incubated so long as to be just ready to open into flower … it must burst forth. (pp. 231–232)

This assumption points to a central divergence between transpersonal and other models of change. For example, the Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM) (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983; Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross, 1992; Prochaska, Norcross & DiClemente, 1994; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer, DiClemente, Rossi, & Prochaska, 1990), perhaps the most researched model of health behavior change (quitting dysfunctional behaviors, such as smoking, and adopting positive behaviors, such as healthy diet and exercise), is so called because it synthesizes the change elements of all the major psychological theories (psychoanalytic, behavioral, cognitive, and humanistic) except the transpersonal. Its author(s) Prochaska et al. (1994) contended that relying on Divine help inhibits people from taking the necessary steps to succeed, though without citing any particular research to prove this point.

Unfortunately, research on the spiritual in facilitating change has been sparse, despite the success of health behavior change models like the twelve-step programs that are built around surrender to a Higher Power, among others. Furthermore, such research is complicated by vague and divergent definitions of the “spiritual” (e.g., Arthur, 2003; Glickman, Galanter, Dermatis, & Dingle, 2006; Holt, Clark, Kreuter, & Rubio, 2003) and methods to distinguish it from other modalities employed in the change process, such as the community of twelve-step programs. Yet the research reviewed here (Gowack, 1998; Kaplan, 2005; Thrash & Elliott, 2004) as well as this study indicate that spiritual experiences, including asking for and receiving assistance from the Divine can actually further self-efficacy, including choosing and committing to act, reflective of Meissner’s theory (1966, 1987) as well as other transpersonal models of transformation (e.g., Almaas, 1984, 1990, 1994; Assagioli, 1976).

Nevertheless, this study as well as those reviewed here on the Divine (Gowack, 1998; Kaplan, 2005; Thrash & Elliott, 2004) are too limited in scope to challenge change models like TTM as they were not focused on outcome but on the exploration of a phenomenon. A significant delimitation to this study was that no attempt was made to identify or assess the outcomes of the positive change, such as validating the guidance given by intuition for its accuracy or efficacy, an area increasingly investigated elsewhere with mixed results (e.g., Dawes, 2001; Ehrlinger, Gilovich, & Ross 2005; Epley & Gilovich, 2005; Kahneman, 2011; Myers, 2002), or conducting follow-up sobriety measures for those addicted to substances. The perception of a positive, sustained change in the person’s life was taken at face value from the participants’ self-report. Given the wide variety of presenting life dilemmas—logistical, psychological, addiction, and illness—, very different research approaches would be needed to assess outcome results. Complex choices like choosing a graduate school or starting a business defy objective measurement as “better” than alternatives. Addiction and disease, on the other hand, may be much easier to assess.
Likewise, conditions that might have conduced to Divine assistance were not investigated here, though determining why some people seem to receive Divine assistance and why others do not has been the basis of religious doctrines on grace and theodicy for most of human history. Transpersonal research is still in its infancy, with phenomena like those reported in this study considered anomalous, random, and “miraculous” even by those who experienced them. Although this study and similar ones start to map its footprint in human affairs, grace remains mysterious. The value of such research at this point may lie in providing evidence that what millions hope for—Divine assistance with the challenges of life—is real, and that it can happen to anyone with convincing results.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

- What was/were your experience(s) of grace?
- How did you know you experienced grace?
- What were the distinguishing features of grace?
Starting about a month before you initiated your change, what was going on in your life at this time? (Probes: Job/career, financial, relationships, spiritual, physically, developmental influences)

What were your thoughts and beliefs about the change then?

Tell me about how you have made this change.

Were you doing anything different before and during the change? (Probe: What do you think changed?)

How would you define and describe Grace?

The Author(s)

Jacelyn C. Bronte is a psychologist in private practice in San Francisco. She specializes in a holistic transpersonal approach that assists adults to connect with their deepest truth.

Jenny Wade is a professional researcher of transpersonal and quotidian psychological and social dynamics at the individual, group, and organizational level. She is a professor at Sofia University (formerly the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology) and consults to change agents and clients on diagnostics, change process design, and measurement.
TOWARD A GENERAL THEORY OF ENACTION: BIOLOGICAL, TRANSPERSONAL, AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

Samuel Arthur Malkemus, M.A.
Berkeley, California

ABSTRACT: This paper explores the world-constituting dynamics of enaction as articulated by the enactive approach in cognitive science and the participatory approach in transpersonal studies. Husserl’s phenomenology is then introduced in order to (a) investigate Husserl’s presentation of world-constitution and (b) to anchor the enactive and participatory approaches in the living field of human subjectivity. Each approach is examined with specific attention paid to the dynamics of world-constitution that emerge therein. Through this analysis the terms biological, participatory, and transcendental enaction provide the ground for the primary aim of this paper: a movement towards a general theory of enaction.

Enaction has become a key concept in contemporary academic circles. Generally confined to the domain of cognitive science this term has made its way into arenas as diverse as education (Masciotra, Roth, & Morel, 2007), transpersonal psychology (Ferrer, 2002; Wilber, 1995) and religious studies (Ferrer & Sherman, 2008a). Enaction, in its most basic sense, denotes a movement or action made manifest in the world. In the context of this paper enaction suggests a dynamic process of world-constitution that is always intimately linked to a particular bodily identity and situated within a greater field of interpenetrating relationships. In this article I examine the world-constituting dynamics of enaction as they arise in the enactive approach of cognitive science (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991), the participatory approach of transpersonal studies (Ferrer, 2002) and the transcendental phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (1954/1970). Through the exploration of these seemingly divergent domains I attempt to reveal their common branches by demonstrating how each of these perspectives, biological, transpersonal, and phenomenological, rejects dualistic and reductionistic accounts of human nature as well as shares an enactive vision of world-constitution. From their common epistemological foundations these approaches provide the ground for a novel vision of world-constitution wherein the scientific, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions of human experience are stripped of their conflictual wrappings and invited to shine from the transcendental depths of embodied life.

ENACTION

“Caminante, son tus huellas el camino, y nada más; No hay camino, se hace camino al andar.”

[“Wanderer, the road is your footsteps, nothing else; There is no road, you lay it down in walking”]

— Antonio Machado (1983, p. 94)
As the path of the wanderer is laid down it is enacted, it is brought into being step by step. It is in this sense of carrying out embodied action, as portrayed by the Spanish poet Machado, that Varela was inspired to use the term *enaction* to characterize a new approach within the field of cognitive science. Originally presented in the book, *The Embodied Mind* (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991), the enactive approach – calling upon studies in cognitive science, phenomenology, and Buddhism – sought to bridge the dualism of mind and matter. It stands as an alternative within the field of cognitive science to the branches of *cognitivism*, which holds a computer model of the mind, and *connectionism*, which views the mind as a neural network. The goal of cognitive science is to make explicit the principles and mechanisms of cognition yet the enactive approach critiques these two branches of cognitive science for failing to do so. From the perspective of the enactive approach, both cognitivism and connectionism are viewed as the result of a process of disembodied abstraction. In contrast, the enactive approach embraces a contemporary branch of cognitive science known as *embodied dynamicism* (Thompson, 2007). From this perspective the mind is viewed as an embodied dynamic system in the world. In contrast to the mechanistic abstractions of cognitivism and connectionism, where the mind is split from embodied experience and considered only knowable through empirical study, embodied dynamicism holds that “cognitive processes emerge from the non-linear and circular causality of continuous sensorimotor interactions involving brain, body, and environment” (Thompson, 2007, p. 11). The mind is seen as embedded in embodied action and the multiplicity of interpenetrating relationships between the organism and its environment. From this perspective a deep continuity between life and mind is proposed.

Yet to clarify the thesis that mind and life are deeply continuous, a claim which is central to Thompson’s *Mind in Life* (2007), I would like to draw attention, not to the contemporary research being done in cognitive and brain science, but instead, to the core features of the biological theory upon which the enactive approach has developed. This section is thus concerned with enaction in its biological context, which provides the ground for the enactive approaches research in the field of cognitive science.

Perhaps the central feature of the enactive approach, and a feature that is foundational for the world-constituting dynamics of enaction, the focus of this inquiry, is the theory of autopoiesis. It provides a theoretical framework for the simultaneous emergence of self, world, and the cognitive faculties through which that self mediates its world. Thus to understand what is meant by enaction, as held by the enactive approach, I first examine the theory of autopoiesis, both its dynamics and its role as an exemplary theoretical model characteristic of all life on Earth. Second, I examine the concept of *world* that emerges from an autopoietical perspective in which the world is viewed as a relational domain enacted by the autonomous agency of the organism and its coupling with the environment. In this view a world is born through the dynamic co-emergence of self and world. Following a presentation of autopoiesis and world I return to examine the nature of cognition from an enactive perspective.
Autopoiesis

Autopoiesis is a theory that refers to the self-producing dynamics of any living system. Originally presented in Spanish by Maturana and Varela (1973) the theory of autopoiesis has since had significant impact on modern scientific discourse (Bitbol & Luisi, 2005; Boden, 2000; Bourgine & Stewart, 2004; Di Paolo, 2005). The term was created from the Greek ἀυτό́, self; and ποιήσις, creation or production. It is thus literally defined as self-creation or self-production. Yet before turning to the theory of autopoiesis a few points must be made about general systems theory.

First, in systems theory a system is broadly conceived as a collection of related entities or processes that stand out from a background as a single whole. These systems range from single cellular life forms to galaxies, from automobile engines to digital circuitry. Second, any system is either autonomous, meaning literally self-governed, or heteronomous, other-governed. Autonomous systems are self-determining and are thus governed by endogenous, self-organizing, and self-controlling dynamics. In contrast, a heteronomous system is determined from the outside and is thus governed by externally imposed inputation. Autonomous systems are comprised of a nexus of processes not, as is the case of heteronomous systems, static entities. An example of comparison between an autonomous system and a heteronomous system would be to consider the difference between an ant colony and a pinball machine. Whereas the ant colony is governed by endogenous self-organizing dynamics the pinball machine requires external support for continued functioning.

An autopoietic system is an autonomous system that is restricted to the biochemical domain, the domain of chemical substances and vital processes that occur in living systems. Such a system is exemplified by every living being, the paradigm of which is a living cell.

Two major concepts characterize the minimal requirements for the emergence of an autopoietic system. The first is that the system demonstrates operational closure. Operational closure indicates that the system stands out as a unity. This unity is defined by the functional boundary that is produced, regulated, and maintained by the internal topology of the system. The internal topology is in turn maintained by the continued existence of the functional boundary. A circular and recursive dynamic is thus in play between the internal and external dynamics of the system. For example, the epidermal layer of human skin is produced by internal metabolic dynamics, yet those same dynamics are dependent upon the boundary of the skin for continued functioning.

The second characteristic, and a function of operational closure, is that autopoietic organization entails a structural coupling with the environment. Structural coupling is the functional relationship between organism and environment that emerges from, and is inherent within, the organic structure of the organism. This relationship demands that the functional boundary of the organism is always semi-permeable. A semi-permeable boundary, maintained by the recursive dynamics of operational closure, enables a functional
relationship between organism and environment, a structural coupling, for it entails a capacity for thermodynamic exchange with the environment. The structure of any organism is embedded in a functional relationship with its environment. Thus operational closure and structural coupling present us with a bound system defined by a functional boundary that is at the same time thermodynamically open. Minimal autopoiesis, the most basic requirements needed for a system to be considered autopoietic, necessitates an operationally closed and thermodynamically open system whose semi-permeable boundary exists in interdependent recursive relations both with the internal topology of that system, and with the world in which that system is immersed.

Minimal autopoiesis and its constitutive features, operational closure and structural coupling, introduces a case for the most basic requirements of any system to be considered a living system. In the words of Maturana and Varela (1980) “autopoiesis in the physical space is necessary and sufficient to characterize a system as a living system” (p. 112). Thus the theory of autopoiesis is a theory of life. It is a depiction of the dynamic processes and requirements necessary to regard a being as a living being.

World

With autopoiesis we have the emergence of the most minimal sense of selfhood. Self is here understood as a self-organizing unity that emerges from a background and is structurally coupled to its environment. From an autopoietic perspective both self and world dynamically co-emerge. World is thus uniquely defined in an autopoietical context as that which emerges and is constituted or disclosed by the functional demands of the organism. This enactment of world, which in this context I would like to term biological enaction to distinguish it from the other forms of enaction addressed below, entails a reciprocal (nonlinear) relationship between self and world. Like the reciprocal relations between the functional boundary and internal topology of an organism, there exists a recursive codependence between self and world whereby the world provides the possibility for the continued existence of the organism and the organism provides the possibility for the continued existence of its biological world. This is not to say that there is not a world that exists independently of the existence of the organism, as in philosophical idealism, but that the world exists as a world for the organism such that it is structurally coupled and intimately linked to the world in which it finds itself.

The world, in the autopoietical sense, emerges through the structure of the organism. This world is a relational nexus of interactions wherein the environment is responded to by the specific demands of the organism. The sensorimotor repertoire of the organism constitutes this sensorimotor world. The notion of such a world was originally presented by von Uexküll’s (1934/1957) use of the term Umwelt, a “sensorimotor world” unique to the sensorimotor capacities of the organism. Signs and symbols of significance within the Umwelt motivate these capacities. It is the biological and sensorimotor world of the organism. For example, von Uexküll proposed
that the *Umwelt* of a tick was predominated by three main (biosemiotic) features of significance; the odor of butyric acid, which emanates from all mammals, the temperature of 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit, which corresponds to the blood of all mammals, and the hairy typology of mammals. He depicts the *Umwelt* of the tick as follows,

The eyeless tick is directed to this watchtower (the tip of a twig on some bush) by a general photosensitivity of her skin. The approaching prey is revealed to the blind and deaf highway woman by her sense of smell. The odor of butyric acid, that emanates from the skin glands of all mammals, acts on the tick as a signal to leave her watchtower and hurl herself downwards. If, in so doing, she lands on something warm – a fine sense of temperature betrays this to her – she has reached her prey, the warm-blooded creature. It only remains for her to find this hairless spot. There she burrows deep into the skin of her prey, and slowly pumps herself full of warm blood. (p. 8)

The world is constituted biologically by the life that emerges to meet it. This world reflects the sensorimotor capacities of the organism. The time and space of that world are thereby constituted by those capacities. Specific relationships of meaning are also constituted. The features of the world that support survival will be of special importance. A “hairy topology” is part of a tick’s world. The types of landscapes, shelter, and food unique to the sensorimotor capacities of the organism will color the shape of its world.

The emergence of an autopoietic system entails the emergence of a living organism. The organism dynamically co-emerges with its world, which in turn entails relationships of meaning that are uniquely linked to the structural dynamics of the autopoietic system.

World co-emerges with self. Each is intimately intertwined with the other and participates in dynamic mutually informing relations. This biological world is enacted or brought forth through the autonomous agency and structural coupling of an autopoietic system. The sensorimotor world of the cell and the redwood are not the same world. The self-organizing dynamics of each manifest distinct functional relationships constituted by distinct relationships of meaning.\(^5\)

**Cognition**

By beginning to examine the deep continuity of life and mind, as presented by the enactive approach, the basic qualifications of living being have been featured as a minimal autopoietic system. Such a demonstration of minimal self-organizing and self-producing dynamics within the biochemical domain displays, from an enactive perspective, *life-like* characteristics. The next step in presenting a convincing argument for the deep continuity of life and mind is to show how these life-like characteristics are also *mind-like*.\(^6\)

In the enactive approach cognition, or mind, is defined broadly as the activity required of any autopoietic system necessary for its continued existence. In
order for any organism to continue functioning it must engage in the process of acquiring knowledge about the world in which it finds itself. It must begin to make sense of its world. Varela terms this basic mode of activity sense-making (Varela, 1997). Sense-making is thus also world-making, for it requires that the organism enact a world of significance sufficient for its continued existence. The dynamic co-emergence of self and world necessitates the capacity of the organism to actively make sense of its world. Consider the case of the motile bacteria, a single celled microorganism, swimming uphill in a food gradient of sugar:

The cells tumble about until they hit upon an orientation that increases their exposure to sugar, at which point they swim forward, up-gradient, toward the zone of greatest sugar concentration. This behavior occurs because the bacteria are able to sense chemically the concentration of sugar in their local environment through molecular receptors in their membranes. They are able to move forward by rotating their flagella in coordination like a propeller. (Thompson, 2007, p. 157)

The emergence of the bacteria entails the emergence of a world (where sugar becomes “food”), which in turn entails the bacteria’s capacity to make sense of that world. This activity of sense-making enacts or brings forth a world of significance. Biological enaction thus involves a process of embodied cognition whereby a sensorimotor world is brought into being.

To be alive is to make sense of the environment, and thereby to enact a world of significance that is uniquely coupled to the organism through continuous reciprocal relations. And while one might quickly concede that without life there can be no cognition or mind, the enactive approach also asserts that without mind there can be no life. Mind and life, from an enactive perspective, are inseparable, coeval, and coextensive.

To summarize, the enactive approach presents a vision of living being as a nexus of interpenetrating world-constituting relationships. The biological world or Umwelt of any living being is actively enacted and brought into being as a domain rich with meaning and significance. World is not preexistent or predetermined, but continually enacted through the embodied activity of the organism as a path laid down in walking. Mind is not distinct from matter and cannot be reduced to specific brain regions, but is coextensive with the relational bodily dynamics of the organism and its world. At a primordial and essential level a sharp distinction between organism and environment, mind and life, is neither useful nor accurate for depicting the active dynamics of living being. This analysis of the enactive approach has revealed what I have termed biological enaction, the process whereby the emergence of an autopoietic system entails the simultaneous co-emergence of a sensorimotor world. This world is saturated with meaning through the total intertwinement of the bodily life of the organism and its capacity to make sense of its environment.
Scholars of transpersonal studies have incorporated the insights of the enactive approach into their investigation of the epistemology of spiritual experience (Ferrer, 2002; Ferrer & Sherman, 2008a; Wilber, 1995, 1996). My focus here will be upon the participatory approach that emerged from the work of Jorge N. Ferrer (2002). While the enactive approach presents enaction as primarily associated with the sensorimotor world of the organism, the participatory approach, as Ferrer and Sherman (2008b) argue, has adapted and expanded enaction to include not only the dynamic emergence of a sensorimotor word, but also the emergence of ontologically rich spiritual worlds. Thus this inquiry moves from the biocognitive to the transpersonal, and into the participatory approach.

Participatory Spirituality

The participatory approach argues that human spirituality emerges from a cocreative communion with a generative force of life and/or spirit. Ferrer (2002) first formerly introduced a participatory vision of spirituality in his book *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory*. In it he presents a detailed critique of a number of entrenched assumptions within the field of transpersonal studies. As a constructive alternative to such assumptions he suggests a need for a participatory turn that, like the impact of the linguistic turn in philosophy (Rorty, 1967), would open the field of transpersonal studies to a new way of conceiving spiritual phenomena. To this end Ferrer constructed a transpersonal epistemology founded upon the principle of participatory enaction. To better understand what is implied by participatory enaction, and its relationship to the enactive approach, I first briefly present Ferrer’s revisioning of transpersonal studies by examining the main thrust of his critique and his novel contributions.

Revisioning Transpersonal Theory

The field of transpersonal studies is broadly characterized by its focus upon the spiritual dimension of human experience (Daniels, 2005). Specifically, it is distinguished “by its conviction that a comprehensive understanding of human beings and the cosmos requires the inclusion of spiritual phenomena” (Ferrer, 2002, p. 8). In *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory* (2002) Ferrer identifies three major obstacles to understanding spiritual phenomena within transpersonal studies. While each of these barriers initially emerged out of the genuine desire of transpersonal thinkers to comprehend spiritual phenomena, Ferrer suggests that they have in fact become outdated restraints that restrict the field as a whole. I will examine Ferrer’s critique of each obstacle and then present Ferrer’s proposed alternative to each.

The first Ferrer termed experientialism, which he defined as the view within transpersonal studies that spiritual phenomena should be regarded as
individual inner experiences. Ferrer’s critique is not to deny that such phenomena do contain an inner experiential dimension, a feeling that they occur “within” oneself, but to point out that a one-sided emphasis on inner experiences is both “distorting and reductionistic” in regards to the phenomenological reality of spiritual phenomena (Ferrer, p. 2). He suggests that such an emphasis leaves room for the implicit assumption that spiritual phenomena, being merely inner experiences, are readily reducible to brain functioning and/or contained within an encapsulated subjectivity. Secondly, Ferrer critiques what Weber (1986) termed inner empiricism, which is the attempt within transpersonal studies to validate spiritual knowledge claims through the use of empiricist standards and criteria in which spiritual knowledge is tested through replication and intersubjective verification or falsification. Such inner empiricism is strongly critiqued by Ferrer as a projection of positivistic science onto human spirituality that perpetuates the “instrumental colonization of value” and upholds a reductive vision of “what counts as valid knowledge” (Ferrer, 2002, p. 70). This scientific colonization of truth denies the veridicality of spiritual phenomena that are outside the bounds of the scientific method. Third, Ferrer presents a critique of perennialism. Popularized by Aldous Huxley’s book The Perennial Philosophy (1945), perennialism holds that all religious and spiritual phenomena — experiences, traditions, and spiritual ultimates — are expressions of a universal and pregiven ultimate source. This source is predetermined and defined by specific characteristics (e.g., all encompassing, eternal, etc.). In Ferrer’s view, perennialism, while often well intentioned, nevertheless supports dogmatism and ideology by justifying the doctrinal ranking of religious and spiritual traditions and phenomena, wherein some traditions and phenomena are held as higher or closer to the truth than others. In addition, perennialism supports objectivist ideological truth claims — i.e., of knowing “things as they really are” (Ferrer, 2002, p. 9).

Contra experientialism, inner empiricism, and perennialism Ferrer proposes a participatory vision of human spirituality. In place of perennialism Ferrer proposes a metaphysic rooted in the apophatic mystical tradition. This embrace of apophasis, literally “un-saying,” allows him to avoid the problematic reification of the transcendent, and embrace a metaphysical position that continually transcends our attempts to definitively define the ultimate as God, Brahman, Nondual, Dual, etc. In this apophatic context Ferrer, drawing upon an ancient philosophical trope, posits a metaphysical dialectic between the One and the Many. The One, as a “shared spiritual ground,” is referred to most commonly as the “indeterminate mystery” or “generative power/force of life” that “cannot be adequately depicted through any univocal positive attribute” (Ferrer, 2008, p. 156). The Many is implicitly posited as the totality of differentiated manifestations, both the physical and nonphysical realms of human experience, and is characterized by a radical plurality, a multiplicity, of both human beings and “visionary worlds and spiritual realities” (Ferrer, p. 156). Couched within an apophatic epistemology Ferrer (2008) presents his position in the following passage,

Newer and more embracing universalist and pluralistic visions will continue to emerge, but the everlasting dialectical movement between the One and the
Many in the self-disclosing of the mystery makes any abstract or absolute hierarchical arrangement between them misleading. If we accept the generative power of the dialectical relationship between the One and the Many, then to reify either of the two poles as the Truth cannot but hinder the natural unfolding of the mystery’s creative urges. (p. 157)

Ferrer notes that his vision presents a form of spiritual universalism. Yet he insists that it is distinct from the problems of perennialism, for it does not posit a predetermined or pregiven spiritual ultimate. Also, it should be emphasized that Ferrer embraces this position as a way to revision transpersonal scholarship, not as an ontological claim to be held contra other ontological assertions about the nature of spirit. Ferrer’s intention is to craft a linguistically nuanced position that allows scholars to meet each tradition on its own terms.

In place of inner empiricism, and the search for the scientific validation of spiritual truth claims, Ferrer insists upon the need for normative evaluation. Anchored in the pragmatic tradition Ferrer asserts that the authentic possibility of making qualitative distinctions among traditions lies, not in the realm of abstracted values and theoretical constructs, but in the immanent ground of embodied human experience and its practical consequences. He proposes three possible tests to determine the relative merit of any tradition, individual, or theory. Each test can be engaged individually, yet they are ideally carried out within a community of peers. Regardless of how they are carried out it would seem that a critical self-awareness and receptivity to the perceptions of others are essential tools for the implementation of each. First, the egocentrism test attempts to discern the degree to which one is “free from gross and subtle forms of narcissism and self-centeredness” (2008, p. 153). Second, the dissociation test looks to what degree all levels of the person (somatic, sexual, emotional, mental, etc.) are freely invited to participate in the process of spiritual development and the elaboration of spiritual knowledge. The final test proposed, the retrospective test, acknowledges that in some cases the apparent difficulties associated with the first two tests may be necessary steps in one’s path toward “a genuinely integrated selflessness” (2008, p. 167). In other words, it may be necessary to live through narcissism and dissociation to know when one is not under the influence of one of these states. Ferrer’s normative evaluation of narcissism, dissociation, and where one is in their life path leads him to envision the potential emergence of a global ethics pragmatically rooted in intersubjective participation and dialogue. In his words, “The new spiritual bottom line, in contrast, will be the degree into which each spiritual path fosters both an overcoming of self-centeredness and a fully embodied integration that make us not only more sensitive to the needs of others, nature, and the world, but also more effective cultural and planetary agents in whatever contexts and measure life or spirit calls us to be (2009, p. 146; italics omitted).” Spiritual truth is, in this sense, not a matter of empirical verification, but reflective of humane and creative relations.

Finally, Ferrer counters the presuppositions of experientialism by emphasizing the participatory nature of his vision. Instead of spiritual phenomena being thought of as occurring solely within an individual he expands upon their
inherent participatory nature by offering three characteristics of what is implied by participation. The first, following closely to the apophatic metaphysic outlined above, speaks to the inherent ontological primacy of participation as the presupposed foundation of human existence. In Ferrer’s words, “human beings are—whether they know it or not—always participating in the self-disclosure of the mystery out of which everything arises” (2008, p. 137). In other words, it is not simply that spirit is within us, but that it is also flows through and around us, permeating our daily lives from birth to death. Secondly, Ferrer emphasizes that his vision is participatory in the sense that spiritual knowing is not objective, neutral, or restricted to mental faculties. On the contrary, such knowing is dynamic and multifaceted involving the potential whole participation of all dimensions of one’s being including the “the body, vital energies, the heart, and subtle forms of consciousness” (Ferrer, p. 137). For Ferrer, spiritual knowledge emerges through our embodied relations with the world. Here a commonality between the enactive and participatory approaches is revealed. Cognition is bodily wisdom and our relationship to the spiritual dimension is also mediated through that wisdom. This is a radical break from the traditional view of cognition, which locates cognitive processes within the brain, as well as with conventional religionist accounts that situate spiritual, knowing in disembodied states of being. Our embodied relations with the world, and the living dynamics of our organism that make sense of that world also, from a participatory perspective, entail a multilayered and multidimensional spiritual relationship that stems from the core of our living embodiment. Contra to experientialism’s one-sided emphasis on inner experience Ferrer asserts that authentic spiritual knowledge emerges in embodied relationship.

The third and final point is that the term participatory emphasizes the “epistemic role” that our engagement with transpersonal or spiritual phenomena entails as a relation of “communion and cocreative participation” (Ferrer, p. 137). To help clarify the term cocreative participation as an essential feature of Ferrer’s transpersonal epistemology he expands upon the enactive approach of cognitive science by presenting what he calls participatory enaction.

**Participatory Enaction**

Ferrer (2008) defines participatory enaction as an active process involving “the participation of all levels of the person in the bringing forth of ontologically rich religious worlds” (p. 137). It is the process through which embodied cocreative participation enacts new domains of spiritual being.

Presumably, because Ferrer’s audience consists of religious and transpersonal scholars he does not go to great lengths to define exactly what he means by spiritual world or domain. And perhaps, due to the great diversity of such worlds and the plurality of possible meanings that one might attribute to them, they evade our attempts to define them as concretely as the concept of a sensorimotor world. Whatever the case, this clarification is lacking in Ferrer’s account. Yet while a clearer definition awaits articulation, Ferrer does propose
a number of primary characteristics that broadly define the main features of religious or spiritual worlds. I have chosen to focus upon four of them.

The first is that these worlds are ontologically rich. They are not mere phantasms or imaginings but actual existent realities. Spiritual worlds exist and it is a distorting move to reduce or reject our experience of them. Secondly, they exist in great number. Ferrer (2008) quotes the editor of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* David B. Barret to support this point. Barret, when asked what he had learned of religious change over the decades, responded: “We have identified nine thousand and nine hundred distinct and separate religions in the world, increasing by two or three every day” (p. 135). This vast plurality of religious worlds leads Ferrer to propose that there is potentially no limit to the number of new worlds that can be enacted.

A third characteristic is that these worlds are largely culturally conditioned. Ferrer cites Hollenback (1996), a scholar of mysticism who notes that “the particular objects, symbols, and images that mystics see, the sensations that they feel, the words that they hear, the particular moods, activities, and orientations of the will that experience evokes — all these things derive from those particular existential preoccupations that mystics consciously and unconsciously receive from their religio-historical environment” (p. 131). Thus social and historical conditions deeply impact the very substance of any spiritual world. Two important qualifications should be made around the nature of spiritual worlds as culturally conditioned: First, both Ferrer and Hollenback acknowledge that there are exceptions to the mediation of spiritual worlds by cultural conditioning. For Hollenback (1996), these exceptions are rare and involve specific types of clairvoyant, telepathic, and precognitive states of consciousness (see especially pp. 231-300, p. 607). In contrast, Ferrer (2008) argues against the idea that such exceptions are a rare occurrence. Instead, he critiques this constructivist stance, notes the many historical cases of novel spiritual insights and heresies, and asserts that novel spiritual knowledge is always possible by virtue of human participation in the generative power of life or spirit. Secondly, and I believe more crucially, we cannot think of spiritual worlds as mere products of cultural conditions, as though there was a causal relationship between cultural norms and spiritual worlds, any more than we can say that our behavior is the cause of DNA. This reductive move is averted when we recognize that the culture from which those conditions are born is itself the result of a vast multiplicity of cosmically embedded recursive relationships that cannot be reduced to a singular cause. In other words, the dynamic relationships among cosmically situated entities, both human and nonhuman, constitute dynamic spiritual worlds that are, for the most part, manifest through the cultural conditions of a particular individual or community and yet, at the same time, cannot be reduced to those conditions. In this case one might even expand the more constrictive concept of cultural conditions towards a notion of cosmic conditions that takes a cosmically situated network of relationships into account.

The fourth and final characteristic is that spiritual worlds are enacted by intentional or spontaneous cocreative participation. In other words, these
worlds are not static or ultimately distinct from human agency. Instead, both human and divine exist in reciprocal cocreative relations. One does not determine the other. They are co-creatively bound and inseparably co-emergent. As Ferrer shows, this is not exactly a new idea. He presents a number of traditions — Theurgic and Christian mysticism, Sufism, Kabbalah, indigenous spiritualities, Shaivism, Vajrayana Buddhism — where the human is taken to have the capacity to impact the inner dynamics of divinity. Intentional cocreative participation involves the intentional action of an individual or community to evoke a relationship with a spiritual domain, whether through prayer, meditation, or ritual gathering. Spontaneous participation occurs when the relationship is somehow mitigated from the spiritual domain, whether through invoking a heightened sense of spiritual communion, a spiritual breakthrough, or a direct visitation by a specific spiritual entity. Both spontaneous and intentional cocreative participation involve varying degrees of relationship that may be either more expansive or even restrictive in scope, yet, from a participatory perspective, the mutually specifying dance of human and divine, self and world, exists at the heart of each.

To summarize, the participatory approach presents a vision of human spirituality in which spiritual worlds are actively brought into being through the cocreative participation of all dimensions of the human being. Unlike the entrenched presuppositions identified within transpersonal studies, experientialism, inner empiricism, and perrenialism, Ferrer presents a holistic vision of participation that affirms the relational, embodied, and apophatic dimensions of spiritual experience. The participatory enaction of ontologically rich spiritual worlds involves many layers and strands of relationship that move from and through the multidimensional cognition of human embodiment. Like the embodied cognition of the enactive approach, this participatory sense-making enacts meaningful relationships with the spiritual domain and thereby constitutes the unique features of our spiritual world(s).

While no rigid boundaries can be set upon what defines a spiritual world, given the differing contexts in which and to whom such worlds arise, their enactment must necessarily emerge with, in, and through the environmentally situated relationships of our sensorimotor world. Once enacted our spiritual world(s) must exist simultaneously with our sensorimotor world(s) such that a dynamic and fluid relationship exists between these two dimensions of our experience. Our participation with one may bring us unexpectedly into a deep and intimate relationship with the other. This can be seen in the “compassion for all things” that emerges after extensive meditative practice, or in the subtle feelings of numinous ecstasy that can emerge while watching the setting sun. In any case, it should be clear that the participatory approach calls us to reflect upon the way in which the spiritual dimensions of our experience overlap and intertwine with the biology of our sensuous environment and bodily identities.

**Phenomenology**

The aim of this section is to demonstrate the value of phenomenology as a ground or bridge for the cognitive and participatory accounts of enaction. To
this end the phenomenological concepts of subjectivity, lifeworld, and constitution will be briefly clarified. Phenomenology brings us into our lived experience and thus into our experience as biological and spiritual identities.\textsuperscript{13}

Husserl’s Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the philosophical school of thought that was developed by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) at the turn of the twentieth century. Its aim is the investigation and articulation of experience as it is immediately given. Husserl developed phenomenology as a response to the prevailing dogma of positivistic science. Namely, the doctrines of \textit{scientism}, the idea that only the quantifiable data of science are of relevance to our attempts to understand the nature of the world, and \textit{objectivism}, the idea that there is a reality absolutely independent of subjectivity.\textsuperscript{14}

Husserl rejected both of these doctrines by acknowledging the constitutional role of human subjectivity; the relative, unique, and perspectival feature of consciousness that links the field of experience to the locus of a particular bodily identity. Through the reign of positivism the subjective dimension had been banished from reputable science. It was thus Husserl’s aim to highlight the fallacious nature of this move and bring subjectivity back into scientific investigation. He developed phenomenology as a branch of knowledge dedicated to the investigation of the first person perspective, the perspective of subjective experience, of how the world appears from my perspective.

Phenomenology views both scientism and objectivism as naively abstracted from the living ground of human subjectivity. A closer examination of experience reveals the fact that all so-called objectivity, and thus the objective claims of science, are in fact founded upon the subjectivities of the very people who are making objective claims. Objectivity is thus subjectively constituted. It can only become objective in our experience. Yet experience for Husserl is not relegated to an isolated subjectivity, even if many have critiqued Husserl for making just this claim. Recent scholarship has shown that a different analysis refutes this critique as a misreading of his work (Welton, 2000, 2003; Zahavi, 2003, 2005). This new analysis involves highlighting Husserl’s concept of \textit{inter-subjectivity} and his assertion that all “objectivity” is in fact inter-subjectively constituted.

With inter-subjectivity Husserl demonstrates that it is a community of historically situated subjectivities that inter-subjectively constitute subjectivity itself. Our perspectives as individual subjectivities are the result of a dynamic web of interrelated subjectivities that together constitute our very identities as human beings. The language that we use, our gestures, and even our most basic sense of self and world are dependent upon this web of relationship.

Lifeworld

The \textit{lifeworld} is a concept Husserl (1954/1970) used in his later writings. Its exact definition remains somewhat ambiguous, and yet a number of primary
features are readily discerned. In general, it is held as the realm or world of experience as it is immediately given to a particular subject. It is the living world of streaming experience, the world as it is sensuously, intuitively, and concretely given as opposed to the world as it is abstractly reflected upon, named, or categorized (Zahavi, 2003, p. 126). It is the pre-scientific and pre-theoretical world that remains the ontological ground into which science and theory must eventually sink. This sinking, what Husserl termed sedimentation, modifies the lifeworld through the sediment that it leaves behind. For example, after being exposed to the stellar pattern of the astronomical constellation Taurus I reach a point when I can look to the heavens and see Taurus without having to reflexively contemplate what I have learned. Taurus has become a part of my lifeworld. It has “sunk down” into the nonconceptual dimension of my subjectivity. This nonconceptual and nonself-referential domain is what Husserl termed transcendental subjectivity, that feature of our experience that is constitutive of experience itself.

This transformation of the lifeworld reveals one of its primary features. Namely, that it is a process of perpetual change. It is the result of a dynamic web of relations whose very dynamicism calls for a language other than the static definitions of positivistic science. As Zahavi (2003) notes, “If we seek to impose on the phenomenon of the lifeworld the exactness and precision that we find in, say geometry, we violate them” (p.130). The lifeworld challenges our desire for clear distinctions. This continual transformation of the lifeworld moves us to the second primary feature; its essential vagueness. No definite or exact characterization of it can be given. Such an attempt would involve a distorting reduction of the fluid and dynamic nature of the lifeworld, which continually transcends our attempts to sharply delineate its features. Husserl makes this clear in his comparison of a mathematician and a natural scientist: “The most perfect geometry and the most perfect practical mastery of it cannot enable the descriptive natural scientist to express (in exact geometrical concepts) what he expresses in such a simple, understandable, and completely appropriate manner by the words ‘notched,’ ‘scalloped,’ ‘lens-shaped,’ ‘umbelliform,’ and the like – all to them concepts which are essentially, rather than accidentally, inexact and consequently also non-mathematical” (Husserl 1976/1982, p. 155).

The third and final feature of the lifeworld that I would like to focus on here, drawing on Zahavi (2003), is “the fact that every lifeworld is correlated to a functioning body” (p. 132). The functioning body is a term Husserl uses to elicit the “unthetic pre-reflective lived bodily awareness that accompanies and conditions every spatial experience” (Zahavi, p. 101). This original bodily awareness and its accompanying kinesthetic corporality contribute to the constitution of perceptual reality yet, as Husserl points out, this constitution involves a reciprocal codependency wherein the spatial objects of perceptual reality constitute the very spatial identity of the body. This is demonstrated through the double-sensations that transpire in sensorial relationship. As my body touches it is simultaneously touched. Through this dynamic interchange I touch the world and it is sensuously enacted, it is born for me as a world. Simultaneously, in my touching I am touched by the world and thereby the world reveals myself to me. In touching I come to know myself as an embodied
being that is part of, and inseparable from, a sensuous and spatially thick world. This codependent relationship presents the ultimate interdependence and inseparability of body and world. My subjectivity is grounded in my body, in the world, and thus my bodily awareness is held as a primary referent and foundational ground for the dynamic unfolding of the lifeworld.\textsuperscript{16}

**Constitution**

The dynamics of the lifeworld have been presented as the world of transcendental (inter)subjectivity. Yet what is the mechanism through which the lifeworld is brought into being? In other words, how is it enacted? This article has explored how the dynamic emergence of an autopoietic system involves the dynamic coemergence, the biological enaction, of a sensorimotor world, as well as how the cocreative participation of human multidimensional cognition invokes the dynamic coparticipation and manifestation, the participatory enaction, of ontologically rich spiritual worlds. Is there a concept in phenomenology that articulates the enaction of the lifeworld, the dynamic and evanescent domain of transcendental subjectivity? The key lies in Husserl’s concept of *constitution*, a linguistic synonym and thus sister locution to enaction. Here I briefly examine this term and in so doing explore Husserl’s depiction of the manifestation of the lifeworld.

How is the world of our experience brought into being? Without attempting to present the full scope of what Husserl implied by the term constitution, for it stands at the core of the whole of his philosophy, there are a number of basic features upon which I would like to focus.\textsuperscript{17} First, it is a process, a dynamic unfolding that obfuscates any attempt to depict it as static or fixed. One might say that the dynamic state of the lifeworld, its character of perpetual change, is rooted upon the dynamic state of the process of constitution. Second, because constitution is itself a dynamic process of unfoldment, it is noncausal and nondeterministic. The constituting does not cause the constituted. Instead, and this is the third feature I wish to highlight, constitution allows for manifestation and thus brings that which is constituted into appearance.\textsuperscript{18} The constituting and the constituted are together coconstituted in the process of constitution. In other words, constitution simultaneously brings the world before the subject and the subject before itself. The fourth and final point is that it is a process that involves several intertwined and inseparable elements. The dynamic combination and interpenetration of these elements gives birth to the streaming flow of experience that we have defined above, the lifeworld. Those elements are *subjectivity*, the locus of an experiencing identity, *intersubjectivity*, the reality of relationship among identities, and *world*, the common field of experience among which and within which identities find themselves to be.

This tripartite structure, *subjectivity-intersubjectivity-world*, forms the basic phenomenological relationship that comprises the concept of constitution. Each of these three elements is, according to Husserl, codependent and inseparable from the others. Any one element can be taken as a starting point.
for an investigation of the others. Instead of the subject enacting the constitutive performance, as in the traditional interpretation of Husserl as a subjective idealist, “the constituting subject is itself constituted in the very process of constitution” (Zahavi, 2003, p. 74). Our relationship to the world shapes the world, which in turn simultaneously shapes our very identity, which is also simultaneously shaped by our relationships with identities in the world. This continuous process involves the simultaneous becoming of self, world, and other(s), and, per the intention of this section, the enactment of the lifeworld.

A concrete example can be readily seen in the act of eating, for instance, a banana for the first time. As I bite into the banana a world of texture, flavor, and scent is revealed to me. Through the act of eating not only is the banana as other disclosed as a novel object in the world, but my very identity (my affective stance towards the banana of like or dislike, my nutritional repertoire of potential food choices, etc.) is transformed. Self, world, and other are simultaneously and inexorably altered. This example points to the radical shifts that novel encounters entail yet the alteration of the lifeworld, while more greatly impacted by certain events than others, does not depend upon such a novel encounter. Constitution is itself the dynamic flux of existence upon which the lifeworld is temporally unfolded. Just as the road of the wanderer is enacted through the process of walking, as in the Machado quote above, it is the shared journey of self, world, and other(s) through time that reveals the creative dynamics of constitution’s evolving nature. Certain events will necessarily impact this journey more significantly than others, but change is foundational. The rising and falling of the breath, subtle modifications in posture, changes of affect, and alterations of environmental stimuli are all part of the continually transpiring kinesthetic streams of the lifeworld that constitution enacts. Constitution, what for the purposes of this inquiry I would here term transcendental enaction, allows for the living flow of subjective life, for the transcendental experience of human existence.

Phenomenology brings us to our subjectivity and to the co-emergent domain of the lifeworld, the dynamic world of lived experience. Phenomenology is a philosophy of the first person perspective, a perspective that is always intimately situated in relationship to my bodily dimension. Transcendental subjectivity is the perspectival and nonconceptual mode of consciousness from which all conceptual and theoretical claims are subsequently articulated. Both the enactive and participatory approaches are articulated from the primordial givenness of transcendental subjectivity and thus, I would contend, the notions of sensorimotor and spiritual worlds are necessarily linked to the first person perspective in a primordial way. As Zahavi (2005) notes, “any convincing theory of consciousness has to account for the first personal givenness of our conscious states” (p. 28). The further we move from the lifeworld in our theorizing the more fragmented our domains of knowledge risk becoming. From the shared transcendental ground of our embodied experiencing we stand before the potential of opening ourselves to the biological and spiritual dimensions of our human identities.
I have examined three basic modes of world constitution: biological, participatory, and transcendental enaction. The integration of these three modes points to the possibility of articulating a general theory of enaction. To summarize, I have shown how phenomenology offers the ground of transcendental enaction, that tripartite process of constitution whereby subjectivity-intersubjectivity-world coemerge and together constitute the primordial flow of our existing. Through this prethematic and nonconceptual emergence of our conscious experiencing the lifeworld is born. The sensuous streaming of this world confronts us with our bodily identity, the locus through which the spatio-temporal structure of our world and our most basic sense of self is constituted. Yet this bodily identity is also an autopoietic system, structurally coupled to, and in continuous energetic exchange with, the environment in which it is embedded. Through reciprocal relationships of meaningful sensorial participation the Umwelt is born, it is biologically enacted. This sensorimotor world, which dynamically coemerges with our basic sense of identity and agency, is engaged through the embodied cognition of our organic system. Yet this bodily cognition has many dimensions, many modes of engagement, through which we find ourselves intimately embedded within a generative and mysterious force of life, and thus in relationship to the spiritual nature of our being.

Through this participatory engagement spiritual worlds of profound significance can be enacted. These mysterious worlds of existential significance are at once an integral part of both the stream of experiencing, the lifeworld, and the embedded matrix of environmental relationships, the Umwelt.

This integral account of the dynamics of each of these three modes of world-constitution, biological, participatory, and transcendental, opens a number of potential avenues for further inquiry. On the one hand, it gives us a more general account of enaction, and on the other, it opens a number of specific potentials that the interrelationship of these three dimensions of enaction suggest. To conclude I will first begin with the more general account, then move towards an articulation of a planetary understanding of enaction, and end with a few thoughts related to potential avenues of further inquiry.

Put in more general terms, enaction suggests the emergence of a basic world of experience that is organically linked to the vital dynamics of any bodily organism. This basic world is brought into being through the vital pulse of life that sustains the existence of every organism. This world both exists as a seamless whole and is comprised of a multiplicity of differing dimensions and features (worlds). These dimensions, once enacted, always involve a blending or intertwining of their nature. In this sense, our identity as a living being and our relation to the generative force of that living cannot be easily discriminated. Thus in a fundamental sense, the continuous enaction of this basic world acts as a fountain of generativity, embedded within the greater generative force of spirit, through which existence itself is brought into being. Like a path laid down in walking, life is unfolded from the perpetual stream of this fountainhead, a fountain that pulses with the rhythm of mortal life. Through life coming into being the experience of that life is enacted. Enaction
is, in this sense, a creative act. It is the creativity of life itself, a creativity born from the great mystery of being. Thus the constitution of any world is an emergence of novelty, born through a unique matrix of interpenetrating recursive relationships. Worlds emerge creatively and become themselves through the context of their multiple relations. In this coemergence of self and world(s) any identity is creatively affected by the dynamics of the worlds in which they find themselves, while simultaneously affecting the very constitution of those worlds.

This general account of enaction leads towards an expanded vision of enaction that moves from the dynamics of world-constitution for a particular subjectivity, and into those same dynamics for a global or planetary intersubjectivity. In Husserl’s later writings he noted that intersubjectivity could not be thought of as simply the constitutive web of existing relations for a particular subjectivity; i.e., developmental and social conditions, friendships and so forth. He insisted that it also involved what he called the “we” of the historical past, the collective dynamics of human evolution, emerging from and through each individual. This historical web of relations, which continuously emerges into the present through our existing, Husserl termed the life of world-consciousness (Weltbewußtseinleben) (Zahavi, 2003, p. 74). With this concept we can expand our vision of enaction from the intersubjective life of a particular identity, by recognizing that any enaction of world cannot simply be reduced to a particular agent and its present relations. Instead, world-constitution must also be attributed to the life of a vast communal consciousness that is in turn comprised of a multiplicity of individual consciousnesses.

The intersubjective life of world-consciousness illuminates the global dimensions of our participation both as a biological and spiritual identity. As an autopoietic entity we find ourselves embedded in relation to a historically situated global species and interspecies community, a living planetary system dynamically evolving through time. As spiritual beings, existing in relation to intentionally or spontaneously enacted spiritual worlds, we find ourselves in dynamic participatory relationship to a planetary matrix of spiritual worlds that are themselves cocreatively evolving and shifting within a global movement of spiritual consciousness. This expanded vision of enaction rests upon the fact that we are born into a vast matrix of historically embedded intersubjective relations. The life of world-consciousness and its historical progression allows for the refinement of novel world structures, from technological advance to enhanced complexity and interrelationship among spiritual traditions.

A final piece has been added to this investigation of world-constitution: the planetary dynamics of an intersubjectively constituted and historically situated global consciousness. Returning to the fountain metaphor, articulated in my general account of enaction above, one can see how the generative fountain of each bodily identity is but a stream amongst the immense flow of an unfathomable number of streams. Together, the interwoven currents of the all-flow of world-consciousness are dynamically enacted in one massive spring of primordial generativity.
A myriad of other possibilities await articulation that are beyond the scope of this article. Here I will name two that are ripe for further research. One involves deepening the relationship between biological and transcendental enaction. The fruits of this exchange point towards an autopoietic account of subjectivity. The enactive approaches broad understanding of cognition as the embodied activity of an autopoietic system has many implications when partnered with the bodily emergent subjectivity of Husserl’s lifeworld. This autopoietic account of subjectivity could potentially reveal a new understanding of the mutually specifying dynamics of bodily cognition and conscious experience.

A second potential avenue entails deepening the relationship between the three accounts by first exploring a phenomenology of spiritual experience. Such an exploration could reveal an understanding of spirit, not as a metaphysically loaded term that implies a particular theological conviction, but as a particular quality of experience itself. Held in this experiential sense (e.g., a quality of sacredness, peace, selflessness, etc.) it might be interesting to explore the role that spirituality plays in the autopoietic unfolding of the human being. In this way compelling links between biological and spiritual telos emerge. What are the existential implications that a fusion of such ends might imply?

The maturation of these fruits awaits further inquiry. It has been the aim of this article to show how three differing conceptualizations of enaction — biological, participatory, and transcendental — can offer complementary perspectives towards a general theory of enaction. My interest in moving towards a general theory of enaction has been to situate the potential of an enactive vision of living being outside the confines of a few specific domains of inquiry. Through a synthesis of these domains, I have attempted to suggest a broader philosophical account of human nature. The pragmatic implications of such an account lie principally in an expanded understanding of the dynamics of living being. This paper is itself a creative enactment of world. It contributes to a new understanding of life, and in so doing, transforms the life that understands it. Yet aside from this hermeneutic effect, a general theory of enaction could also serve as a practical pathway towards living the organic unity of our spiritual and biological natures. The key to the potential realization of this synthesis lies in the shared bodily ground of human experience. Through attention to the dynamics of these seemingly oppositional domains, a general theory of enaction might invite us to embrace our common biological and spiritual origins, and thus open the potential to foster a global community that lives in conscious relationship to the fountain of dynamic generativity that constitutes our very nature.

Notes

1 For a contemporary overview of the momentum that the enactive approach has stimulated, see Stewart, Gapenne, and Di Paolo’s edited volume, *Enaction: Toward a new paradigm for cognitive science* (2010).
For a recent overview of the field see Shapiro’s *Embodied Cognition* (2010); see also Clark’s *Supersizing the Mind* (2008) for a detailed account of extended cognition, a complementary, yet critical perspective on enactivism, that depicts the way in which our cognition extends beyond the confines of brain processes.

2

Auto poiesis is presented in such a way that it need not be limited in scope to the emergence of Earth-bound life. In searching for the minimal qualifications of what is to be considered life “minimal life is not identified with any particular molecular structure, such as RNA/DNA, but rather with a bounded, self-producing concatenation of processes, which can in principle be structurally realized in different ways” (Thompson, 2007, p. 118; see also pp. 101–102).

3

Space does not allow me here to undergo a more detailed discussion of philosophical idealism and realism. For a contemporary presentation of the debate see Meillassoux (2008), especially pp. 1–27.

4

It is important to note that such distinctness does not imply lack of relationship. An intimate interdependence exists between their worlds such that a reciprocal relationship between the trillions of cellular worlds, and the world of the redwood tree that they together comprise, is essentially present. A further exposition of this relationship, and the dynamics of worlds enfolded within worlds, is beyond the scope of this paper.

5

My inquiry here follows Thompson’s (2007) presentation closely, see pp. 128–165.

6

For additional accounts linking the spiritual and biological domains see especially Fuller (2008) and Vasquez (2010).

7

A number of contemporary authors align themselves with the participatory turn, see especially Tarnas (1991), Heron (2006), and the contributing authors of *The Participatory Turn* (Ferrer & Sherman, 2008a). For an overview of its scope and impact see Ferrer (2011). For a history of the term participation and its evolution in the West see Sherman (2008).

8

William James is the first known person to have used the term transpersonal as he delivered the Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh in 1901 (Vich, 1988). The continued growth of transpersonal studies developed largely in response to the widespread dominance of positivism in the humanities. Positivism, which emerged from the thinking of the French social philosopher August Comte (1798–1857), holds that any veridical assertion must be supported by scientific evidence.

9

For an account of Ferrer’s position in relation to Dennett’s Heterophenomenology, an empirical research methodology, see the dialogue between Freeman (2006), Adams (2006), and Hartelius (2006).

10

Sells (1994) distinguishes between apophatic theory (Ferrer’s use of apophasis) and apophatic discourse. In his words: “apophatic theory affirms the ultimate ineffability of the transcendent; but as opposed to apophatic discourse, it affirms ineffability without turning back upon the naming used in its own affirmation of ineffability. A purely apophatic language would be an abstract and mechanical turning back on each reference as it is posed” (p. 3). He presents an example of apophatic discourse from the Mahayana Buddhist Vimalakirti Sutra: “all constructs are empty,” thus “the construct that all constructs are empty are empty,” and “the construct that the construct that the constructs are empty is empty” (p. 4).

11

For an altogether different use of participatory sense-making in an enactivist context see Di Paolo, Rohde, & De Jaeger’s (2010) use of the term as an extension of sense-making into the domain of social cognition.

12

It is important here to note that there exists a growing body of literature on the relationship between phenomenology and cognitive science. For the main accounts see Gallagher and Zahavi (2008), Pettito, Varela, Pachoud, & Roy (1999), Rowlands (2010), Schmicking and Gallagher (2009), and Thompson (2007). In addition, research has investigated the relationship between phenomenology and spirituality; see especially Steinbock (2007), and Candler and Cunningham (2008). The novelty of my account lies in the fact that connections have not been made (a) between these three domains nor (b) in specific relation to the world-constituting dynamics of enaction. It is in these novel contributions that the fruits of this paper lie.

13

My analysis in this section draws from the concise presentation of Husserl’s phenomenology by the Norwegian phenomenologist Dan Zahavi (2003).

14

It is worth noting that, while this insight is commonly associated with Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* (1946/1962), it was from Merleau-Ponty’s close reading of Husserl that he developed his philosophy of the lived body.

15

For other readings on the lifeworld see especially Held (1986/2003) and Steinbock (1995).

16

For more about Husserl’s concept of constitution see Zahavi (2003) especially pp. 72–77, 115–120.

17

The assertion of the noncausal nature of constitution may appear misleading. It is noncausal in that it is not limited to linear causation; constitution is not a discrete and definable entity that can be pointed to as a specific and narrowly determined causal factor. Thus its allowance for the manifestation of appearance is not causal in the traditional sense of causation. Yet in such allowing constitution can readily be seen as powerfully causal, for it is the active force that gives rise to experience itself. It can thus be said to be holistically and primordially causal if understood in this new light.


The Author

*Samuel A. Malkemus* is a doctoral candidate at the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, CA. His doctoral research involves an interdisciplinary exploration of the somatic and lived dimensions of sexuality, instinct, and world with the aim of articulating a transpersonal vision of human nature that holds bodily life at its foundation.
ON THE QUESTION OF SANITY: BUDDHIST AND EXISTENTIAL PERSPECTIVES

G. Kenneth Bradford, Ph.D.
Lafayette, California

ABSTRACT: Psychological diagnosis presumes an understanding of mental health and mental order, on the basis of which it is possible to discern pathological deviations of mental illness and mental disorders. The field of psychodiagnosis, however, has no such agreed upon understanding, thus lacking in both scientific and philosophical grounding. The article addresses this lack by exploring the question of sanity itself, distinguishing between relative, social constructions of sanity and the nature of basic, unconstructed sanity. The thought of Martin Heidegger and Chogyam Trungpa is amplified by Buddhist-Dzogchen understandings of natural wakefulness in fleshing out this inquiry.

I tell you: one must harbor chaos if one would give birth to a dancing star.

– Friedrich Nietzsche (1969/1891, p. 46)

We live in illusion and the appearance of things. There is a reality. We are that reality. When you understand this, you see that you are nothing, and being nothing, you are everything. That is all.

– Kalu Rinpoche (2012)

This discussion completes an inquiry I began in two previous articles addressing the theory and practice of psychological diagnosis. Drawing upon an ever-growing body of research critiquing the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) (Healy, 1997; Horowitz & Wakefield, 2007; Hutchins, 2002; Ingersoll, 2002; Jerry, 2003; Lukoff, Lu, & Turner, 1998, for example), I described the fundamental flaws of the DSM on the basis of its own empirical scientific criteria, finding it to be both unreliable and invalid as a diagnostic instrument (Bradford, 2010). As an empirical manual, it fails on its own merits to fulfill the purpose for which it was designed and should either be discarded outright or wholly revised. I concluded that analysis by suggesting several alternative criteria (gathered from phenomenological, psychoanalytic, and holistic sources) to guide non-empiricist approaches to psychodiagnosis. These suggestions were developed in a second article (Bradford, 2009) revisioning diagnosis according to a contemplative-phenomenological paradigm. That study reviews a spectrum of diagnostic approaches, from “conventional empiricism (DSM)” through transpersonal and mindfulness-informed inquiry to a radical non-dualistic approach, the latter of which I contend allows for the most thorough (dia) knowing (gnosis) of an Other’s mind.

ken@bradfordphd.com

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Since these articles focus on psychodiagnosis, they could not help but accord to the discourse of clinical psychology and psychopathology. Why else “diagnose” someone if not to identify their particular illness, disorder, deficiency, stickiness, or problem(s)? On the other hand, if the intention in understanding the mind of another person is to more deeply know them as they are in their wholeness and complexity, and not merely in terms of their pathology, one typically does not refer to that kind of thorough knowing in terms of clinical diagnosis, but as “genuine interest,” “love,” or “appreciative discernment” (prajña).

A contemplative, “heart to heart” approach to the knowing of other minds requires that we enter the occasion with, as Rollo May advised, “at least the readiness to love the other person, broadly speaking” (May, Angel, & Ellenberger, 1958, p. 38). When we relax the calculating, objectivizing, experience-distant mindset of empiricism and adopt instead a meditative, intersubjective, experience-near attitude, we are more able to access the subjectivity qua subjectivity of the other person. As the field of psychology now generally recognizes, empathic attunement is especially facilitative in encouraging another person to reveal more of him or herself to us (Prendergast, 2007, pp. 35–54), thus improving our knowing of them. The enhanced clarity and compassion that arises through being with an Other in a contemplative attitude influences the intersubjective field in that direction. That is, the direction in which non-judgmental, empathic, and appreciative discernment tends is toward what the Tibetan Buddhist master, Chogyam Trungpa (2005) refers to as “basic sanity.” This directive, however, raises the question, What is basic, or essential, sanity? While I referred to this in the previous articles focusing primarily on diagnosis, there was not space there to more thoroughly consider it. It falls to this essay to explore the question of sanity itself.

**Conditional Sanity and Social Context**

Psychology has ever-expanding inventories of psychopathology, such that the DSM is a metastasizing compendium proliferating mental disorders. It now is of a size that makes for an able doorstop. Not only this, but theories of the causation of mental illness: from developmental to social to bio-chemical to trauma-based and beyond, are likewise expanding at an impressive rate. Not to be left behind, treatments of mental disorders are in a formidable growth curve, with pharmaceuticals, psychotherapies, somatic therapies, behavioral therapies, cognitive therapies, and various and sundry forms of self-help counseling doing a brisk business to meet an ever-growing demand of a world going, apparently, ever more crazy. In large part, psychology has neglected the nature of sanity, including the mystery of human being and the phenomenology of spiritual awakening, for the noisier agitations of the distressed mind and the more readily available knowledge and power that comes from tossing ever more wood on the bonfire of the insanities.

It is noteworthy that the field of psychology has no common understanding of what constitutes sanity. There is little comprehension of the ontological nature of the mind and only nascent psychological inventories of sane qualities and potentialities (For example, see Hutchins, 2002 & Sovatsky, 1998). While
developments such as “positive psychology” are working to rectify this, such efforts focus primarily on the qualities of positive states of mind rather than on the nature of mind as such. Let us be clear: mental disorders or illnesses are conceived as deviations from a presumed mental orderliness or healthiness. Yet there is no consensually agreed-upon understanding as to what constitutes mental order or mental health. I will venture to address this lacuna by identifying the ambiguous assumptions underlying the notion of mental health/order. In particular, I will consider how the orderliness of everyday sanity is a social construct that maintains the status quo of consensual reality at the expense of the authentic, or essential, sanity of the person conforming to that reality. Sanity as conventionally understood is strictly relative to the social context which construes it. To understand a cultural construction of sanity is to understand something about the norms and mores of a particular culture, but not necessarily to understand anything at all about the nature or potentialities of unconstructed sanity.

There is the story of a good and wise king ruling over a faithful and prosperous kingdom that illustrates the core dilemma of relative sanity. From a fine, spring-fed castle on a hill, the king contentedly surveys the fields, dales, and villages of his realm. Then a strange event happens: the rivers and wells of the lowlands in which his subjects dwell becomes infected with a virus causing madness throughout the land. The subjects begin to hallucinate and speak in a strange way, making no apparent sense. Stranger still, they are somehow able to accord with each other in their shared madness. While they are not as productive as before, they still manage to continue their work and lives well enough. Of course, the king and his doctors do everything they can to cure the illness, but to no avail. Gradually, a gulf forms between the king and the people; he remaining perfectly sane while they babble on in their delusion, with neither side able to communicate with the other. The people come to see that their king is different from them and that he keeps himself aloof in his castle, speaking when he does in a strange and frightening tongue. In this estranged situation the people become increasingly suspicious of and alienated from their king, fomenting confusion and agitation. The king realizes he is at risk of losing his kingdom, so he decides to drink the tainted water himself. In so doing, he also becomes quite mad of course, but it is a madness shared by his subjects, who are soon relieved that their king is no longer acting so odd, and can once again rule benevolently over them.

There are many anthropological examples in which one culture’s apparently sane, everyday norm is another culture’s crazed abomination, decidedly abnormal and perhaps morally reprehensible. To observe but one instance, European explorers of the New World encountered what for the Aztecs and Incans was a perfectly normal and morally legitimate custom of making animal and human sacrifices to propitiate unseen gods. The Europeans found these rituals to be an ignorant, morally misguided, and spiritually bereft display of a kind of madness, something like a culture-wide irrational thought disorder. Christian missionaries replaced this madness with the Eucharist ritual of drinking the symbolic blood and eating the symbolic flesh of a brilliant young Jew murdered 16 centuries earlier, which seemed to them to be a perfectly sane
and reasonable transubstantiation of dead flesh into the living spirit of an unseen God. Of course, it is not hard to imagine that the indigenous people found (and may continue to find) this practice to be a compulsive exercise in delusion, a bizarre religious ritual, and perhaps a kind of irrational thought disorder.

Even though sanity is relative to the culture which construes it, within its cultural context the social construction defining sanity-madness reigns as absolute. (For instance, see Bennett, 1978; Foucault, 1961/1965; Laing, 1967; Szasz, 1974) To deviate from a culture’s definition of sanity is to court madness within that culture. The folk wisdom in the story of the mad king conveys that it is at times wise “to go along in order to get along,” teaching that it can be useful to compromise one’s own truth in order to maintain one’s personal ties and social position in the service of social adaptation. The king wanted to continue being king and understood that in order to do so he could not continue to see things in his own sane way, but had to join in the madness of his realm. The price of being found relatively sane, and so accepted by others, was the loss of his sanity. That these Others are his own people well reflects the human condition. It is our own people, in each our own family, that form the (constructed) world into which we are born and to which we must adapt. As Freud observed (1961/1930), the price of social adaptation is psychological discontent, since the individual is compelled to contort, deny, or otherwise stifle his personal desires in order to belong to society. Whereas Freud focused exclusively on the self-restriction of sexual and aggressive impulses, self-restriction also extends to the suppression of more subtle impulses, such as the desire for authenticity and spiritual awakening when these desires emerge at odds with cultural norms. Heidegger (1927/1962) refers to the voluntary – even if unconscious - suppression of authenticity as losing oneself in a world of otherness. As he laments, “Everyone is the other and no one is himself” (p. 165).

Echoing Existential and cultural thinkers before and after him, Heidegger observes that a self who unwittingly conforms to a social context becomes lost in what he refers to as “the They” (das Man) (1927/1962, p. 163–168). The They is the anonymity of society: everybody and nobody, which cling to a particular worldview. In becoming submerged in this anonymity, authentic presence is lost. Every culture has its own view of the world and different cultures are more or less rigid in the policing of that view. Depending on the rigidity of a worldview and the capacities of its members to tolerate differences, mysteries, and insecurities, human groups have varying tolerance for what lies outside the constructs of their shared reality. Above all, it is the mission of the They to maintain the consensus vision which makes sense out of the dizzying immensity of existence, creating a habitable world in which a people can feel emotionally secure and mentally sane. As Ortega y Gasset puts it,

For life is at the start a chaos in which one is lost. The individual suspects this, but he is frightened at finding himself face to face with this terrible reality, and tries to cover it over with a curtain of fantasy, where everything is clear. It does not worry him that his “ideas” are not true, he uses them as
trenches for the defenses of his existence, as scarecrows to frighten away reality. (1930/1985, pp. 156–157)

To quell existential anxieties, it is not necessary that social constructs be true, only that they be effective; and a worldview is only effective to the extent it is unquestioned.

History is littered with the steep price many self-honest men and women have paid for daring to express truths that emerge from a free mind, sourcing themselves from within rather than in conformity to the They. The terror that societies feel, and the terrorist acts the They deploy toward those they fear is written throughout the long arc of history. Unwilling to face each their own existential anxiety, individuals abrogate their freedom and responsibility, submerge themselves into the rabid anonymity of the pack, and so satisfy appetites of aggression that serve as sedation from a sobriety that might recognize the illusory nature of constructed reality. Socrates, Jesus, and witch hunts are but a few obvious examples of the intolerance the They has for nonconformity, especially if the nonconformity is not merely reactive, but a proactive force sourced from an individuating being.

In the modern world, largely by virtue of the rapid advances in technology and globalization, there are many forces acting to splay the cohesiveness of any particular worldview, raising tacit questions about the nature of reality and one’s place within it. In what W. H. Auden has called “the age of anxiety,” this situation is one of increasing uncertainty and insecurity, giving rise both to the hope of a collective global village and fear of the loss of one’s securely delimited sense of self and world. To decrease the anxieties stemming from a breakdown of worldview, the They works to maintain the status quo by tranquilizing and deterring impulses of wakefulness that threaten the easy slumber of its consensual security arrangements. Various diversions promoting social cohesion at the expense of authenticity include many forms of entertainment, material acquisition, self-promotion, and the vapid, “empty speech” of social chatter. All such preoccupations serve to distract us from who, what, and where we actually are, and from where we are going as we pass through time.

**EXISTENTIAL GIVENS, BUDDHIST-STYLE**

Being lost in the They occurs in a sleep of what Heidegger refers to as “average everydayness” (1927/1962, p. 163–168), which is an illusion we cultivate in order to avoid facing unnerving truths of existence. The Buddha described three existential characteristics with which every human being must reckon: **suffering, impermanence, and no self** (Conze, 1973, p. 34–46). While it was common for Existential writers of the 20th Century to posit various collections of existential givens with which human beings must contend, all of them, such as anxiety, meaninglessness, and death, are contained in these three fundamental characteristics. Insofar as we keep ourselves benumbed, stimulated, and generally preoccupied with relatively meaningful activities,
which means relatively meaningless activities, then we are less likely to notice how we are, who we are, and where we are bound. This everyday, seemingly sane, and apparently moral lack of awareness is what the Buddha famously referred to as the primary “ignorance” resulting in unnecessary suffering, and which Heidegger referred to as the proximal cause of inauthenticity.

The primary characteristic of human existence enshrined as the Buddha’s first “noble truth” is the inescapable fact of suffering (Rahula, 1959). Nevertheless, that mortal suffering is inescapable does not mean we do not try to do so. Suffering is obviously something we try to avoid when we receive things we do not want, such as travel delays, indigestion, domestic discord, or illnesses great and small. We also do not want to suffer the infirmities and indignities of aging, and most especially we do not wish to die. Psychoanalysis understands this much. However, we also suffer when we receive the things we do want, be it a beloved companion, a dear child, more money, a new technological gadget, a piece of jewelry, or even a sublime spiritual experience. These desirables turn out to be causes of suffering because once we have them we do not want to lose them. We suffer to the extent we seek to possess them and worry about their loss. So we suffer both when we get what we do not want as well as when we get what we do want. If we take stock of this predicament, we come up against the paradoxical dilemma that unhappiness and dissatisfaction is caused both by our efforts to secure happiness and satisfaction and by trying to avoid the unhappiness and dissatisfaction inherent in existence. Surely this is crazy. Nevertheless, it is considered to be completely normal and perfectly sane to pursue and cling to our desires while avoiding and rejecting our aversions. Moreover, in a consumption-driven society like ours, undeterred striving for material acquisition is even construed as a righteous endeavor.

Who can forget that following the shattering 9/11 air attacks on America, the President at the time, G. W. Bush, urged Americans to go shopping, lest the economy falter in a pause of material consumption. Rather then pause to more thoroughly digest the tragedy, understand its causes, and weigh an informed response, the country (the They) effectively closed down, submerging its vulnerability in arguably chaotic and reckless self-defensive aggressive reactions. In an effort to feel less vulnerable and more secure, the United States engaged in acts of war, torture, and political intrigue that alienated potential allies, energized potential enemies, and wound up only making Americans feel more afraid and less secure than before these impulsive self protective efforts began. Of course, one reason Americans experienced an extreme spike of insecurity following those brutal attacks was due to the American people’s denial of being so vulnerable to terrorist attacks in the first place. America existed in a consensual illusion of invulnerability while actually existing in what had become a world increasingly vulnerable to such attacks. This is an example of how the They exists within “a curtain of fantasy” which seeks to avoid facing life’s insecurities.

Even though it is a complete illusion to think that existential suffering can be avoided, the consensus opinion is that it is perfectly sane to try. Consider the eight everyday “worldly concerns” which the Buddha specified as sources of
potential suffering whenever we believe that our well-being hinges on
possessing one while avoiding the other. *Pleasure and pain, praise and blame,
gain and loss, and good versus bad reputation.* Striving to have pleasure and
avoid pain is utterly sane and normal, is it not? Yet how can one be sensitive
even enough to delight in pleasure without also being sensitive to agonize in pain as
well? When is it possible to fall in love without running the risk of having that
love be unrequited? Wanting to be praised but not blamed, seeking gain
without loss, or wanting to be admired without being envied are all normal
preferences which are impossible to have without also having its unwanted
twin. All of these normal, apparently reasonable desires are like wishing to
have “up” without “down”. How sane is that? Upon even a little reflection we
see that gain without loss is a fantasy, as is admiration without envy. These
preferences are all futile exercises inviting more misery, yet they reflect the
everyday sanity of the They.

Regarding the second existential characteristic, we exist wholly in a dimension of
*impermanence*. We are just now – reading this sentence - hurtling through
time on our way toward certain death. In addition to the favored distractions
of a particular culture, and in our case we surely have more varieties of
distraction than have ever before existed, there are our everyday misdirections
which Stolorow refers to as “absolutisms of everyday life” (2007, p. 13–16). By
this, he refers to the common incantations we recite to reinforce an illusion of
security covering over our inherently insecure existence. These absolutisms
include such everyday affirmations as “I’ll see you later” to a friend, or “I’ll see
you tomorrow” when tucking in a child for the night, or “I’ll be right back” to
our partner as we leave on a short errand. Of course, we have no idea whether
or not these assurances are true. We do know that some day, although we
know not which day, they most certainly will not be true. But we ignore the fact
that we know we do not know what awaits us as we leave the house each
morning. In fact, we do not even know what will happen if we stay home for
the day and merely climb in and out of the shower, light the stove, descend the
stairs, and answer the doorbell on a perfectly ordinary day…a day like any
other day. Marvelously, assuming that nothing unexpected will occur and life
will proceed without interruption, we readily deny the truth of impermanence
by warmly offering and eagerly accepting these reassurances to and from each
other. In so doing we collude in servicing an illusion of permanence.

In regard to the third characteristic, still more strongly do we cling to the view
of consensus reality that supports the illusion that our selfhood is a solid
ground in an otherwise chaotic sea of change. In addition to the existential
truths of suffering and impermanence, the Buddha observed there is the
ontological truth of *selflessness*. At first glance, this declaration seems strange
and simply wrong. That “I” exist as an enduring entity seems to be the most
incontrovertible fact of existence, the denial of which at first strikes us as either
absurd or nihilistic. Indeed, Buddhism has been faulted, mistakenly, as a
nihilistic religion. As with all the Buddha’s teachings, this declaration too is not
to be taken passively as an article of faith. The point is not to believe it, but to
discover if it is true. Meditative inquiry into the nature of the self is a powerful
Engaging in simple self-inquiry, Siddhartha Gautama sat on a comfortable seat under a sheltering tree, and during his long night of self-reckoning discovered the brilliant nature of sanity itself. In releasing the distorting tendencies of his mental fixations and emotional conflicts, he discovered that the cessation (nirvana) of clinging to the self-constructs of relative sanity was in itself a bliss-saturated freedom surpassing all conceptual understanding. Letting go of the fear, aggression, and grasping of his firm convictions, the constructed, felt existence of his selfhood separate from the Otherness of the world collapsed into unimpeded openness which we refer to as awakening to the way things actually are. The way things actually are in the interdependent connectedness of existence is decidedly not how we construe them according to the self-centered imaginings of the They.

Whether examining the minds of ourselves or others, we readily find that it is a separate sense of Self which forms the primary identity and personal territory which we defend against the intrusions and unpredictable Otherness of the world. The insulation of a separate self and delimited world is a marvelous fiction, creating a habitable world that is – within its constructs – comprehensible and sane. In child development, we know very well that if a child is unable to create a dependable sense of self, that child will feel extraordinary powerlessness and be increasingly vulnerable to psychic fragmentation. It is no wonder given the immensity of existence, that we are developmentally prone to “cover [chaos] over with a curtain of fantasy, where everything is clear.” And then, to cling to our constructions “as scarecrows to frighten away reality.” Especially as children, the vastness of existence can certainly feel overwhelming, and it is of utmost importance for caretakers to soothe the existential anxieties of children with the reassurance, illusory though it may be, that “everything is going to be fine.” Adults also have varying capacities for tolerating unknowing, otherness, and the disturbing givens of existence. It is important to respect that the constructs of consensual sanity serve a protective function and not everybody at anytime has the capacity to accept the mysterious and at times terrifying truths about themselves and their vision of the world.

As Carl Jung is to have said, “The most terrifying thing is to accept oneself completely.” When we look into the nature of the self we take ourselves to be, it can be disturbing to accept what we find there in two senses. Psychologically, we are challenged to accept the egoic humiliation that we are not entirely how we like to think of ourselves, but bear an unconscious “shadow” of disowned intentions, impulses, and ideas that may be chaotic, embarrassing, threatening, or otherwise disruptive of our conscious, cohesive sense of selves. Ontologically, the matter is more serious, since in seeing that “I” am no thing: not the firm ground of being I take myself to be, I am up against the terror of groundlessness. Heidegger, echoing the Buddha, spoke to this situation suggesting that not only do we who are lost in the They wish to ignore the truth that we will die one day, we are even keener to ignore the truth that we
are not self-existing just now! Distraction in idle activities and meaningless pursuits serve as a hedge against discovering the groundlessness, or as the Existentialists provocatively put it, the abyss of self and world. Even though Heidegger glimpsed and the Buddha realized that the discovery of selflessness opens a way to the freedom and bliss of inter-being, accepting such openness can be a formidable challenge.

**Existential Anxiety**

Both Freud and Heidegger spoke to the difference between fear and anxiety. They specify that fear is always fear of something, an “entity-within-the-world” as Heidegger put it (as quoted in Stolorow, 2011, p. 36). The something might be an actual thing that is about to happen or it might be something that is imagined. In either case there is an entity or event that is feared. In the face of fear, it is possible to mount defenses to combat an identifiable threat. One’s response to fear may be skilful or misguided, but either way one is mobilized to either action or inaction (fight or flight or freeze) that rivets attention to the what that is feared, binding attention to an external object.

Anxiety on the other hand is not about an objective entity or event, but is about one’s own subjective being, which is no thing. As Heidegger put it, anxiety is “completely indefinite...nothing and nowhere”, and yet this non-being is “being-in-the-world as such” (as quoted in Stolorow, 2011, p. 36). There is a marked difference between observable and knowable things in the world and the being of the being who observes and knows these things. As Heidegger put it, a human being is “distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it” (1927/1962, p. 32). That is, the mystery of one’s own existence is a mystery, an unresolved issue which niggles, drawing one’s attention within. As one senses into the no-thingness which is oneself, one may feel a kind of vertigo. Whether by deliberately inquiring into the enigma of selfhood or in being haunted by an existential disquiet perhaps arising unbidden in the middle of the night, one finds oneself anxious. Heidegger felt that confronting existential anxiety is an individuating opportunity in which one is called to turn from the superficialities of everydayness to the actualities of one’s existence. Buddhism speaks of this turning toward the way things are as “noble,” while Existentialists refer to it as “authentic.”

Paradoxically, the process of individuation is evocative of existential anxiety precisely because of its release of self-groundedness. We typically think of individuation as the development of a separate self; whereas, to the extent it is an authentic process, individuation involves the de-centering of self-centeredness along with a growing capacity to tolerate unsettledness and non-self-centeredness. Authentic subjectivity discovers it is an occasion of inter-subjectivity. As one becomes more oneself, relaxing more deeply into the who, what, and where one actually is, the inherent open/inter-ness of selfhood becomes more apparent.
Although we tend to lose ourselves in the They, we can never completely escape the sanity of our basic nature. The unconditioned openness of inter-being exerts a gravitational pull which I call the impulse of authenticity. Unnervingly, this impulse is at once a pull toward relative insanity (defined according to the They) and toward unconstructed sanity. This is an impulse we can either resist or accept. To the extent we resist it, authenticity tugs at our conscience, nags at us as anxiety, guilt, or despair. So that even when things are going momentarily well, we still feel vaguely incomplete and somehow wanting, craving for our situation to either not change or to be further improved. On the other hand, to the extent that we accept the impulse toward authenticity and relate to the existential anxiety that arises in so doing, the sanity of unconditional presence arises in our mindstreams.

When Heidegger refers to our own being as the core issue of human being, he identifies to my way of thinking, the essential question forming the overarching purpose of being human. To the extent this issue remains unaddressed, one has not fully realized the purpose of human life and so continues to feel somehow incomplete and to experience some measure of existential anxiety. As the Buddha discovered, to come to terms with this issue leads to its dissolution and the evaporation of anxieties. Existential thought is not so bold as to go this far. Like psychoanalysis, it is wary of self-deception and suspicious of claims to the effect as well as the possibility of “fully realizing” life’s purpose. For good reason. It is very appealing to the They-self to fool itself into thinking it is beyond existential insecurities in having attained the ultimate ground of being, resulting in ego-inflation, spiritual bypassing, and a profound kind of lostness in which one becomes convinced one is not lost. Of course, meditation masters are also well aware of this pitfall. Nevertheless, being aware of the pitfall does not mean that the impulse of authenticity is exhausted when one is courageous enough to face up to existential truths. Having dared existential sobriety, there is still the matter of living authentic presence forward, both in relationship to others and in regard to releasing the unfolding potentialities of authentic presentness. Seeing the suffering, impermanence, and selflessness as the way things actually are does not mean one has completely resolved one’s issues with this situation and is therefore able to fully embody that knowledge. Beyond recognizing one’s basic nature is integratively embodying it in time. From what I can tell, such reckoning and integration are the issue, the raison d’être, of human being. All other reasons and activities are secondary or preparatory to the primary purpose of recognizing, embodying, and radiating brilliant sanity.

Again, there is a difference between the psychological integration of unconscious material and an ontological recognition of one’s true nature. Summarizing the psychoanalytic project of “making the unconscious conscious,” Jung wrote that psychological integration involved a “transcendent function” (1957/1969, p. 67–91), which is a “bringing together of opposites for the production of a third [position, in which]…it is no longer the unconscious that takes the lead but the ego.” (p. 87). This “third” position involves a synthesis of conscious and unconscious attitudes into a less divided
selfhood. However, this psychological integration, as valuable as it is for coming to better terms with one’s inner divisions and so providing a more stable position from which to inquire more deeply into the nature of one’s being, is not yet recognition of that ontological nature.

The discovery of basic sanity, or *rig-pa*, which the Dzogchen master, Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, translates as “primordial awareness” or “instantaneous, nondual presence” (Namkhai Norbu & Clemente, 1999, p. 58), is not a unification of opposites, but the intrinsically undivided nature which allows for the division and unification of opposites. From this perspective, the positing of a transcendent function is superfluous, since there is nothing to transcend. The search for and realization of authenticity is no particular state, but an attuning process. Through attuning to the impulse of authenticity, one de-integrates from the (protective) self and world constructs to which one clings, which is simultaneously an opening to the essential inter-ness of being in time. In being-open, one is more able to integrate whatever arises within that presence in basic wakefulness. This integrative process is easily misunderstood, inviting further clarification.


Explicated according to the Dzogchen tradition of Buddhism, basic sanity, or instant presence, has three aspects: essence, nature, and energy (Namkhai Norbu, 1986, p. 56–73). While these are experientially indistinguishable, they can be conceptually teased out in order to better understand the subtle and elusive nature of unconditioned mind.

As has already been mentioned, the essence of mind is empty-openness (*sunyata*). Without center or periphery, the mind is essentially the unconstructed capacity of inter-ness, vast like an unclouded sky. Far from being a mere “void,” as *sunyata* has sometimes been (mis-)translated, the nature of empty-openness is cognizant liveliness. Like every other sense organ, it is the nature of the mind (understood as the sixth sense organ in Buddhist psychology) to perceive. Unlike other sense organs, the mind’s perceptions include concepts, and concepts have the unique power of appropriating perceptions of the other five senses by interpreting them according to various criteria and intentions. The cognizant quality of mind therefore has the capacity to either disregard its empty-open essence, which includes the sensory experience appearing within it, or not. In disregard, or “ignorance,” of its true nature, the mind detaches from being-in-the-world and seems (to itself) to exist separately from the world. It is not recognized that this split occurs wholly as the mind’s own mental construction. This ignoring, and self-managing, of experience is a form of intentionality which the Buddha identified as the root cause of suffering (i.e., *samsara*). By grasping onto what is liked, rejecting what is disliked, and ignoring what is of no personal interest, one participates in an on-going struggle with one’s self-world. Since self and world are not fundamentally separate, the tensions of this struggle are felt to be “inner” tensions which manifest as self-conflicts. The split between self and world,
including self and other, can be understood as basic insanity, which may then develop into more sophisticated manifestations of psycho-somatic pathology. At the same time, since the nature of mind is essentially open and free like the sky, even though clouds (of delusion) may obscure its empty essence, the mind’s cognizant quality can always rediscover and recognize its intrinsic non-self-centered spaciousness (Wegela, 1994).

When mind recognizes that the nature of sensory perceptions and mental constructs are in essence unconstructed, the apparent separation between self and world collapses, releasing mind’s intrinsically healing energetic properties. The energy of mind manifests as nondualistic responsivity. In letting oneself be…and continue to be…open and undefended, with naked awareness not losing itself in the clothing of its perceptions, the impulse of authenticity expresses itself in compassionate and discerning responses to self and other. In contrast to everyday emotional reactivity that aims to defend or enhance a self-position, the energy of unconditional presence responds to experience without, or with reduced, self-centered distortion. Responding without attachment or aversion to what arises or passes away within the field of awareness loosens the tensions that bind one to a defensive position and the anonymity of the They. Whether alone or with others, when the energy of nondual attunement is unimpeded, subtle psychic holdings that constrict body and mind in defensive-offensive postures naturally release. This occurs simply because the intentional effort that maintains them loosens. In Dzogchen, the naturally healing responsiveness of authentic presence is referred to as self-liberation (rang-drol) (Reynolds, 2000). Elsewhere, I have referred to this intrinsic healing potential as natural resilience (Bradford, 2002).

In contrast to what is normally thought of as psychological or spiritual “work” involving earnest effort, the natural resilience of basic sanity delivers its healing power through the “play” of effortless presencing. The maintenance of self-defensiveness, self-image, and conformity to the security arrangements of the They requires an on-going exercise of intention. Releasing the tensions of defensive intentionality involves not practicing them for at least a moment or two. It is in a pause of self-intending that fundamental healing takes place, as the subtle effort maintaining dualistic vision relaxes. Ironically, it is by relaxing one’s efforts to secure oneself that one is able to discover that there is nothing to be secure from. Naturally resilient sanity cannot be created; neither can it be destroyed. It can however be released from fixating tendencies which bind it.

**Conclusion**

The deceptively simple message of spiritual and psychological practices informed by basic sanity is “let it be” (which Heidegger (1959/1966) refers to as gelassenheit). The irony of this is that the non-doing of letting be may be the most difficult thing we can ever do. It can seem impossible and feel terrifying to let go of our everyday sanitized consensual security arrangements, self-image management scenarios, and taken-for-granted worldviews. To let go of these is, in some measure, to risk our relative sanity. Of course there are many skillful
means that can be employed to guide, buffer, support, confront, soothe, and otherwise assist an opening to authentic presence, but that requires a much larger discussion. I am content here to sketch the paradox of sanity/insanity that a search for authenticity invokes. This leaves many avenues of inquiry open for further research, such as: Is it true that unconditioned presence has inherent healing potential?

As a pointer for this kind of inquiry, there is an enduring image that has served as an encouragement for many on the path of awakening: the classic figure of the seated Buddha having passed through the night of his enlightenment (see Figure 1). He sits in dignified repose, the fingers of his right hand touching the ground. The “dark night of the soul” through which he has just passed opened him to the depths of suffering his own hopes, fears, and confusions. Having emerged into the wakefulness of brilliant sanity in which confusions self-liberate, dawning as wisdom, he expressed this recognition simply by touching the ground upon which he sat. The usual explanation of this “earth-touching mudra” is that he was having the earth bear witness to his awakening. Perhaps—but resting in the healing bliss of unconditional presence, would the Buddha really need a witness? I doubt that he needed any validation beyond the self-evidence of the intrinsic openness in which he then unwaveringly dwelt. My sense is the Buddha is expressing in this gesture the trans-conceptual actuality of awakening in the sense of displaying that everything is as it is. Nothing need be corrected, nothing need be enhanced. Touching the ground

Figure 1. Buddha displaying the earth-touching mudra.

says simply and directly, just here in this place, just now at this time. The
upturned hand resting easy on his lap expresses the natural confidence of
unobstructed openness: anything can be held lightly, any situation is
manageable, just as it is.

Finally, as regards psychodiagnostic reference systems, we do well to
acknowledge they are forms of knowledge relative to the psycho-cultural
context which construes them. As guides to foster the emergence of genuine
sanity and awakened qualities, categorical forms of knowing reveal less than
they conceal. To echo a terse admonition of the gifted Nazarene, as constructs
of consensual reality, psychodiagnoses may be appropriate for “rendering to
Caesar what belongs to Caesar,” thus serving a function of social hygiene.
They are not, however, appropriate for “rendering to God what belongs to
God,” genuine sanity being unconstructed, naked presencing. Aware of what is
at stake, psychotherapists and spiritual counselors ought not confuse who they
are serving at any given time.

NOTES

1 Thanks to Tulku Ogyen Rinpoche, Tsoknyi Rinpoche, and their translators for this translation of mind’s
dynamic “nature,” tshul-wa.

2 Thanks to Peter Fenner for coining this excellent phrase.

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On the Question of Sanity


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**The Author**

*G. Kenneth Bradford* is a psychologist in private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area, specializing in Existential-Contemplative oriented psychotherapy,
consultation, and professional training. Currently, Adjunct Professor at John F. Kennedy University. Formerly, Co-Director of Maitri Psychotherapy Institute. His recent publications include *Listening from the Heart of Silence: Nondual Wisdom and Psychotherapy, Vol. 2* (edited with John Prendergast), and several articles intertwining the thought and practice of Buddhism, Existential Phenomenology, and Depth Psychotherapy.

Many kinds of research in every field, from anthropology to zoology, are changing the world. Human research, e.g., psychology, sociology, the human sciences in general, has placed much faith in observational, statistical and experimental methods that assume or require that the researcher be objective and separate from the research outcome. This and various procedures designed to control variables and compare groups are intended to assure us that we are finding the data relevant to a hypothesis or theory, that there are trends or differences, and that we are accurately assessing human experience and behavior. This approach is standard, often is productive and can lead to significant changes in societies and cultures.

Historically, much scholarly and scientific research in the human sciences has proceeded with in a reductionistic and “objective” paradigm that relies substantially on quantitative methods. This is usually not an adequate approach to researching the more complex, subtle and most meaningful experiences in life. It also tends to exclude as artifact any impact on the researcher. Using qualitative methods, focusing more directly on the phenomena itself, in a more naturalistic approach, can give a clearer, perhaps more vivid picture of the “subject” of the study. And yet a further step is possible: To build into the design, as the study’s focus, significant participation and opportunity for change in the researcher and the participants.

In Anderson and Braud’s new book, they make this methodological leap. They give us the epistemological basis for a different research approach, tell us how to do it, why it is important, and what larger purposes it can serve. In Transforming Self and Others through Research, they present a comprehensive, detailed, case study application model for a major expansion of research methods.

The Preface and Introduction to Part One describe their backgrounds (scientific behavioral research), their shift to an expanded view of methods, and the larger philosophical context out of which their new approach has emerged. Their framework is that of a “transformative paradigm,” which focuses on personal and individual transformation that they define as change that “tends to be persistent … pervasive … and profound (having an important life impact)” (p. xvii). “Transformation” throughout the book also carries an inherently positive, compassionate connotation, “… so that all of us … may collaborate and contribute to a better world for everything that lives” (p. 3).

Chapter 1, “Intuitive Inquiry,” by Anderson, has a lively style and covers five types of intuition, five cycles of hermeneutic interpretation, challenges and
Part Two presents skills and practices intended to enhance the preparedness or adequateness of the researcher. In four richly detailed chapters, the authors provide exercises, case examples and practical guidance for developing intention, attention, quieting and slowing, auditory and visual skills, kinesthetic and proprioceptive skills, direct knowing, intuition, empathic identification, accessing unconscious processes and materials, and play and the creative arts. This section of the book could benefit anyone, researcher or otherwise, who wants to gain or improve these capabilities.

Chapter 8, “An Expanded View of Validity,” is a very useful and readable summary of reliability and validity considerations, and of the trustworthiness of various qualitative investigations and techniques. Especially recommended!

The final chapter presents the authors’ larger purposes: “We propose a transformative vision for research and scholarship that supports positive individual, communal, and worldwide transformation” (p. 303). What are their strategies for dancing such a vision? “Collaboration with scientists and scholars across disciplines … integration of spiritual and indigenous insights … methodological pluralism … integration of the expressive arts” (p. 306–313). This chapter is an important foray into serious value territory, deep global needs and the unique ethical considerations of transformative research.

Overall, this is a well thought through offering. It shows the authors have proposed, tested, defended, and continuously refined their research methods and philosophy. The text is well-edited, documented with 400 references, and has generous biographical notes on the authors. I would have liked to have seen more discussions of similarity/differences between transformation and psychotherapy, how to handle traumatic reactions that might arise in research, and a consideration of transformations that might be negative. A researchable question that arose for me was whether there were enough completed research examples available to determine the persistence of the transformational changes reported.

It is especially significant that the book’s many research methods skills, and the authors’ working context and orientation, are characterized as “transpersonal.” Over four decades ago in 1969, this Journal’s first issue announced the founding of the field, emphasizing an empirical approach and a strong call for
“theoretical and applied research” (Sutich, p. i). Many authors over many years have responded to this call with an impressive literature. Now, in this book we have a fresh, innovative, well-argued expansion of the maturing field’s research possibilities. Now we also have more case-tested ways, using transpersonally oriented methods for professionals, schools, clinics, agencies, businesses, and individuals to conduct research that is potentially transformative - and that perhaps can add to our growing knowledge of “the farther reaches of human nature.”

REFERENCE


The Authors

Rosemarie Anderson, Ph.D., has conducted quantitative and qualitative research from the 1970s on. She taught in Japan and Korea, became an ordained Episcopal priest in 1987 and has served on the core faculty at Sofia University (formally the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology), in Palo Alto, California, since 1992. She has published extensively including Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences, (co-authored with William Baud), Celtic Oracles, and Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Research (co-authored with F. Wertz, K. Charmaz, L. McMullen, R. Josselson and E. McSpladden). She is currently a professor in Sofia University’s online Ph.D. program, and serves on several advisory and editorial boards with publications and associations dedicated to transpersonal and spiritual endeavors.

William Braud, Ph.D., died May 13, 2012. He had a variegated research methods background in learning theory and motivation in experimental and clinical applications in university, medical, and private laboratory settings. He taught for 17 years at Sofia University (formerly the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology) in Palo Alto, California, where he directed research, residential and global programs. He has published extensively including Transpersonal Research and Methods for the Social Sciences (co-authored with Rosemarie Anderson) and Distant Mental Influence. He was a Professor Emeritus at Sofia University and a member of several advisory and editorial boards for professional journals.

The Reviewer

Miles A. Vich, M.A., D.H.L. (hon.) has served in various roles, 1962–1999, in the fields of humanistic and transpersonal psychology, including editor to the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, as a founding board member of the Transpersonal Institute, as Editor of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology and executive director of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology. Since
retiring in 2000, he has consulted on various projects, pursued a longstanding interest in art, and archived many transpersonal documents in the Sofia University library, Palo Alto, California, and many humanistic era documents in the University of California Santa Barbara, Davidson Library.

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The purpose of Soul to Soul is to address two of the most significant questions about the different aspects of life: Human experiences as portrayed by the seasons and cycles of life, and the shared love that makes soul to soul bonding more solid and universal. This book is intended for all men and women who are in search of self-improvement, spiritual understanding and growth. Though the book embraces the full spectrum of transpersonal psychology's curricula, it is written for popular readers in a non-academic style. The information in the book derives from the author's own knowledge and experiences rather than the outcome of scientific research.

The author leads the readers through the lessons of his own observations. He is also presenting to the readers what he has learned growing up, and what he understands now. According to him, seasons portray human experiences with accuracy, including the challenges that not only speak to us, but also contribute to our wellbeing and spiritual unfolding. Nothing exists for itself alone, but as an intricate part of the whole, and/or as a constant player in the Cosmic game called existence. Soul to Soul invites readers to view life as an ally. In that vein, Zukav argues that even, “your painful emotions are designed to bring your attention to the parts of your personality that you were born to challenge and change accelerates this process” (p. 29). When this change happens, you will become more, “compassionate, wise, and grateful for life” (p. 29).

Zukav holds that happiness is more in the effort to perfect oneself than in perfection itself. When the journey through life is off track, it is never too late to make a course correction. To illustrate his arguments, he reports that a Rabbi once told him that to sin is like shooting an arrow and, “missing the mark” (p. 36), and when this happens, Jewish people go into a period of introspection and prayers to put themselves back on track. To live is to be self-responsible, and it is only by learning to be pro-active, as opposed to being reactive with regard to life’s challenges, that one can enjoy a fulfilling life. To shift awareness, one needs to ask the right question. “When you see your life as a learning opportunity in which you are provided with continually updated class material that is uniquely suited to your needs, you will see your life as a gift that is worthy of your value and close attention. You will also begin to see

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the universe as a wise and compassionate partner in your educational process and you will be grateful for it” (p. 57). It is the author’s intention in this book to let the readers understand that nothing in life is left to chance.

Zukav views life as a process, which when ended gives birth to another process. He thus believes in reincarnation, which he considers a reason to have hope for a better and more fulfilling life (in future incarnations). When one’s current life becomes an uphill race, one should drop one’s resistance in order to enjoy the process. Life is more than the appearance we see; it is like a plant with its root deep in the soil. “The root that produced the plant has produced other plants in the past, and will produce more plants in the future” (p. 64). He also believes that life is better when lived in cooperation with others, not in isolation. It is more rewarding to leave one’s, “habitual consciousness behind in order to support one another” than remain trapped in one’s own victim consciousness.

Zukav also strongly believes that this earth plane is a school we are all attending. We are here to learn to appreciate every situation in our lives. “Appreciating abundance, awareness and patience are important lessons. Every experience that you have in the earth school is designed to help you learn them” (p. 75). Additionally, although we may think that we are separated from each other, we are a part of a web that connects every individual. Thus, “the hurt of one person is the hurt of all, and the honor of one is the honor of all” (p. 81). We are on the earth plane to share our moments of joy, pain, love, and other feelings and experiences. We might think of others as friends or foes, but “the things you don’t like about yourself are the same things that you do not like about other people. The way you treat yourself is also the way that you treat other people. If you don’t like yourself, you will assume that other people don’t like you either, no matter what they say or do” (p. 89).

In conclusion, for those in search of meaning in life and answers to their spiritual questions, this is a good book to read. The author’s goal is to take the readers beyond the boundaries of their limitations, and help them experience true freedom from the inside out. This book is indeed an anthology of Zukav’s personal life experiences and his wisdom accrued from such.

The Author

Gary Zukav is the author of The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics, The Seat of the Soul, Soul Stories, and many others. He is a graduate of Harvard University and a former U. S. Army Special Forces (Green Beret) officer with Vietnam service. He lives in Oregon with his spiritual partner, Linda Francis.

The Reviewer

Sahibou Oumarou, M.A., is originally from Niger (West-Africa). He is a 5th year Ph.D. student at Sofia University. At this moment, Sahibou is writing his dissertation on personal life stories. Sahibou has a special interest in cultures, religions, and mystical traditions around the world. He is a world traveler and
speaks several languages, including five African languages, French, Russian, and English.


*Growing Whole* is a transformative text that is deeply rooted in the principles of transpersonal psychology, psychosynthesis, and eco-psychology; yet each of these topics is introduced and integrated throughout the book, so no knowledge in these fields is necessary on behalf of the reader. The chapters explain these concepts with clear and concise descriptions augmented with abundant exercises that are accessible to both the novice and the professional. The purpose of this book is to utilize the principles and techniques of psychosynthesis as a foundation for the reader to participate fully in, “the Great Turning” (p. 1), a transformation of our world’s collective ways of living from an industrial growth society to a life-sustaining one.

*Growing Whole* focuses on transforming the individual so that he/she may then transform the world. The early chapters teach the fundamental principles of psychosynthesis with exercises that are simple yet effective guides to mindfulness and centering practices. The later chapters explore the Self, the multiple dimensions of personality, the conscious use of will, spiritual awakening, relationship, service, and much more as the author guides the reader through the development and refinement of knowledge and skills that are central to a life of fulfillment and service.

Although well written, this book is not a light read. Every few pages contains another exercise that is designed to experientially reinforce the transformative information in this book and guide the reader along a path of personal and spiritual growth. Keeping a journal is recommended while completing the exercises where a reader can draw, take notes, and reflect. The first exercise is a self-awareness technique that is the foundation of the later exercises. This simple exercise involves closing your eyes and sitting quietly in a comfortable position. To begin, Brown instructs you to gently become aware of any sensations in your body, especially any areas of tension or discomfort. Notice your shoulders, jaws, thighs, and belly. Notice your breathing, the sounds of the environment, and the temperature of the air on your skin. Notice your own weight and how the ground supports you. Look around: Do you feel any new sensations in the body? Are you annoyed or surprised? Excited or anxious? Neutral or unsure? Notice feelings that seem to originate from your surroundings. Notice feelings that seemed to originate from inside of you. Now focus your attention on your thoughts. Even while reading these words,
notice the thoughts that flow in and out of your awareness in response to what you read. Notice any insights or concerns you have with this process. Notice any concerns, judgments, or images that arise. Notice which aspects of this activity seem easy or difficult. Can you distinguish between feelings and thoughts, or feelings and body sensations? Now take notes, reflect, and continue to notice.

After exercises on developing awareness in the present, the focus shifts to visions of the future, and then to confronting the blocks and choosing changes. The final sections of the book address the special challenges of spiritual awakening, the exploration of relationships, and how to find one’s role in the “Great Turning.” This book demands conscious, active, engagement every step of the way, and its format gives a motivated individual powerful psychological tools for personal change.

Brown holds high expectations of human potential, and the reader is continually guided with practical knowledge and activities for utilizing the highest potential within him/herself. With experiential direction, the reader of Growing Whole is trained to glean insights and guidance from the unconscious and to use such insights to open new possibilities and transformations in his/her life. This book is a journey that should not, and cannot, be rushed; it is a quest for the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.

The Author

Molly Young Brown, M.A., M.Div, studied psychosynthesis with Dr. Roberto Assagioli in Italy in 1973, and subsequently with other teachers in the USA. She has taught and written about psychosynthesis ever since. In the 1990’s, she studied and worked with Joanna Macy, Ph.D., in deep ecology and systems theory. Molly currently teaches on-line training programs in psychosynthesis and ecopsychology, offers counseling and coaching by phone, writes essays and books, presents workshops internationally, and serves on the Advisory Board and the Professional Development Committee for the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis.

The Reviewer

Joshua Rutt is a 4th year Ph.D. student at Sofia University, with a specialization in creative expression, and a research focus on posttraumatic stress disorder and trauma work.
Nearly a decade after the publication of *Varieties of Anomalous Experiences* (Cardena, Lynn, & Krippner, 2000), this book is a welcome addition to the literature on this category of mental processes. It presents new findings on exceptional human experiences (EHEs), and broadens the topic by including phenomena such as nearing death awareness (NDA), after-death communication (ADC), substance-induced altered states of consciousness and EHEs, and spirit possession. The authors’ task of narrowing down the purview of this manual was undoubtedly a delicate one, considering that over 500 kinds of exceptional experiences (EEs) and EHEs have been compiled (White, 2000), including fairly common experiences such as empathy, hypnagogic experiences, flow and zone experiences, intuition, or sleep paralysis, as well as other, more unusual experiences such as aura vision, channeling, past-life recall, or psychokinesis. The specificity of this handbook is its clinical approach to EHEs; it is addressed primarily to clinicians, but also to researchers and to experiencers themselves. Because the majority of EHEs have a positive impact on the experiencer’s life, it would be improper to categorize them as “disorders,” which the DSM-IV-TR defines as being, “associated with present distress … or disability … or with a significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom” (American Psychiatric Association, 2004, p. xxxi). The therapeutic recommendations in each chapter suggest approaches to cases of EHEs that created abreacts, exacerbated latent disorders, or were dismissed by the experiencer’s entourage.

The experiences included in this manual are defined rather loosely in the first chapter as, “experiences that occur to more people than one might imagine, people of all ages, living in different countries, and that nonetheless have not been categorized in the list of ‘what is real,’ although they are not accompanied by a diagnosis of any clinical disorder” (Allix & Bernstein, 2009, p. 5). In this fashion, the authors set EHEs apart from disorders such as psychosis or dissociation, which do result in distress and dysfunction for the experiencer.

The second chapter addresses psychopathology, but not by treating EHEs as disorders. Bernstein points out that the aftermath of an EHE presents very real problems for the experiencers, who are often faced with the incomprehension of their friends, family, or therapists, in a world where the consensus is that their experiences are unreal. The experiencers may feel isolated while trying to make sense out of an experience that calls into question their very sense of identity. This chapter guides the therapist in drawing a differential diagnosis between EHEs and possible comorbid disorders, and in refraining from
pathologizing so that the experiencers may integrate their EHEs as part of the range of human experience and use them for personal transformation. Traditional assessment tools are often inadequate in this realm, as some of the subscales systematically define elements of an EHE as indices of a mental disorder. Since many of these experiences involve a perception by the experiencer that cannot be shared with others, and no scientific term describes such perceptions, it ends up being referred to as a “hallucination.” It is also noted that in some instances, co-occurring mental health problems may be induced by the EHE.

Chapter Three examines near-death experiences (NDE). The author, Evelyn Elsaesser-Valarino, points out relevant studies showing, for instance, a marginal difference in NDEs from culture to culture, noting that the deeper structure of the experience is universal. Interesting pieces of information are presented such as: people whose suicide attempt results in an NDE do not make another attempt, while those who did not experience an NDE have a high rate of recidivism. A variety of NDEs are described such as those of children, of blind people, or frightening experiences. The author notes that whether or not NDEs are an epiphenomenon of a dying brain still remain controversial. As she goes through hypotheses that were advanced to interpret NDEs, she remarks that none of the theories proposed to disprove the reality of NDEs are sufficient to explain all the elements of the experience.

The next chapter is written by the same author and covers nearing-death awareness (NDA) experiences. Less well known by the public than NDEs, this state of consciousness, often characterized by visions at the time of death, is well known to hospice staff members. These visions are often comforting for the dying, but give others present the impression that the patient is incoherent or has hallucinations. This phenomenon takes place in the last hours or minutes of life, in people who die slowly and gradually. It can be the source of profound transformation, and bring the dying person in a few minutes from despair to a state of peace. Care of the dying who are experiencing NDA involves offering a receptive, caring and safe psychological space, where they can fully live these visions. In NDA cases, the dying’s agitation or distress may be a reaction to the misunderstanding of the people around them.

Continuing on another topic surrounding death, Elsaesser-Valarino then treats the subject of after-death communications (ADC). These experiences are mostly associated with a recent death. ADCs can take many forms, from a simple felt presence to the involvement of one or more senses. They often occur during sleep, but also in wakefulness, drowsiness, out-of-body, meditation, and manifest themselves as physical or symbolic phenomena. The subjective experiences occur for the most part once, and in patients showing no form of mental deterioration. Most people who have had these experiences focus on the belief that the contact was made by the deceased rather than the content of the messages. This contact comforts the mourners and allows positive changes that usually take months or even years.

Bernstein authored the next chapter on “out of body” experiences (OBE), where the experiencer perceives from a place other than his or her physical
body. OBEs are distinguished from the dream state by the experiencer’s total lucidity (see below for lucid dreaming), and also from remote viewing where the person does not experience the sensation of being out of his or her body and can still move it (doing so in the case of an OBE would end the experience). Most people see the experience as spiritual, and they feel it has made a positive change in their lives. In rare cases where the experiencer has difficulties returning to normal life, the clinician is cautioned to avoid the pitfall of treating the OBE as an abnormal experience.

The next chapter on lucid dreaming is a partial republishing and translation of LaBerge’s and Gackenbach’s (2000) chapter in Varieties of Anomalous Experience, with an addendum on problems and solutions relative to lucid dreaming by Carine Lemarchand. Lucid dreaming is defined as knowing that we dream as we are dreaming. This experience, which occurs in REM sleep, is similar to OBEs, and, the authors contend, is often phenomenologically indistinguishable from OBEs. This experience is by no means exceptional, since most people say they have had a lucid dream at least once in their lives. People can be trained to have lucid dreams. They can be used as a therapeutic tool to overcome nightmares, to decode the symbolic messages of the unconscious by intervening in the dream, or to work on personal problems.

In Chapter Eight, Olivier Chambon addresses substance-induced altered states of consciousness. The author’s main focus is hallucinogens, in particular those used in traditional shamanistic rituals. The chapter refers to these substances as “psychedelics” and sometimes as “hallucinogens,” but while acknowledging their common use to induce mystical states, does not use the term “entheogens” (perhaps this needs to be introduced into the French language). This part emphasizes the importance of using these substances in a culturally welcoming context and under the direction of an experienced guide. Incidentally, half of the chapter is dedicated to pathologies and therapeutic approaches, thereby sending the message that these EHEs may present some hazards.

Psycho-spiritual experiences are the subject of the next chapter. Djohar Si Ahmed makes extended use of Stanislav Grof’s (1976) model of perinatal matrices to provide a roadmap for these EHEs. She includes a broad variety of experiences in this category, from peak experiences to possession (described in the next chapter), including Kundalini awakening, alien abductions, NDEs, and even alcoholism. Distinction is made between a spiritual emergence and a spiritual emergency. The latter case is deemed worthy of the attention of a therapist who can encourage the process without trying to block it, using medication sparingly, if at all, in order not to undermine any hope of growth.

In the following chapter, Ahmed teamed up with Isabelle de Kochko to describe possession phenomena. These EHEs correspond to the experiencer’s feeling that his or her inner being has been invaded by an alien presence. Unlike many of the experiences in this book, this type tends to have negative effects on the experiencer. These effects may be exacerbated in a cultural or familial environment unprepared to accept the external entity theory. The authors note that many non-western societies conceive of an illness, especially a mental one
as a manifestation of possession. Different healing approaches are presented: hypnosis, shamanistic healing, transpersonal psychotherapy, ethnopsychiatry, family-systems therapy, and religious exorcism.

The final chapter, authored by Erik Pigani, describes extrasensory perception, including telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition. These phenomena are presented as common faculties of the mind and are imbued with therapeutic value. Here again, the therapist’s task, when faced with a patient who is having some trouble integrating the experience into his or her life, is to take the patient’s experience at face value and normalize it.

Although it is written in French, this book contains a majority of citation of articles and books published in the English language. One can only hope that an American publisher will be willing to make it available to the Anglophone public.

REFERENCES


The Authors

Stephane Allix is a former war correspondent. In 1988, at age 19, he clandestinely joined a group of Afghan guerrillas. He spent his career making documentary films in many parts of the world such as Somalia and Kashmir. Dedicated to pushing the limits and exploring the unknown, he has studied puzzling questions raised by certain scientific discoveries about the nature of the universe. This has led him to realize the importance that eyewitness testimony and unexplained human experiences can have in opening doors to new dimensions of reality. He has devoted himself to the study of unexplained phenomena since 2003, and founded the Institut de Recherche sur les Expériences Extraordinaires (INREES) in July 2007.

Paul Bernstein, Ph.D., served on the board of IANDS and was editor of that organization’s periodical, Vital Signs. He was a research associate with
Harvard psychiatrist John Mack, at the Center for Psychology and Social Change. He received degrees in the natural and social sciences from Stanford and the University of Michigan, and taught at the University of California, Irvine and Boston College. His ongoing work is to help expand science’s understanding of the relationships between consciousness and matter. Bernstein has personally explored spiritually transformative experiences through meditation, training in mediumship, the Findhorn spiritual community, est, the Silva program, yoga, Tai Chi, transpersonal psychology, and dolphin-interaction programs.

The Reviewer

Fabrice Nye, Ph.D., graduated from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in 2011, and is currently working on his licensing requirements. He studied and practiced for many years Byron Katie’s style of inquiry, and published a book review of her two books Loving What Is and A Thousand Names for Joy in this journal. He has worked as a hospice volunteer and assistant chaplain, as a grief support group facilitator, and as counselor for juvenile delinquents in the California Department of Corrections. His first career was in information technologies. He also holds a M.S. in Computer Science.

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Having met in 1970, Ian Gordon-Brown and Barbara Somers founded the Centre for Transpersonal Psychology in London, England in 1973. The term ‘transpersonal psychology’ was first defined in 1968 in the USA by Anthony Sutich, so these were pioneering days with Ian and Barbara creating something
original and unique this side of the Atlantic. Bringing to this project their combined backgrounds in academic psychology, Carl Jung, psychosynthesis, Buddhism and Alice Bailey, they designed their own workshops. These proved so successful that towards the end of the 70’s they began their first training course for psychotherapists. Eventually UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) accredited this course.

Ian’s sudden death in October 1996 caused the program to come to an untimely end. However, there were those who felt that the material from the workshops and seminars must not be lost. Using notes, recordings, and with the help of Barbara Somers, the editor who trained at the Centre has reproduced in these four volumes much of the material from those programmes. They carry recommendations by several well-known figures, including the late David Fontana, a founder of the Transpersonal Section of the British Psychological Society.

Although the series, which is collectively titled *Wisdom of the Transpersonal*, is designed primarily for psychotherapists and counsellors to enrich their understanding of the human psyche, they are also designed to be read by anyone who has an interest in pursuing a path of psycho-spiritual self-healing and development. Each new concept starts off at a simple level with definitions, helped along where needed by illustrative diagrams, and an index at the back of each volume that enables the reader to select specific topics.

The first volume in the series, *Journey in Depth*, takes us straight into the idea that psychotherapy needs a spiritual dimension; that it is not just about helping people with problems to adjust to society’s norms, but rather it is a journey of the soul towards wholeness. Lady Diana Whitmore, President of the Psychosynthesis and Education Trust, London, in an endorsement that appeared on the jacket cover in 2002, writes that this book, “integrates the personal with the transpersonal, allowing readers insight into their childhood and the greater challenges they face on their psycho-spiritual journeys.” It deals with the experiences of childhood, of parenting, the challenges of having siblings or of being an only child, how the Shadow comes about, the Mother and Father archetypes, one’s sense of personal space, mental and physical illness as symptoms, and dreams as a portal to the unconscious.

The next title, *The Fires of Alchemy*, is self-explanatory. This volume is in two parts, dealing with the alchemy of the west and of the east, and draws much from Carl Jung in its themes and interpretations. Accompanied by beautiful reproductions of old alchemical drawings, Part 1 guides us gently through the stages of the Work: calcinatio, solutio, coagulatio and sublimatio. Part 2 deals with Taoist alchemy and includes the inspiring ox-herding series of pictures.

*The Raincloud of Knowable Things* differs in format from the preceding two volumes, as it does not reproduce seminars but consists of the Centre’s weekend workshop programmes, which are described in full with all the explanatory talks and experiential exercises. For me this is the most important of the four volumes. Theory may be fascinating and spiritually satisfying, but it
is work on oneself that is at the heart of the individuation process, and facilitating that journey is what The Raincloud is all about.

Many authors have written about the transpersonal, but this book is unique in giving a template for how to run the Centre’s series of transpersonal workshops in practice, including instructions on how to use spot imaging and guided fantasy. However, although it has been designed primarily as a handbook for psychotherapists, it can still be read by a layperson. Each new topic is introduced simply with definitions, and the text is peppered with illustrative diagrams.

The first three workshops, open to the general public, were a prerequisite for enrollment on the training course. The first of these covers basic concepts such as the distinction between Ego and Self, the collective unconscious, Jung’s four functions, and subpersonalities, as well as introducing guided fantasy. The second explores the masculine and feminine principles, while the third deals with life cycles and growth. The chapters then progress towards more advanced material including initiation, archetypes, chakras, and the links between intuition, inspiration and will. The final chapter, which bears the same title as the book, delves into one’s relationship to the collective, the cosmos and the future. The volume ends with a number of appendices providing additional explanatory, practical and historical information.

This brings us to the final book in the series, Symptom as Symbol, which presents those training seminars linking physical and mental characteristics with the psyche. Overt features are viewed as symptoms of the inner. As well as physiological symptoms, the standard categories of mental illness and abnormality, neurosis, psychosis and personality disorders, are examined in depth in terms of both their origin and their treatment, though the authors are at pains to point out their disapproval of labels. Therapists are warned of the many pitfalls when dealing with disturbed clients. There is also a chapter on sexuality and another on the meaning of illness. The overall message is to recognise the symptom and to let it lead to the underlying cause of disturbance in the psyche with a view to achieving reintegration of that which has been split. The book ends on a positive note with the last chapter, The Transcendent Function.

REFERENCES


The Editor

Hazel Marshall, M.Ed., is a qualified psychotherapist and has, since 1989, been running transpersonal courses based upon the work of Barbara Somers and Ian Gordon-Brown. The books she has edited are distilled from her
transcriptions of some 96 audiotapes of Barbara and Ian’s seminars, which she has put together in the light of her profound knowledge of, and admiration for, the authors’ work.

The Reviewer

Hazel Guest, MA, BSc., FIMA, Adv.Dip.CTP, MAHPP, attended the second training course (1979–80) at the Centre for Transpersonal Psychology and gained accreditation with the UK Council for Psychotherapy. On taking early retirement as a mathematics lecturer at City University of London, she became a psychotherapist in private practice, from which she retired at age seventy.

Reviewer’s Note: This review is based, with permission, on a review of the series I had previously published in Network Review (Winter 2011, pp.53–54), the members’ journal of the Scientific & Medical Network, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, UK, but revised and augmented specifically for the readership of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology.


... Stanley Krippner


... Irene Lazarus


... David Loy


An excellent overview that provides a broad historical perspective for students of transpersonal psychology.


An anthology of reflections by religious and spiritual teachers as well as thought leaders from various secular areas on the state of contemplative expression in their respective sectors. A wonderful contribution to the unfolding of a deeper spiritual understanding of the doorways to the transformation of consciousness in our society.


Jacob Needleman explores the purpose of life on earth and reveals how the care and maintenance of our world is vital to our existence as authentic human beings.

... Frances Vaughan


The author engages, most articulately, the epistemology of the perception of art.
Excellent and thorough commentary on a modern activist monastic.

A wide-ranging, well researched exploration of the myths, religions, uses, beauty, power and impact of trees throughout civilization.

... Miles Vich


... Jenny Wade
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Dept. of Human Development, VA Tech/ National Capital Region
7054 Haycock Road, Falls Church, VA 22043-231 USA

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