



Perspective

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THE EGO AND THE ETERNAL
by Don Mihalow

ECOPSYCHOLOGY'S ROOTS
by Mark Schroll

ATP NEWSLETTER
pages 20–25



REVIEWS

Alternatives Beyond
Psychiatry

Honen the Buddhist
Saint

Ayahuasca
Hallucinogen

Out of Denial



ATP NEWSLETTER

CONFERENCE REVIEW

The First International Congress on Ecstatic States Hanover, Germany, May 22-26, 2008

— David Lukoff

Organized by the Department for Psychiatry, Social Psychiatry, and Psychotherapy of the Hanover Medical School, and the German College for Transpersonal Psychology

More than 200 participants attended this Congress, including psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, psychotherapists, neuroscientists, social workers, scientists, and interested laypeople from Poland, England, Holland, Russia, the U.S., and Germany. It was organized by Assistant Professor Torsten Passie, M.D., M.A., and Professor Hinderk M. Emrich, M.D., Ph.D., from the Hanover Medical School, and Professor Wilfried Belschner, Ph.D., University of Oldenburg, who heads the German College for Transpersonal Psychology (DKTP).

Since prehistoric times, ecstatic experiences occupied a central position in cultural development, as can still be observed in the Far East and in non-industrial societies. In occidental history, ecstatic experiences have been demonized and marginalized—but still significant in religious practices, somatic and psychological experiences, sexuality, youth culture, and psychotherapy.

Ecstatic experiences can purify and transform human beings, change their perspectives and values, give life new meaning, and have healing effects. This makes them important to consider in developing a spiritually oriented psychotherapy. While scientific research in the West has been looking at ecstatic experiences mainly as marginal phenomena of psychological life, many cultures in Asia and shamanic

cultures have developed technologies and rituals to achieve ecstatic states of consciousness. Since the 1970s, humanistic and transpersonal psychology have been discovering the connection between ecstatic Peak-Experiences (a term Abraham Maslow coined) and psychological health, and psychotherapeutic techniques that induce these states.

The Congress organizers were able to enlist a range of internationally renowned experts in the field who considered the phenomenon of ecstasy on the conceptual, experimental, and practical levels in its psychological, neurobiological, cultural, and transcultural dimensions, including its potentially healing effects. In a professional setting, people could talk about ecstatic states of consciousness, what they are, how to achieve them, what can come from them, and various cautions. Several presenters discussed how ecstasy can come from sexual intercourse and how orgasmic release can be directed via intention to achieve higher states of spiritual transcendence; also the use of various drugs, disciplines, rituals, chanting, music, incense, etc. A dramatic case was shown on video of a man dying of cancer who was panic-stricken with uncontrollable fear, regrets, and worries. He had



TORSTEN PASSIE AND WILFRIED BELSCHNER AT THE CONFERENCE

lost a great deal of weight. In this pilot program, the doctors used the drug Ecstasy (MDMA) along with psychotherapy to help the patient work through his fear and face his situation in a more open and relaxed way. In two months, he had regained weight, reported feeling positive about whatever remained of his life, and reunited with his girlfriend. Most of the sessions were like that—about cutting-edge research, experiments, new theories, and therapists determined to open up their practices to embrace and include ecstasy, bliss, spirituality, and the transcendence in higher states of consciousness.

Participant P. M. H. Atwater stated: "I really felt I was at the epicenter of some of the finest minds in the world, and I took full advantage of that." For a fuller account, see *PMH Atwater's NDE News* at <http://atwaterndenews.blogspot.com>.

ATP NEWSLETTER



BRIDGING NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE

April 1-5, 2009, Portland, Oregon, <http://atpweb.org/sacaaa/index.asp>

The first cosponsored meeting of the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness and the Association for Transpersonal Psychology will address the eco-crisis. "What we need is a new vision of the world," says Liv Ullman in her role as Sonja Hoffman in Fritjof Capra's film *Mindwalk* (1991). This need for a new vision of the world is the need for a new world interpretation, a new world orientation, the "call for an essential/integral science": a new paradigm or myth. The Greek word *mythos* means telling a tale. We are searching for a new way of speaking, a new way of telling our stories, a new way of framing our questions. Using the word *myth* in this way allows us to find a sense of common ground with storytelling and folklore. According to Elaine Wynne, in S. Foster and M. Little, editors, *Between and Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation* (Open Court, 1987, pp. 482-488): "If we want to change our lives, we must first change our stories." Story in this sense refers to our own inner voice, our personal narrative, or the things we tell ourselves about our life and the lives of others in this world. Our lives are in fact made up of stories, as Wynne explains: "Stories are the glue, the essence that holds a people together



... a family, a community, a nation, a planet" (Wynne, 1987, p. 466).

We invite your voice and your stories in an open call for papers and a growing list of presentations. These include a 2-hour symposium on April 4 on the "History and Future of Ecopsychology" with Ralph Metzner, Stanley Krippner, Adele Getty, and Robert Greenway, moderated by Mark A. Schroll. "We propose that the concerns people have expressed while waving the banner of ecopsychology are not limited to the new discipline of psychology. It is more likely that a transdisciplinary field is emerging that will draw from all of the current social, behavioral, and life sciences, in which a variety of research strategies will be required for data collection as well as for application.

To help shape this field, we intend to present suggestions for a clear understanding of ecopsychology's history, definition, and vision of its future."

Ralph Metzner's books include *Green Psychology* (1999), *The Well of Remembrance: Rediscovering the Earth Wisdom Myths of Northern Europe* (1994), *The Unfolding Self: Varieties of Transformative Experience* (1998), and *The Expansion of Consciousness* (2008), all contributing to this movement. Adele Getty is author of *A Sense of the Sacred: Finding Our Spiritual Lives through Ceremony* (1997). Stanley Krippner

— Mark A. Schroll

Conference Location

Edgefield encompasses a lush 74-acre parcel of farmland at the mouth of the spectacular Columbia River Gorge with historic buildings of all sizes artfully restored and rich with cozy interiors, tranquil ponds, and dazzling gardens. The stately main Edgefield building (circa 1911), with more than 100 European-style guestrooms and hostel accommodations, is a national historic landmark. Edgefield offers a fine dining restaurant, classic pub, and numerous small bars. Edgefield's onsite brewery, winery, and distillery offer tasting rooms for handcrafted ales, wines, and spirits. Each spacious guestroom is furnished in charming turn-of-the-century decor. There are no televisions or telephones in the rooms, encouraging tranquility, as do the rocking chairs on the verandas. Wireless Internet connections, however, are available. On the grounds you will find a plethora of diversions including trails, golf course, pool hall, onsite massage and spa, outdoor heated soaking pool, onsite glass-blower and pottery maker, artwork everywhere, recent-run movie theater, and gift shop with treasures from the Pacific Northwest and the world.

is world-renowned for his work in dreams, shamanism, psi research, and consciousness studies, and many books. Robert Greenway worked with Abraham Maslow at Brandeis University in the early days of humanistic and transpersonal psychology, and is a pioneer in the "eco-psychology" field.

Don Eulert is Director of the Center for Integrative Psychology,

ATP NEWSLETTER

San Diego, and was the Guest Editor of the February/March 2007 *AHP Perspective* issue on Ecopsychology, and he will be giving a 1-hour poetry reading addressing the conference theme, outside on April 2 during the lunch break. On April 3, David Lukoff (whose DSM category "Religious and Spiritual Problem" is a condition for mental health, and not a pathology) is presenting his latest thoughts in the symposium "Spiritual Emergence and the Greening of Psychotherapy." Chairing this symposium will be Sara Lewis (Columbia University), who is both a psychotherapist and anthropologist. Additional papers are sought in this open call; and CECs will be given for this symposium.

The morning of April 4, Dr. Constantine Hriskos (Colby College, Maine) will chair the symposium "Bateson, Postmodernism, and Shamanism." This symposium includes papers by Sarah Williams

(Evergreen State College), Hillary S. Webb (Ph.D. candidate at Saybrook Graduate School), Ian J. Prattis (*Failsafe: Saving the Earth from Ourselves*, 2008), and Alan Drengron (Emeritus, University of Victoria, founding Editor of *The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy*), and Sharon Mijares (*The Root of all Evil: An Exposition of Prejudice, Fundamentalism, and Gender Imbalance*, 2007) will present on shamanism and gender.

Diane Hardgrave (University of Nevada Las Vegas) will chair a symposium on "Mind/Body Approaches to Biomedicine and Medical Anthropology," presenting her research on the effects of meditation on boosting the immune system. Sonya Pritzker (University of California Los Angeles) will present on learning to bridge nature and self via the mind and body in Chinese medical education. A symposium on "Consciousness: The Non-locality Hypothesis—A Multi-Disciplinary

Approach" will be co-chaired by Rachel Cooper and Robert Harper (Vancouver Island University, Vancouver, British Columbia).

Evgenia Fotiou (University of Wisconsin, originally from Athens, Greece), is organizing a symposium on ayahuasca based on her research in Peru with indigenous shamans. Papers are also sought for a symposium that A. Muhammad Maruf is organizing on "The Psychology of the Dream and Sufi Stories." Saturday evening April 4 a Keynote banquet will examine the future of how ecopsychology, eco-anthropology, shamanism, transpersonal psychology, and more are coming together and creating something new. The first hour of this Keynote event will feature two or three short papers, followed by a 2.5-hour freewheeling conversation forum. The first deadline for abstracts is December 15, 2008, and I'll extend this deadline for those who contact me with a title needing more time.

Relaunching of the International Transpersonal Association

The International Transpersonal Association (ITA) was launched in 1978 by Stanislav Grof, its founding president, along with Michael Murphy and Richard Price, the founders of Esalen Institute in California, to promote transpersonal education and research, and to create international transpersonal conferences. Several international conferences during the previous six years had created a

community of scholars and scientists who wanted to continue this international exchange and collaboration. In contrast to the Association for Transpersonal Psychology, which held annual conferences in California, ITA was explicitly formed to develop international conferences, as it had become obvious that the transpersonal vision was



STANISLAV & CHRISTINA GROF & THE DALAI LAMA AT AN EARLY ITA CONFERENCE IN DAVOS, SWITZERLAND

ATP NEWSLETTER



being embraced globally.

So far 13 ITA conferences have been held in diverse locations. (Audio downloads of presentations from many of these conferences and photos of the conferences are available on the ATP Member website, atpweb.org.) However, after the 2004 ITA Conference in Palm Springs, California, the ITA dissolved when Stanislav and Christina Grof had to discontinue their participation for health reasons.

REBIRTH

David Lukoff, Co-president of ATP, began to explore the possibility of forming a new umbrella organization for the 28 worldwide transpersonal associations (see the ATP Guide to the Transpersonal Internet at <http://atpweb.org/IntlTranspOrgs.asp>) modeled after Eurotas, which is an umbrella organization for 18 European Transpersonal Associations (<http://www.eurotas.org>). He created a Google Group for the International Associations of Transpersonal Psychology (see <http://atpweb.org/googlegroup>). During the ATP 2008 Conference in New Delhi, Lukoff sponsored a meeting to discuss forming such a group, which was well attended, including by Harris Friedman, Glenn Hartelius, Les Lancaster, and many others.

Prior to the Conference, another group was discussing the need for an international association. Harris

group it was decided, to name the new organization ITA after the original ITA—and to continue the



MEETING AT THE 2008 ATP CONFERENCE WHERE ITA WAS BORN

Friedman, Editor of the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* (see <http://www.transpersonalstudies.org>), was looking for an organization to sponsor this *Journal*, and it seemed to Friedman that an international journal would be best sponsored by an international organization, something he began to discuss with the Managing Editor of the *IJTS*, Glenn Hartelius, and with Les Lancaster, *IJTS*'s Coordinating Editor, who had also received a small grant from the British Psychological Society to fund the development of a website to link the international transpersonal community.

As a followup to that meeting, there was discussion on the Google Group regarding the shape and direction of this new organization. Friedman advocated exploring a resurrection of the ITA name, and after much debate on the Google

ITA tradition, including its international conferences. Stanislav Grof gave his blessing to the idea of incorporating ITA again. The ITA was reincorporated on May 27, 2008. The initial officers are Friedman serving as its President, Lukoff as Vice President, and Hartelius as Secretary and Treasurer. Plans to hold the next such conference in either Brazil or Russia are under discussion. In addition, an expansion of the ITA board to include leaders from the global transpersonal community is planned, as is development of a website that can link the international transpersonal community.

Current plans also call for a transfer of the *IJTS* to ITA. All in all, these are exciting times for the international transpersonal community, and everyone interested is invited to participate in ITA's newly unfolding future.



ATP NEWSLETTER

ITP OPENS COMMUNITY CENTER FOR HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Community Center for Health & Wellness is a nonprofit community counseling center and training institute that offers a wide variety of counseling services. It combines contemporary psychotherapy with transpersonal values that focus on the integration of body, mind, and spirit. It offers an affordable fee structure to increase the accessibility of services to a wide range of clients.

As it develops in the coming years, the CCHW will include a program for the treatment of trauma, a marriage and family therapy program, and a spiritual guidance program, as well as the psychotherapeutic and counseling services it presently offers. The vision for CCHW is that it will be a resource for the community in addressing a wide variety of life issues from a whole-person perspective. 744 San Antonio Road, Palo Alto, California 94303 (650) 493-5006

Russia and America Building Bridges in Spiritual Psychology

Vladimir Maykov, Yuri Zinchenko, and Victor Petrenko from Moscow State University, on January 31, 2009, 6225 Doremus Avenue, Richmond, California, 94805, rsvp@stuartcs@jps.net

AN ALL DAY CONVERSATION, 1-10 p.m. COME FOR ALL OR PART OF THE DAY AND MEET THESE DISTINGUISHED RUSSIAN COLLEAGUES AS WE CREATE INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS TOGETHER

Faculty Positions at CIIS and ITP

The Integral Counseling Psychology (ICP) Program of the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) is accepting applications for two full-time faculty positions. The ICP program prepares students for the MFT license and a career in psychotherapy. The Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology has an opening for a full-time faculty position. Both schools are keeping the positions open until filled. More information on these positions is available on the school websites: <http://www.ciis.edu>, and <http://www.itp.edu>

Transpersonal Salon Evenings

The Future of Transpersonal Psychology, January 23 and February 13, 2009, 7:30-10pm

Barely 10% of the Indo-Tibetan archive has been translated. Come learn about the other 90% that resolves debates on:

- Pre/transpersonal ego development
- Sexuality and Spirituality
- Why Dualism Is Good
- Lifelong Spiritual Awakening
- Ascending and Descending Paths
- What Is Enlightenment?
- What should a transpersonal psychotherapy of the future be able to do for clients?

6225 Doremus Avenue, Richmond, California, 94805, 510 232 8262
E-mail stuartcs@jps.net to reserve your place, \$5 for ATP members, \$10 for others.

Siberian Shamanism, Transpersonal Psychology and Psychotherapy, Contemplative Practice in Eastern Orthodox Traditions, Human-Dolphin Research, Religious Practice in Post-Communist Russia, The Russia-India Connection, Cross-Cultural Trauma and Addiction Psychology, Creativity and Spirituality, Dostoyevski and Existential Psychology, Psychic Research, World Peace Studies and Activism, Yoga, Tantra and Buddhism in Russia, Planning for the Second World Congress on Psychology and Spirituality, Moscow, 2010

Stuart Sovatsky, Ph.D., <http://home.jps.net/~stuartcs/about.html>; www.atpp.ru/association/news/?ID=2011; <http://www.worldcongressps2008.org/event/presenters.aspx>

ATP NEWSLETTER



Tribute to a Transpersonal Pioneer

RUMOLD MOL

Rumold Mol, who died in September 2008, was one of the founding fathers of the transpersonal movement in Europe. Currently there are 18 European transpersonal associations, and Rumold was the Johnny Appleseed of the European transpersonal movement. A feel for his contributions can be gleaned from these excerpts from the *Eurotas Newsletter* (issue 50 at <http://www.eurotas.org>).

From Rumold's friends in Poland, Tanna Jakubowicz-Mount and Jacek Majews: We are deeply sad to know that Rumold, our close friend and very generous benefactor of the Polish Transpersonal Forum, passed away a few days ago. He played an important part in establishing the transpersonal movement in Poland, coming here for the first time in 1992 to ask us if we could organize a transpersonal conference before we even knew what "transpersonal" meant. Later he helped and inspired us, working consistently through the East-West Eurotas Foundation to facilitate contacts between Eastern and Western Europe. Thanks to this work, we established close links and friendships with such fine transpersonal trainers and mentors.

From Beata Bishop in the UK: It's hard to imagine any EUROTAS meeting without Rumold. Those of us who have been involved in our organisation from the earliest times

have gotten so used to his sturdy and warm presence, and his total devotion to the ideals of EUROTAS. With the East-West Project, he went to endless trouble to help extend our work to Central and Eastern Europe, which had been cut off for so long from the West. His achievement has been enormous and continues to grow and bear fruit.

From Monique Tiberghien in Belgium: I think of all the trips and workshops we organised together in the different countries of Europe. How enthusiastic and creative he was for this action even in the difficult moments! Never tired, he was always ready to travel to help our friends to build their associations and trainings. He created many links and did many good things in his life, so I am sure he is travelling to the light.

From John Drew in Europe: Dear Rumold, It was not only the work you supported so closely in Central and Eastern Europe, but also your great support at the EUROTAS annual conferences in Poland, in Italy, in Hungary, in Germany, in Luxembourg, in Portugal, in Romania, in London, in Russia, in France, and in Germany. You were always practical, always visionary, always wanting good things to happen both for the transpersonal movement and for EUROTAS. You were always there when you were needed with the faithful Ank not just at your side, but leading you on and encouraging you. — John



RUMOLD MOL

Stanislav and Christina Grof Audio Archive

The Stanislav and Christina Grof Archives Fundraiser held at the California Institute of Integral Studies on April 21, 2007, raised enough to digitize and put online 134 presentations from ITA and ATP conferences. Added were talks from the 1984 ITA Conference in Kyoto and from ATP conferences in the 1970s. Members can listen to new talks by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Robert Bly, Edgar Mitchell, Jack Kornfield, Frances Vaughan, John Welwood, Angeles Arrien, and many others.

A retreat with Jack Kornfield and Stan Grof is also now part of the Stanislav and Christina Grof Archives. With these additions, there are now more than 300 presentations from ATP and ITA conferences online at atpweb.org

CONFERENCE REVIEW

EUROTAS 2008

David Lukoff

The theme of this year's conference was "Planet, Culture, and Consciousness: The Development of Humanity in the 21st Century." Presentations included:

- The Contributions of Transpersonal Psychology to the Evolution of Planetary Consciousness
- Rituals, Rites of Passage, and Psychotherapy
- Shamanic Traditions and New Paradigm in Transpersonal Psychotherapy
- Immune System Consciousness
- Reaching Spiritual Maturity
- Developing Human Consciousness

I have attended six Eurotas conferences. The included meals allow for time to catch up. But this was the first Eurotas meeting for my wife, Christel. She jumped right in with a two-hour workshop on folktales, and she helped to build the Day of the Dead altar together with two women from Mexico. Christel and the two women in the photograph had all brought some things to make a traditional altar, and you can see the result in the photo below.

After the conference, I had four days to immerse myself in Dali, Gaudi, Miro, and Picasso, and other delights of Barcelona. The next conference will be in Italy, October 15-17, 2010, and I hope to be there.

Katherine Philbin

It was hard for me to imagine working with a translator at EURO-TAS this year. I was scheduled to give a two-hour workshop that I had designed for my dissertation study. It is an experiential workshop that I consider successful if it brings my participants to tears. Yet most of the participants in my workshop would not understand English. I decided to take on the challenge by seeing how I might reach my multicultural participants in a truly transpersonal manner—beyond words, beyond such ego attachments as language.

Since my workshop centered around Yoga practices such as asana, pranayama, and yoga nidra, I knew that with some guidance and modeling by me, they would catch on to the techniques, and as they practiced the benefits would soon become self-evident: the mind clearing and calming, the heart rate slowing to a steady and deep rhythm, the body making its peace with the tension harbored within.

The truth is that the young woman who translated brought it all together for the Spanish-speaking participants. She worked seamlessly with me, translating the most essential points gently and with a soft, clear voice. She shadowed me in a way that only a talented translator could, picking up on nuances and going with the flow so that the participants relying on her never missed a beat with the simultaneous English I was speaking. Having a translator in tune with my intention and who got the nuances I was trying to convey was irreplaceable.



CHRISTEL LUKOFF, MAGDA LOPEZ DE LA MORA, AND CECILIA PEREZ MENENDEZ

Presenters were from Western and Eastern Europe, Russia, the United States, South Africa, and India.

For more information on the European Transpersonal Associations (Eurotas) and their conferences, go to www.eurotas.org

ATP NEWSLETTER



VICTOR RODRIGUES, PRESIDENT OF EUROTAS,
AND MAGDA SOLÉ, CONFERENCE CHAIR

needs to continue to reach out to other disciplines and would generally benefit from continued collaboration with other professionals. In all, I feel that my ideas were well-received. I cannot wait for the opportunity to present at the EUROTAS conference again in the future if not for anything more than to reconnect with the friends I made this year in Barcelona.



STEVEN SCHMITZ AT MONTSERRAT

Sean M. Saiter

Café con leche (*café amb llet* in Catalan), wine for lunch, jamon serrano, Gaudi, the Gothic quarter, compact cars, world-class public transportation, and very friendly people. For me, having spent seven years of my childhood in Spain, making my way to Barcelona was a no-brainer.

The number of countries represented at this humble gathering was truly a sampling of diversity under the banner of “the transpersonal.” I learned how important it is to respect not only the language barriers but also the varying perspectives of what “transpersonal” means to different people. As an American, for me this is a humbling and much appreciated realization.

I was scheduled to give a presentation on what my vision of the future of transpersonal psychology is. I gave a brief overview of transpersonal psychology’s Western philosophical heritage and why it arose as a reaction to the natural science road that psychology chose to pursue. I also proposed the idea that transpersonal psychology

Steven Schmitz

Just as each European country has its own unique flavor, so does each Eurotas Conference. The Conference organizers, Associació Catalana Transpersonal (ACT), arranged an excursion to the sacred mountain and monastery at Montserrat, a transcultural party, and a talent show. I found many opportunities to network and converse with professionals involved with Transpersonal Psychology in many diverse cultures. Each experience supported the conference slogan, “Love for all cultures, light for consciousness, and peace for our lovely planet.”

I presented for the third consecutive year on my work as a Transpersonal Counselor and Shamanic Practitioner. In this year’s workshop, “The Healing Power of the Shamanic Journey Circle,” I presented four aspects of the journey circle that can facilitate the spiritual healing process: (1) being together in a circle, (2) creating sacred space,

(3) drumming, and (4) the shamanic journey. I also provided an experience of a Shamanic Journey Circle for the attendees, which included shamanic journeying to live drumming. As at the past conferences, the attendees showed a strong interest in shamanic practices.

I presented a gift from the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology (ITP) to Magda Solé in gratitude for inviting ITP faculty and students to the Conference, and to acknowledge her contribution to “international collaboration in the field of Transpersonal Psychology.” Many thanks to Magda Solé and the ACT team for an informative and enjoyable conference in Barcelona.