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Editor's Note

Our 50th Anniversary issue of the Journal, celebrated during 2018, included an array of reflections by founding pioneers as well as projections into the future. We now launch our first issue of Volume 51 and during 2019 will turn our attention to the next 50 years. Recently, we have witnessed the passing of an array of key pioneers in the transpersonal movement. Each was honored with a meaningful *In Memoriam* from a colleague who knew the individual well. Just over the past several years examples include Frances Vaughan, September 2017 (honored by Roger Walsh), Elmer E. Green, March 2017 (by Miles A. Vich), Huston Smith, December 2016 (by William A. Richards), John Levy, January 2015 (by his wife Adele Schwartz and JTP Editorial staff), Christian Grof, June 2014 (by Karey Pohn), Arthur Hastings, April 2014 (by Genie Palmer), Sonja Margulies, April 2013 (by Miles A. Vich), Arthur Deikman, September 2013, published in 2016 (by Charles Tart), William Braud, May 2012 (by Jay Dufrechou), James F.T. Bugental September 2008, published in 2011 (two reviews: one by G. Kenneth Bradford and one by Myrtle Heery). In addition, the passing of long time British transpersonalist John Rowan (May 2018) was memorialized in the editorial column of Volume 50(1), 2018. A living legacy article had been written by Keith Silvester in Volume 49(1), 2017.

Accordingly and very befittingly, with heartfelt remembrance, **David E. Presti** opens the first issue of 2019 by tuning our antennae to the legacy of pioneer **Ralph Metzner**, who passed on during March 2019. He remembers and honors Metzner as “visionary alchemical explorer, rigorous academic scholar, and uniquely gifted shamanic teacher.”

As the field continues to mature and we navigate forward there are current and ongoing issues, including controversial topics to address and new heights to soar in the transpersonal arena. **Paul Cunningham** (“Scientism and Empiricism in Transpersonal Psychology”) begins by addressing different philosophical stances and epistemological orientations that have emerged regarding transpersonal research, particularly as it applies to transcendent matters. He expresses concern with a potentially limiting definition of science and discusses, among other matters, “degrees of empiricism.” Using the “Taylor-Hartelius debate” as a case-in-point, he offers a critical examination of differing orientations and calls for dialogue to bring about a more harmonious synergy.

Jan M. Keppel Hesselink, molecular pharmacologist from the Netherlands, and anthropologist **Michael Winkelman** (Brazil) have teamed up to address “Vaccination with Kambo against Bad Influences: A Case of Symbolic Healing and Ecotherapy.” Given their professional areas of expertise, they offer a well informed and knowledgeable discussion about the use of Kambo (a psychoactive secretion of an Amazonian frog) as part of a healing ritual. Their discussion opens dialogue about what is considered by some as a controversial topic.

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The relevance of ritual also features strongly in the article by **Giovanna Calabrese, Giulio Rotonda, and Pier Luigi Lattuada** from Italy (“The Meaning of an Initiation Ritual in a Psychotherapy Training Course”). The authors’ inquiry reveals the transformative meaning that an initiation ritual had for the participants as part of a psychotherapy training course and its lasting nature after many years. The authors also discuss the meaning of the ritual from both social and anthropological perspectives.

In a critical analysis, editorial Board member **Jenny Wade** (“Transcending ‘Transpersonal’: Time to Join the World”) expresses concern but also offers hope for transpersonal psychology. She argues that transpersonal psychology is part of the New Age movement and may share its fate of disappearing, but also offers insights, suggestions, and opportunities as to how to increase the relevance of the field and its service to the whole world. Among the areas where transpersonal psychology could potentially contribute much, she cites the global growth and resurgence of many forms of religion and spirituality, including but not limited to those that stress beyond-ego dimensions and dynamics, as well as attention to scholarship in other disciplines that is related to transpersonal concerns.

Finally, from Australia, **Kylie P. Harris, Adam J. Rock, and Gavin I. Clark** (“Religious or Spiritual Problem? The Clinical Relevance of Identifying and Measuring Spiritual Emergency”) focus on the crucial role of the clinician in dealing with matters of Spiritual Emergency and stress the importance of a valid measurement instrument in that regard for use by clinicians. Reviewing their own research as well as that of others (especially Storm and Goretzki) they call for collaboration among researchers.

All Book Reviews offered in this issue are authored by individuals who have previously published in this journal. *The Sacred Path of the Therapist: Modern Healing, Ancient Wisdom, and Client Transformation*, by **Irene R. Siegel** and reviewed by Associate Editor/Clinician, **Irene Lazarus**, emerged in part from the author’s article published in Volume 45(1), 2013 (“Therapist as a Container for Spiritual Resonance and Client Transformation in Transpersonal Psychotherapy: An Exploratory Heuristic study”).

While **Jill Mellick’s** book *The Red Book Hours: Discovering C.G. Jung’s Art Mediums and Creative Process* is reviewed here by **Janice Geller**, excerpts of the book appeared as an addendum to Mellick’s article, entitled “Piercing the Mundane: The Role of Creative Expression in Transpersonal Psychology,” that appeared in our 50th Anniversary issue, Volume 50(2) 2018. Mellick was also interviewed by Doris Netzer in an earlier issue (Volume 49(2), 2017 and a prior book of hers (*The Art of Dreaming: Tools for Creative Dreamwork*) was reviewed in Volume 36(2), 2004 by Sandy Sela-Smith.

Psychology without Spirit: The Freudian Quandary, reviewed by **Binita Mehta**, is authored by **Samuel Bendeck Sotillos**, who has previously contributed several Book Reviews to the Journal. Also, a prior book of his (*Psychology and the Perennial Philosophy: Studies in Comparative Religion*) was reviewed in Volume 48(1) 2016 by Mateus Soares de Azevedo.

Concluding Volume 51(1), the Books Our Editors Are Reading section continues our retrospective view begun in our Anniversary issue of reporting on the Books Our Editors Were Reading over the lifespan of the Journal, and organizing the material by Editorial Board member. This issue covers the decade 1980-1989.

With this issue we officially welcome Aimee Palladino as General as well as Clinical Editorial Assistant and thank Linda Morris for her years of service to the Journal. A transpersonal psychotherapist, Aimee is a graduate of Naropa University and maintains a clinical practice in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Welcome to the next 50 years!

MB

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO RALPH METZNER:
SCHOLAR, TEACHER, SHAMAN
(18 MAY 1936 TO 14 MARCH 2019)

David E. Presti, Ph.D.
University of California, Berkeley



Photo of Ralph Metzner taken in 2012 by Sophia Metzner (reproduced with permission).

Ralph Metzner was a visionary alchemical explorer, rigorous academic scholar, and uniquely gifted shamanic teacher. His contributions to transpersonal psychology, consciousness research, and contemporary psychedelic studies are myriad. Throughout his life he engaged in deep study of mind, and he distilled his findings into words and practices he communicated to others through his many writings, teachings, and counsel. The study of consciousness, now an acceptable topic of investigation in mainstream science, will surely benefit as ideas he explored continue to penetrate into academic discourse. And the growing contemporary field of psychedelic science – currently undergoing a blossoming of clinical and neurobiological investigation – has been and will continue to be profoundly influenced by Ralph's contributions over the last more than half-century.

Ralph was born in Berlin in 1936. His father was a book publisher and his mother, who was Scottish, had worked for the League of Nations. Nearly 83 years later,

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Ralph died quietly and with grace at his home in Sonoma, California, following a relatively short (about a year) encounter with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. He is survived by his wife of thirty-one years, Cathy Coleman; their daughter, Sophia Metzner; a stepson, Eli Jacobson (and his wife Sabrina and son Gracian); two brothers, Robin and Ken; two half brothers, Guenter Metzner and Otto Metzner; and a half sister, Anna Metzner. Ralph also had another son, Ari Metzner, who died in a bicycle accident at age 8 in 1974.

Following World War II, Ralph moved from Germany to Scotland, where he attended Gordonstoun, a school in northeastern Scotland founded by German educator Kurt Hahn, whose philosophy of education included cultivation of responsibility for society at large, and respect, compassion, and service to others. Hahn also founded Outward Bound. Ralph went on to matriculate at Oxford University, where he studied philosophy and political science. Following graduation from Oxford in 1958, Ralph came to the United States to attend graduate school in psychology at Harvard University. After a couple years studying behaviorist learning theory and psychoanalysis, dominant forces in academic psychology at that time, he encountered the research project of Harvard faculty members Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert, who were conducting an innovative investigation into the psychological effects of psilocybin. Psilocybin had recently been identified – by Albert Hofmann of the Swiss pharmaceutical company Sandoz – as the primary psychoactive chemical in psychedelic (genus *Psilocybe*) mushrooms. Ralph had his first psychedelic-drug experience in March 1961, about which he would later write, with deep sincerity in the preface to his *Maps of Consciousness* (1971): “I shall always be grateful to Harvard for providing me with that extremely educational experience.”

Ralph joined the psilocybin research project, although he and other graduate students were informed the following year by senior faculty in the psychology department that they could not use psilocybin-related research in their doctoral dissertations. In part this related to deep opposition to a paradigm that drew upon the study of subjective experience rather than measurement of behavioral action. American psychology at the time was only beginning its emergence from decades of domination by behaviorism. And perhaps even more egregious was the fact that the researchers in the psilocybin project were generating ideas and protocols via taking the drug themselves. This was considered by some to be an unacceptable manner of conducting scientific investigation.

While continuing to participate in psychedelic research, Ralph also engaged in another project in reward-delay learning and used that work to complete a doctorate in clinical psychology. He followed with an NIMH postdoctoral fellowship in pharmacology at Harvard’s medical school. Shortly thereafter, his mentors were famously dismissed from Harvard – a testament to the power of psychedelics to shake up the psyche and potentially lead to problematic consequences when this power is not effectively contained and channeled.

Ralph, together with Leary and Alpert, moved to a communal living setting in Millbrook, New York, where they continued their exploration of the impact of psychedelics on consciousness. By this time psilocybin had become difficult to

obtain from Sandoz and their primary focus of exploration had switched to LSD. From these investigations came Ralph's first book, a collaborative project together with Leary and Alpert (and inspired by Aldous Huxley) based on a translation of Tibetan texts known in English as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. In Tibetan spiritual traditions, these texts have been interpreted as a guide to negotiating the intermediate state (*bardo*) between one life and the next. In *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1964), the *bardo* prayers were reformulated by Ralph, Leary, and Alpert as guides to using states of consciousness experienced during a psychedelic trip for psycho-spiritual growth. It was and is a beautiful notion, poetically executed.

Their communal research program at Millbrook eventually dissolved, and Leary went on to become a provocative activist for social change, proponent of personal exploration with psychedelics, and highly visible lightning rod for targeting by establishment powers. Alpert journeyed to India, connected strongly with Hindu spirituality, and returned to America as Ram Dass. He authored a widely read book – *Be Here Now* – and through his lectures and writings contributed to introducing ideas from Asian spiritual traditions into American culture.

Ralph moved to California where he assumed a position as a staff clinical psychologist at Mendocino State Hospital in Ukiah, California – an institution for the “criminally insane” and other chronically mentally ill, housing nearly 2,000 patients at the time. Subsequently, he worked as a staff clinical psychologist at Kaiser Permanente, Stanford University, and Fairview State Hospital in southern California.

All along, Ralph continued his scholarly activities, editing a periodic publication – *The Psychedelic Review* (1963-1971) – and a book – *The Ecstatic Adventure* (1968) – addressing the psychological and societal impact of psychedelics. While Ralph's initial connection with transpersonal psychology was catalyzed by years of intense exploration with psychedelics, he quickly expanded into other territory. His quest throughout was to draw upon the rich bodies of knowledge and wisdom emergent from European and Asian spiritual and mystical traditions and bring this to bear to both expand a modern science of mind and develop and disseminate practices conducive to psycho-spiritual growth and healing.

In 1971 he published *Maps of Consciousness*, a work of scholarly and personal-practice investigation into a variety of esoteric divinatory and psycho-spiritual traditions – including the *I Ching*, alchemy, tarot, and astrology – speaking to the deepening of one's capacity to explore the territory of mind. For Ralph, it was always about how to apply the knowledge and practices learned from these traditions to reduce suffering – at the individual, societal, and planetary levels. His interest in applying the results of personal transformation to planetary health is articulated in his 1999 book *Green Psychology: Transforming our Relationship to the Earth*, and is the stated mission of the Green Earth Foundation, an organization created by him and his wife Cathy.

In the early 1970s Ralph studied actualism, an esoteric yogic teaching of working with inner light, from Russell Schofield at the School of Actualism in southern

California. Ralph was among the pioneering teaching staff of actualism. He was an active member of the actualism community for nearly a decade, and this served as a foundational aspect of his work and his own practice throughout his life.

In 1975 Ralph took a job as professor at a small graduate school in San Francisco known at the time as the California Institute of Asian Studies. In 1980 the school's name changed to the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) and the institution grew in size and stature. Today CIIS is at the forefront of psychology graduate training programs encouraging and supporting investigation of frontier areas of humanistic and transpersonal psychology and consciousness research.

Ralph served as professor on the CIIS faculty for three decades. He took on positions as academic dean and academic vice-president, during which time he contributed to the expansion of the school and its programs. I had the good fortune to meet Ralph in the early 1990s, and thereafter paid a number of visits to his classes at CIIS, offering instruction and facilitating discussion related to neuroscience and psychopharmacology.

Continuously, Ralph researched, taught, and wrote – in academic settings and in widely delivered lectures, seminars, and workshops. His teachings were profoundly influential to a large number of psychotherapeutic practitioners, and the web of his students is vast. And to his last days, he maintained a small psychotherapy practice.

Ralph's work with psychedelics that began when he was a graduate student at Harvard continued throughout his life. He worked with and wrote about the powerful psychotherapeutic utility of MDMA (methylenedioxy-methamphetamine) in the 1980s, well before it became an illegal Schedule I controlled substance. In the early 1980s, he proposed the term “empathogenic” to describe the distinctive “heart-opening” quality so often associated with MDMA and distinguishing its effects from those of other psychedelics. Only now, after decades of perseverance, is the psychotherapeutic use of MDMA again becoming accepted in academic clinical science.

For three decades, prior to it becoming an illegal Schedule I substance in 2011, Ralph researched the psychotherapeutic utility of 5-methoxy-dimethyltryptamine, a psychedelic substance present in a number of Amazonian plants and also in secretions from the Sonoran desert toad (*Bufo alvarius*). He summarized a number of his methods and observations related to working with this substance in his book *The Toad and the Jaguar* (2013).

Ralph was a gifted and prolific writer. During his lifetime, he wrote 22 books and more than a hundred published essays, journal articles, and book chapters. A few representative books (in addition to the five already mentioned) are: *Know Your Type: Maps of Identity* (1979); *The Well of Remembrance: Rediscovering the Earth Wisdom Myths of Northern Europe* (1994); *Sacred Mushroom of Visions: Teonanacatl* (2005) (editor); *Sacred Vine of Spirits: Ayahuasca* (2006) (editor); *Roots of War and Domination* (2008); *Alchemical Divination* (2009); *Birth of a Psychedelic Culture: Conversations about Leary, the Harvard Experiments, Millbrook and the Sixties* (2010) (with Ram Dass & Gary Bravo); *Allies for*

Awakening (2015); *Overtones and Undercurrents: Spirituality, Reincarnation, and Ancestor Influence in Entheogenic Psychotherapy* (2017); and *Ecology of Consciousness: The Alchemy of Personal, Collective, and Planetary Transformation* (2017).

When he was in his 60s, he learned to play jazz piano and recorded an album of songs he composed and sang – *Bardo Blues, and Other Songs of Liberation* (2005). He also recorded two other albums of spoken poems and storytelling – *Spirit Soundings* and *Völuspa* – accompanied by music composed and played by friends.

He wrote poems and published a book of poetry – *Diving for Treasures* (2015) – and another book of poetry in translation – *Eye of the Seeress, Voice of the Poet* (2011). His last published book – *Searching for the Philosophers’ Stone: Encounters with Mystics, Scientists, and Healers* (2018) – describes his relationships with and gratitude for important teachers in his life, and appeared in print only weeks before he died.

In the days immediately prior to his death, Ralph posted small notes near his bed in which he had written: “intention → attention → awareness” – reminders to remain alert and aware along his dying trajectory – and a testament to the shamanic advice he frequently offered in working with visionary states: stay connected with your intention, your ancestors (those who have gone before, those who have mapped the terrain), your ground, and your light. Good medicine, indeed.

Ralph leaves a legacy of written scholarship and teaching, and a very widely distributed circle of students and friends, deeply grateful for what he gave to the global community of transpersonal psychology. Thank you, Ralph!

Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā.

The Author

David E. Presti is professor of neurobiology and psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, where he has been on the faculty in molecular and cell biology for nearly 30 years. For more than a decade he worked in the clinical treatment of addiction and of post-traumatic-stress disorder at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Francisco. And for the past 15 years, he has been teaching neuroscience and dialoging about science with Tibetan Buddhist monastics in India, Bhutan, and Nepal, part of a program of monastic science education initiated by the Dalai Lama. He is author of *Foundational Concepts in Neuroscience: A Brain-Mind Odyssey* (Norton, 2016) and of *Mind Beyond Brain: Buddhism, Science, and the Paranormal* (Columbia, 2018).

SCIENTISM AND EMPIRICISM IN TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT: This article offers a further contribution to the Taylor-Hartelius debate on psychology and spirituality. It examines the role of scientism in defining transpersonal psychology as a scientific field, how the doctrine of empiricism admits of degrees, and the limitations that accompany any doctrine of empiricism that restricts itself to sensibly verified experience. Potentials and opportunities for developing a transpersonal science of the Transcendent are described. The call to banish all metaphysical hypotheses from transpersonal psychology as a scientific field is not a mere technical point about epistemology. It concerns transpersonal psychology's central intellectual values and has implications for not only transpersonal theory and methodology, but also for the transpersonal vision that guides our field. The issues of central importance discussed in this article concern the foundations of science that have divided the field of transpersonal science and psychology into two camps and are far from already settled.

KEYWORDS: Transpersonal psychology, scientism, empiricism, psychology of science.

In a recent series of papers, Hartelius (2016, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c) offered a critique of Taylor's (2016, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c) perennial psychology project that used the phenomenology of a transpersonal experience (i.e., "awakening") to justify objective knowledge claims regarding the ontology of metaphysical entities (e.g., "all-pervading spiritual force"). Hartelius and other transpersonal scientists have argued that metaphysical hypotheses regarding the nature of basic reality beyond the five senses have no place in science. Only claims that are testable, falsifiable, repeatable, and consensually validated in the sensory experience of others are permitted in transpersonal psychology as a scientific field (see also, Daniels, 2005; Friedman, 2002, 2015; MacDonald, 2013). Friedman (2015) stated, "transpersonal psychology cannot be scientific unless it is constrained into abandoning its focus on transcendence. . . . This does not mean, however, that the transcendent cannot be studied, only it cannot be studied under the guise of psychology, which is a scientific endeavor" (p. 60). Transpersonal scholar, Michael Daniels (2005), drew out the implications and consequences of this philosophic stance.

Transpersonal psychology cannot engage in direct speculation about the Transcendent because the noumenal is outside the remit of science (i.e., it is beyond the phenomenal or observable. . . . As transpersonal psychologists, we are limited to exploring the ways in which the Transcendent is experienced phenomenologically. (p. 230)

Friedman (2015) explained that "for those who want to study the transcendent, there are non-scientific approaches that remain available, such as through religion,

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poetry, and other artistic expressions . . . These endeavors are neither intrinsically more or less valuable than science, but they are not science” (pp. 60-61).

Bracketing the transcendent, transpersonal psychology fastens upon the reasoning mind as opposed to the intuition. Because science can only deal with the physical and does not provide a framework capable of containing experience of transcendence, the field is advised to squash the experience as a topic of scientific inquiry since it is “not amenable to empirical approaches or even conceptualization itself” (Friedman, 2015, p. 60). The study of transcendent experience becomes acceptable only through poetry or art and other aspects of transpersonal studies, where it is accepted as creative, but not real enough to be considered a part of scientific psychology or upset the philosophic stance of the physical sciences.

The philosophic stance of logical positivism being proposed for transpersonal psychology as a scientific field is motivated by an intent to throw aside “superstitious nonsense” such as the supernatural, New Age metaphysics, and “aspects of the transpersonal that are clearly outside the bounds of science, such as non-duality and other empirically inaccessible concepts (e.g., soul) that seem to transcend ordinary reality” (Friedman, 2015, p. 60). The reasoning mind is to be harnessed “within a scientific frame with its demand for logical consistency and empirical accessibility” (Friedman, 2015, p. 62). Non-scientific transpersonal studies become the only acceptable translator of mystical experience and a mediating cushion between transcendent experience and the self whose experience it is. This view of transpersonal science, unfortunately, throws some of the baby out with the bathwater.

Using the Taylor-Hartelius debate on psychology and spirituality as a case study, this article critically examines and evaluates the call to limit the focus of scientific transpersonal psychology “only on the non-transcendent aspects of the transpersonal” and use of positivist epistemology modeled on the physical sciences (Friedman, 2015, p. 60). I will argue that restricting the field to logical empiricism as a philosophic stance for scientific transpersonal psychology is a form of scientism based on a narrow and limited definition of science that is to be adopted only if preceded by a rigorous, critical examination of the metaphysical commitments upon which it is based.

In agreement with Friedman (2002), “science should never be an ideology but an approach to knowledge grounded in respect for understanding experience,” broadly conceived (p. 178). Empiricism (*empiricis*, meaning experience), however, is a doctrine that admits of degrees and theoretically allows for an expanded definition of what constitutes valid empirical evidence beyond “experience accessible via the senses . . . brought into a consensual framework for others to corroborate. . . . that any appropriately trained observer is able to replicate” (Friedman, 2015, p. 55). Instead of assuming *a priori* that transpersonal science cannot deal with metaphysical claims as a matter of principle, I would argue that as long as the transcendent and so-called supernatural entities causally act upon the observable world and produce some real effect to which we are compelled to respond, then transpersonal science has something to investigate (Boudry, Blancke, & Braeckman, 2012; Fishman, 2009; Fishman & Boudry, 2013).

Overview of the Taylor-Hartelius Debate

The Taylor-Hartelius debate on psychology and spirituality represents an important dialogue about what counts as valid evidence in transpersonal psychology as a scientific field. Taylor (2016, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c) proposed a theory of spiritual experience called soft perennialism (also perennial phenomenology and essentialist phenomenology). Taylor based his theory on a comparative thematic analysis of “awakening” experiences reported by religious mystics and modern-day research participants and on other research he has conducted on spiritual experiences (e.g., Taylor, 2009, 2015; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017). An awakening experience is defined as

An experience in which our state of being, our vision of the world and our relationship to it are transformed, bringing a sense of clarity, revelation and well-being in which we become aware of a deeper (or higher) level of reality, perceive a sense of harmony and meaning, and transcend our normal sense of separateness from the world. (Taylor, 2012, p. 74)

Taylor concluded that the derived eidetic structure indicated that both groups were reporting essentially the same kind of experience “that is explored and interpreted in different ways, all of which are equally valid” (p. 34) and that is constituted by an energy or force that pervades all reality.

Hartelius (2016, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c), on the other hand, proposed that only those statements that are in principle verifiable by sensory evidence and are testable, falsifiable, and experientially confirmed by intersubjective observation should be considered a part of any psychology that considered itself scientific. Hartelius (2017b) stated that “to claim that one can directly apprehend transcendent realities is to conflate the particular qualities of experience with some specific attached meaning, which may or may not be accurate pending some sort of independent evidence” (p. 126).

Hartelius was particularly severe in his criticisms of Taylor’s importing into psychology nonempirical theoretical propositions that were allegedly unfalsifiable and untestable. He censured Taylor’s use of subjective (awakening) experience to justify objective knowledge claims about transcendent realities for which there cannot be any independent “evidence that anyone might be able to examine for themselves” (Hartelius, 2017a, p. 94). However, even consensual agreement is suspect under such circumstances. Hartelius (2017b) insisted that “the fact that other individuals in other ages and cultures have noticed similar patterns adds no evidence for the correctness of the perennialist speculations. . . . Metaphysical models do not receive additional weight or confirmation on account of agreement by respected figures for whom authoritative knowledge is claimed” (pp. 124, 126).

Theoretical Commitments

Before attempting to address the issues raised by the Taylor-Hartelius debate, it will help the reader to know some of my theoretical commitments up front.

For purposes of convenience, I interpret Hartelius's position in this debate as allied with the philosophic stance of logical empiricism of the physical sciences (i.e., scientific knowledge consists of what is known positively through sensory experience and objectively through intersubjective agreement) in the "post-logical" positivist tradition of Carl Hempel (1965) and Ernest Nagel (1961). Taylor's essentialist phenomenology position is allied with the epistemology of human science (i.e., we are what we would study and we have intuitive access to our own nature). Both ways of knowing represent legitimate frameworks of knowledge. Of course, we have to be cautious about claiming that any class of experiences is universal as Taylor did. This includes any class of experience that has been reported and observed down through the ages and across cultures and has in some sense *prima facie* validity. A similar cautionary tale applies to adopting those metaphysical assumptions which have been assumed intrinsic to modern science (e.g., objectivism, physicalism, positivism) and which preclude any "union of science and metaphysics" advocated by Hartelius and using these assumptions and values as criteria for establishing a phenomenon's existence and authenticity.

If transpersonal psychology is to address the important issues raised by the Taylor-Hartelius debate, then we need to do at least two things: First, identify and critically examine the *assumptions* that underlie the methodological criteria and the metaphysical commitments that define what counts as meaningful data in our field. Second, we need to conceive and explore alternatives to conventional ways of approaching transpersonal phenomena in their scientific *and* philosophical dimensions, or at least being open to their possibility. This is a different kind of problem—not just acknowledging the limits of what we do not know and of what we actually understand, but of trying to recognize what we can and cannot understand, in principle, by certain existing methods. Two epistemic cultures of transpersonal psychology—empirical rationalism and transpersonal empiricism—are in dialogue in this debate (Cettina, 1999; Cunningham, 2015). The question is whether we can bring these two seemingly incommensurate paradigms together into a more harmonious synergy to form a more robust transpersonal psychology able to cast new light on their combined purposes. The clash between Taylor and Hartelius is not about a mere technical point in epistemology. It concerns the field's central intellectual values and has implications for not only transpersonal theory and methodology, but also for the transpersonal vision that guides our field.

Scientism in Transpersonal Psychology

A number of transpersonal scientists have expressed the view that if transpersonal psychology wants to be an empirical science like physics, chemistry, astronomy, and biology, then it should act like one (e.g., Daniels, 2005; Friedman, 2002, 2015, 2017; MacDonald, 2013). It is one of Hartelius's presumptive arguments in the Taylor-Hartelius debate. So desirable has this outcome become because of the apparent legitimacy it would lend to our subdiscipline in the eyes of mainstream positivist psychology, that it is considered a goal to be pursued for its own sake. Under this pressure to apply methods that have attained a certain level of respectability in dealing with impersonal, inanimate objects, we are asked to limit our inquiry to the study of only those aspects of transpersonal phenomena that are

receptive to conventional research methods associated with the physical sciences (i.e., the phenomenal and observable).

Hidden behind these research methods are background philosophical assumptions of objectivism (i.e., an already-out-there-now-real world exists independent of the knower), physicalism (i.e., only physical reality is real), and positivism (i.e., the real world is what is accessible to experience via the senses) (Slife & Williams, 1995). A majority of orthodox scientists assume these adopted ontological and epistemological commitments to be intrinsic to modern science (Harman, 1994). They are the metaphysical commitments that lie hidden behind the call for the banishment of metaphysics from transpersonal science and the adoption of logical empiricism as the official philosophic stance of transpersonal psychology as a scientific field. “With these background assumptions in place, the eventual nature of psychology is predecided—it is to be a physical science, and is to assume the ontological and epistemological commitments that generally accompany physical science” (Yanchar, 1997, p. 163).

Walsh and Vaughan (1993) cautioned the field against prematurely committing itself to theory-laden cognitive commitments and reminded us “the assumptions implied by these [cognitive commitments] are not necessarily wrong. However their validity should be researched and assessed rather than presupposed” (pp. 201-202). The banishment of metaphysical hypotheses and adoption of physical science methods might indeed be helpful, but only if preceded by a rigorous examination and critical evaluation of the background cognitive commitments regarding the nature of knowledge, reality, causation, logic, and time upon which such a scientific transpersonal psychology might be based. Only after these background assumptions have been clarified and critically examined at the outset and we are prepared to accept their implications and consequences for the nature and direction of our field, should they be accepted and adopted (Slife, 1993; Slife & Williams, 1995; Yanchar & Kristensen, 1996).

The metaphysical commitments of logical empiricism have proven very effective when it comes to the study of passive, inanimate objects. I would argue they have been less successful when applied in a self-referential human science such as transpersonal psychology where *we* are what we would study and the scientist wants to know all of reality and not just the repeatable, shared, observable portions of it (Hunt, 2005). It is not that logical positivism is incorrect, but rather too narrow and limited to serve as a general or *comprehensive* approach to the field’s subject matter of active, animate, imaginative, creative, thinking, deciding, choosing, desiring, valuing, defiant human beings endowed with ideals and impulses toward ultimate states (i.e., the farther reaches of human nature; Maslow, 1966, 1971). Difficulties arise when transpersonal scientists insist that worthwhile problems that are not susceptible to study by empirical methods of orthodox physical science are outside the range of inquiry of transpersonal psychology as a scientific field. Such a claim is a form of scientism that stands in need of critical appraisal before being adopted by the field as a part of its transpersonal vision.

Scientism Defined

There are many ways to define “scientism” (see Boudry & Pigliucci, 2017; Haack, 2012; Rosenberg, 2011; Sorell, 2013; Williams & Robinson, 2015). The *Merriam-Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* summarizes a common thread that runs throughout in its definition of scientism as “the proposition that only scientific and especially materialistic methods can be used effectively in the pursuit of knowledge (as in philosophy, the social sciences, and the humanities)” (Merriam-Webster, 1969, p. 771). Nothing counts as knowledge unless it is scientific knowledge. “No other way of knowing will succeed where science fails” (Boudry, 2017, p. 45). Scientism goes beyond notions of epistemology, however, and extends its reach into ontology by claiming that physical reality is the only reality there is (Melnyk, 2003) and that the only facts are physical facts (Kim, 2005). The laws of physics come first and physical reality and everything else follows. In language invented by philosophers, everything non-physical (e.g., psychological) “supervenes” on the physical. A case in point is the ubiquitous trend to “biologize” psychology (Fisher, 1997; Pinel & Barnes, 2018) and account for all psychological phenomenon in material biological terms (e.g. brain states, electricity, chemistry, physiology) such that psychological phenomenon are no longer treated *as* psychological phenomenon (Yanchar, 1997, p. 153).

How Shall We Think of Science?

The term scientism, then, encompasses much more than “misguided beliefs that making things merely look like science makes them in fact scientific” (Friedman, 2017, p. 300). Such definitions of scientism make sense, of course, only if one presumes to know what science denotes and what the essential nature of the scientific method is. Is it the science of high school laboratory courses where the instructor manual explained the proper method to “discover” facts known beforehand? Is it the cookbook of steps as taught in undergraduate research methods courses? Alternatively, is it the way that scientists actually practice their craft? If science is simply a way to understand what we did not know before, then there are many ways to do this. George Kelly’s (1963) personal construct theory of human personality presumes that all humans act like scientists who develop theories to anticipate the future in order to reduce uncertainty in their daily lives. It all really comes down to a single issue: How shall we think of science? If we have a narrow definition of science, then the question of limits and what demarcates science from nonscience will have a different answer than if we have a more inclusive definition of science, one so broad enough as to encompass any form of rational human knowledge.

The Demarcation Problem in the Taylor-Hartelius Debate

The demarcation between science and nonscience was made popular by Karl Popper (1963) until Larry Laudan’s (1983) seminal article, “The Demise of the Demarcation Problem,” questioned it all. “Except at the level of rhetoric, there is no longer any consensus about what separates science from anything else. . . .

Without conditions which are both necessary and sufficient, we are never in a position to say “*this* is scientific: but *that* is unscientific” (Laudan, 1983, pp. 116-119). “‘Science’ is no single thing. . . . The boundaries of science are ambiguous, flexible, historically changing, contextually variable, internally inconsistent, and sometimes disputed” (Gieryn, 1983, p. 792).

If one defines science as something that “eschews truth and instead builds models that are expected to be replaced with ever better models” (Friedman, 2017, p. 298), then we cannot make *infallibility* the criterion for separating scientific knowledge from non-scientific knowledge because science provides neither necessary truths nor absolute certainty. If the heterogeneity of activities and beliefs of the different physical sciences indicate that there is no one scientific method that contains unchanging and binding principles that characterize the process of discovery in all sciences (Bauer, 1992; Dupré, 1993; Feyerabend, 1975; Medawar, 1984), then we cannot use *methodology* as the boundary to mark off what is science from everything else.

If progress in the growth of knowledge is not unique to the sciences but occurs in other disciplines (e.g., philosophy, education, history, military strategy, economics, business), then *advancement of knowledge* is not a necessary or sufficient condition for demarcating scientific activity from non-scientific ones. Nor should criteria for separating science from nonscience be based on what we may now consider logically possible or on historically contingent judgments of what is empirically impossible. For example, Wolfgang Pauli’s postulation of the neutrino in 1939 was thought to be unfalsifiable, but today is used as a medium to observe the interior of the sun, also once thought to be unobservable (Riordan, 2001)

If empirically true statements of fact cannot be falsified because they are true (e.g., there is a planet closer to the sun than the Earth) and if ill-founded claims can be falsified because they are ascertainably false (e.g., the earth is flat), then we cannot use *falsifiability* as the criterion to distinguish the scientific from the non-scientific (Ferrer, 1998, pp. 60-62; Lakatos, 1970; Rychlak, 1981). If some scientific theories are well tested and others are not (e.g., cosmological theories such as the Big Bang, dark matter, string theory), then the semantic notion of *testability* is not adequate to distinguish a scientific theory from a nonscientific theory. Many ill-founded claims (e.g., flat earth, biblical creationism, orgone boxes, perpetual motion machines, Loch Ness monster, ether theory, alchemy) are testable and failed the empirical test, yet by virtue of their testability and falsification, they satisfy the above-mentioned criteria that would make them scientific!

There are approaches to disciplined inquiry that are distinctly scientific in the classical sense that are not to be dismissed (e.g., difference between astrology and astronomy, alchemy and chemistry). I agree with Hartelius (2016) that it will always be important to interrogate knowledge claims (e.g., are they well confirmed, well tested, reliable, heuristically fertile, logically warranted by the evidence, do they advance knowledge?). However, we should use our answers as feedback for improvement and *not* catechize them as criteria for separating out what is scientific from what is not scientific or as reasons for precluding the study of transcendent or supranatural realities from science. This would prevent our field from becoming

conscious of its true scope, in my view, and realizing its transpersonal vision of a beyond ego whole person transformative psychology.

Empiricism Admits of Degrees

If the borders separating science from nonscience are themselves fluid and lacking stability except in the academic imagination, then Hartelius's claim that scientific discernment relies on the empiricism of sensory experience in order to demarcate "good science" from "not-so-good science" requires further examination and critical evaluation (see also, Friedman, 2017). One may define "empiricism" simply as sensory experience if one wants to. There is more than one kind of empiricism, however, and even sensory experience admits of degrees.

Sensory Empiricism Admits of Gradation

Sensory-based imagery and the sensory impressions from which they derive disclose gradations (Goldstein & Brockmole, 2017). Sensory impressions and images, for example, can exist independent of physical objects and without an actual object representing them in usual physical terms (e.g., afterimages, Mach bands, subjective contours, positive hypnotic hallucinations, rubber glove illusion). Sensory impressions and images based in physical visual perception (e.g., rotation, distance, shape, interference, ambiguous figures, masking effect, and acuity) are related to and have their analogue in non-physical visual imagery (Kosslyn, Thompson, & Ganis, 2006). What this indicates is that the empiricism of visual perception and the empiricism of visual imagery fall on the same continuum. This means, in principle, that the empiricism of logical positivism advocated by Hartelius and the empiricism of phenomenology that grounds Taylor's metaphysical hypotheses fall do not necessarily have to be viewed as dichotomous. More importantly, it implies that the empiricism of experience is "a doctrine that admits of degrees" (Kukla, 1989, p. 785).

I am not denying the validity and significance of sensory data or that objective knowledge claims must be grounded in empiricism (i.e., *empiricis*, meaning experience). The proper reception and interpretation of sensory data is highly important for the survival of the organism in physical reality. It becomes more necessary, not less, for the perceiving organism to interpret sense data in highly rigid and specialized ways and to synthesize the gained sensory experience in recognizable terms within the physical system. Moreover, sensory/perceptual psychology shows that if a person is to be consciously aware of any stimulus in normal waking consciousness, then some sensory representational system must be involved (Goldstein & Brockmole, 2017; Grinder & Bandler, 1976, pp. 1-26).

What I am arguing for is an enlargement and extension of the term "empiricism" so that its conceptual definition includes both external (sensory) and internal (non-sensory) experience. The data of sense that provide evidence for empirically (sensory) verifiable statements do not occur in a cognitional vacuum. They emerge

within a context determined by a flow of sensations that becomes a flow of perceptions shaped by a succession of memories and interests, preoccupations and imaginative acts of anticipation that, in turn, become accessible to awareness through introspection and verbal reports. I am arguing for a definition of experience that is not confined to sensation alone (i.e., datum of sense such as the content of an act of seeing, hearing, touching smelling, and tasting) but includes non-sensory experience such as the data of consciousness. Data of consciousness include interests and hopes, fears and desires, waking thoughts and the imagery of dreams, intentions and expectations, impulses and memories accessible to experience via introspective awareness and communicated to others through self-report (i.e., verbal reports as data, Ericsson & Simon, 1984). As Kukla (1983) put it, “Introspective observations lead to introspective facts in the same way as behavioral observations lead to behavioral facts. . . . Descriptions of our own feelings and fantasies must have exactly the same observational status for us as our reports of stones rolling down hills” (pp. 233, 236). Taylor’s data of consciousness and Hartelius’s data of sense are given equal footing in the debate and one is not privileged over the other.

A Generalized Empirical Method of Spiritual Experiences

The implication of such an empiricism that is *experiential* in this expanded sense is that the method of classical empirical science, which currently concerns itself solely with the data of sense, also applies in its essential features to the data of consciousness (i.e., a generalized empirical method; Lonergan, 1957, pp. 72, 243-244). This would also apply to experiences occurring in non-ordinary states of consciousness and operate along the lines of what Tart (1972) proposed in his state-specific science paradigm. He identified four basic rules essential to science that would constitute epistemological elements of such a generalized empirical method: “(a) good observation, (b) the public nature of observation, (c) the necessity to theorize logically, and (d) the testing of theory by observable consequences; all these constitute the scientific enterprise” (pp. 1205-1206). Wilber (1990) likewise identified three key features of the scientific method that can also represent the essential feature of a generalized empirical method of spiritual experience: (a) instrumental injunction, (b) direct apprehension, and (c) communal confirmation (or rejection).

Can Experience Be Used to Justify Objective Knowledge Claims?

If the unity of knowledge requires no boundary police and the doctrine of empiricism admits of degrees, then the question arises: Can subjective experience—whether in ordinary or non-ordinary states of consciousness—be used to justify objective knowledge claims, as Taylor claimed, while we often do the reverse, such as using objective knowledge claims to justify subjective experience (Hammer, 2004)? According to Hartelius,

Personal experience cannot be used to validate a metaphysical claim (2016, p. 45) . . . Evidence that a type of experience occurs is not evidence for any

particular explanation of that experience or theory about its significance (2017a, p. 101). . . . Evidence for the existence of a particular type of experience—whether from traditional accounts, qualitative research, or even quantitative studies—is not evidence for a speculative metaphysical explanation of that phenomenon (2017c, p. 139).

An experience in and of itself, on this view, cannot be used as evidence to validate its epistemic content, especially if that content is making a claim about so-called “transcendent” realities such as non-dual awareness, survival personalities, or all-pervading spiritual intelligence that may exist within, beneath, or beyond the boundaries of physical reality in practical terms of sense data. The Taylor-Hartelius debate revolves around this question of “proof” of experience and evidence “of the sort anyone could examine for themselves if they took the trouble to do so” (Hartelius, 2017a, p. 93). According to Hartelius (2017c), “this question of evidence seems critical in the dialogue with Taylor for if criteria for valid evidence cannot be agreed on, then he [Taylor] will continue to claim that he has made an evidence-based case, and I will maintain that he has not” (p. 139).

The question, “Can subjective experience be used as evidence to justify objective knowledge claims?” is not easily answered because there are many ramifications. Using sensory observation as a criterion of valid evidence, limiting empiricism to sensibly verified experience, requiring that all good evidence be of the sort that is observable, replicable, and achieves intersubjective agreement is usually justified by pointing to the impressive achievements of the physical sciences (e.g., space shuttle program). These criteria are relatively useful ones, but only *within certain specifiable limit*. The theoretical grounds upon which they are based and the problems that they pose for the study of transpersonal phenomena need to be recognized and acknowledged. Rigorous, critical examination of their limitations must continually complement any claim to their privileged status as a working epistemology for transpersonal psychology as a scientific field.

Problem of Sensory Specialization

First, sensory observation, as a criterion of valid evidence, is limited at the macroscopic level by relativity theory that tells us that the vast majority of the universe is beyond direct sensory observation. At the microscopic level, there are objects and events that are not directly observable at a physical level (e.g., subatomic particles’ nonlocal entanglement) and that require the convergence of more indirect types of sensory evidence bearing on unobservable reality (e.g., instrument readings, debris, electromagnetic tracks in the case of sub-atomic particles). Undoubtedly, there are realities of which we are completely ignorant interwoven into energy frameworks containing dimensions that neither the physical sciences nor their methods will help us understand. There is always more to basic reality than human senses can show. Scientism would say that if the method of physical science cannot glimpse these occluded parts of reality, then neither can other ways of knowing.

Problem with Abstraction

Second, empiricism that limits itself to sensibly verified experience has long had problems with abstractions, especially the existence of abstract mathematical objects such as numbers. Numbers do not exist in time or space; have no parts, sizes, shape, mass or other dimensions associated with concrete objects that would allow causal knowledge or relationship with them. Our access to numbers is not through the physical senses but through a mind that is itself a nonphysical entity, an abstraction from experience. The mind does not take up space, the physical senses cannot perceive it, mine is not available for your consensual validation, and it has non-sensory access to non-sensory mathematical objects. Yet few would be foolish enough to deny the reality of their own thoughts without self-contradiction (i.e., you must use thought to deny thought).

Problem of Causal Inference

Third, the epistemological requirement that all good evidence be of the sort that must be observed directly that “anyone might be able to examine for themselves” (Hartelius, 2017a, p. 94) poses a problem for theories of causation (determinism) that depend on inferred causes. The direct observation requirement poses a challenge, for example, for what some may consider the paradigm of scientific psychology—behaviorism. As Slife and Williams (1995) point out,

It is possible to observe something that happens in the environment, but it is not possible to observe whether the event is really a stimulus [that] actually produces the response. It is possible to observe a behavior, but it is not possible to observe whether the behavior was really caused by a stimulus. Any connection between a presumed stimulus and a presumed response can only be inferred by the researcher—never observed. (pp. 29-30)

All “causes” are thus meta-empirical (or meta-physical, if you prefer). A cause does not take up physical space and cannot be seen, touched, smelled, tasted, or heard by the physical senses or their instrumental extension. Causes must be inferred, as Hume (1739-1740/2003) correctly recognized, and only in an act of non-sensory abstraction (Shank, 1985).

Problem of Replicability

Fourth, the requirement that all good evidence is of the sort that must be replicable is an idealized condition that is neither necessary nor sufficient for accepting or rejecting an experimental finding or demarcating scientific from non-scientific hypotheses, despite claims to the contrary (Friedman, 2017, p. 299-300). Most transpersonal scientists are aware of what has been called the “reproducibility crisis” in science generally and psychology in particular (Ioannidis, 2005; Makel, Plucker, & Hegarty, 2012; Open Science Collaboration, 2015; Stroebe, Postmes, & Spears, 2012). The reasons for this failure to replicate are more complex, however, than the usual suspects of file drawer problems, journal review policies, academic

reward structures, and research practices within individual labs (Pashler & Wagenmakers, 2012).

One problem with the idealized conception of replicability as the self-correcting mechanism of science is that it does not match the way that science is actually practiced (Bauer, 2017). No two experiments can ever be identical because of differences in the general conditions of the experiment (e.g., different participants, experimenter, research assistants, and laboratory apparatus) and differences in experimental environment, including changes in time and place (Braude, 2013, 2018; Schmidt, 2009; Sheldrake, 1998). No human being is the same from one moment to the next (Bauer, 2018). Even in the physical sciences, the repeatability criterion differs from one science to the next (e.g., physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, cosmology meteorology). Scientists tolerate these differences between a supposed replication and the original experiment and consider them not significant as long as results more or less agree. It remains unclear in what respects and to what degree replication attempts can differ before it is necessary to regard them as being a different experiment.

Replicability may be helpful for establishing the validity of some forms of knowledge, in other words, but is neither necessary nor sufficient for establishing the validity of other forms of knowledge. Why should my awakening experience be required to resemble or replicate your awakening experience in order to grant its legitimacy or authenticity? If you visited a foreign country, why would you expect the small portion that you visited to be representative of the entire nation, even though other portions may be quite different in geography, culture, and climate? If we expect photographs of our own exterior physical world to be different according to where we go, why should we expect or require all of the “pictures” of interior realities to look alike? This aligns with participatory spirituality where none of us perceives the *same* reality, but builds up a personal reality that is the result of individual private perceptions that combine and enlarge to create in magnified form the collective religious, psychological, and cultural realities of our times (Ferrer, 2017).

It is important to recognize that replication is a concept originally developed in the physical sciences and transported wholesale into the human sciences. I am not arguing that the concept of reproducibility is not important in transpersonal science (it is important), but only within certain specifiable limits. I am saying that it is not as straightforward a means of legitimizing experimental results as one may believe, especially given that “it no longer makes sense to think of the experimental subject as a passive interchangeable unit, a sample of some population” or that “the experimenter is somehow independent of the experiment” and likewise interchangeable (Tart, 1977, pp. 82-83).

The Problem of Intersubjective Agreement

Fifth, the point of scientists insisting on the repeatability of experiments is to bolster their metaphysical claim that different scientists have established contact with one basic reality in their experiments (Ross, 1970). The more “looks”

available the better, and the more the various looks agree with each other, then the more confidence we have in any individual look (truth by consensus, Polanyi, 1958). Consensual validation, however, still relies on subjective experience to justify an objective knowledge claim even if it does involve the subjective experiences of a group of individuals. It still involves essentially *someone's* experience, understanding, and judgment of the experience. Would not the group's judgment be open to the same requirement of further "independent evidence" to validate it? As Kukla (1983) put it, "Your observation of the physical event is as hidden from me as your feelings, thoughts, and images" (p. 235).

Cognitive psychology acknowledges divergence in the perception of any given set of sensory set of data that is accepted as Reality (capital R) to be a characteristic of all mental life. Divergences in intersubjective agreement always plays a role in any observation even in a physical science such as astronomy where individual differences in observational data regarding the motion of physical objects in space are mathematically accounted for. Moreover, intersubjective agreement in observation, as a criterion of valid evidence, does not work consistently well for all types of phenomena. "There are classes of experiential events that elicit very high degrees of interobserver agreement (e.g., afterimages) and some classes of physical events achieve rather low levels of agreement (e.g., behavioral events)" (Kukla, 1983, p. 240). Consensual agreement, in other words, also admits of degrees and varies along a continuum. There is no logical reason for privileging one arbitrary threshold of agreement that must be exceeded before it is accepted as supporting evidence for a knowledge claim over another (Kukla, 1983).

A Transpersonal Science of the Transcendent

Given that science is continuous with other forms of rational inquiry and that there are important limitations to any empiricism that restricts itself to sensibly verified experience, there are many reasons why the call to banish metaphysical hypotheses from transpersonal psychology as a scientific field is neither reasonable nor practical. One cannot escape metaphysics.

Metaphysics Permeates Science

First, science is permeated by metaphysics (Quine, 1948, 1953/1980; Kuhn, 1970, pp. 39-47). All forms of scientific endeavor implicitly presuppose some ontological and epistemological commitments about the nature of the knower, the knowing process, and the world that it seeks to experience, understand, and know. The important question is whether we explicitly recognize and evaluate these commitments or do they remain implicit and hidden (Ferrer, 2014; Tart, 1975/1992, Chapter 2). To be transparent concerning my own metaphysical commitment regarding this matter, I would propose that the unity of knowledge finds its basis in the original unity of being that is continually translating itself into a diversity of unique and individual particulars within the creative field of probabilities without destroying the original unity. The unity of knowledge logically implies this.

Second, metaphysics serves an important heuristic function in science by suggesting directions in which testable explanatory theories of science might be found (Popper, 1982). “In order to have a general picture of the world we need metaphysical hypotheses” and “in the actual preparation of our research we are guided by ‘metaphysical research programmes’” (Popper & Eccles, 1977, p. 442). G. T. Fechner, the founder of the branch of experimental psychology known as psychophysics, entered into his investigation of the relationship between physical stimuli and psychological response not to solve any psychological or scientific problem but to establish the metaphysical identity of mind and matter (Kantor, 1922, p. 498).

Third, metaphysical commitments determine what counts *as* evidence and constitute part of the evidence itself (Nelson, 1994). The metaphysical and methodological commitments incorporated into the procedures of modern physics, for example, constitute part of the evidence for why physicists posit the existence of atomic particles and how they justify their knowledge claims about particles’ behavior (Heisenberg, 1958). My point is that the involvement of metaphysics in the shaping of scientific and psychological knowledge does not invalidate that knowledge.

We do not make transpersonal psychology more “scientific” by excluding metaphysical issues, focusing only on the non-transcendent aspects of the transpersonal, or self-imposing limitations on the problems it investigates—metaphysical or otherwise—just because they are more difficult to study than external physical objects and processes (Braud, 1998; Lancaster, 2002). “The essence of science is that we observe what is there to be observed whether it is difficult or not” (Tart, 1972, p. 1205). As Percy Bridgman (1959) stated: “The scientific method, as far as it is a method, is nothing more than doing one’s damndest with one’s mind, no holds barred” (Maslow, 1966, p. 57). Maslow (1966) believed that the primary role of science is “to acknowledge and describe all of reality, all that exists, everything that is the case. At its best, it is completely open and excludes nothing. It has no ‘entrance requirements’” (p. 72).

Essential Science Does Not Preclude Evaluation of Metaphysical Hypotheses

Instead of banishing metaphysical hypotheses from our field, scientific transpersonal psychology has a role to play in their investigation. Transpersonal science bridges the traditional physical sciences and the humanities (Hunt, 2005). Transpersonal psychology is scientific in the Aristotelian sense (i.e., *scientia*, knowledge through causes: material, efficient, formal, and final). It is open to the study of all of reality and not just that portion that is accessible to experience via the senses. We must get beyond thinking in terms of something existing or not existing in sensory terms alone. It is unscientific to think that what we cannot perceive or do not perceive with the physical senses must therefore be nonexistent (e.g., thoughts, dreams) or beyond the scope of disciplined inquiry in a transpersonal science that is part of a much larger intellectual enterprise.

Some knowledge is undoubtedly beyond the bounds of classical science; that is, it is acquired and evaluated in ways that are not continuous with the assumptions of objectivism, physicalism, and positivism. Whatever the limits of human knowing may eventually turn out to be in terms of our language and intellectual concepts, a *generalized* empirical method does not preclude the examination and evaluation of metaphysical and “supranatural” claims (above [*supra*] the natural) that are accompanied by psychological effects and/or physical correlates that give science a foothold to investigate (Boudry, Blancke, & Braeckman, 2010, 2012; Fishman, 2009). The Transcendent may not be physical, but that does not make it non-natural or completely outside of nature. As Augustine of Hippo put it, “A portend happens not contrary to nature, but contrary to what we know as nature” (Dods, 1884, Book XXI, p. 429).

Scientific Parapsychology Provides a Foundation

That supranatural claims—for example, survival of bodily death, apparitions and hauntings, reincarnation, precognition, clairvoyance, psychokinesis, telepathy, and phenomena that imply there are other modes of knowing beyond the physical senses, other realities beyond the physical one, “and/or that reality is at bottom purposeful and irreducibly mind-like” (Fishman & Boudry, 2013, p. 922)—are amenable to scientific investigation is evidenced by the vast field of psychical research (Cardeña, Palmer, & Marcusson-Clavertz, 2015). Transpersonal researcher William Braud (2003) stated, “We do know that the conventional scientific method is adequate to capture at least some of these phenomena because classic science experiments demonstrating their existence sometimes prove successful” (p. 21).

Charles Tart (1997, 2004), a co-founder of transpersonal psychology, has argued that parapsychology provides a rigorous scientific foundation for transpersonal psychology and a model for the field to follow in its examination of metaphysical hypotheses and supranatural claims. These would include the study of provocative demonstrations of personality action in which the self seems to operate and at least partially exist independently of the body and has access to nonphysical sources of information beyond the physical senses. Such research could indirectly provide “a certain degree of confidence and trust that at least some of the processes and concepts encountered [by people on a spiritual path] are ‘real’ in a more traditional sense and are not delusions, projections, or misinterpretations” (Braud, 1997, p. 150). Most importantly, the study of parapsychological transpersonal phenomena could provide “the essential grounds for believing in and validating religious experience and in so doing we find in parapsychology the necessary interface between science and religion” (Rao, 1997, p. 70).

Opportunities for the Externalization and Objectification of Experience

One task of the transpersonal scientist is to discover ways to transduce, translate, or transform originally non-physical phenomena into effects or correlates that are observable, sensory, and intersubjectively accessible in a manner analogous to what

the physical senses do. The physical senses act as living transducers that transform otherwise unknowable stimulus energies (e.g., electromagnetic energy, vibrating airwaves and molecules, frequencies of mechanical stimulation, gas and liquid atoms and molecules) into knowable sensory terms (i.e., color, sound, temperature, pressure, tastes, and odors) (Goldstein & Brockmole, 2017). Hunt (2005) suggests that this translation task is an important function of the many different research designs and technologies, measurement and assessment instruments used in scientific and clinical research. They *transduce* the phenomenon from one form into another in a way that selectively externalizes and objectifies the experience and behavior of interest in order to study it in a “scientific” manner. Because “we are at the same time *too close* to what we would study; accordingly we need devices for selective externalization and objectification, precisely so that the defining intuitive access can be scientifically engaged and used” (Hunt, 2005, p. 361).

Indirect Access to Basic Reality

The fact that subjective experience may be selectively externalized and objectified in this way suggests that the transpersonal scientist and clinician has *indirect* access to the personal knowledge and private experience of others via its observable effects (e.g., behavior) and measurable correlates (e.g., brain wave activity). Here phenomenology implies ontology when contextualized within the interpretative framework of William James’s philosophy of pragmatism, which proposes that anything that acts and has real effects upon us to which we are compelled to react and respond is itself real. As James (1902/1936) put it:

That which produces effects within another reality must be termed a reality itself, so I feel as if we had no philosophic excuse for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal. God is the natural appellation, for us Christians at least, for the supreme reality, so I will call this higher part of the universe by the name of God. We and God have business with each other; and in opening ourselves to his influence our deepest destiny is fulfilled God is real since he produces real effects. (pp. 506-507)

The reason why Taylor (2016) hypothesized a metaphysical landscape of perennial experience and all-pervading spiritual force to be real is the same reason why William James considered the unseen or mystical world real. My point is that the sensory picture is only one of many possible ways of perceiving the guises through which basic reality discloses itself. Black holes, although they are invisible to the eye, are nevertheless posited to exist, even in the absence of direct supporting empirical data, not only by virtue of their tangible effects on other things that come within their sphere of influence, but also by virtue of their hypothesized existence being a consequence of Einstein’s non-empirical method of science (i.e., general relativity theory).

Non-empirical Methods of Doing Science

The scientific canon that requires theories be evaluated in terms of whether they generate empirically (sensory) testable hypotheses has led to the false conclusion

that all non-empirical theories and hypotheses must therefore not be scientific. Kukla (1989) argued that non-empirical methods of research are actually quite legitimate and valid ways of doing science. This includes *theory construction* (i.e., given a set of data, what theory explains the data and what criteria establishes a proper scientific explanation). It includes *predicting empirical consequences* from a theory (e.g., predicting the existence of black hole by virtue of its being a consequence of Einstein's general relativity theory). Non-empirical methods of research also include analyzing the *logical coherence* of a theory (e.g., internal coherence of parts of the theory with itself or with other existing bodies of evidence). It includes the construction of *innovative conceptual schemes* (e.g., Freud's concept of unconscious mental processes). There is no logical reason why theories should be required to generate empirically testable hypotheses or why positivist criteria for evidence are deemed the only valid ones available, except for privileging logical empiricism and presuming the method of classical science to be the correct epistemological basis for all human inquiry (Slife & Williams, 1997).

Conclusion

Science is not a static, monolithic structure that stands alone. The history of science shows that the meaning of science has changed over time (e.g., the difference between Ptolemy and Copernicus, Aristotle and Galileo, Newton and Einstein, Lavoisier and Crick and Watson). Moreover, it inevitably relies on nonscientific sources of belief, such as the perceptual senses, memory, logical reasoning, intuition, and introspection (Midgley, 1992; Peels, 2017). Science's epistemic boundaries, being continuous with everyday knowing, enmeshes it with other forms of knowledge, including philosophy.

Metaphysical hypotheses such as those Taylor (2016) proposed will always retain an element of speculation and remain difficult to test through intersubjective observation. One way to approach the consensual validation of a metaphysical hypothesis, however, is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of how empirically verifiable facts predicted by the theory or hypothesis connect with other observations and related predictions. Another way would be to examine how the metaphysical theory fits within other theoretical frameworks for understanding phenomena that the theory means to explain. Other criteria available for the evaluation of metaphysical hypotheses in the absence of intersubjective observation include: "simplicity, internal coherence, coherence with other theories in other domains, the ability to reproduce properties of experience that are familiar in our own case, and even an overall fit with the dictates of common sense" (Chalmers, 1997, p. 22). In science, one does not refute or accept the validity, correctness, or truth of hypotheses and theories based on its author's organic constitution or psychological origin (e.g., channeled material; Cunningham, 2012, 2013; Roberts, 1997-2002). The unrestricted, detached, and disinterested desire to know and understand compels transpersonal researchers and clinicians to ask the further question, even if it is a metaphysical one.

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VACCINATION WITH KAMBO AGAINST BAD INFLUENCES: PROCESSES OF SYMBOLIC HEALING AND ECOTHERAPY

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ABSTRACT: A healing ritual has emerged in the West, based on the appropriation of elements from an indigenous Amazonian ritual involving a psychoactive secretion from the skin of a tree frog (*Phyllomedusa bicolor*) called Kambo. Kambo contains a plethora of bioactive peptides. It is applied via a heat-induced blister, referred to as a vaccination. The administration of Kambo leads to a quick onset of nausea, vomiting and a number of autonomic symptoms, including edema in the face (*frog-face*), palpitations and hypotension. These physiological effects of Kambo are analyzed as supporting therapeutic processes based in symbolic and transpersonal healing dynamics. Kambo induces a profound parasympathetic state with an intense internal orientation that evokes a number of physiological and emotional processes. This neoshamanistic ritual therapy uses these reactions to engage symbolic healing processes where intense physiological changes produced by Kambo support the experienced symbolism of what is referred to as being “infected by bad influences,” and subsequently being “cleansed” and “vaccinated against them.” Kambo healing involves core transpersonal principles of ecopsychology and ecotherapy that engage the transformative potency of nature in the form of the jungle frog’s venom and produces personal transformation and self-actualization through the intrinsic meanings provided by purging and intensified relations with nature.

KEYWORDS: Kambo, transpersonal healing, symbolic healing, shamanistic healing, Sapo, ecopsychology

The Kambo Vaccine

Kambo or Sapo is the name of a gland secretion of the Amazonian tree frog *Phyllomedusa bicolor*, a secretion that has a great protective effect against predators. The secretion is referred to as Kambo (also *kampo* and *kampu*) in Amazonian languages, as well as Sapo, meaning *toad*, in Spanish and Portuguese. The peptides isolated from Kambo include adenoregulin, bombesin, bombesin-nonapeptide, bradykinin, caerulein, deltorphin, dermorphin, neurokinin B, phyllomedusin, phyllocaerulein, phyllokinin, phyllolitorin, preprotachykinin B, ranatichykinin A, sauvagine, T-kinin and urechistachykinin II (de Moraes et al., 2018). The secretion also contains deltorphin, dermorphin and caerulein, peptides with a high affinity for different opioid receptors, with analgesic effects in animals

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and humans (see Keppel Hesselink, 2018a for review). These are distinct compounds from secretions of the toad *Bufo alvarius*, which contains psychedelic tryptamines 5-MeO-DMT and bufotenin (Erspamer, Vitali, Roseghini, & Cei 1967; Weil & Davis, 1994).

The administration of Kambo is referred to as *Vacina do Sapo*, a *frog vaccination* that is thought to cause the body to expel bad influences and restore optimal health. Kambo's bioactive peptides have their main pharmacological activity on the gastrointestinal, cardiovascular and nervous systems. Kambo does not contain compounds that are commonly recognized agents for producing an alteration of consciousness, but includes dermorphin and two other neuropeptides that stimulate different opioid receptors (caerulein and deltorphin), which thus may induce alterations of consciousness. Kambo's active constituents produce sweating and vomiting and many users attest to profound changes in experience that produce therapeutic outcomes.

Over the last several decades the secretion has been increasingly used in the West in neoshamanistic settings for healing purposes, often administered in urban ritual settings by certified therapists or practitioners. A controlled setting is important, as the pharmacological effects of the administration of Kambo can be quite intense, and in rare cases have led to hospital admission. A recent paper examines the side-effect profile and provides a brief review of problematic cases based on published case-reports (Keppel Hesselink, 2018c). However, the effects in the vast majority of cases are not problematic, limited to nausea, vomiting, low blood pressure, palpitations, and edema that start within minutes of application and normally last for less than one hour. Here we focus on Kambo's indigenous roots in the Amazon and its transformation in Brazil from a hunting ritual into a neo-shamanic symbolic and transpersonal healing ritual that was exported to Western countries.

This article documents the transformation of the Kambo ritual from a simple self-administration by a hunter to overcome bad luck into a neoshamanistic healing practice where physiological responses and symbols of nature provide mechanisms for multiple levels of therapeutic and transpersonal transformation. Kambo healing processes are shown to exemplify the transpersonal principles emphasized by Hartelius, Rothe, and Roy (2013) as involving an enhancement of human well-being by experiencing elements of the psyche as deriving from relationships with ecological dimensions and nature. Kambo ritual exemplifies transpersonal healing in shifting consciousness beyond the limits of personal identity and ego by incorporating nature's power as manifested in the qualities of a frog and its protective and cleansing secretion. This incorporation of the frog's influences produces a personal transformation through a rebalancing at physiological, emotional, psychological and spiritual levels that exemplifies transpersonal healing.

Kambo rituals are shown to engage transpersonal psychology's concern with the individual's search for growth through an encounter with the personalized powers of nature. Natural and cultural symbols associated with the frog's venom and its intrinsic effects provided by purging produce transformative changes in self-experience and personal meaning. Kambo healing is analyzed as involving symbolic processes integrating nature's powers, using the frog and its jungle habitat

as a natural symbolic system for engaging one's individual psychodynamics and potentials for self-transformation. Kambo therapy is shown to address collective psychological crises afflicting modern humans through an ecopsychology approach that restores well-being through the frog's inherent properties to transform the experience of body and self.

Some of the key terms in our paper involve transformation of ritual, transpersonal dynamics, and personal transformation.

1. By transformation of a ritual we mean the changing of the form/shape of the ritual: from a simple administration of Kambo by a fellow tribe member into a neoshamanic ritual where the context has been constructed by the Kambo practitioner based on a variety of contrived cultural elements, including such disparate elements as beliefs from the Hindi religion and the cultures of the Native Americans.

2. The term 'transpersonal' we use in the sense as relating to consciousness beyond the limits of personal identity (ego). We emphasize the principles of the transpersonal perspectives (see Hartelius, Rothe, and Roy, 2013) that involve engagement with the development of the human potential beyond the ego to achieve optimal levels of well-being by experiencing the psyche and soul as deriving elements from the larger context of the interconnected relationship to the social and ecological situation.

3. We use the term 'personal transformation' to emphasize the fact that the person undergoing the ritual strives to obtain a spiritual and emotional-physical balance, and leave the old contaminated state of his/her body-mind.

The Kambo Ritual: Its Origins Described by Tastevin

The missionary Constantin Tastevin appears to be the first author reporting on the Kambo ritual, describing in 1925 the purpose of administering the frog's secretion, which he referred to as *Kachinaua campon*. We quote Tastevin (1925) describing the administration of Kambo and its consequences:

When an Indian becomes ill, becomes thin, pale and swollen; when he is long unlucky in hunting, it is because in his body resides a bad principle which must be expelled. Early in the morning before dawn, while still fasting, the sick and the unlucky hunter produce small scars on the arm or belly with the tip of a burning stick, which are then vaccinated with the "milk" of frog, as they say. Soon they are seized with violent nausea and diarrhea starts; the bad principle leaves his body by all the exits. [As a result] the patient returns to being big and fat and recovers his color and the unlucky man finds more game than he can bring back. No animal escapes from his sharp sight, his ear perceives the smallest noises, and his weapon does not miss the target. (p. 19-20, translated from the French by author JMKH)

In this first description, both curing as well as magical aspects are described: The person was ill before (thin, pale and swollen; perhaps an indication for a protein or vitamin B deficiency) and was unlucky in hunting due to a bad principle in his body. After being "vaccinated" the person became "big and fat" and the bad

principle left his body. His hunting skills returned and he brought back more meat than he could eat himself. The basis of Kambo as a vaccine against “evil” external influences thus can be found in the original cultures using the secretion, where Kambo is also known as the *frog’s vaccine*. (https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vacina_do_sapo). The frequently occurring pharmacological effects of Kambo are also mentioned: nausea, vomiting, sweating, diarrhea, and edema as in Quicke’s edema – swelling of parts of face and especially the lips. Vomiting, sweating and diarrhea are supposed to cleanse the body of the “bad principle” that is expelled from the body, resulting in a more vigorous state of health.

There are some indications in this first narrative suggesting that the initial application of the frog’s secretion might be performed in a broader context of curing and healing ritual. However, there was no mention of the role of a shaman in applying the Kambo to the patient.

Kambo: Anthropological Observations

The anthropologist Robert Carneiro, curator of the American Museum of Natural History, appears to have provided the first academic publication on Kambo, revealing that secretions of a frog were used as hunting magic by the Amahuaca people from the upper Amazon, around the border of Brazil and Peru. According to Carneiro (1970), the 1900 Amahuaca population consisted of around 7000 people, but by 1970 this was reduced to 500. The Amahuaca lived in small settlements of approximately 15 people. At that time, they were without headman or shaman in the group. Approximately 40% of all food consumed came from game hunting using bow and arrow, with tapirs and monkeys being the most important targets.

Based on his earlier field work (Carneiro, 1962), Carneiro (1970) reported on the various aspects of hunting magic among the Amahuaca. The hunter, for instance, could drink a tea brewed from the toxic plant *Rauwolfia*, or from the excretion of a boa constrictor. One more intense method was to find a nest of wasps, cut it open and expose one’s self to many stings of the wasps. For some days, the hunter would be very ill and swollen from the effect of the stings, but it was thought that the hunter emerges from this intense treatment as a better hunter.

Carneiro considered Kambo to be the strongest hunting magic of the Amahuaca; he wrote: “But the strongest hunting magic of all is for a man to inoculate himself with the very toxic secretion of a small frog, which the Amahuaca call Kambo. This secretion is scraped off the back of the frog with a stick. Then, taking a live brand, a man burns himself in several places on the arms or chest, and rubs this secretion into the burns. Within a short time, he becomes violently ill, suffering uncontrollable vomiting and diarrhea. For the next three days, while under the influence of the toxin, he has vivid hallucinations that are regarded as supernatural experiences. When he finally recovers, he is convinced that his hunting is bound to improve” (1970, p. 340). In this anthropological description of Kambo, we find no indications of any shamanic influence; rather the inoculation was done by the hunter himself. Carneiro suggested the frog was related to *Phyllobates bicolor* from Colombia, whose secretion was used by the Choco Indians to poison their blowgun

darts. Only later investigations clarified that the frog used was not related to the *Phylllobates* genus, nor are there vivid hallucinations normally reported after applications of Kambo.

Carneiro witnessed some aspects of magic hunting ritual, such as putting blood on chonta palm bowstring. But according to Peter Gorman, Carneiro had only heard about other aspects of hunting ritual, including the use of Kambo (Peter Gorman, personal communication to JMKH, 28 October 2018). Peter Gorman, an avocational anthropologist and explorer who had used Kambo with the Matses, was the first to provide Kambo (the secretion of the frog applied on a Kambo stick) to scientific groups in the USA and Italy for research purposes. Peter Gorman informed me (JMKH, personal communication, 28 October 2018) that neither Carneiro, nor Erspamer, nor the others who later published on the frog secretion had ever seen the frog, ever seen the medicine used, or ever used it themselves.

Early Descriptions of Kambo Effects by Pharmacologists

Although there were many pharmacological observations on the secretion of the frog published already, these were all based on the dried skin of the frog, such as the results published by the group of Erspamer in Italy (Anastasi & Erspamer, 1970). Only later, in the early 1990s, the analysis of the compounds on an original Kambo stick were described by the Italian and an USA group, who analyzed the frog secretions provided by Peter Gorman, collected as early as 1986. Subsequently the link between the Kambo ritual and the bioactive peptides in the secretion of the frog began to become known.

In 1992 Daly and researchers from the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda (USA), the University of California Department of Anthropology (USA), and the American Museum of Natural History (USA) summarized what was known at that time about this secretion and hunting ritual (Daly et al., 1992). They also identified the secretion of the frog as originating from the skin of the *Phylomedusa bicolor*. Daly et al. related that the ritual was reported to still exist among Amazonian groups, including the Brazilian Mayoruna and the Amahuaca and Matses people of the Peruvian and Brazilian Amazon. The procedure was described as follows: secretions of the frog were scraped from its skin, dried and stored on a wooden stick. This procedure did not kill the frog, which was subsequently released. In the treatment, the secretion was applied on fresh blister wounds produced by a small burning stick. The dried secretion was first mixed with saliva, and then introduced into a line of fresh burns on the arms or chest. Within minutes the pharmacological effects of the secretion start, mostly as a violent reaction, with rapid pulse, incontinence and vomiting, which normally last for less than one hour. Subsequently the recipient enters a state of listlessness and sleeps for some days. The final effect is a euphoric state, perhaps qualifying as an altered state of consciousness (ASC), and the recipient later testifies to have become a more successful hunter, partly due to improved stamina and keener senses. Some of the effects reported by Carneiro, such as vivid hallucinations, were never reported by later observers. Reported hallucinations might have been the result of higher doses or the concomitant use of hallucinogenic substances, most probably Ayahuasca.

Also in the description of Daly et al. there was no shamanic context mentioned as involved in the application of Kambo.

In 1993 Erspamer and colleagues published a paper where they referred to “shamanic hunting practices”: “Pharmacological studies of ‘sapo’ from the frog *Phyllomedusa bicolor* skin: a drug used by the Peruvian Matses Indians in shamanic hunting practices” (Erspamer et al., 1993). Here the word “sapo” was wrongly introduced based on the mistaken classification of the Indians from the frog as a toad, as sapo means toad. For the description of the ritual they referred to an article of Peter Gorman (1990), who described the use of Kambo among the Matses, and related his own experiences after the use of Kambo as the urge for vomiting and incontinence, an alarmingly rapid heartbeat, intense sweating, fearful incapacitation, and near delirium, qualifying as a clear ASC. After a day’s rest, he recuperated and felt quite godlike in strength and acuteness of the senses. Based on Gorman’s testimonies, Erspamer et al. (1993, p. 1102) pointed out that it is suggested (not clear by whom JMKH) that the drastic cleaning out of the body (vomiting, diarrhea, urination, sweating) observed in the first phase of the sapo application, with alleged elimination of ‘toxin’, may have some magic effect in itself and may heighten the effects of other drugs possibly taken prior to, or together with, sapo. Among other things, by cleansing the body, Matses hunters would lose their human odor in the short time, making it easier to approach and capture the prey. Erspamer et al. further thought it was possible that before or after the administration of the frog vaccine, the Matses (and especially the Amahuaca) took other compounds such as ayahuasca or nu-nu snuff (based on *Nicotiana rustica*), plants with hallucinogenic effects.

Although Erspamer used the phrase “shamanic hunting practices,” there were no references made to any source suggesting the use of Kambo occurred in a shamanic context. Gorman communicated to JMKH that he never knew the Matses/Mayoruna to have a shamanic concept around Kambo use. He stated: “Not saying they didn’t, but I never saw it in the time I spent with them, which was a month per year, mostly, for about 7 years, and then several weeks a year in the last 20 years. Pablo was the man who knew the plants best, and the guy who could talk with animals. But to him it was just who he was.” Gorman was not certain where the idea of a shamanic context expressed by Erspamer et al. (1993) originated (personal information, 28 October 2018). Erspamer probably used the word shamanic as a synonym for magical.

Erspamer et al. (1993) had discovered that the skin of this specific frog contains a variety of highly concentrated vasoactive peptides such as phyllocaerulein, phyllokinin, and phyllomedusin and moderate levels of sauvagine. Furthermore, small amounts of deltorphins were found. Daily et al. (1992) also looked for peptides that could explain the clinical effects caused by the application of the secretion and they identified a new peptide, named adenoregulin, due to its affinity for the adenoreceptor. Step by step more bioactive peptides were isolated and characterized, including dermorphine and caerulein (cerulitide), compounds with analgesic properties and high affinity for the mu-opioid receptor. In a recent analysis of a Kambo stick, sixteen potentially active peptides were detected: adenoregulin, bombesin, bombesin-nonapeptide, bradykinin, caerulein, deltorphin,

neurokinin B, phyllomedusin, phyllocaerulein, phyllokinin, phyllolitorin, prepro-tachykinin B, ranatachykinin A, sauvagine, T-kinin and urechistachykinin II (de Moraes et al., 2018).

The pharmacological effects of Kambo are due to the various peptides components, as well as interactions among the entire cocktail of peptides, either at the receptor level or at the level of the plasma kinetics of the compounds. The major and immediate symptoms emerging after the application of Kambo are all easily explainable based on the known pharmacological activity of the vasoactive, gastrointestinal, and neuroactive peptides. It is important to state that the transient syndrome of many different symptoms after the application of Kambo is explainable based on these pharmacological effects. These do not, however, involve a state of intoxication or an anaphylactic shock, although it may look like an intoxication or anaphylactic shock from the phenomenological/symptomatological point of view.

The general peripheral pharmacological effects induced by the administration of Kambo are cardiovascular (mostly hypotension, tachycardia) and gastrointestinal effects via smooth muscle contraction, and enhancement of gastric and pancreatic secretions. For instance, caerulein induces symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, facial flush, tachycardia, changes in blood pressure, sweating, abdominal discomfort and urge for defecation. Caerulein also leads to contraction of the gall bladder, a reason for the yellow vomit (interpreted as “cleansing the liver”). Persons experiencing the yellow vomit see this as a cleanse of the gallbladder-liver system. This yellow liquid results from the physiological contraction of the gall bladder and the propulsion of gall fluid into the intestines; the expulsion of yellow vomit has no known healing or cleansing effects on the liver.

Phyllokinin is more potent than the reference compound bradykinin in lowering blood pressure, also giving rise to compensatory increase of the cardiac frequency. Phyllomedusin also lowers blood pressure, activates salivation and stimulates intestinal motility. Sauvagine has a comparable, but more intense hypotensive effect, leading also to diarrhea. Sauvagine also has a potent vasodilator effect that might enhance the penetration of dermorphin and other neuro-active peptides into the central nervous system, perhaps contributing to the euphoric feeling after a Kambo-session. (Erspamer et al., 1993). In addition to these peptides, other peptides such as adenoregulins and dermaseptins have been found with antibacterial, antifungal and anticancer properties (Amiche, Seon, Wroblewski, & Nicolas, 2000; Cao, Zhou, Ma, Luo, & Wei, 2005; van Zoggel et al., 2012). These properties stimulate some users’ imagination and further support the perception of Kambo as a *vaccine* against many disorders, including infectious diseases. However, these properties are solely derived from animal studies and to date no clinical studies have been conducted to evaluate these properties for human conditions.

In Table 1 we summarize the physiological effects of the 3 main peptides of Kambo on the body, as well as what we view as the symbolic representations in the experiences of the users. Although many users report medical benefits for a wide

TABLE 1
Effects of Three Main Bioactive Peptides from Kambo

Compound	Physiological effect	Symbolic representation
Caerulein	Nausea, vomiting, bile-secretion, sweating	Cleansing and detox
Sauvagine	Activation of corticotropic hormones (CRF), hypotension, diarrhea	Immune-enhancing, cleansing
Dermorphine	Activation endogenous opioid system: fearlessness, analgesia, endurance	Stamina, euphoria, feeling as a God

array of diseases and symptoms, there are no clear case reports of curing claims available for closer studying.

These physiological effects may also provoke various forms of endogenous healing responses. The effects of Kambo are mediated by activation of both the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system, involving massive shifts in activity and balance within the autonomic nervous system (ANS). These shifts in the balance of the ANS are found in many ritual treatment processes involving alterations of consciousness, and provide additional healing mechanisms for hypertension and stress-related disorders (Winkelman, 2010, chapter 5). This parasympathetic dominant state is a key feature of most alterations of consciousness, a period of repose in which the person has an intense internal focus of attention. These Kambo-induced experiences are powerful pharmacological transformations of consciousness, exemplified in the parasympathetic dominant conditions manifested in the reclined, internally oriented—and even sleeping state.

Kambo's Transformation in the West into a Neoshamanistic Ritual

This initial use of Kambo as described by Tastevin (1925) was self-application by the hunter or the diseased person (both afflicted by an external bad influence, *panema*). It was not part of a ritual led by a shaman. It was only later on in the context of appropriation and diffusion that shamanism started to be linked to Kambo, initially apparently via a myth. The anthropologist Labate (2012) claimed that a Kaxinawá (member of an indigenous group of Brazil and Peru) once said “Kampu was a shaman who died and became a frog. Before dying, he said: ‘I’ll help cure diseases’.” Labate and Lima (2014) also conveyed the indigenous beliefs that before you can capture a frog, you have to talk to it, and only a shaman can catch the frog.

The Urbanization of Kambo

Labate (2012; also, see Lima and Labate, 2008) reports that this non-shamanic but magical use of the Kambo secretion by indigenous groups was diffused into urban Brazilian environments in the 1990s by Francisco Gomes, a rubber tapper who lived a few years with the Katukina people. Labate (2012) reviews evidence that the networks of the Brazilian Ayahuasca churches, specifically the União do

Vegetal (UDV) and Cefluris/Santo Daime, were instrumental in the diffusion of Kambo both in Brazil and internationally. Labate reports that Gomes was accompanied by a UDV group as he visited various Brazilian cities in the states of Rondônia, Minas Gerais, and São Paulo, and also visited the Santo Daime church in several states. One of the authors (MW) was introduced to Kambo on the grounds of a Santo Daime temple in the state of Goiás.

In the beginning of this century, Menezes, an acupuncture therapist, learned the Kambo application from Gomes (Labate, 2012; Lima & Labate, 2008, 2014). Menezes introduced the ritual in the clinic of a psychiatrist. He worked according to the practices of Stanislav Grof, but created his own mix referred to as 'Psychotherapy of Enchantment', also inspired by Jungian psychology, alchemy, hyperventilation, and shamanism. Here we first find the embedding of Kambo use in a neoshamanistic healing context. According to Labate (2012) Menezes characterized Kambo as 'a powerful natural energizer, increasing the efficiency of the immune system, and as a 'divine being', creating 'healing according to the merit of each person'; Labate (2012) also pointed out that there is clear influence of ideas from the Santo Daime (a Brazilian church using Ayahuasca as a sacrament). She reports that Kambo was subsequently presented by Menezes at the First Meeting of Brazilian Shamanism, organized by Santo Daime church in São Paulo; there, Professor Edilene Coffaci de Lima, an anthropologist of the University of Paraná, Brazil, expressed the view that around that time the "shamanization of Kambo" took place.

When indigenous Amazonian people used Kambo to overcome bad luck in hunting and against negative influences, Kambo could be applied by anyone. In the environment of the cities, however, Kambo started to be positioned (marketed) as related to secret knowledge and initiations, typically performed by a neoshaman. Kambo was presented as an indigenous Amazonian healing power, filtered through the frontier culture of rubber trappers, creating a hybrid culture around Kambo that evoked the power of nature and ancestral traditions. In this context Kambo was advocated and used as a cure capable of combating all kinds of diseases and evils (curing and healing). By the beginning of this century there was a transformation of Kambo from being a magical intervention to improve hunting luck and remove bad influences (*panema*) into a more general neo-shamanistic and transpersonal ritual related to healing and personal transformation, and sometimes also to cure disease.

The Globalization of Kambo

During the last two decades increasing numbers of therapists and practitioners offer Kambo in Europe and the U.S. as a main part of a neo-shamanic healing ritual. Kambo came to the West via the routes opened by ayahuasca (Labate, 2012), a psychedelic brew that is also used in religious rituals for integrating and connecting with the higher Self. This international diffusion was facilitated through networks of the Brazilian Ayahuasca religions (Matas, 2014). In many Western rituals of more than one day, Kambo is combined with ayahuasca, or with other 'teacher-plants' as they are referred to, such as iboga or peyote.

There are recordings of many such rituals available on YouTube (for example see <https://youtu.be/Ox8RYDIYISA>; <https://youtu.be/EeaVBZI4ak0>; and <https://youtu.be/5u9ehQ2k3RA>), which show the many forms of ritual associated with the application of the Kambo. These include the very simple rituals sometimes used in Brazil, where there is no preparation whatsoever, and even an isolated case of the application of only one Kambo dot on one freshly created blister in order to see whether the common cold symptoms would disappear. (NN 1) More frequently, however, Kambo is applied to several dots, depending on its strength (three to five dots of Kambo from first cycle of ‘milking the frog’ and sometimes more dots if the secretion is diluted).

In most Western cases, however, it is a neoshamanistic ritual that guides the experiences. In these above cited YouTube videos, the testimonies emphasized that Kambo is an “ancestral medicine” and the participant in the ritual stated that it “helped to heal her family and herself, and to remember that the only and wonderful mission of life, is also the simplest: WE HAVE COME TO LIVE” (NN 2). She said she wanted to share her experience, so that the divine inspiration of existence could be shared with others. The therapist in this YouTube movie refers to herself as therapist of ancestral medicine. The movie documents the preparation of Kambo during the initial phase, including drinking water, and tells the story of Kambo rituals accompanied by ritual songs of shamans.

Healing Processes in Kambo Rituals

Practitioners, as well as participants, say that the essence of the Kambo ritual is to improve physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of our being through eliminating toxic influences. Kambo treatment emphasizes that the liver is the problem, as this organ has to digest all toxins and negative emotions, and cannot function properly when contaminated. These toxic influences on the heart make one feel heavy. Clean the liver with Kambo, and your heart opens again. Kambo beliefs are expressed via the metaphor of liver cleansing, due to the idea that gall cleanses the liver and should then be expelled; this is exemplified in the yellow vomiting which is seen as a sign of bile discharged from the liver cleansing.

The Kambo ritual has been transformed in the West into an eclectic shamanistic healing ritual. It is mostly said to be a cleansing ritual, and the cleansing is not only of a physical nature, but also emotional and spiritual. This echoes Erspamer et al.’s (1993) observations that the Kambo secretion has the effect of a “drastic cleaning out of the body” (p.1102). One of the authors (JMKH) is member of a number of Kambo FaceBook (FB) groups and participated in many discussions on the essence and value of Kambo since early 2018. In one closed FB group on Kambo Healing, a well-trained therapist pointed out that the activity of Kambo cannot be compared with normal pharmacological compounds. We excerpted his explanation of why this is the case: “Synthetic pharmaceuticals (medications) always work against the body (symptom suppression) but the ‘symptoms’ are actually the self-healing attempts of the body and are therefore inherently toxic. Kambô is a medicine, not some form of medication, and actual medicine has no negative side effects. It’s two different worlds.” He proceeded explaining: “the work of the frog is not ‘dose-

dependent' but based on what a person needs, and is ready for, at a given point in time, also taking into account the capabilities of the facilitators and the properties of the environment.”

The frog is seen to actively interfere in the body after the Kambo application, as one FB case described: “Her session was one of the longest sessions I have held - lots of short purges intermittently over a two-hour period of time. It was obvious the Frog was being gentle with her while slowly collecting the toxins throughout her body and she was having severe cramping in her womb, very sharp pain. And we asked the Frog to do that work - it was a very strong intention setting” (Kambo Healing closed FaceBook Group visited 28 November 2018).

In many anthropological analyses of healing rituals, it is suggested that rituals are effective (e.g., Dow, 1986; Waldram, 2000; Winkelman, 2010). This effectiveness is not, however, based on evaluations through clinical studies, which are not the optimal test paradigm in this case. Effectiveness of a healing ritual is not based on the overall effect on a population of patients, but rather on the basis of a perceived (healing or curing) effect by an individual participant, or by both the participant and the healer.

Explanation of the underlying healing mechanisms elicited by the Kambo ritual presents challenges. These challenges begin with the claims of successfully treating people with such diverse conditions as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder; chronic fatigue and chronic pain; cancers and auto-immune disorders; fertility issues; HIV, herpes and candida; chronic conditions of arthritis, diabetes, and high blood pressure; recurrent infections; alcoholism and other addictions; and many more (see Keppel Hesselink 2018b, 2018c). How could a remedy appear to effectively address such varied conditions? While the rich pharmacology of Kambo may ultimately provide biological mechanisms for some of the diverse effects reported, we suggest that another set of processes are primarily involved.

Symbolic Healing Processes

The widespread appearance of efficacy in ritual healing activities can be explained in terms of what Dow (1986) described as symbolic healing—universal and innate psychological processes through which symbols effect changes in both mind and the body. These psychological processes are elicited and manipulated through ritual healing interactions that symbolically manipulate the psychophysiological associations among attachments, emotions, and beliefs (see Winkelman, 2008, chapter 8 and Winkelman, 2010, chapter 5).

Dow (1986) proposed that the universal mechanisms of symbolic healing involved:

- 1) the establishment of a generalized mythic world, a set of shared explanations regarding the nature of the patient's problem;
- 2) the persuasion of the patient to particularize his or her problems within that mythic world;
- 3) the ritual processes attaching the patient's emotions to the mythic world symbols; and

4) the ritual manipulation of symbols and self-dynamics to produce emotional transformations.

Establishment of a generalized mythic world. In symbolic healing, the healer and ritual engage a commonly held mythic system that expresses the patient's condition, particularly the psychophysiological dynamics. In the case of Kambo healing, the shared metaphors involve: the belief in the power of nature in a jungle medicine from the frog and its many associated powers; and the removal of negative influences, especially contaminations, through vomiting. The embedding of Kambo use within a neoshamanistic healing context that occurred in its urbanization involved a deliberate transformation from a hunting medicine into a broader indigenous Amazonian healing power that integrated indigenous Native American, nature and ancestral identities.

Persuasion of the Patient to the Mythic World. This Indianization of Kambo as a doctor of the forest, so to speak, provided a traditional value orientation that dovetails with the seekers' (Kambo users') desire for a connection with the spiritual and natural healing dimensions that Kambo provides. The healer persuades through the marketing of Kambo as an indigenous, ancestral, natural Amazonian remedy. The patient engages in a self-persuasion via the seeking of a remedy that promises the qualities of personal relief that they seek. The emergence of a frog face early during the ritual is used to reinforce the mythic/magic intuiting of the receiver that the frog (via the secretion) scans the state of the body, finds and dissolves blocks, and reboots the system.

Ritual Processes Attaching the Patient's Emotions. The ritual processes engage the attachments of the patient's emotions within these internalized mythic systems of meaning. In the treatment with Kambo, the purgative effect produces an archetypically based release of psychic contaminations through the cathartic processes of vomiting. The typical vomiting, as well as effects such as the diarrhea, are perceived as direct evidence of the power of the cleansing ritual and the removal of toxins from the body. These physiological mechanisms of the Kambo-induced experience are prominent in people's interpretation of the mechanisms of the transformational experiences. One participant writes: "It is a deeply purgative substance, causing one to vomit primarily, though purging can take the form of crying, diarrhea, sweating and so on. One never knows quite what Frog has in store. The cleansing and healing principle is identified and referred to as 'Frog', with capitals" (NN 3).

Ritual Manipulations and Emotional Transformations. The healing ritual transforms the patient emotionally through manipulating the symbols of cleansing that provide a dis-engagement with problematic aspects of one's personal psychology and self. A powerful catharsis of emotions is provided in the dramatic evidence of the contaminants leaving in the vomiting, an inherent cleansing process. Another statement strongly points to this power of analogical reasoning in healing, using the transference of the frog's qualities and the context of its jungle home into a potent force for personal transformation: "Kambo is a very powerful medicine that also really helps with fear that so many of us have. The Kambo frog has no known predators in the Amazon, so this bad ass is kind of like the king of the

jungle. Kambo not only helps cleanse your physical body, but also your emotional and spiritual body. It has been known to help shift negative thought patterns, and also purge out unwanted energies we may be holding on to” (closed Kambo Healing FaceBook group, visited 28 November 2018).

Purging as Symbolic Healing

Moerman et al. (1979), in a seminal article on the anthropology of symbolic healing, pointed out that just prior to the scientific development of medicine in the West, the majority of diseases were treated with calomel (mercurous chloride), which has the physiological effect of purging. It was this dramatic physiological effect combined with the metaphoric interpretation of expulsion of stomach contents that was presumed to lead to efficacy in the treatment of diverse conditions. Moerman, et al. pointed out that in the traditional healing contexts of North America and northern Asia, sickness was seen as the result of a bad influence entering the body. The central metaphor of healing was the removal of this bad influence as a “thing” that is removed from the body. He elaborated the ideas of Hudson (1975) who explained the Cherokee view of vomiting as a means of cleansing the body system; rather than just a metaphor, curing involved the actual removal of something identified as malevolent influence.

This emetic effect of mercurous chloride parallels the administration of Kambo to expel *panema* (bad energy) via vomiting, sweating and diarrhea. Moerman et al. noted that most symbolic healing rituals have no physiological consequences, making it hard to understand how exactly the symbols reached the body and triggered healing/curing. In contrast, mercurous chloride and Kambo trigger a plethora of physiological effects, which provide additional vehicles for inducing physiological changes that can be used for signifying the effects of the healing processes.

The Analogy with San Pedro Cactus

Joralemon (1984) proposed the concept of influencing the autonomic nervous system as an explanation for the overall physiological effect of ritual healing based on the ritual use of a hallucinogenic plant, the San Pedro cactus (*Echinopsis pachanoi* formerly known as *Trichocereus pachanoi*). He stresses that the “organic response” together with the “symbolic message” are playing key roles in the purificatory connotations of the ritual. In Joralemon’s study, most of the people treated by the shaman with this plant, however, were underdosed and did not report any hallucinations. It was the nausea, vomiting and coughing that were reported as most memorable effects by the participants, who characterized their experience of the ritual as “a purificatory cleansing ordeal” (Joralemon, p.406).

The *curanderos* (healers) of the Peruvian cleansing ritual also commonly diagnosis the patients as suffering from *dano* (harm), a toxic influence generally attributed to sorcery. Thus, the purificatory symbolic ritual is appropriate; the body is being purged of the externally derived harmful substances (comparable to the Kambo

expelling the *panema*). The Peruvian shaman used the word *limpiar*, meaning to cleanse, in reference to the purpose and the effects of taking San Pedro, including its diarrhetic effects. Joralemon discusses the activation of divisions of the autonomic nervous system, both sympathetic as well as parasympathetic, and especially identifies the sympathetic division of the autonomous nervous system as an important driver of the results of the San Pedro ritual. However, Joralemon does not detail the exact mechanisms of healing.

Joralemon also proposes that endogenous healing mechanisms such as the endorphine system, are triggered by such healing rituals, inducing antidyphoric and antidepressant effects. Joralemon highlights the fact that it is the patients' organic responses to the ritual's physiological stimuli on the one hand, together with its symbolism on the other hand, that leads to the healing effects.

This is also the case with Kambo: Both the peptides' physiological effects, as well as the symbolic message of expelling a "bad influence" from the body (due to the frog's alleged spiritual effects), are perceived by the user as a coherent account of their healing. This is why ritual healing is so plausible—and apparently effective—for most people; it is the purification-by-ordeal (as it is called by Joralemon), combined with the patient's expectations, that contributes to successful treatment. The fact that it is believed by practitioners and users that the physiological effects are caused after the activation of an internal bodyscan by the spirit of the frog, taken together with the emergence of a frog-face within some minutes after Kambo intake (due to the facial edema with protruded eyes), provides further symbolic support for the impact of the ritual. Furthermore, there is power to persuade the user of the various pharmacological properties of the peptides, which not only induce the various sympathetic and parasympathetic effects, but also have profound effects on the endocrine and immune-system via the influence on the hypothalamic-pituitary and adrenal gland physiology (Vaudry et al., 1999; Tan, Vaughan, Perrin, Rivier, & Sawchenko, 2017).

Pharmacology and Neurophenomenology of Kambo Healing

There are healing dynamics derived from the interpretation of the pharmacological effects of Kambo. The dominant global effect of the Kambo administration, following emesis, is to quickly put the person into a period of internal focus and relaxation, a powerful parasympathetic reaction inducing even sleep. Within an hour most of these acute effects vanish, and the user generally begins to feel reborn, rejuvenated and cleansed. The symbolic processes of the Kambo treatment enhance healing and well-being through the combination of the physiological effects within the ritual processes, integrating the physiological, emotional and psychosocial dynamics of the patient in the transformation of a state of tenseness and contamination into a sense of being cleansed, reinforced by the relaxation. Kambo's dormorphine and related neuropeptides can produce analgesia and euphoria that counter the dystopia of the prior condition of contamination with tranquilizing feelings and elated emotions. The pharmacological effects of the numerous bioactive peptides produce experiential support for the belief of a cleansing from a phenomenological perspective. The bioactive peptides activate the

circulation, lower blood pressure and increase cardiac frequency, stimulate the gallbladder to contract, and create antiperistalsis, resulting in nausea and vomiting. Furthermore, it enhances permeability of small vessels, leading to facial edema, so that the Kambo user starts to look like a frog, with swollen eyes and lips. The latter is interpreted as the frog's energy which scans and heals the body, exemplifying a neurophenomenological perspective in which physiological changes produce effects that produce experiences.

Kirmayer (1993) proposed that the verbs used by Dow in his symbolic healing model—establish, persuade, attach, and manipulate—all involve processes at both the physiological and psychological levels, including nonsemiotic social and biological processes that produce healing through shifts in affective meaning. Kirmayer (2004) introduced the concept of *metaphoric logic of transformation* as a mechanism of healing ritual. This is also the case for Kambo, often referred to as leading to transformation on emotional and spiritual levels, based on effects that are provoked physiologically and interpreted culturally. These meanings of metaphors are not just within the symbolic realm, but also within the physical body. “Metaphor theory does this by insisting on three levels to action and discourse: the mythic level of coherent narratives; the archetypal level of bodily-givens; and the metaphoric level of temporary constructions” (Kirmayer, 1993, p. 175). These processes of myth, archetype and metaphor represent the social, bodily and psychological domains, respectively. The archetypes arise from the body, a universal substrate of human experience that provide neurognostic foundations of consciousness. In the case of Kambo, the purging effect engages an archetypal cleaning process. The metaphor of frog potency integrates the bodily dynamics with affective meaning through the linking of the physiological qualities of the frog venom with the archetypal dynamics of purging the body.

The symbolic dimension of the Kambo cure is summarized by Labate and Lima (2014), as involving the mythological status as an Amazonian remedy: “kambô acts positively against imbalance, negativity, the evil eye, evil energy, damaged auras, feeling down, and sadness. And in their perspective, it can provide so many benefits because it comes from the remote Amazonian forests, places where purity, harmony, and originality exist; antidotes to the ills of modern society, where disorder, imbalance, pollution, and chaos prevail.” Yet this modern discourse vacillates, also calling on the scientific and medical literature and the rich pharmacology of the constituents to enlist support for people's experiences of Kambo's ability to treat diseases.

Labate and Lima propose that this fluctuation between spiritual and scientific views enables a process of “cure” that goes beyond the scope of biomedicine. “Both lines of interpretation are not mutually exclusive . . . This discourse is part of . . . ‘the new religious consciousness’; a kind of cultural and religious experimentalism; a revival of the intellectual, political and existential interest in ‘alternative therapies, esoteric disciplines or practices’ by the intellectualized middle classes of big urban centers” (Labate & Lima, 2014, p. 10).

Kambo as Transpersonal Healing

Kambo healing exemplifies the core transpersonal psychology themes identified by Hartelius, Rothe and Roy (2013): an integrative beyond-ego psychology of self-transformation. Kambo treatment ideologies illustrate the intersection of ecopsychology and transpersonal psychology, where humans and nature are parts of a transpersonal whole (Davis & Canty, 2013); this is exemplified in the person's healing through the incorporation of the transformative effects of nature derived from the frog's potency.

Kambo healing experiences engage what Davis and Canty (2013) characterize as central features of the ecopsychology perspectives of transpersonal psychology, namely an ecological self-involving relations with nature and healing processes derived from connections with the natural world. The integration of nature's potentials through the body's incorporation and expression of the power of the frog venom shows how the human psyche can be transformed by the powers of nature.

The Kambo user engages a psychology of transformation in a self-empowered attitude involving seeking personal change and a sense of optimal well-being. The ability of the frog venom to produce transformations of self-experience and expression exemplifies the ecopsychology of transformative process in which the individual is changed through interconnections with other aspects of the living cosmos. The toad venom emphasizes a different transformation than the self-expansive states often characteristic of typical of transpersonal experience. Rather, the transpersonal states produced through the frog venom's effects involve the elimination of unwanted aspects of the self and experiences through which a transformative cleansing is produced. In the treatment, this cleansing through the frog's qualities are particularly manifested in the person's body (emetic, sweating), emotions (crying), and self-experience (purification).

The incorporation of nature's potencies in the form of the frog venom addresses what Davis and Canty (2013) consider a core psychological crisis and collective trauma plaguing modern humans, whose technology and machines have produced a separation of personal identity, self and soul from the natural world. The frog and its jungle narrative redresses the obstruction of the human bond with nature. The frog's properties as a potent form of nature address a deep modern need that Davis and Canty (2013) characterize as the driving force in the development of ecopsychology theory and practice: the desire to restore humans' innate relationships with the natural world. The incorporation of the frog's qualities exemplifies this engagement with inherent properties of the natural world that can penetrate and transform the experience of self.

The use of Kambo is an ecotherapy, engaging with the natural power of the frog at many levels. The frog is a primordial image that provides a bridge to connect human identity with the natural world, exemplifying transpersonal psychology's broadening of self-identifications to incorporate the non-human world. The frog venom's power as a therapy derives in part from its inherent pharmacological properties, incorporating ecotherapy principles of shamanic work in the powerful alteration of consciousness involving purging and a sense of cleansing. Well-being



Figure 1. An artist's impression of the Kambo frog, incorporating various metaphoric elements, such as an opened 3rd eye, the Aesculapius symbol of curing/healing, and the spiritual light emerging from its humanized hands as a blessing (thanks to the artist Kent Osborn for permission to use this picture).

is produced in a re-embedding of the individual ecoself and psyche within the natural world through analogical processes involving the transference and incorporation of the frog and jungle qualities. The frog's properties of invincibility provide potent metaphors for psychological empowerment, supporting self-esteem and enhanced immune system functioning. The natural symbolism of the frog, combined with Kambo's pharmacological capacity to produce a powerful alteration of consciousness, provides potent processes for personal transformation.

Figure 1 depicts an artistic representation of the Kambo frog, illustrating this interest in alternative therapies, esoteric disciplines or practices and based on various metaphoric elements, such as an opened 3rd eye, the Aesculapius symbol of curing/healing, and the spiritual light emerging from its hands as a blessing. These features symbolize various significant transpersonal dimensions of Kambo healing.

Conclusions

Ritualized use of Kambo undoubtedly contributes to placebo effects and propels people into the transpersonal realm and transformative experiences by the powerful mix of a) pharmacologically active compounds, b) the ritual processes and expectations, c) the autonomic and somatic nervous system activity induced by the bioactive peptides, and d) the strong metaphoric power induced by the cleansing reactions of the body after the introduction of the frog secretion. Here we see a strong analogy with the transpersonal experiences of people using psychedelic

sacramentals in a ritual context, which may also be followed by cleansing reactions (e.g., vomiting, diarrhea on ayahuasca), or other strong autonomic reactions. Interestingly, although some of the transformative and transpersonal effects of Kambo as reported by users are comparable to those effects reported by people using psychoactive sacramentals involving action on serotonin (5HT₂) receptors (i.e., LSD, DMT, ayahuasca, psilocybin), Kambo does not act on these pharmacological principles in contributing to an alteration of consciousness.

The features of Kambo healing manifest characteristics that illustrate both a neurophenomenological dynamic, as well as exemplify symbolic healing ritual and transpersonal ecotherapy. The many bioactive peptides in Kambo influence our cardiovascular, gastroenterological, endocrine and immune systems, as well as the autonomic nervous system and the endogenous opioid system. These effects produce a significant transformation of consciousness that have intrinsic healing effects invoked by the purging and the associated ASC. The Kambo peptides are also known to have antitumor, antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral activity, positioning it as a symbol of a universal healing substance. These properties symbolically enhance the reputation of Kambo as a “natural vaccine” and panacea. Many of the symptoms induced by Kambo, such as sweating, purging and the emergence of a frog’s face (facial edema), have a high symbolic value for the user related to the cleansing (expelling bad influences and toxins) and the consequential emotional transformation. Users and therapists also know that Kambo is a protective secretion from a frog used as a medicine among indigenous peoples of the Amazon, and with chemical constituents that make the frog nearly immune to predators and infections.

This sets the scene for Kambo to function as a powerful symbolic healing ritual. Therapists and clients view Kambo as a cleansing and transformative substance which scans the body to expel toxins and bad influences of physical, emotional and spiritual nature. The increasing popularity of this ritual treatment can be seen as a result of the postmodern search for spiritual and ecological remedies, especially ecotherapies that engage with the curing powers of nature. Kambo’s powerful physiological effects are coupled with the symbols of the power of nature and the ties to indigenous wisdom that further empower metaphoric processes of healing that engage core transpersonal and ecopsychological principles.

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THE MEANING OF AN INITIATION RITUAL IN A PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING COURSE

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ABSTRACT: In this article we report the results of a qualitative study investigating the meaning of an initiation ritual within the context of a psychotherapy training course. The rite had a transformative meaning, as a result of the contact with the archetypal quality expressed by the Orixá – metaphorically borrowed from the Afro-Brazilian culture – meaning supernatural forces. The ritual dance and other physical tasks of the ritual with their energetic involvement were reported as integral to gaining access to the spiritual dimension, leading to insights and feelings of inner empowerment. The group, and most importantly the mentor, had a central role during the whole rite, embodying the qualities of love and care. After many years, all the subjects still report feeling that those strengths and qualities are important and inform their personal as well as their professional lives. We discuss the meaning of the ritual from a social and anthropological perspective.

KEYWORDS: Initiation, rituals, shamanism, psychotherapy, transpersonal

In this article we report on a qualitative study that investigated the meaning of an initiation ritual for students at a transpersonal psychotherapy training school. We first introduce the theory of this particular approach of psychotherapy to frame the context in which the initiation ritual took place. Then we describe the ritual itself. An aim of the study was to explore the meaning of the ritual both during the educational program, at the time the student experienced it, and after some years of their professional practice.

Biotransenergetica (BTE) is a transpersonal model of psychotherapy developed by Lattuada (2012). The name *Biotransenergetica* explains the holistic approach to the individual: *bio* concerns physical aspects, *transe* concerns spiritual and transcendental aspects, and *energetica* refers to a transcendental dimension expressing itself as energy in the physical dimension. Providing the context of Biotransenergetica theory and training, in this article we consider an “initiation” ritual some students undertake during their training. We then analyze and discuss the results of feedback participants submitted on the training, as well as retrospective interviews.

The BTE theoretical framework grew from Bioenergetics, developed by Lowen (1985), in which the energetic aspects were considered to be taken into the body, along with the breath. BTE, however, goes further to consider also the spiritual dimension of the human being. From an ontological perspective, self is considered

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part of a transcendent being. In this regard, BTE can be considered a transpersonal psychotherapy as defined by Walsh and Vaughan (1980).

Peculiar to BTE is the influence Lattuada brings from his experience with Brazilian shamanism, in part connected to the Afro-Brazilian culture of Umbanda and Candomblé. As a result of partaking in and fully experiencing their rituals, he understood that, similar to other forms of shamanism, including Umbanda, “the knowledge of existence of what is outside occurs through the experience of interior deepness and self-knowledge through the profound immersion in the nature to which we belong” (Lattuada 2005, p. 19). Lattuada’s experience of shamanic rituals gave birth to his interest in non-ordinary states of consciousness, particularly by observing how the *curandeiro* (healer) contacts spiritual forces and performs the healing, in a trance state.

To describe this state of consciousness Lattuada uses the Portuguese word *transe*, which is defined as that state allowing the individual to be in contact with the divine dimension (Lattuada, 2005).

The involvement of the spiritual dimension in the therapeutic process is the key point in Lattuada’s model. He framed his approach within Eastern medicine and philosophy, and other forms of shamanism, which have a spiritual orientation to the human being. In fact, these frameworks consider all the physical and psychological aspects of the self as expressions of a wider spiritual dimension. Moreover, in these approaches human beings are considered to be in profound communion with the natural field in which they live, so that the spiritual level of the elements, air, water, earth, fire and so on, has a strong influence on them. Humans and nature are deeply connected and in equilibrium.

As indicated above, BTE recognizes its roots in the Brazilian shamanic tradition. In the practice of Umbanda the shaman invokes the Orixá (supernatural forces, according to Afro-Brazilian culture) and their qualities. Instead, in BTE the reference to the Orixá is only valid because they are considered “expressions of an existing entity to which mankind’s psyche gives a meaning” (Lattuada 2005, p. 26), recalling what Jung named collective archetypes. However, while Jung considered archetypes as intra-psychic phenomena, deriving from an elaboration process of cosmic energy, BTE regards archetypes as authentic energetic expressions of a transcendental dimension. This energy might interact with the physical dimension and be experienced through non-ordinary states of consciousness.

In the Umbanda tradition, the Orixá express their forces through natural elements; in BTE natural elements are understood as expressions of energy that manifest as qualities on a psychological level. In BTE through different practices, it is possible to enter into contact with the energy and with the qualities of that specific element. Furthermore, according to a holistic and integral vision, BTE considers that the natural elements found in the environment possibly have a subtler influence – on the energetic and spiritual level. For example, by recalling the quality of fluidity of water and by inviting the client to feel this quality on a physical level, working on an energetic and spiritual plane rather than on a mental one, results in the person embodying this quality and being able to activate it, also on a personal level.

BTE's reference to a relationship with natural elements can also be considered in light of the theories elaborated by environmental psychology, which has demonstrated how natural environments influence human beings' behavior, whether we consider social behavior as the effects of green areas in the cities or the processes of healing, both from psychic or physical diseases (Nenci, 2003).

These theories have been re-elaborated by eco-psychology. Beyond those that can be considered new age drifts, the reasoning and studies on the positive effect of natural environments on the psyche are numerous and valid, whether we consider evolutionary theories (Balling & Falk, 1982; Kaplan, 1987) or constructivist ones (Lyons, 1983; Tuan, 1971), not to mention the theories of bio-filia, promoted by Wilson (1984) and experimentally studied in depth by Frumkin (2003).

BTE is taught as a Transpersonal Psychotherapy approach in a school recognized by the Ministry of Education and Research in Italy for both medical doctors and psychologists. During the four years of training, students go through theoretical education in clinical psychology and psychotherapy, plus a range of theoretical education in neuroscience and humanistic and transpersonal psychology.

Like other psychotherapy training programs, a very important part of the training is experiential. In this particular approach the experiential classes are aimed to help students master the non-ordinary states of consciousness through which the therapeutic process takes place. These states of consciousness can be induced by mindfulness and body work practices (Lattuada, 2012). During the therapeutic sessions the therapist and the client share the field of non-ordinary states of consciousness to explore a transcendental dimension where the archetypal qualities are expressed and can be contacted for healing purposes.

In a psychotherapeutic model, which is applied in a medical scientific context, this vision results in the psychotherapist assuming a role of facilitator of a healing process in which the client him/herself is responsible for his/her own healing, connecting with the spiritual level. In fact, unlike shamanic traditions, for BTE everybody can access a transcendental level through practices that are usually called meditative.

This facilitator role demands that the psychotherapist fulfill an evolutionary process that leads him/her to master non-ordinary states of consciousness and to let his/her personal history go. This process must not be seen only from the academic and educational point of view. Rather, it is similar to a spiritual evolution process, because only by personally experiencing these non-ordinary states of consciousness is it possible to master them and share the healing field with the clients. If the therapeutic process is a journey towards inner transformation, in order to be a valid helper, the psychotherapist must have already undertaken the same process.

Within this context, we now consider a ritual called *initiation* that students may decide to experience during the four years of training.

This ritual takes place during one of the intensive seminars and is a collective ritual involving all the students. During the two days of the ritual the subject undergoing

the initiation (*initiate-to-be*) has to carry out different tasks, to stay silent and be as if invisible to others, having his/her face covered with ashes. He/she is accompanied by a *mentor* chosen from the other students. At the end of the ritual there is a celebration like a re-birth, and the *initiated* is welcomed into the group again.

As already noted, the shamanic tradition is a peculiar aspect of BTE, but how does it connect with the clinical practice of psychotherapists trained at the BTE school? The authors of this study were particularly interested in understanding the meaning of the initiation ritual in the context of a psychotherapy training program. How was it perceived by the students and what perceived influence did it continue to have after many years of psychotherapy practice? What relevance does the ritual have now in the context of their clinical practices?"

In order to analyze the meaning of the ritual, we started with the feedback that the students were required to write after each seminar. The feedback represents an important part of the training course: the students wrote about both the theoretical aspects, elaborating them according to their current knowledge, and their inner experiences during the practices of non-ordinary states of consciousness.

For the current inquiry, we read through all the feedback of the previous five years and selected those from the students that took the initiation ritual and wrote about their experience, a total of ten students.

We contacted them by email first and on the phone afterward, asking permission to consider their feedback for the present study, explaining the aim and modality of the study; three of them never responded, one refused her consent to participate stating that her experience was too personal to be read by others, and six agreed to participate. We considered only the part of the feedback that included the ritual of initiation.

In a second phase, those that agreed to participate in the study were interviewed and asked to think about the meaning of their personal initiation ritual from the point of view of their present situation, taking into account the implications for their personal and professional development. Both the feedback and the materials from the interviews were analyzed according to the thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006). To be as objective as possible in considering the two different points of inquiry, that is the ritual and the current perception of the ritual, the two texts were reviewed separately by each of the authors; the feedback was studied by GR and the interviews by GC.

The six participants included four females and two males; their ages at the moment of the present study ranged from 38 to 50. They were all practicing as psychotherapists. The study was performed in compliance with the ethical principles described by the British Psychological Society (2009) and adopted by the BTE School. In particular, bearing in mind the symbolic value of each inner experience, only the feedback written by the participants who agreed to participate in the study (signing a consent form) was taken into account. The data were processed anonymously, omitting the elements that might have revealed the

participants' identity. They analyzed and approved the text, together with the transcriptions of the interviews, prior to submission of this manuscript and its publication.

Before reporting on the participants' first-hand experiences, we provide a short description of the ritual, not disclosing all the details since, as in each initiation rite, they have to be kept as an intimate and personal part of an inner journey made by those who committed to it.

During an initial collective rite, the student who has decided to take part in it chooses the force, i.e., the archetypal quality, to whom to be initiated. As the rite is held during the summer seminar all the students, even those at the first year of training, know quite well the theoretical shamanic framework. The student, therefore, declares his/her intent within the circle created by the other students. This initial collective rite sets forth the status of *initiate-to-be*, who will become "invisible." The initiate-to-be will choose a *mentor* among the other students. The mentor will accompany the initiate-to-be as a kind of spiritual helper, to whom the initiate-to-be can turn for any basic needs. It goes without saying that the initiate-to-be can decide to interrupt the ritual and go back to be part of the circle at any time. After two days, including a night spent alone in nature (either in the woods or on a stream bed), the initiate goes through a purification wash, as a process of rebirthing to a new life, and then is welcomed back to the circle with a new collective ritual of celebration.

Text Analysis

Feedback Describing the Lived Experience of the Ritual

The analysis of the feedback was performed following the various different stages of the rite, highlighting some common themes recurring in the feedback. We first considered the reasons the students decided to take part in the rite and found that their motivation often coincides with their intent and seems to have conscious and unconscious components. In some cases, the reason seems to be pre-decided and conscious for some participants, such as:

I decided to perform the initiation to honor, make peace, accept, see with new eyes the existence of an important, fundamental and strong feminine side in me.

In other cases, the reason is discovered once the circle is gathered:

My muscles moved me, led by a force and a willingness that were present beyond the boundaries of my mind... and, with a mixture of stupor and terror, I sat at the center of the circle together with my companions in the initiation.

In other situations, both components are present. The reason always seemed to be related to an inner process that requires contact with the quality of the forces to be fulfilled. The relation with the chosen force is at the basis of the entire rite of

initiation. This force, perceived as an archetypical quality, is fundamental for the structure of the rite itself.

In the participants' stories, we may note the mentioning of terms like *a calling* or *a foreboding sense*, *a presentiment*, meaning that the choice takes place through a *calling that is felt in advance*; this call will get clearer during the rite, as if it was the force itself that called.

And, then, the force, the violent force that had called me, an energy of the emerging fire, transforming everything...

The choice of Orixá. It was a very spontaneous process for me... I found myself in the presence of Nana as if by chance and in an automatically... a vibration overwhelmed me and I recognized its constellation, i.e., its archetypical force.

The relationship with the force, again in the sense of an archetypal quality, is present in the declared intent, as a *prayer* in relation to the initiate's own initial inner process. We may find it again in the moments of crises or during the ordeals that require a profound energy, both physical and emotional. Often, when individuals attune with this energy, they find solutions to moments of deep suffering, or, in other cases, the energy is a source of powerful insights, as the following accounts from different participants show:

It was as if Oxossi had sent me a message, a metaphor, through which I could feel and listen to the story of my life.

Like now, Xango – in my body, my thoughts, my cells, in my heart... like now to accompany me and stay with me and give me the strength to get free.

I was praying to Oxum who took care of me the whole night through. I felt I wasn't alone.

I felt the constant presence of one or several forces.

I felt I didn't need to be afraid anymore.

You could feel them. I could have talked to them.

In other cases, the choice is more rational, even if the attuning with the energy of the force is still present: "... want to balance an aggressive drive in me that had not been processed yet" or "to rebuild a new relationship with my crashed feminine side."

The choice of the mentor again seems to be intuitive and unconscious. Students referenced unconscious processes in choosing the mentor: "Something made me stay in front of him and, in a moment, with an exchange of looks, I knew that this was the right thing" or "When I chose my mentor, I wasn't aware of the real reason why him."

The students are engaged in an inner process that will lead them to discover in the mentor some qualities that they did not possess; these qualities are necessary for the fulfillment of their own rite. The reason for the choice seems to be unconscious only at first; but, afterwards, thanks to the insights that emerge during the rite, it becomes more and more clear, as it happens when choosing the particular Orixà. In other words, they recognize those qualities and that particular force that is missing but fundamental for their “passage”:

I suddenly understood the sense of my choice: I needed that a man would take care of me; a man who, paradoxically, was caring like a mother but with the strength of a father, of a man. It was a warm, respectful and discreet presence for me.

The preparation for the ceremony is a moment of particular “felt sense,” during which the students feel very much involved in the sacred ceremony and intense emotions arise:

I am moved by the gestures and the care with which she prepares everything; she adorns the stick with the flowers and prepares the altar. I don’t have to think about and feel the anxiety that is coming.

My companions’ love and care in preparing the place. The energies and the rites were like being part of a large tribe where each one takes care of each other and is taken care of. It is love that generates love.

The ceremony is certainly associated with the initiate’s experience of the presence of the mentor who actively contributes to the preparation. *Love, care* and *harmony* are the terms that seem to describe a perception both at the emotional and energetic level, something very intimate and subtle. In these words, as we see in the entries below, a link is revealed between the preparation and the entry into the woods accompanied by the mentor.

The experience of being invisible is another moment of particular intensity. It seems to be linked to a perception that is different from everyday life. The condition of “being invisible” triggers deep feelings of calming solitude. It is like being detached from the entire context and, at the same time, being deeply immersed in one’s own soul. We may say that the perceptual level changes, activating a more intimate relationship with oneself and the surrounding world, where the value of silence and solitude is rediscovered.

The ashes on my face and the sensation of disappearing... at the end, I needed nothing... I became invisible, immersed in my companions’ company but invisible to their eyes, surrounded by their souls, compassionate but within the silence of solitude. Detached from the tempting fields of my ego.

And then the ashes on my face... I was happy to be there and to become invisible. This gave the process a character of uniqueness that allowed me to enter into a deep contact with myself and with what was happening; I think that the words and the understandable curiosity from the others would have invaded

the intimacy of my process. I really wanted to stay silent and go through all the next passages alone.

The moment of the initiate's dance, a physical ordeal accompanied by drumming, appears to be very important. It can trigger different levels in the body-mind, opening up the path of the heart, the felt sense that leads to the emergence of images and feelings that can lead to important insights. The physical level can be involved and one can arrive at identification with what is outside of the personal perception: "During the dance... I felt my body like being transformed into a plant, an olive tree, ..." or at an emotional/ transpersonal level, "The dance with its movements from which the images and the feelings emerge... in connection with the fighters, the warriors of the past."

The movement together with the drumming is paramount in activating the body, making it reverberate at various levels. The experience of the dance is recalled as really intense. It is characterized by a significant energetic rise that affects the different body-mind levels. This process may evoke some significant inner experiences, often leading to feeling the force of the Orixá, in a distinct way. It is a difficult ordeal, during which it is possible to experience pain or reach states of complete serenity. The most relevant aspect is the intensity of the experience that totally involves the initiate; some particular "vibrations" are also felt and recalled. It is a vibration that takes one up on a seesaw, between crisis and resolution, difficulties and their solutions. It is a plane that seems to have little in common with logical and rational thinking.

The experience is too strong. Too intense is the power of the force to find the words to describe it... millions of vibrations, emotions, breaths, voids... only with the vomit to remind me to be still alive... I fell several times and still bear the marks, but, in that moment, I wasn't feeling anything... I felt very badly, physically speaking, I didn't really vomit; it was only spit, but I also cried desperately, but inside, at the end, I was in peace ... serene.

Being saved when I was losing my balance made each cell of mine vibrate with a blind trust providing my body with an unexpected energy.

The ordeal of sleeping in the woods is perceived as a very intense moment of the rite. In each piece of analyzed feedback, the mentor, with his/her virtues, played a key role. Qualities like caring, looking after, the sense of being accompanied, the love, the trust (which are similar qualities perceived during the *preparation of the ceremony*) show the fundamental role played by the mentor in *leading* and *accompanying* along the personal path:

Thanks to the silence that offers respect and trust, the mentor follows with great patience. In a motherly way, he looks after the warrior that will have to face the night blindfolded and in complete solitude.

My mentor's love made my bed the most comfortable ever... the care shown in choosing the "pillow" (a stone) and the sacredness with which the rituals were

performed (the cigar, the rice and the ashes) moved my soul encountering his soul, a dignified and heroic one.

My mentor's strong hands turned into a very sweet motherly touch while he was washing me with care, attention and love; it was like going beyond the encounter of two bodies to become an encounter of two souls.

The choice of the place in the wood, where to spend the night, is mentioned in half of the reports. From the texts, this moment emerges as the occasion to strengthen not only trust with the mentor, but also the relationship between the initiate and the energy that he/she feels coming from the place.

The energy (or energies) of nature is actually an independent factor that is present in the different moments of the rite.

Surrounded by the strong force of the tree roots and by the transforming energy of the wind that moves.

The descent to the river that had welcomed and cuddled me.

The thoughts stirring lightly as the leaves of the poplar outside the window.

I listened to the sound of the river and the wind that lulled me until I fell asleep.

Nature is present and alive. It cures. It seems to pass through the initiate with a felt sense of harmony and deep connection where, once all barriers have fallen, the initiate can arrive at some real identification or union with it. In some harmonic trances, this moment is defined as that state in which the five levels of experience (i.e., physical, emotional, energetic, mental, and spiritual) are in equilibrium.

The night spent in the wood, alone, is probably the most exacting ordeal of the entire rite. It is an experience that seems to trigger the arousal of fears:

I woke up a couple of times after my usual nightmares.

I could hear some dogs... I felt a moment of fear. With the noises of nature each kind of thought invades my mind; some terrible and fearsome monsters take shape.

Here, being *alone*, is mitigated by an "experience of a lifetime," i.e., the protection given by the force (either Orixá or natural) to whom you entrust yourself completely.

Oxum that took care of me for the entire night. I felt I wasn't alone; I felt the constant presence of one or more forces.

The image of an owl watching over me.

I had not fear of anything... Xangô was protecting me.

These protections are fundamental to face the night and go through the crises that might arise, spontaneously. The crises represent a constant part of the entire rite, emerging in different moments. The rite is like a trigger of processes that unmask the initiate, leading him/her to face his/her pains, in a continuous series of “crises” and obstacles (we can call them ambushes). These can be overcome by tapping into one’s own resources starting with the forces discovered in oneself; it is about continuous deaths and rebirths.

This process is clearly perceived at two moments of the rite: when awakening after the night in nature and during the final purification: pure awareness of the initiate’s fulfilled journey. The moments that mark the passage from what is old to what is new are described as full of *presence*: “*an awakening to life*”; “*what an emotion to see where I had slept; I would have never thought I would go so far, I made it.*”

New fulfillments, images and sensations arise, enhancing the awareness to having reached the integration of those forms that were initially incomplete; for all participants it was like being reborn.

To summarize, the entire rite seems to be based on the key role played by the Orixá and the mentor’s qualities. These are the paramount figures of the rite, necessary to fulfill the initiation–catalyzers that involve the initiate in every level (physical, emotional, energetic, mental and spiritual). The energetic change seems to gradually spread in experiencing the rite, through continuous crises and intuitions, and ultimately arriving at the final rebirth. The meaning that is revealed by the end of the rite is clearer than the initial intent.

A common theme described in the reports is the dissolution of identity. The process of the initiation rite seems to lead to a sort of dis-identification from the individual self.

It is worth highlighting the moment in which the usual identities and identifications are shed, and the individual allows him/herself to go through an experience that is beyond the individual self. It is a key moment of freedom, which opens to a greater receptiveness to experiences in general; the inner process becomes more fluid and unburdened by the weight of our own rigid identities.

As I entered the process and they (the identities) were dissolving, my identity dissolved too, beginning its transformation.

At several moments, I finally lost control over my physical space and time of human condition; I finally stopped to be the identification of my and others’ projections... losing myself.

A similar experience is the perception of a context that is “other” than the ordinary one:

“Being invisible to the others moves your attention onto another plane, making another reality visible, which, at the beginning, seems ‘other’ only because I wasn’t used to seeing it.”

For one participant the perception of an altered space was present during the whole rite: “The metamorphosis started in a context that was different from the ordinary. The place of the rite wasn’t the usual Monte Carmel, but it was another place in which times and spaces weren’t the common times and spaces anymore.”

Sometimes the rite prompts a passage from a subjective unfortunate situation to a more favorable one, in which the starting point seems to be clear, but the final state is always unpredictable; the subjective experience will determine its outcome and the meaning of such a passage. For example, one subject reported at the beginning an issue about “femininity perceived with shame,” and “an aggressiveness in denial,” as if there was an initial disharmonious condition, which the rite, through the forces involved, allowed her to overcome.

Retrospective Interviews

Those who took part in this ritual approximately five to seven years ago were interviewed to explore the meaning of the rite from the point of view of personal and professional development. The aim of the semi-structured interview was to focus on which kind of meaning those interviewed now give to the ritual, from the perspective of personal development and in relation to aspects related to their profession as psychotherapists. The interviews tried to also bring to light what participants remembered as particularly meaningful in the ritual and if there were other moments in their lives to which they could attribute similar meaning.

With regard to the current meaning given to the ritual, interviewees regarded it as a transformative passage. “*It was a process of death and rebirth.*” “*Passing from a state of consciousness to another*” “*I felt like being in a moment of transformation.*” “*Afterwards, it wasn’t the life as before.*” “*The event was a passage in itself.*”

It was a necessary passage to leave some experiences of personal history behind: “Each one of us has to overcome some things. The initiation was, therefore, a rite of passage.”

In releasing those experiences, the rite of initiation was even more effective than a psychotherapy path: “For me, it was more helpful than psychotherapy because it goes beyond.”

For some participants, this process of transformation coincided with a period in their personal and professional life, when intense change was already taking place: “Thinking back, the period was a little bit particular: it was the beginning of some continuous transformation.” “I arrived at the rite being at the verge of a change that I wasn’t able to fulfill and, so, it was like a leap into the dark.”

All participants were aware of and noted the importance of the ritual’s structure. The ritual is a containing structure, which provides a meaning to the process of initiation. Examples of participant comments include: “The importance of the respect in the rituality, to reach an authentic perception of what is the sense of the

initiation.” “The isolation and the ordeal about your strength, having expressed the intent...different small parts that led me to live that experience fully.”

Moreover, as a containing structure, the rite allowed one to face the challenges related to it:

Being supported by something or someone that allows you to find the energy, which, sometimes, you might not be able to find on your own.

You feel as part of something, within a position, within a situation in which you can do something without feeling exposed and fragile.

On your own, but feeling protected.

I felt fragile but able to tap into those resources that allow you to do it in a way that it is not serene, but certainly positive and proactive.

The ritual is perceived as a test to fulfill in order to tap into one's own resources:

Bring out your own resources, telling yourself: “I must do this thing. I'll do it.”

Disorientation, frailty but also strength, the dirty mud and the following shower. I went to sleep, having fulfilled the first test. I can make it!

It was very painful, it is the most significant memory, these breaks that I had to face but that I couldn't face; fear, abandonment, emptiness, darkness, fear of not making it and knowing that once you've made that step... finding myself strong as a warrior.

What the participants remember as significant was the group, which was felt as a constant presence, even if from outside: “The group outside that was singing and I let myself be lulled by them.” “The group; I felt it very close and as a source of comfort and insights.” “I felt the group a lot.”

And in particular the presence of the mentor as companion:

He accompanies, standing at your side, a step behind: not in front of you showing the way (because each one of us has his/her own way), not behind you to push you (because each one of us has his/her own pace), but allowing freedom and responsibility.

The mentor. Trusting someone while you can't see... you must trust, someone who's done a piece of the path with me, and he will stay with me like a piece of my heart, something carnal. And it is the rite that makes this happen.

The mentor as a guide, silent, not invasive, present, who accompanies you, a ferryman, who allows the passage. You give him/her a coin and he/she'll take you to the other side: Like Chiron, in this process of death and rebirth, an energetically strong figure.

What all participants recalled is the involvement of the whole person, including on the physical level: “Feeling on your skin to be able to define it also at the corporeal level, for me it’s important. “Perceived first hand and on your body, so to speak.” “The contact with nature.” “On all your levels, also on the corporeal one and very much. You don’t feel the same at a graduation ceremony; on the other hand, in this case, it is also everything that happened to you physically.”

This aspect makes this ceremony different from other educational ceremonies like a diploma or a graduation. Furthermore, it leaves also a *mnestic carnal trace, in your heart* as some of the subjects said about their mentors.

As we have seen in the previous part of the analysis of the feedback, the transpersonal plane is also involved, and the memory of this stays alive: “My consciousness flew so high that I felt to be able to touch the sky and hear words that came from there and, then, come back onto the ground and into my body.” “I perceived a force, there.”

For some aspects, the ritual with its meaning of passage and transformation was likened to some moments in life like mourning a beloved one or facing some serious physical illnesses: “I had already had a physical experience of change, through an illness.” “It was another extreme situation when I had cancer.”

In other cases, it was associated with other situations that required important life changing choices; but what characterized and distinguished this experience was the involvement of the spiritual plane, summoning an archetypal quality or claiming intent, with the consequent ensuing responsibilities:

More than one; each time that I created the same break, which had awakened the same fears and there was a tremendous pain, but it didn’t trigger any transformation; it was during the initiation that it was transformed into a force for the first time and the pain was becoming the power to face things.

In the intent that we had to express, which I summoned at the presence of Nana’s force, at that time.

The experience of the initiation rite was not only intense and meaningful in that particular moment in life, but also influenced the personal and professional development of the participants: “Even if it is far back in time, it is still very alive.” “Afterwards, the phases of listening and regeneration developed; trust developed; slowing down the rhythm, finding your own time and your own space.”

The allusion to a threshold associated with the passage, remained as a frame through which the participants could look at their own personal development:

We are always at a threshold, changing from one state to the other. When I work as a psychotherapist, my client goes through a rite of passage, when he/she walks through that door he/she is not the same person; something has changed.

What seems to have a significant relevance in this regard is the deep immersion in a field where it was possible to enter into connection with the archetypal quality of the force. Moreover, and equally significant, was the observation that such contact provided an accessibility that was also available to them later on when they needed it:

What I felt of the force at the level of my sensations, emotions and energy. I have often gone back to those feelings.

After this time, I must say that I went back there with my mind both for my personal life and professional one, since the two aspects overlap. In that moment, I felt a force.

Finding myself strong and as warrior, knowing that I could take that force back home. . . I need it every time I am scared and I forget.

When I find myself in the condition of having to compromise or lacking the courage of being more a fighter, I go back there and I find the strength again.

The force, which you cannot see, because it is a vivid experience that has accompanied me, and a force is. . . sometimes, maybe, I forget to summon it when I need it, but whenever I call it, this force intervenes.

This transformation not only took place on a personal level. The participants also felt a change within their professions as care providers of support; a profession for which they had been trained during their psychotherapy studies.

This aspect is expressed in different ways with the following examples:

The change was important to express empathy and a willingness to listen more freely.

When in your life you go through a process of this kind, your profession is also involved, even more significantly because, again, it is a ritual of healing also on yourself and we go and look after other people. It is focused on cure.

It is as if the participants had been given a tool (the rite of passage) to use in a therapeutic context: "In experiencing it, I feel it is really mine."

The ritual itself gives a meaning to the structure in therapeutic setting:

Acknowledging the relevance of the rite. And this is a metaphor of the therapy, which has its own setting and rules; there are boundaries and limits. Being within this space means working on yourself. It is the container, i.e., the structure that a person can leave behind after having gone through the pain of being in there.

Or it catalyzes the emergence of dissonances with regard to the meaning of their professions:

This led me to see the inconsistencies in the psychologists' work because this field now clashes with the principles of the archetype of mother earth, with her qualities of humbleness, simplicity and transparency. But, at the same time, I take them outside and share them with others. I find them more in artistic expressions when I use recycled objects to respect the environmental values.

In any case, the two planes (the personal and the professional ones) felt extremely connected for participants:

I must say that I went back there many times, both in my personal life and professional one, since the two things overlap.

It led me to give an accomplished meaning to my inner path of personal and professional transformations, in unifying these two levels.

Discussion

From the text analysis we can conclude that the initiation ritual was perceived as a transformative rite. Transformation was catalyzed by contact with the archetype quality expressed by the Orixá. The structure of the rite with the involvement of the physical and energetic level was integral to making contact with the spiritual dimension, from which insights and inner strength could come. The group and most of all the mentor had a central role during the whole rite, embodying the qualities of love and care.

After many years, all the subjects still feel that strength and those qualities as important to inform their personal as well as their professional lives. The structure of the rite and the mentor are the aspects that they remembered the most. The ritual was compared to other important life events that had somehow affected their lives, but it bore a more profound transformative meaning.

We would like to now discuss these results from an anthropological perspective. According to Segalen (2002), a rite has a flexible nature, eluding rigid interpretations that can disregard a very attentive analysis of the cultural system in which it takes place, in a dialogical relationship between the two, rich with symbolic meanings.

It is, therefore, necessary to consider the results of this research, bearing in mind that the BTE model (even though it acknowledges the Brazilian shamanic tradition as one of its roots) is seen as a training course in an academic field, recognized by the Ministry of Research and University. The aims of the present study were to investigate the meaning of the initiation rite within a training course in psychotherapy. The meanings that have arisen from the experience of the therapists who took part in the study are related to two aspects: first, the value given to the ritual considered as a rite of passage and, therefore, related to transformation; second is the relevance of the ritual per se.

With regard to the ritual, we have noticed how the structure was intensely felt during the process and how it has left a significant mark and perceived as having a lasting impact, even after a few years, as we will discuss further on. The rite as a social act, with its repetitiveness and defined code, has been acknowledged as a key factor to create the necessary social bonds within a social structure and organization (Durkheim, 2013; Van Gennep, 1909/2013). In the social-anthropological vision, rites are directly related to the religious institution, whereas what is sacred is seen, in a limiting way, as a mere symbolic manifestation of society (Durkheim, 2013). This confines the rite into a preordained and incomplete vision: making the group member, relive and remember the collective traditions and values, triggering a powerful integrative function, especially thanks to what he defines as *collective effervescence*. This term is related to an important characteristic of the rite, which we also have noted in our sample: a state of excitement, “electricity,” enthusiasm, which arises from the consciousness of the members within a group, to be all together in one space-time that is different from the ordinary, being focused on the sacred symbol itself. In their feedback, students reported that this state was associated both with the role played by the collective dimension of the “group” and by the particular experiences such as the dance, the preparation of the ceremony, the experiences in an extraordinary context, and the conditions in which both the Orixá and the mentor are chosen.

Different from Durkheim, a more pertinent consideration about the issue dealt with in our research comes from the scheme provided by Van Gennep (1909/2013). According to Van Gennep’s anthropological point of view, the rite gives meaning to the moments of passage, both in the shamanic culture and in traditional societies. From a social point of view, living is a continuous dying and being reborn (Van Gennep, 1909/2013), a renewal of passages that involves cyclical moments of *separation* and *aggregation* from a state to another—psychological, social, natural, cosmic. According to his interpretation, we can give wider meanings to each ritual in which there is a passage from one condition to another, similar to what Campbell (1949/2012) and Propp (2000) describe.

Generally speaking, the passage during initiations has the novice involved in a series of challenges and ordeals that he/she has to overcome in order to be recognized by the members of the group, in his/her new state. The rites of passage, anthropologically speaking, are an answer to the need to face those unsettling states and crises that undermine the internal cohesion and the temporal continuity in a social group; according to Van Gennep (1909/2013), these are paramount requirements for the survival of each society. These crises (De Martino, 2008) arise both because of social changes and passages and because of individual and natural changes and passages (the cosmic ones, always jeopardizing a community’s cohesion and balance, generating the need for mechanisms and rules to control such changes). In other words: “The rites of passage are indeed the ceremonial mechanisms that lead, control, and rule every kind of change within individuals and groups” (Remotti in the introduction to Van Gennep, 1909/2013, p. xviii). We can see this, for example, in the rites of passage related to births, the rites of initiation, the nuptial rites, the funerary rites, the rites related to the agricultural cycles and the rites marking social moments, etc. Their main goal is to transform and consecrate both individuals and groups through two key functions. The first one is to support

the individual during the passage, preventing him/her from going too far or losing his/her way, during the phases of transformation. It links, channels and carries the human essences across a gate that will cause the creation of a new individual, guaranteeing a continuity, a coherence and constancy of self, during the passage. A second function, which is outside the individual, is to trigger some systems of social bonds: the rites of passage do indeed generate and untie relations (Cianconi, 2010).

In the Van Gennep model (1909/2013), the rites of passage unfold through three stages: the pre-liminal stage (*separation*), the liminal stage (the threshold or *limen*), and the post-liminal stage (*aggregation*). In the first stage, the separation from an earlier situation is marked as a symbolic death. The second stage puts the individual into a suspended state; in these moments, the transformation can take place. The last stage eases the introduction of a new condition as a symbolic rebirth.

From the emotional point of view, the stages are related to a feeling of anxiety, connected to the sense of being torn during each *separation* and *abandonment*, which we have to endure from our birth until our death. In the intermediate stage, from the *separation* through the *limen*, a state of *crisis* is perceived, in which fear is the strongest emotion. In arriving at the *margin*, we enter into a condition in which the transformation can and does take place; in this moment an emotional dissociative disposition is dominant, similar to a trance state. The last stage consecrates the new birth and allows the *aggregation* within the group, leaving the ritual behind. Some feelings of being at peace after having overcome anxiety are present (Cianconi, 2010).

In the abovementioned scheme, the concept of *margin* (Turner, 1986) is fundamental, both for the individual and the social group. We can consider the ritual performed by the students as a limen, which becomes evident during the experience of being invisible, the dance, or the night spent in the woods. For the initiates the area of the *margin* is the mysterious space in which they could leave some parts of themselves behind, entering in contact with a spiritual dimension; the latter is also favored by spending the night under the sky.

In this space, students could also feel the various forces being active in order to facilitate their change. It is in this state that the preparation and the connection with ancestral and natural forces take place; the students relied on them to perform their transformation. This is strictly related to the manipulation of the body, in the rites of initiation: ornaments, painting, clothes, tattoos and hard ordeals such as scarifications, piercings, circumcisions, deep cuts, leave unforgettable and carnal marks reminding of the transformation that has taken place (Buckland, 1995). In the ritual considered in this study, a corporeal manipulation is present, not only through the ashes on the faces to sanction the invisibility but also with some ornaments. The dance and the stimulation through dancing and the drumming have the same function.

The involvement on the physical level is paramount to deepening the transformation and is the aspect (as the subjects in the present study have remarked) that differentiates this ritual from other moments of passage. Moreover,

for the participants the physical aspect is equated to other moments in their lives, such as significant illnesses or the losses of dear ones, which were perceived as important on a transformative level and again involving the physical sphere.

The rite is inseparable from its fundamental process of transformation. Undergoing some hard psycho-physical ordeals deeply shakes the mind-body complex; in fact, we might better describe them as transformation rites rather than rites of passage (Heald, 1982). The participants in the study talked about a process of transformation that has remained in their memory for years after and is somehow connected with their profession as psychotherapists.

At the end we would like to highlight the meaning of the ritual in the context of a training course in psychotherapy, considering two different perspectives.

The first one is a personal evolution, which, in the case of a transpersonal approach, also means spiritual evolution. In this evolution, therapists have to acquire the necessary skills to enter into contact with their healing powers, learning to master the non-ordinary states of consciousness. In BTE, in analogy with the shamanic culture, therapists should be, as much as possible, like channels between the transcendental dimension and the perceivable one. During the healing process, they proceed together with their patients who gradually become the creators of their own healing paths.

The second one is that there is a path that each therapist-to-be has to fulfill, irrespective of his/her particular approach, not only in order to learn the “techniques” but also to get free, or at least become aware, of their personal history and conditioning, so that they will not interfere with the therapeutic process that they will implement with patients.

As far as the first point is concerned the rite allows the initiate to become familiar with something that transcends the personal and ordinary dimensions, giving life to an intense emotional and sentimental (Jung, 1963/1993) shade, reinforced by the “collective effervescence.” This emotional tone mirrors the involved energies that the rite allows one to channel and master, protecting the psychic balance in the individual.

In the social-anthropological vision, rites are important to enter in direct contact with the field of the archetypal forces, spirituality and *numinousness* (Eliade, 1974; Grof, 2006/2007; Jung, 1963/1993; Neumann, Portmann, & Scholem, 1991). The rite allows one to face all the emotions and energies, which otherwise would overcome the initiate. In fact, the etymology of the term *rite* comes from the Latin term *rivus* or stream and recalls the act of flowing: the rite that digs a groove allowing the energetic flux to flow at various levels, having not only the function of containing, but also working through towards a full transformation (Widmann, 2007). Transforming is passing through and overcoming this turbulent water arriving at a new birth, in an inner experience in which one emerges feeling stronger than before, provided with new potentialities and abilities, as the interviewed students mentioned.

Considering the second point, the transformations that involve human beings, society, nature, the cosmos and the tight bonds between them, need some containers that allow a proper processing, i.e., the states of suspension that allow the person to connect to those forces and regenerate those energies that are necessary to fulfill the metamorphoses. Without these containers, each passage will be diminished and distorted, creating a strong sense of existential disorientation and, in some extreme cases, with the risk to become a passive instrument for those emotions and energies with which we have gotten in contact.

It is also important to consider the academic context in which the training school is included. In such contexts, nowadays, the ritual aspect of celebrating a passage from a student status to a graduate professional has been gradually fading. If the shamanic culture marked these passages in a very incisive way, and with a total involvement of the person, Western society has first sublimated, and then almost erased those passages.

It is interesting to note how these rituals are actually still present, even if a little criticized. We would like to remind the reader, in this regard, about the article from Huber (2003) and the relevant comments (Glick, 2003; Golden, 2008) with regard to the White Coat Ceremony (WCC). In fact, the coat and the ceremony of the passage from those that have finished the course and those who are about to start can be seen as proper rituals under an anthropological point of view. As Glick has remarked,

Rituals of passage are an almost universal phenomenon in many societies. When the Soviet Union banned religious ceremonies, these were quickly replaced by other no less ritualistic practices. One has but to remember the lines of Soviet citizens waiting for hours in subzero Moscow temperature just for the opportunity of viewing Lenin's body. (Glick, 2003, p.368)

In training courses, ritual moments could be highlighted not only on a mental and emotional level, but also on a physical one with ornaments, like a toque or a gown, or even with movements like a procession or what, in the past, was the "academic embrace."

Finally, we would like to point out that the rite's most significant elements are the mentor and the group. The mentor is characterized by his/her presence full of *love* and *care*, while the group is perceived as supporting from outside. At the end of the ritual they both disappear, but, in the following path of life, the mentor remains like a mnemonic trace in the initiates' heart, as a "carnal mark" (as one of the participants said).

These aspects could be considered in every professional training program: sharing instead of competition, and support instead of judgment.

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TRANSCENDING “TRANSPERSONAL”: TIME TO JOIN THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT: Wide-ranging scholarship discussed in the body of the paper has argued that transpersonal psychology is part of the New Age and consequently is sharing its fate. The New Age, and the secularization theory against which it arose, are Anglophone and Western European social trends misapplied to the rest of the world, an error overlooked in transpersonal psychology. As New Ageism has become too culturally diffuse to function as a meaningful identity, so transpersonal psychology has diffused to encompass much more than the beyond-ego psychology of advanced meditation. Moreover, the world's population is growing more religious and spiritual, but in ways transpersonal psychology has historically ignored. Unless transpersonal scholars critically examine its role in the social sciences and the global community, transpersonal psychology is likely to disappear along with the New Age just as the rest of the world offers a wealth of potential for transpersonalism. This article points to opportunities for productive action if transpersonal psychology is ready to embrace the challenge.

KEYWORDS: transpersonal psychology, New Age, secularization theory, pre/trans fallacy

In the yeasty days of the late 1960s, anti-establishment, anti-war sentiment in the United States, easy access to psychotropic drugs and reliable birth control, and the spread of Asian spirituality in the West combined to create a counter-cultural movement, of which transpersonal psychology was a part, the *New Age*. Like most of that movement, transpersonal psychology defined itself in contrast to what had gone before, as a more or less revolutionary move away from conventional psychology. The new discipline concerned *beyond-ego* phenomena: transcending Western culturally normative mature personality identification through involuntary or cultivated experiences that could be temporary (e.g., peak experiences, psychedelic altered states) or perpetual (e.g., realization of nonduality, “enlightenment”) considered markers of “higher” stages of human development (e.g., Lajoie, & Shapiro, 1992; Sutich, 1968; Walsh, 1993). Transpersonal psychology emphasized transformation and personal growth rather than pathology. After a twenty-year trajectory focusing almost exclusively on meditation and contemplative states, transpersonal psychology branched out to include shamanism, ecopsychology, myth, body and energy work, paranormal phenomena, and so on (e.g., Hartelius, Caplan, & Rardin, 2007; Hartelius, Rothe, & Roy, 2013). This expansion, however, was not matched by increased recognition of transpersonal psychology as a discipline in the popular mind, nor by professionals, such as the American Psychological Association.

Transpersonal psychology has continued to try to define itself as a discipline distinct from humanistic psychology, the psychology of spirituality or religion, and developmental psychology even though it considerably overlaps all of these. A

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series of articles that began shortly after transpersonal psychology ventured into non-contemplative topics (Hartelius, Caplan, & Rardin, 2007; Hartelius, Rothe, & Roy, 2013; Lajoie, & Shapiro, 1992; Shapiro, Lee, & Gross, 2002; Walsh, 1993) kept redefining the discipline as consensus about transpersonal psychology evaporated, as it encompassed more phenomena unrelated to ego-transcendence, and as its influence declined. “It is clear that the field has not been highly successful in conveying to a broader audience the deeper significance its proponents believe that it holds” (Hartelius et al., 2013, p. 7).

One of the main problems is that transpersonal psychology, while borrowing selectively and very narrowly from a few fields, such as Asian contemplative traditions and psychotherapy, has been too insular to benefit from a critical interdisciplinary integration or sociohistorical perspective. For a start, it is helpful to consider that the New Age was a rising tide that lifted the transpersonal boat in the 1960s: understanding that movement informs what has happened to transpersonal psychology and what the future may hold.

Transpersonal Psychology, the New Age, and Secularization

Although transpersonal scholars may want to distance themselves from the New Age, the fact is, it was—and remains—part of the New Age, and consequently is sharing its fate. According to its latest definition (Hartelius et al., 2013), transpersonal psychology is a “transformative psychology of the whole person in intimate relationship with an interconnected and evolving world; it pays special attention to self-expansive states as well as to spiritual, mystical, and other exceptional human experiences that gain meaning in such a context” (p. 14). This definition is the essence of New Age thought and values, a connection that has been available in academic discourse since the turn of the millennium.

By the 1990s, the New Age movement was about three decades old, although its roots extend much farther back in Western esotericism (e.g., Hanegraaff, 1998; Heelas, 1996; Kemp, & Lewis, 2007; Rose, 2005; Sutcliffe, 2003). Debate remains about exactly what the New Age represents (social movement, religious movement, part of the *zeitgeist*?), but the aforementioned authors concur that it is an influential cultural strand of spiritual seeking in contemporary society, which, despite its many manifestations, is characterized by fairly coherent beliefs and values. Of greatest relevance to the present discussion are Paul Heelas’s *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity* (1996) and Wouter Hanegraaff’s *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (1998).

Heelas (1996) viewed the New Age as a religious movement that sacralizes contemporary Western values: “freedom, authenticity, self-responsibility, self-reliance, self-determination, equality, dignity, tranquility, harmony, love, peace, creative expressivity, . . . the inner self and the intrinsic goodness of human nature,” positive change, the natural world, community, and the “efficacy of positive thinking” (p. 169). Core New Age beliefs, according to Heelas, are that the self and the world are sacred, and that attunement to the self’s inner spirituality and that of

the cosmos will produce harmony and evolution to bring about a better life and world. He considers these beliefs to be essentially doctrinal because they provide: a) a rationale for why life now is not as it should be; b) what the ideal life and world look like; and c) a path for how to attain the ideal life and world. Cultural conditioning and inauthenticity create “ego” (p. 18), which obscures the divine spark in each person, so eliminating ego is the path to liberation, in which “to experience the [real] self is to experience God” (p. 19). Heelas had already concluded in the mid-1990s that New Age thought and values were so assimilated—into religious institutions, healthcare, and commercial enterprises—that as a *movement* the New Age had become too diffuse to isolate.

Hanegraaff (1998) also claimed that the New Age was a religious movement rather than just a social movement because it possesses a distinct theology, albeit one characterized by secularism through the marriage of esotericism and contemporary science, especially quantum physics. *New Age religion*, according to his analysis, comprises five central tenets: a) a this-world orientation, defined roughly as focusing on present earthly experience to achieve a better life and a better world, perhaps later in this life, perhaps in a different incarnation, or perhaps in some vaguely defined other world; b) the interrelatedness of all things; c) the spiritual evolution of all beings and of the cosmos toward some purposeful end; d) the “psychologization of religion and the sacralization of psychology” (p. 366), distilled as equating self-realization with the realization of Spirit; and e) a culmination of all of these in the dawning of a new golden age on the earth characterized by positive values and spirituality.

The similarity of Heelas’s (1996) and Hanegraaff’s (1998) definition of New Age beliefs to the qualities distinguishing transpersonal psychology (Hartelius, et al., 2013) is too obvious to warrant elaboration, but such connections are absent from transpersonal discourse. Significantly, after high visibility as a commercial brand for a distinct market (New Age books, products, fairs, and healthcare practices, for instance), the label has fallen into desuetude since the 1990s, both because the distinction was no longer meaningful and because the label was dated (it has been replaced by the less catchy “mind, body, spirit,” according to Chrissedes, 2007, p. 17). New Age ideas and values remain ubiquitous. Examples include the spread of alternative (non-allopathic) healing practices, such as reiki; the translation of originally esoteric spiritual practices, such as mindfulness meditation and yoga, into commonly available health techniques; and the number of movies and television shows that routinely feature psi phenomena, near-death experiences, supernatural mental powers associated with meditation and other spiritual practices, and the like (e.g., Baker, & Bader, 2014; Berger, & Ezzy, 2007). (Indeed, some social scientists [e.g., El-Zein, 2000; Heelas, 2008; Lau, 2000; McAvan, 2010] wonder whether New Ageism was not a kind of American values imperialism aimed at global transformation through the spread of capitalism as a vision of cosmic abundance.) Cultural diffusion—in other words, the normalizing of New Age thought—has dissolved the boundaries required for a separate transpersonal brand because what was countercultural and distinct 50 years ago is ordinary today.

That is not to say that New Ageism is universal. *New Agers* remain a distinct population profiled not by transpersonalists, who are among their constituents, but

by sociologists and market researchers. Not surprisingly, they tend to be White, are found mostly in Anglophone countries and Western Europe, and can be typified as “religious individualist[s], mixing and matching cultural resources in an animated spiritual quest” (Sutcliffe, 2003, p. 200). In an eponymously named chapter addressing the “psychology of the New Age,” researchers Miguel Farias and Pehr Granqvist (2007), working independently, started with the hypothesis that New Age individuals would differ psychologically from traditionally religious people. Their studies showed that certain traits and early developmental factors “underlie endorsement of New Age ideas and practices” (p. 124), specifically that New Agers have some degree of left temporal lobe dysfunction with over-activation of the right hemisphere, especially the temporo-limbic area; that they have schizotypal tendencies, including thin boundaries and a predilection for absorption and suggestibility; that they are more individually than communally motivated; that they engage in magical thinking characterized by loose connections and abstract self-understanding; that they tend to be dissociative; that they have an elevated sense of subjective suffering; and that they experience bursts of feeling and creativity (p. 144). Furthermore, New Agers are likely to have had parents who were insensitive to their needs, to have suffered traumatic abuse or loss, and to have an insecure attachment orientation (p. 144). Although the authors acknowledge that it is impossible to confirm New Agers’ reported claims of supernatural experiences, such as encounters with spiritual beings, they suggest that the above characteristics make New Agers more likely to report such experiences. Interestingly, the authors, despite these claims, “wish to distance ourselves from attempts to explain away metaphysical beliefs and spiritual experience as nothing but epiphenomena of the brain. ...[O]ne of us has in fact found results that cast serious doubt on one of the major proposals of neurotheology...” (p. 145). A few transpersonalists have identified a handful of these trends more or less in passing (e.g., Dein, 2012; Greyson, 2000; Ring, 1992; Wade, 2004), but this fertile area has not been systematically studied by the very psychologists closest to the subject population.

This is only one area where transpersonal psychology’s myopia has missed important trends. If the New Age has been absorbed to the point that it is yesterday’s fad, what is next for transpersonal psychology, a New Age brand that never caught on? Here again it is helpful to look at the broader context of the New Age as a countercultural religious movement that arose at a particular time in a particular culture in opposition to secularism.

Secularism has been a rising metaphysics in the West for centuries. The decline of belief in the supernatural, often called the *disenchantment* of the world (e.g., Walsham, 2008), dates back to the Protestant Reformation, followed by explicit predictions of the death of religion starting in 1710 when Thomas Woolston declared that Christianity would disappear by 1900 (Stark, 1998). Since then generations of diverse thought leaders, such as Voltaire, Frederick the Great, Thomas Jefferson, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Sigmund Freud, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, have predicted that humanity would outgrow belief in the divine for a more mature, rational, enlightened kind of atheism (Stark, 1998). Known as the *secularization thesis*, this prediction became the norm in Western scholarship.

Secularization prophecies share several characteristics, according to Stark (1998). First is the belief that modernization, especially science, industrialization, urbanization, and rationalization, will kill spirituality. Specifically, science is regarded as the most powerful deterrent to belief in the supernatural or transcendent. Second, secularization theories are based, not on the institutional decline of religious organizations, but on the notion that personal belief (spirituality) cannot survive the increase in rational and scientific thought that will become a societal norm. Thus, the more educated and prosperous a population, the more secular it will be. Third, secularization, although chiefly viewed as a cognitive process, is considered to possess the same compelling psychological qualities as spiritual belief. The pervasiveness of secularization theory in academe, especially mainstream psychology, and Western society at large would be hard to overstate. It was the cultural backdrop against which New Age thought formed, and transpersonal psychology, in many ways, is still struggling for acceptance against the secularization paradigm.

This struggle has largely been won in other disciplines because all evidence shows the world is becoming re-enchanted. Social scientists, theologians, and philosophers now speak of *postsecularism* or the *postsecular turn* (e.g., Habermas, 2008; Merz, & Merz, 2017; Partridge, 2004; Ziebertz, & Riegel, 2009) to describe the resurgence of belief in the sacred, both religious and spiritual. (Until quite recently, spirituality and religion were overlapping constructs, and the terms are still often used interchangeably [Hill et al., 2000; Zinnbauer et al., 1997]. In transpersonal studies, *religion* is usually seen as the institutional and organizational dogma and practices that structure specific religious groups, in contrast to *spirituality*, the personal search for, and experience of, the sacred [Hill, et al., 2000]. For example, in a review of the literature, Myers and Willard [2003] concluded that spirituality is “the capacity and tendency in all human beings to find and construct meaning about life and existence and to move towards personal growth, responsibility, and relationship with others” [p. 149], irrespective of affiliation with a religious institution.) Secularization theory—and the postsecular turn—address both spirituality and religion, usually without distinction. For the present discussion, they will be treated more or less separately here, starting with spirituality, but, as will be seen, the distinctions are not always easy to maintain, and some cited sources conflate them.

New Age Spirituality in the Postsecular Turn

The rise of spirituality during the postsecular turn is largely credited to the New Age. The increase in personal spirituality rather than religious affiliation has been documented as large numbers of people characterize themselves in research studies as *nones* (no identification with a recognized religion) and *spiritual but not religious* (e.g., Eaton, 2015; Fuller, 2001). For example, a major British survey (Hay, & Hunt, 2000) covering the period from 1987-2000 showed that the proportion of people who did not go to a place of worship yet believed in a spiritual reality increased from 29% to 55%. Over a quarter of all Americans describe themselves as “more spiritual than religious,” including those who identify as Christians and Jews (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009, p. 38). Americans

reporting no religious affiliation increased from 7% in 1974 to almost 23% in 2014 (Pew Research Center, 2015a), and this population is more likely to identify as spiritual but not religious (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012). Among them are the New Agers who directly access the divine through an eclectic assortment of Eastern, Western, neo-pagan, and indigenous belief systems (Bruce, 2002; Heelas, & Woodhead, 2005), in addition to attributing spirituality to paranormal and alien (UFO) phenomena (e.g., Baker, & Bader, 2014; Denzler, 2001; Draper, & Baker, 2011; Kripal, 2010), a syncretism mirrored in the extension of transpersonal psychology into these areas. Some New Agers express an affiliation with a particular path while borrowing freely from others, including more recent ones called new religious movements (NRMs; e.g., Dawson, 1998; Feuerstein, 1990; Heelas, 1996), many of them included in transpersonal studies.

Some of these NRMs have centralized institutional structures, but others, such as Wicca, rely mostly on loose, self-organizing groups to the extent that they involve communal activities at all. NRMs associated with the New Age include such diverse paths as Scientology; Silva Mind Control; Krishna Consciousness, Transcendental Meditation, and other forms of neo-Hinduism; Science of Mind; UFO religions; neo-pagan paths, such as Wicca, Druidism, and Asatru; neo-Indigenous paths, especially shamanism; and Afro-American Spiritist paths, such as voodoo and Santeria, to name a few. Buddhism is considered a new religious movement in postmodern, non-Asian cultures (Smith, & Froese, 2008, p. 15). Neo-paganism, just to pick up on one of these strands for illustration, is one of the fastest growing NRMs (Kosmin, & Keysar, 2008; Lewis, 2007; Waldron, 2005). Difficulties in measuring its actual growth abound since there are no institutions to provide membership censuses, since it may be entirely a private personal practice, and since classifications of exactly what is pagan are not hard and fast. Nevertheless, visibility of some neo-pagan groups, such as Wicca, is high in the media (Berger, & Ezzy, 2007), warranting serious study (e.g., Ankkarloo, & Clark, 1999; Berger, 2005; Lewis & Pizza, 2009; York, 2007). Neo-paganism, like some NRMs, involves frank use of magical practices and beliefs.

Transpersonal psychology's inclusion of such non-contemplative paths did not occur without a fight. In the mid-1990s, conflicting ideas about what was properly transpersonal flamed into a dispute around what became known as the *pre/trans fallacy*, in which developmentalist Ken Wilber (1990, 1993, 1995, 1996a, 1996b) maintained that because the "prerational and transrational realms are, in their own ways, nonrational, they appear similar or even identical to the untutored eye" (1996b, p. 248). According to Wilber, this fallacy leads to two different errors. The first is reducing the trans-rational (a developmentally advanced state, post Piagetian Formal Operations) to the pre-rational (a lower state, prior to Piagetian Formal Operations, which includes magical thinking). To illustrate this kind of error Wilber cites Freud's allegation that the nondual realization of mystics is merely a regression to the oceanic undifferentiation of fetal consciousness. The second error is the reverse, elevating the pre-rational to the trans-rational. An example of this is mistaking Jung's mythic awareness or archetypal participation, which Wilber views as regressive, for a higher, trans-egoic kind of awareness. Many transpersonal scholars, notably Stanislav Grof (1975, 1985, 1987, 1996) and Michael Washburn (1990, 1994, 1995), maintain that the ability to access pre-egoic states facilitates

transformation to trans-egoic states, and thus, that the former represent a significant area of investigation to transpersonal psychology. (The authors in these debates do not always maintain conceptual distinction between pre- and trans- cognition, ego psychology, and spirituality.) Ferrer (e.g., 2002, 2008) developed an alternative transpersonal model of participatory spirituality in direct contrast to developmental models, and transpersonal psychology continued to explore non-meditative altered states, such as the use of psychedelics, holotropic breathing, dream work, visualization, trance, and magico-religious forms of spirituality, like neo-shamanism and neo-paganism. These trends, in part, led Wilber to divorce himself from transpersonal psychology for his own school of strictly hierarchical development and justified transpersonal psychology's continuing expansion into areas unrelated to nonduality and meditation.

Nevertheless, the influence of developmental theory on transpersonal psychology, from the hierarchical attainment stressed in contemplative traditions to Fowler's stages of faith (1981), Maslow's hierarchy (1971, 1982) and Assagioli's psychosynthesis (1965, 1991), and Wilber's early work (1977, 1985, 1986, 1995) continues to be marked. The field emerged counter to the secularism and exoteric religiosity associated with the mid-range of adult development (between *pre-personal*, *-rational* and *trans-personal*, *-rational*; Daniels, 2004, 2005) in favor of "higher" stages of esoteric contemplative paths culminating in nonduality. If Wilberians deplored transpersonal psychology's expansion into the *pre-* as primitive and unimportant, both camps ignored the mid-range of religiosity as conventional and uninteresting.

But secularization theory, including the New Age reaction to it, was an isolated trend particular to certain first-world Western cultures that has *never* been applicable to non-Western societies (e.g., Cannell, 2010; Merz & Merz, 2017; Taylor, 2007). According to Peter Berger (1999), formerly a secularization proponent himself, what needs to be explained is not the spirituality of the world, but the anomalous secularism of the minority who live in Anglophone countries and Europe. It is hubris to assume that the secularization and New Age counterculture spirituality of a tiny, white Western minority must inevitably be the shared experience, much less the future, of the world (Fernandez-Armesto, 1995).

New Age spirituality, as much as it borrows from older forms, remains a White, first-world, postmodern hybrid distinct from the spirituality of other cultures. For example, the nontheistic Buddhism embraced in Western cultures, notably of the kind studied in transpersonal psychology, is quite at variance with Asiatic Buddhism, which syncretically mixes with Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, and indigenous traditions. The Buddhism typical of Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, Myanmar, Tibet, and China ranges from theistic to polytheistic, whereas nontheistic forms, if they exist there at all, are practiced by a small, intellectual elite (Stark, & Finke, 2000). If transpersonal psychology is to be relevant, transpersonalists should appreciate its humble place globally and determine whether it is more important to cling to an identity formed by a past long gone, serving an elite minority, or take its place in today's global explosion of spirituality

and religion where people in other disciplines are doing the heavy lifting to find out why, how, and what is needed.

“Prepersonal” Spirituality and Exoteric Religiosity Globally

We live in a world that is not supposed to exist. Religion was supposed to decline with modernization and economic development...Yet over the past thirty years, to the surprise of Western governments and social scientists, it has been religion rather than secular ideology that has increasingly mobilized people in developing countries. (Thomas, 2007, p. 21)

Both pre-egoic/rational and *egoic/rational* (Formal Operations level, exoteric, or conventional, mid-range cognitive development) religions are booming worldwide, with magical beliefs prevalent in modern developing cultures in Africa, Central and South America, Asia, and the Pacific (e.g., Malinowski, 1954; Tambiah, 1990). In fact, most Westerners are unaware that even differentiating life into religious or spiritual and secular spheres is nonsensical to much of the global population, which perceives all phenomena, including the realms of human activity, as an integrated, essentially sacred whole. For example, in African metaphysics, a distant, impersonal God is at the apex of a single, hierarchical, closed system with the ancestors below, then humans, and then animals (e.g., Van der Merwe, 2008). In this worldview, the causes of health and illness, for instance, are both scientific and supernatural. Even if it is known that mosquitoes cause malaria, the more important question is which supernatural force is employing the mosquito to make someone ill, and, therefore, what kind of magic and which ancestors should be invoked to restore health (and possibly turn the malevolent magic back on the perpetrator; Van Dyk, & Van Dyke, 2015). In Africa, witchcraft and sorcery are modern concerns used to explain global and state politics (e.g., Geschiere, 1997; Moore, & Sanders, 2001).

Folk religions—the extra-institutional or -doctrinal practices of people affiliated with an established religion—usually include a significant proportion of magical beliefs. Folk Catholicism, as one example, is prevalent in Central and South America. It involves pilgrimages to sacred places, the magical embodiment or re-enactment of sacred stories, and the use of magical objects as a “contemporary reconfiguration of personal religiosity inside the traditional religious field” (Vilaça, 2012, p. 90). One example is the rapidly growing cult of Santa Muerte (Saint Death or Holy Death), whose effigy is placed on altars, prayed to and given offerings as thanks or to make requests (Bigliardi, 2016; Hedenborg-White, & Gregorius, 2017). Santa Muerte is honored with chants, dancing, mariachi music, singing, and firecrackers, and her image may be tattooed on the bodies of devotees. Folk religion in China has burgeoned with the relaxation of state sanctions regulating religion (e.g., Chau, 2006; Dean, 1993; Yang, 2010, 2012), including the revival of ancient traditions, such as ancestor worship, shamanism, belief in ghosts, sacrificial rituals to the spirits of objects and places, and divination, such as the *I Ching*, numerology, and astrology (Bambridge, 2007). An estimated 85% of Chinese people believe in the supernatural: “The syncretic practices of folk-religion which combines those of Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and folk-religions are popular among nearly 1

billion people” (Zhao, & Yao, 2010, p. 9). If anything, in China such beliefs are likely to be underrepresented owing to lingering stigma and to the private nature of practices occurring outside identification with government-favored religious institutions.

Unlike transpersonal psychology’s original privileging of the “higher states” of meditation, still emphasized in the Wilberian school, other social sciences have abandoned the elitism inherent in classifying some forms of spirituality as *primitive* (also read as *superstition*), especially those involving *magic*:

No one now accepts any of the fanciful notions of the early anthropologists about so-called primitive cultures and the role of religions in them. In particular, Frazer’s assumption that Darwinian evolution could be extended into the socio-cultural realm, combined with the positivist assumption that scientific knowledge was the highest or most evolved form of knowledge, have been largely rejected. . . . Durkheim’s a priori assumption that Aboriginal religions are “elementary” or simple forms of religion are ludicrously false. They are in fact extraordinarily complex and sophisticated systems. (Charlesworth, 2009, p. 120)

Despite cognitive distinctions between *magical thinking*, characteristic of Piagetian pre-Formal Operations thought, and rational thinking, most social scientists (e.g., Bohak, 2008; Cholewa, & Gilski, 2017; Malinowski, 1954; Frazer, 1942; Klutz, 2003; Meyer, & Smith, 1999) have long noted the impossibility of separating magic from religion. For example, according to Lévi-Strauss (1966), “The anthropomorphism of nature (of which religion consists) and the physiomorphism of man (by which we have defined magic) constitute two components which are always given, and vary only in proportion. . . . There is no religion without magic any more than there is magic without at least a trace of religion” (p. 221). Indeed, some of the pre/trans fallacy distinctions of theoreticians like Wilber do not hold up meaningfully in this regard, according to anthropologists grounded in fieldwork, who describe at least four types of causal effects that qualify as magical:

- (a) The direct effect of consciousness over matter. . . (mind-over-matter magic);
- (b) the sudden acquisition of spontaneity by a nonanimate physical object (animation magic); (c) a violation of the fundamental laws of object permanence, physical space, and time, such as one physical object inexplicably turning into another physical object in an instant (nonpermanence magic); and
- (d) when certain objects or events affect other objects or events in a nonphysical way, through similarity or contagion (sympathetic magic). . . . All of the above effects violate the principle of physical causality. (Subbotsky, 2011, p. 127)

(Subbotsky puts psi phenomena among these violators of Newtonian principles, which would include certain effects associated with advanced meditation; clearly this view of magic operates at the macro level of observable phenomena, but not the quantum level, a scientific epistemology indiscriminately and often inappropriately invoked in New Age metaphysics, but that discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.) Thus, the realm of spirituality may not share the hierarchy of cognitive or ego development, and to conflate them is likely a category error. The anthropological literature collectively suggests that natural (i.e., scientific) and

supernatural explanations are the outcomes of distinct cognitive orientations (Whitehouse, 2011). According to Subbotsky (2011), whose observations could be directly leveled at New Ageism and transpersonal studies, “The belief in magic is a fundamental feature of the human mind, which is culturally invariant and present throughout the life span. This view links together phenomena that thus far have been studied separately from one another: superstitions and beliefs in the paranormal, religious beliefs,. . .the appeal of psychedelic drugs” (p. 141). People exhibit magico-religious thinking alongside rational or scientific thinking in all cultures, including first-world industrial nations (e.g., Bering, 2006; Boyer, 2004; Boyer & Bergstrom, 2008; Malinowski, 1954; Tambiah, 1990; Vyse, 1990; Subbotsky, 2011; Wade, 1996)—whether that means New Age thought, prepersonal magico-religious beliefs, or traditional religious beliefs, such as the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, to provide only one example. Accordingly, transpersonal psychology’s more recent inclusion of phenomena associated with pre- forms of spiritual experience is warranted, despite its earlier beyond-ego identity and emphasis on “higher” stages achieved through meditation.

If magic and religion cannot be separated and magical beliefs co-exist with science even among first-world populations, what of the global resurgence of exoteric, conventional religion generally? Two of the fastest-growing segments of that religious boom involve arguably beyond-ego dynamics heretofore entirely overlooked by transpersonalists.

The upsurge of religion after the loosening of state controls in populous countries like China and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is one factor accounting for the explosion. Like China, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and former Communist bloc countries have reclaimed their traditional religions, and then some: the Russian Orthodox Church and other Christian churches are thriving in those areas—and so are NRMs, including neo-Christian sects, neo-Hinduism, neo-Buddhism, quasi-Theosophical and other esoteric paths, neo-paganism, and so-called ethnic religions (Barker, 2000; Ivakhiv, 2005). But the two groups accounting for most of the global religious resurgence are the worldwide Islamic revival and the spread of Pentecostal, charismatic, and evangelical Protestantism (Pew Research Center, 2015a).

Most of the growth in Islam is in non-Arab countries, such as Indonesia (the largest Muslim country in the world), followed by Pakistan and India (Pew Research Center, 2015a). Unlike the conversion numbers in Christianity, Muslim growth is more owing to its younger population and higher reproductive rates, according to the Pew Research Center, which projects that Muslims will outnumber Christians for the first time in history by 2070.

The spread of Pentecostalism and charismatic, evangelical Protestantism has been less visible, but is no less spectacular (Norris, & Inglehart, 2004; Thomas, 2017). This grouping of variously named Protestant institutions is characterized by charismatic practices involving ecstatic states, such as possession by the Holy Spirit, signified by speaking in tongues (glossolalia), and faith healing. It is estimated that as many as 250 million Pentecostals, one-eighth the world’s two

billion Christians, and an astonishing one out of every 25 people in the global population, belongs to a Pentecostal-charismatic evangelical Christian sect (World Christian Database, cited in Martin, 2002). Even those numbers may be deceptively small regarding the spread of charismatic ecstatic states, faith healing, and belief in miracles as spiritual experiences in contemporary Christianity. For instance, in an attempt to stanch the loss of members to Pentecostal evangelical organizations in Latin America, the Roman hierarchy has allowed millions of lay people to introduce charismatic practices into the Catholic church (Hartch, 2015), a move that has succeeded to the point where charismatic Catholics (still classified as Catholics) outnumber people classified as Pentecostals by roughly 75 million to 66 million.

Linked to the global growth of religion is a rise in fundamentalism (e.g., Aikman, 2003), which is found in all religions, including NRMs. Like the New Age, fundamentalism, first recognized in nineteenth-century American Protestantism (Marsden, 1980), is a reaction to secularism: “Without modernization and secularization there would be no fundamentalism” (Emerson, & Hartman, 2006, p. 127). How fundamentalism has been understood has been greatly revised in recent years; its core is considered to be a radical, apocalyptic evangelicalism (e.g., Sutton, 2017) that can be characterized as “a reaction to religion’s loss of hegemony and marginalization in the modern world...[producing] two main characteristics: zealous religiosity and radical political aspirations to transform the secular political order” (Fischer, 2016, p. 532). Thus, fundamentalists of any religious identity aspire to restore an authentic and pure religiosity free from modernity’s corrupting influences by first strengthening members’ faith and then through political activism to restore religion’s influence (Juergensmeyer, 2008). Much of the rise in fundamentalism is attributed to proselytizing in order to bring about the desired change (Aikman, 2003). Regardless of the headline-making violence of some fundamentalist groups, violence does not characterize most fundamentalist movements (Sadowski, 2006).

Nevertheless, to the extent that adherents of a religious organization literally martyr themselves for a greater cause—most of them functioning at a level of egoic differentiation (Wade, 1996)—they surely demonstrate a psychological, if not phenomenological, beyond-ego identification—and this is where fundamentalists arguably should be of interest to transpersonal psychology in addition to their commitment to bringing about a better world through realizing higher spirituality. Scholarship on fundamentalist psychology has burgeoned in other fields (e.g., Nagata, 2001; Strozier, Terman, & Jones, 2010), not least because of the immediacy of understanding how some groups transform members into sacrificing their own lives for the cause. For a discipline focused on transformative process and beyond-ego identification, disregarding conversion experiences strong enough to result in self-destruction in service to a greater good because the phenomenon does not involve a “higher state” continues to sideline transpersonal psychology and its relevance, where it could potentially contribute much.

Although most Pentecostal-charismatic-evangelical sects fit the basic definitions of fundamentalism, their use of ecstatic states is closely linked to New Age spirituality, including areas studied by transpersonal psychology but ignored in this

religious form to date. Since “the majority of Christians in the world by 2050 will be non-white, non-Western, from the ex-colonized world, rather than the former colonizers, and will espouse forms of Christianity that are more emotive and charismatic than those found in the West” (Thomas, 2017, para. 20), disregarding Christian spirituality, fundamentalist or not, will only increase transpersonal psychology’s irrelevance.

As early as 1992, Lucas noted similarities between the resurgence of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity and the New Age movement: both stress the personal intense, ecstatic experiences of the sacred by ordinary people accessible in daily life; both focus on healing through spirituality of the mind and the body as an interconnected whole that extends to an integration of the individual and the larger community; both envision some kind of dawning of a new age; and both are “anti-institutional and decentralized” while featuring loose self-organizing spiritual communities of like-minded peers (1992, pp. 205-207). Many, if not all of these characteristics, are also present in New Age NRMs (Stone, 1978): a) they are characterized by religious individualism (what involvement can do for the person rather than for society at large); b) they emphasize intense, personal experience rather than doctrine; c) to the extent that they feature “gurus,” these tend to be charismatic leaders who function as expert guides for creating and sustaining ecstatic experiences among their followers as a basis for their authority; d) they are tolerant and syncretic of other religious perspectives; e) they tend to reject dualism; and f) they emphasize personal experience of the divine.

To summarize, New Ageism involved re-inventing more personally meaningful forms of spirituality that countered Western conventional Judeo-Christian religious institutions and secularism. Transpersonal psychology originally defined itself as specializing in the higher, ego-transcending states associated with mostly Asian contemplative traditions, and even when both New Ageism and transpersonal psychology incorporated more practices associated with the magical beliefs of indigenous or folk religions, they maintained a perspective ignorant of non-Western spiritual and religious realities. In the rest of the world, magic, religion, and spirituality are not separate—and in truth, they are not really separate in the West, either. Magical beliefs and practices co-exist with scientific atheism in daily life in the Western world, and assumptions about a hierarchy of spirituality based on developmental theories of cognition and ego psychology do not hold up well in light of the extensive research conducted outside transpersonal psychology. Religion and spirituality, which never were eclipsed by secularism outside the West, are teeming globally, especially in forms involving the supernatural beliefs, altered-state practices, and beyond-ego behaviors that produce the kinds of experiences transpersonal psychology has stretched to embrace, if only in certain Western, first-world guises. Transpersonal psychology has a wealth of potential to offer, if it would look outside its traditional focus to this world of riches.

Conclusion

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James (1902/1985), widely considered the progenitor of transpersonal psychology, urged investigation of “all

the various feelings of the individual pinch of destiny, *all* the various spiritual attitudes” (p. 543; author’s emphasis), the widest range of spiritual experiences that are significant to human life. Despite this heritage, transpersonalists have focused on the forms New Agers have created and reinvented in their first-world, Western cultures rather than on the myriad older, living traditions in other cultures and the vast influence they have—and will continue to have—on the global stage. Sadly, even in that paltry realm, transpersonal psychology has had little impact: the vast majority of research on “higher stages” of human development and techniques to bring them about has been done by people outside the field, such as neuroscientists, sociologists, anthropologists, and mainstream psychologists. Transpersonal psychology has been long on practice and theory, but very short on empirical research. By ignoring the scholarship in other disciplines about trends affecting its salience and failing to do research on topics well within even the narrowest scope of the field, transpersonal psychology has largely opted out of relevance. To reverse this trend, assuming that is still possible, will involve taking up William James’s injunction to pursue: a) the impulse to spirituality and/or religiosity at any developmental stage, including all the forms it takes; b) the potentials and effects of different spiritual/religious practices, notably the full range of altered states or expanded identity they produce; and c) rigorous empirical research into these traditions, methods, and their constituent populations.

Of course, making such changes would challenge the very identity transpersonal psychology has carved out for itself, not least of which would mean challenging the reasons it has held aloof from being considered a psychology of religion and spirituality or a branch of developmental psychology. It would also require transpersonal psychology to examine the bigger question behind its love of its own identity, which is, what are the field’s unique contributions compared to these other disciplines, if any? Has being different really made any difference, added any value? The days when the transpersonal brand, like the New Age brand, meant something innovative and exciting are long past. Is it not time to transcend the field’s separate identity, in the manner transpersonal psychology itself advocates as the best and highest path, for relevance and real service to the whole world, not just a privileged few?

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RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL PROBLEM? THE CLINICAL RELEVANCE OF IDENTIFYING AND MEASURING SPIRITUAL EMERGENCY

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ABSTRACT: Spiritual emergency (SEY) is a type of religious or spiritual struggle that has been associated with physical and psychological health problems as well as providing a unique opportunity for growth. The SEY construct provided the impetus for the development of a diagnostic v-code that exists within the current *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V). However, clinicians are failing to utilize the code due to a lack of understanding and knowledge. This article discusses the clinical relevance of identifying religious and spiritual problems and presents an overview of the SEY construct. We discuss attempts to identify religious and spiritual problems in a clinical setting and distinguish them from psychopathology. A systematic review of recent research aimed to measure SEY is provided, along with an outline of its limitations and suggestions for further empirical inquiry. Given the expanding number of positive health benefits associated with healthy religiousness and spirituality, facilitating this potential outcome for those experiencing more pathological forms of religiousness and spirituality should be of paramount importance to mental health professionals.

KEYWORDS: religion, spirituality, spiritual emergence, spiritual emergency, crisis, psychosis, psychopathology

Religiousness and spirituality have been increasingly recognized as contributing, both positively and negatively, to various aspects of human functioning (Rosmarin, Wascholz, & Ai, 2011). In a recent review of the links between religiousness, spirituality, and health, Koenig (2015) described religion as involving beliefs and practices related to a transcendent being (e.g., God, Allah, Buddha, a Higher Power), often (but not always) institutionally organized with rules to guide behavior. Traditionally, spirituality was conceptualized as the core of what it meant to be religious. However, Koenig (2008) described how the definition of spirituality has expanded from describing a deeply religious person to include “the superficially religious person, the religious seeker, the seeker of well-being and happiness, and the completely secular person” (p. 349). Such a broad use of the term may complicate efforts to explicate the various effects of spirituality on health, especially as they compare to those effects associated with religiousness. In an effort to overcome such complications and present the clearest summary of results, the terms ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ are often used interchangeably throughout the literature (Koenig, 2015).

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To briefly summarize, recent reviews suggest there are demonstrated links between religiousness and spirituality and improved mental health and wellbeing (see Koenig, 2015; Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012; Paloutzian & Park, 2013; Pargament, Mahoney, Exline, Jones, & Shafranske, 2013), including attachment security (Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2013), self-control (McCullogh & Willoughby, 2009), happiness and positive emotions (Abu-Raiya & Agbaria, 2015), greater meaning in life (Park, Edmondson, & Hale-Smith, 2013), lower levels of depression and anxiety (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009), self-actualization and personal growth (Ivtzan, Chan, Gardner, & Prashar, 2013). Religiousness and spirituality may also provide a protective influence over physical health, displaying improved outcomes associated with diabetes (Newlin, Melkus, Tappen, Chyun, & Koenig, 2008; Polzer & Miles, 2007) and immune and circulatory systems (Kline, 2011). Additionally, Holt-Lunstad, Steffen, Sandberg, and Jensen (2011) found that higher levels of spirituality were associated with lower levels of cardiovascular risk factors (i.e., blood pressure, inflammation, fasting glucose and blood lipids). Possible factors mediating the relationships between religiousness and spirituality and improved health outcomes include positive affect (Holt et al., 2011), forgiveness (Lawler-Rowe, 2010), social support and self-control (Abu-Raiya, Hamama, & Fokra, 2015), cognitive reappraisal (Dezutter, Wachholtz, & Corveleyn, 2011) and cognitive-behavioral mechanisms (James & Wells, 2003).

However, religiousness and spirituality may also contribute to adverse psychological and physical health outcomes. For example, religious or spiritual coping is a concept outlined by Pargament (1997), and describes efforts to understand and deal with life stressors in ways related to the divine or sacred (Pargament, Feuille, & Burdzy, 2011). Negative religious or spiritual coping methods (i.e., religious or spiritual struggle) are reflective of tension, conflict, or struggle with the divine or sacred (Pargament et al., 2011). Researchers have identified various types of religious or spiritual struggle, including interpersonal (e.g., conflict between an individual and a member of their clergy), intraindividual (e.g., internal tension between feelings and expressed behavior) and divine (e.g., questioning God's presence; Abu-Raiya, Pargament, & Exline 2015; Hill & Pargament, 2003). These types of struggle raise ultimate questions about the sacred aspects of life and, thus, may hold important and distinct implications for health and well-being (Hill & Pargament, 2003).

Religious or spiritual struggle has been associated with psychological variables including anger and avoidant coping (Ai, Pargament, Kronfol, Tice, & Appel, 2010; Ai, Seymour, Tice, Qatar, & Bolling, 2009), post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and reported trauma (Bradley, Schwartz, & Kaslow, 2005), depression and anxiety (Abu-Raiya, Pargament, Krause, & Ironson, 2015; McConnell, Pargament, Ellison, & Flannelly, 2006), negative affect (Van Dyke, Glenwick, Cecero, & Kim, 2009), and death anxiety (Henrie & Patrick, 2014). Park, Wortmann, and Edmondson (2011) found that increased religious struggle was associated with greater depression and longer hospitalization in patients with congestive heart failure. Additionally, in relation to physical health, religious or spiritual struggle has been associated with bodily pain (Ai et al., 2010; Cole, 2005), fatigue (Sherman, Simonton, Latif, Spohn, & Tricot, 2005), poorer physical health in older patients (Pargament, Koenig, Tarakeshwar, & Hahn, 2004), and increased

risk of mortality following a medical illness (Pargament, Koenig, Tarakeshwar, & Hahn, 2001).

However, religious or spiritual struggle may be a catalyst for growth and development (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993). For example, religious or spiritual struggle has been associated with post-traumatic growth (Calhoun, Cann, Tedeschi, & McMillan, 2000), religious and spiritual growth (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2006), greater acceptance of others (Bryant & Astin, 2008), and enhanced physical and mental health (Rosmarin, Pargament, & Flannely, 2009). Hill and Pargament (2003) point out that religious or spiritual struggles appear to represent a critical juncture for people, and may catalyze either significant health problems or a unique opportunity for growth.

The abovementioned findings highlight growing mainstream clinical interest in the relationships between religiousness, spirituality and health. The findings also illustrate some of the positive physical and psychological health benefits associated with healthy expressions of religiousness and spirituality, and the need for further exploration of religious and spiritual problems that may contribute to less favorable health outcomes. For example, *spiritual emergency* (SEY) is a phenomenon originally described by Grof and Grof (1989, 1991) as a process of spiritual emergence or awakening (i.e., a gradual unfolding of spiritual awareness) that may become traumatic for some individuals, leading to states of psychological crisis. Such crises are considered distinct from other forms of psychosocial stressors or crises in that they are spiritual, or transpersonal, in nature, and are not attributable to a mental disorder (Turner, Lukoff, Barnhouse, & Lu, 1995).

SEY may be considered a form of religious or spiritual struggle that contributes to both physical and mental health problems, while providing a unique opportunity for growth (Bragdon, 2006, 2013; Grof & Grof, 1989, 1991; Jung, 1983; Lukoff, 1985; Perry, 1999, 2005; Turner et al., 1995). Currently, the SEY construct resides almost solely within the transpersonal psychological literature, despite being the impetus for the development of a diagnostic v-code within the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) (Lukoff, Lu, & Turner, 1992). This article presents an overview of the SEY construct and discusses the clinical relevance of identifying religious and spiritual problems. We discuss attempts to identify SEY in a clinical setting and distinguish it from psychopathology. A systematic review of recent research aimed to measure SEY is provided, along with an outline of its limitations and suggestions for further empirical inquiry.

Literature Search Procedure

The literature search procedure for this review involved systematic searches of title and abstract fields through online databases (i.e., Medline, EBSCOhost, PsychInfo, Google Scholar, and Google Books). As much of the relevant literature is somewhat dated and limited, there were no restrictions associated with date of publication. A combination of the following terms was used: *spiritual experience*, *religious experience*, *spiritual emergence*, *spiritual emergency*, *spiritual crisis*, *spiritual struggle*, *religious struggle*, *psychological crisis*, *spiritual psychosis*. The

reference lists of relevant papers and book chapters were also perused to aid identification of additional relevant references.

Defining Spiritual Emergence(y)

An effort to define SEY necessarily involves an effort to understand how the construct is positioned within the broader conceptual framework of ‘spirituality’. The tendency to conflate findings relating religiousness, spirituality and health outcomes may result in an oversimplification of the current state of scientific knowledge (MacDonald, 2009). Without a uniform definition of spirituality the construct has been defined and measured in a myriad of ways, often resulting in tautological associations with positive health outcomes such as well-being (Garssen, Visser, & de Jager Meezenbroek, 2016; Koenig, 2008; MacDonald, 2000, 2009). As Koenig (2008) pointed out, defining and measuring spirituality in terms of positive traits and experiences guarantees positive associations with such variables and precludes the possibility of identifying relationships between spirituality and negative traits and experiences. Koenig’s (2008, 2015) solution was to focus empirical work on measures of religiousness. However, focusing research upon questionnaires that use predominantly theistic terminology (e.g., experience of God) may limit our understanding of the actual relationship between health and spirituality as a universal (nontheistic) human experience (de Jager Meezenbroek, Garssen, van den Berg, Tuytel, van Dierendonck, Visser, & Schaufeli, 2012; de Jager Meezenbroek, Garssen, van den Berg, van Dierendonck, Visser, & Schaufeli, 2012). An additional issue is evidence suggesting that the conceptualization of spirituality may be culture-specific (see MacDonald et al., 2015), thereby limiting the generalizability of results to wider populations.

MacDonald (2000) statistically analyzed numerous measures of spirituality and presented a descriptive organizational model of the construct. Five dimensions of spirituality were identified: *Cognitive Orientation Towards Spirituality*; *Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension of Spirituality*; *Existential Well-Being*; *Paranormal Beliefs*; and *Religiousness*. In this model, religiousness is conceptualized as an intrinsic expression of spirituality through religious means (i.e., religiously-oriented beliefs, behavior, and practices may facilitate the understanding and unfolding of spiritual experience). MacDonald proposed that spirituality is related to, but not the same as, general religiousness. More specifically, he proposed that spirituality includes, but extends beyond, an intrinsic religiousness orientation (MacDonald, 2000, 2009).

MacDonald and Friedman (2002) found that when spirituality is assessed as a multidimensional construct its relationship with health differs depending on the dimension of spirituality that is assessed. For example, addressing the conceptual confounding of spirituality with well-being, Migdal and MacDonald (2013) found that MacDonald’s *Existential Well-Being* dimension of spirituality was statistically significantly correlated with numerous measures of general well-being. However, explicitly religious and spiritual variables (i.e., variables void of reference to well-being) were not associated with existential well-being and showed only weak correlations with a small number of the general well-being measures investigated.

MacDonald (2018) also reported results that support the conceptual independence of spirituality and well-being via factor analyses.

MacDonald's (2000) *Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension of Spirituality* includes experiences that may be considered transpersonal and bears relation to altered states and non-ordinary experiences. Grof and Grof (1989, 1991) originally identified SEY as a transpersonal phenomenon and discussed it in relation to spiritual emergence (SE). Grof and Grof (1991, p. 34) defined SE as "the movement of an individual to a more expanded way of being that involves enhanced emotional and psychosomatic health, greater freedom of personal choices, and a sense of deeper connection with other people, nature, and the cosmos." Similarly, Nelson (1994) described SE as an awakening into higher levels of awareness beyond the ordinary capabilities of the ego. He suggested that SE involves a transcendence of consciousness beyond one's ordinary waking consciousness, and may facilitate positive outcomes.

Additionally, Lucas (2011) and Bragdon (2013) have each described SE as a process involving healing and growth. Bragdon further explained that during a process of emergence, a person expands gracefully into his or her 'spirit-self' in the absence of psychological crisis. It is noted that these authors all make reference to positive health benefits in their definitions of SE. This point becomes particularly salient when we consider definitions of SEY. For example, Grof and Grof (1991) defined SEY's as:

... critical and experientially difficult stages of a profound psychological transformation that involves one's entire being. They take the form of non-ordinary states of consciousness and involve intense emotions, visions, and other sensory changes, and unusual thoughts, as well as physical manifestations. (p. 31)

Tart (1975) described a non-ordinary, or altered, state of consciousness as both a quantitative and qualitative shift in mental functioning. Grof (2000) focused upon a subgroup of non-ordinary states of consciousness which he termed 'holotropic', meaning 'oriented toward wholeness', excluding states caused by pathological process such as cerebral traumas, intoxications with poisonous chemicals, infections, or degenerative and circulatory processes in the brain (Grof, 1998). However, we note that Rock and Krippner (2007, 2011, 2012) argued that the term 'altered states of consciousness' was based on a logical fallacy and, thus, instead proposed the term 'altered states of phenomenology'. Grof and Grof (1991) described SE and SEY (hereafter collectively referred to as SE[Y]) as a continuum, the implication being that somewhere along this continuum the experience shifts from one that facilitates *positive* health outcomes to one that contributes to *negative* health outcomes. That is, during a process of healthy SE new spiritual insights are easily integrated, and an individual makes a smooth transition from an old to a new way of thinking and being. This process *becomes an emergency* (i.e., SEY) when an individual finds new spiritual insights traumatic and psychologically challenging. This view implies that SE is an inherent characteristic of SEY.

Kane (2005) explored this notion further by examining the differentiation and interplay between spiritual *emergence* and *emergency*. She noted that while Grof and Grof (1991) described SE(Y) as a continuum, they also provided descriptions to differentiate the two phenomena, which has led to a common juxtaposition. Kane interviewed participants who self-identified as having experienced SE(Y) and explored seven aspects (i.e., childhood trauma, trigger, background, experience, therapy, integration and interaction). Based upon scores derived from Grof and Grof's comparative framework,¹ Kane could not clearly differentiate participants' experiences. Every participant reported components of each (i.e., SE and SEY), supporting the concept of a continuum. Kane (2005) found that the speed of onset was connected to the likelihood that a process of SE would lead to SEY. She concluded that the occurrence of one (i.e., SE or SEY) does not preclude the occurrence of the other and, that in the case of her participants, SE *always* accompanied SEY. She also found only a single differentiating factor – the presence of psychological crisis in the case of SEY. A continuum view of SE(Y) acknowledges that as an individual moves further along the continuum and into a state of crisis, they may exhibit psychotic-like symptoms (see Clarke, 2010a, for a discussion of a purported spiritual-psychosis continuum). However, the experience is viewed as a crisis of spiritual awakening (Lucas, 2011), conducive to healing and positive transformation.

Also addressing the issue of psychosis, Bragdon (2013) described SEY as a personal crisis that may manifest symptoms commonly associated with clinical psychosis and psychopathology. She claimed that many individuals have been improperly diagnosed and medicated, which may impede the natural transformative process of the experience. Lucas (2011) described SEY as an intensification of a process of SE, such that the experience becomes unmanageable and often terrifying. Lukoff, Lu, and Turner (1998) similarly stated that a process of SE involves minimal disruption to psychological, social and occupational functioning, whereas SEY involves a significant abrupt disruption to one's functioning.

Crisis intervention expert Albert Roberts (2000) defined psychological crisis as “the subjective reaction to a stressful life experience that compromises the individual's stability and ability to cope or function” (p. 516). Roberts (2000) and Lewis (2005) further explained that crisis involves two necessary conditions: (a) perceived psychological trauma, and (b) perceived problems in coping efficacy.² This conceptualization is similar to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress and coping, whereby an individual evaluates their ability to deal with a stressor based upon their perception of both the nature of the stressor and available coping resources. A salient feature of psychological crisis is that it *must be subjectively perceived by the experiencer* (Lewis, 2005; Roberts, 2000). This point relates to Kane's (2005) findings, whereby individuals may self-identify their experience as either SE or SEY based upon relative weights attributed to components of their experience (e.g., challenging and threatening insights, disruption to daily life, ambivalence towards inner experiences) rather than the number of components that would generally be attributed to either SE or SEY (e.g., according to Grof and Grof's [1991, p. 45] comparative framework).

Identifying Religious and Spiritual Problems in a Clinical Setting

Pargament et al. (2013) proposed that the psychology of religion and spirituality has a great deal to contribute to the understanding of these domains and how they may be used to promote health and wellbeing. However, there is disparity between the views of mental health professionals and the demands of the general population. For example, in a survey of American Psychological Association (APA) leaders conducted by McMinn, Hathaway, Woods, and Snow (2009), despite the fact that over 90% of participants 'agreed' that religion and spirituality reflect important aspects of human diversity, only 40.3% 'strongly agreed' that religion and spirituality are important topics for psychologists to consider, 36.5% 'strongly agreed' that religion and spirituality are important to consider when providing professional services, and 30.6% 'strongly agreed' that religion and spirituality can be studied with scientific rigor. With regard to the personal significance of religion in their lives, the authors found that 21% of participants reported that religion was 'highly important' to them, 25% 'fairly important', and 54% 'not at all important'. These findings are consistent with an earlier survey of APA leaders, in which Delaney, Miller, and Bisono (2007) found that 21% reported that religion was 'very important' in their life, 31% 'fairly important', and 48% 'not very important'. Similarly, Shanfranske (2000) surveyed APA members listed as clinical and counseling psychologists and found that 26% reported that religion was 'very important' to them, 22% 'fairly important', and 51% 'not important'.

With regard to the personal significance of spirituality in their lives, Shanfranske (2000) reported that 48% of participants rated spirituality as 'very important', 25% as 'fairly important', and 26% as 'not very important'. Comparatively, McMinn et al. (2009) found that 61% reported that spirituality was 'very important' to them, 21% 'fairly important', and 18% 'not very important'. Thus, it seems mental health professionals place greater personal significance on spirituality than religion. However, McMinn et al. cautioned that those who seek psychological services may not make the same distinction. In recent polls, approximately 52% of Americans reported that religion was 'very important' in their lives, 26% 'fairly important', and 22% 'not very important' (Gallup, 2015). Eighty-six percent of Americans professed belief in God or a universal spirit (Gallup, 2014), and 52% believed that the Bible can help answer all or most of today's problems (Gallup, 2015). Thus, there is a clear disparity between the personal significance placed upon religion and spirituality by mental health professionals compared to the general population.

Religion and spirituality may be particularly pertinent to patients with psychosis and severe mental illness. For example, Tepper, Rogers, Coleman, and Maloney (2001) reported that religious coping was considered very important by patients with severe mental illness, and increased religious activity was associated with reduced symptoms. Logan and Romans (2002) reported that patients' religious beliefs often conflict with illness paradigms used by mental health professionals and may negatively impact adherence to treatment in bipolar patients. The authors observed that 37% of patients perceived a link between their religious beliefs and their illness. Similarly, Borrás et al. (2007) reported that religion and spirituality contribute to shaping representations of disease and attitudes towards medical treatment in chronic schizophrenic patients.

Research indicates that psychotic symptoms exist as a continuum in the general population (Johns & van Os, 2001; van Os, Linscott, Myin-Germeys, Delespaul, & Krabbendam, 2009). To reflect this conceptualization, in its most recent edition, the DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013) included dimensional assessments across eight domains of psychopathology associated with psychotic disorders (Barch et al., 2013). The diagnostic criteria for schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders (i.e., schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, schizophreniform disorder, delusional disorder, brief psychotic disorder, catatonia) and schizotypal (personality) disorder include five primary symptom domains: hallucinations, delusions, disorganized speech, abnormal psychomotor behavior, and negative symptoms (i.e., restricted emotional expression and avolition). Related clinical phenomena also assessed includes: impaired cognition, depression, and mania, which highlights the relationship between the psychotic and mood disorders (i.e., bipolar and depressive disorders; see Barch et al., 2013; Heckers et al., 2013; Parker, 2014).

To assist in the clinical diagnosis of religious and spiritual problems and their differentiation from psychosis and other forms of psychopathology, Lukoff et al. (1992) proposed a new category - 'Religious or Spiritual Problem' - for inclusion in the DSM-IV (APA, 1994; see also Lukoff, Lu, & Turner, 1995, 1998; Turner et al., 1995). The category appears in the DSM-V (APA, 2013) as a v-code, which identifies additional issues that may be useful to clinicians in documenting underlying pathology. Virtually unchanged since its original appearance, v-code V62.89 notes:

This category can be used when the focus of clinical attention is a religious or spiritual problem. Examples include distressing experiences that involve loss or questioning of faith, problems associated with conversion to a new faith, or questioning of other spiritual values that may not necessarily be related to an organized church or religious institution. (APA, 2013, p. 725)

The inclusion of the v-code illustrates the DSM conceptualization of religion and spirituality as cultural issues, the context of which clinicians are ethically required to consider in their treatment of patients. The diagnosis of a religious or spiritual problem occurs when religion or spirituality are regarded as causing problems in the patient's functioning (Prusack, 2016). Milstein, Midlarsky, Link, Raue, & Bruce (2000) concluded that v-code V62.89 possesses construct validity, based upon concurring evaluations made by clinical psychologists and rabbis in relation to three categories of presenting problems (i.e., mental disorder, religious or spiritual problem, and 'pure' religious problem). The impetus for this proposal originated from the authors' research into SEY experiences (Lukoff et al., 1998). However, specific examples of SEY (e.g., mystical and near-death experiences; Grof & Grof, 1989) were not included in the DSM definition (Turner et al., 1995), which may hinder the effective use of v-code V62.89.

For example, Hartter (1995) investigated the use of v-code V62.89 amongst practicing psychologists and found they could not clearly differentiate pathological from non-pathological aspects of a patient's experience. Most participants (92%) agreed there is a qualitative difference between a psychotic episode and SEY but

felt dissatisfied with the current DSM coding system. Scott, Garver, Richards, and Hathaway (2003) examined the clinical use of v-code V62.89 and suggested it provides little incentive for clinicians to utilize unless they are already predisposed to do so. Hathaway, Scott, and Garver (2004) surveyed mental health clinicians working at exemplar specialty clinics, regarding practice habits related to the attention given to the religious and/or spiritual functioning of clients. None of the clinicians reported using the v-code as part of diagnostic practice, despite perceiving clients' religious and spiritual functioning as significant and important. In a second study, the authors surveyed a random sample of clinical psychologists. Again, most (93.8%) had never used the v-code as part of diagnostic practice, despite almost 50% of respondents acknowledging spontaneous client reports of changes in religious and/or spiritual functioning.

Spiritual assessment may positively influence the clinical care of psychotic and mentally-ill patients. For example, Huguelet et al. (2011) assigned outpatients with psychosis to one of two groups: an intervention group received traditional treatment and a religious and spiritual assessment, and a control group received only traditional treatment. The spiritual assessment was well accepted by patients, and psychiatrists reported potential clinical uses for the assessment information for 67% of patients. Patients in the intervention group reported a strong interest in discussing religious and spiritual issues with their psychiatrists, displayed statistically significantly better attendance rates at follow-up assessment, and were statistically significantly more willing to ask for help than patients in the control group. The ability to ask for help has been associated with potentially higher recovery rates in schizophrenic patients (McGlashan, 1987). However, although psychiatrists acknowledged the usefulness of the intervention, they displayed only moderate interest in conducting spiritual assessments in clinical settings.

The reduced focus on religious and spiritual issues by mental health professionals may, in part, be due to lack of formal training in this area (Bartoli, 2007; Lukoff et al., 1998). According to Vieten et al. (2013) psychologists are lagging behind other health care fields in establishing basic religious and spiritual competencies. For example, Brown (2005) found that clinicians were failing to use v-code V62.89 due to lack of knowledge and understanding, while Herrick (2008) found that mental health practitioners felt that further training was needed to adequately identify spiritual experiences. Vieten et al. established a proposed set of empirically based spiritual and religious competencies for psychologists (i.e., as a form of multicultural competence), addressing attitudes, knowledge and skills. For example, they specify that psychologists must demonstrate empathy, respect and appreciation for diverse religious, spiritual or secular orientations (attitudes); understand that clients may have experiences that are consistent with their religious or spiritual orientation, yet that are difficult to differentiate from psychopathology (knowledge); and be able to conduct empathic and effective therapy with clients from diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds (skills). Vieten et al. (2016) reported that an average of 85.5% practicing clinicians agreed that psychologists should receive training and demonstrate competence in the 16 proposed religious and spiritual competencies. Of concern was the finding that, on

average, 70% of participants reported receiving little to no training in these competencies.

Differentiating Religious/Spiritual Problems from Psychopathology

Transpersonal researchers have long been concerned with the religious and spiritual competencies of mental health practitioners, which has led to attempts to differentiate religious and spiritual problems from psychopathological states. For example, Grof and Grof (1991) provided criteria for differentiating SEY from medical and mental diseases. They suggested it is first necessary to exclude any medical conditions that may be responsible for perceptual, emotional and other disturbances (e.g., arteriosclerosis, temporal tumor, uremia). Signs that would favor SEY include: a history of reasonable psychological, sexual and social adjustment preceding the episode, consideration that the process might originate in one's own psyche, and a willingness to co-operate and honor the basic rules of treatment. Conversely, signs that would indicate caution against a SEY diagnosis include: a lifelong history of serious psychological difficulties and marginal sexual and social adjustment, confused and poorly organized content of the experience, the systematic use of projection, the presence of persecutory voices and delusions, strong destructive and self-destructive tendencies, and violations of basic rules of treatment.

Similarly, Lukoff (1985, see p. 163 for a complete diagnostic flow chart) suggested that a psychotic-like experience may be likely to have a positive outcome if certain indicators are present, including: (a) good pre-episodic functioning, including no previous history of psychosis, maintenance of a social network, intimate relationships, some academic success, (b) acute onset of symptoms (three months or less), (c) stressful precipitants such as a major life change (e.g., death, divorce, job loss), or major life passages, and (d) a positive exploratory attitude toward the experience.

Johnson and Friedman (2008) suggested that an individual may be experiencing SEY if their daily functioning is severely impaired by extremely intense religious or spiritual experiences. They suggested that people experiencing SE may be more likely to display an attitude of excitement contrasted with the frightening and overwhelming states found in SEY, and that such individuals may lack discrimination in sharing their experiences with others who would or would not be receptive. It has been proposed that psychological evaluation should include a thorough understanding of a client's religious and spiritual history and background (Barnhouse, 1986; Johnson & Friedman, 2008; Lovinger, 1984). Similarly, Greenberg and Witzum (1991) stressed that identifying pathological aspects of a client's experience requires an understanding of the fundamental aspects of their religious or spiritual orientation. They proposed that compared to normative religious beliefs and experiences, psychotic episodes: (a) are more intense, (b) are often terrifying, (c) are often preoccupying, (d) are often associated with the deterioration of social skills and personal hygiene, and (e) often involve special messages from religious figures.

Menezes and Moreira-Almeida (2009) proposed that the following features would indicate non-pathological spiritual experiences: absence of psychological suffering, absence of social and occupational impediments, absence of psychiatric comorbidities, short duration of the experience and non-invasiveness in daily activities, manifestation of a critical attitude towards the experience, compatibility of the experience with some religious tradition, individual control over the experience, increase in the meaningfulness of life as a result of the experience, and development in the individual of more concern with helping others as a result of the experience. Menezes and Moreira-Almeida (2010) suggested that the symptoms of SEY may present similarly to the psychosis prodrome (i.e., the period that precedes the onset of full-blown psychosis). They stated that although there may be common characteristics (i.e., visual/auditory hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, social and occupational impediments), SEY is not the same as psychosis because of the potential outcome (i.e., spiritual awakening). After reviewing a number of studies (e.g., Mohr, Brandt, Borrás, Gilleron, & Huguelet, 2006; Mohr & Huguelet, 2004), the findings of which indicated that the role of religion in psychotic patients' lives may be part of the problem as well as the solution, the authors concluded that religion is not an etiologic factor in schizophrenia, but influences the content of patients' thoughts and behavior and, consequently, the outcome.

Others (e.g., Greenberg, Witztum, & Buchbinder, 1992; Jackson & Fulford, 1997; Saver & Rabin, 1997) have suggested that the major differences between religious and spiritual experiences and psychotic states lie in their emotional and behavioral consequences and the interpretation and meaning given to the experiences (Peters, 2010). More specifically, psychosis is more likely to lead to social and behavioral impoverishment, whereas spiritual experiences are generally associated with adaptive and life-enhancing consequences (Fulford, 1989; Heriot-Maitland, 2008). For example, in a group of clinically psychotic outpatients, Peters et al. (2012) found the intensity of hallucinations and delusions, and the presence of psychotic thoughts were all highly related to negative affect and, inversely, to positive affect. In contrast, Heriot-Maitland, Knight, and Peters (2012) observed that spiritual interpretations of 'out-of-the-ordinary' experiences were generally perceived as adaptive and enhancing.

However, these distinctions are complicated by findings suggesting that clinically psychotic patients may appraise their experiences in a positive manner (Chadwick & Birchwood, 1994), while spiritual experiences may be appraised in a negative manner (Jackson & Fulford, 1997). Additionally, Heriot-Maitland (2008) noted that caution must be applied when considering behavioral consequences, which are typically associated with *negative* symptoms of psychosis (e.g., apathy, withdrawal), whereas the focus should be upon acute expression of the *positive* symptoms. Morrison (2001) proposed that positive psychotic symptoms (e.g., hallucinations and delusions) may be conceptualized as culturally unacceptable interpretations of intrusive experiences, and it is the interpretation that causes the associated distress and disability. Furthermore, negative symptoms may be interpreted as 'safety behaviors' to avoid the exacerbation of positive symptoms (Heriot-Maitland, 2008; Morrison, 2004). Peters et al. (2012) found that appraisals such as 'insight' (i.e., illness attributions) and 'decentring' (i.e., psychological explanations) fluctuated over time depending upon environmental context and

internal states. These findings indicate that appraisals of anomalous experiences (deemed as central to the development of psychotic outcomes; Garety, Kuipers, Fowler, Freeman, & Bebbington, 2001) are malleable, are crucial in determining distress and functioning, and are largely determined by cultural and contextual factors.

Therefore, diagnosis has been argued to significantly impact the way an individual deals with their experience (Lukoff et al., 1995). Bragdon (2013) contended that if SEY is diagnosed as clinical psychosis (i.e., without acknowledgement of any potentially transformative aspects) and treated in the conventional way (i.e., anti-psychotic medication), treatment may undermine the natural developmental process, and the individual may fail to integrate the personally meaningful aspects of the experience. Allman, De La Rocha, Elkins, and Weathers (1992) found that the diagnostic process towards patients reporting mystical experiences was largely influenced by psychologists' attitudes. Those who held spirituality in higher regard were less likely to diagnose psychotic disorder. There is also evidence that clinicians' familiarity with religious beliefs and practices influences pathology ratings (O'Connor & Vandenberg, 2005), and this may be contrary to DSM recommendations (i.e., that commonly-held beliefs associated with an individual's religion, culture, or subculture should not be regarded as pathological; APA, 2013) and guidelines regarding cultural competencies in diagnostic and therapeutic practice (Peteet, Lu, & Narrow, 2011; Vieten et al., 2013).

Numerous additional studies have highlighted the subjective nature of diagnostic practice. For example, clinicians' assessments of pathology and prognosis judgments have been illustratively influenced by client factors, such as age and physical health (James & Haley, 1995), and gender (Hansen & Reekie, 1990), as well as therapist factors, such as ethnicity (Atkinson et al., 1996), theoretical orientation and years of experience (Daleiden, Chorpita, Kollins, & Drabman, 1999). Thus, it is important to recognize the limitations and potential biases associated with clinical diagnosis (Friedman & MacDonald, 2006; Johnson & Friedman, 2008; Vieten et al., 2013). Even when a clinical diagnosis is given, attempts can be made to minimize potential associated harmful effects. For example, Watson et al. (2006) reported that negative subjective appraisals (i.e., timeline, cure/control and consequences) of psychotic illness were associated with anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. The authors suggested that therapeutic approaches should emphasize that a psychotic disorder is not necessarily a life-long illness, and that steps can be taken to minimize the likelihood of relapse.

Further studies illustrate a relationship between clinical diagnosis and the subjective appraisal and integration of anomalous phenomena. Comparisons between diagnosed and undiagnosed populations reporting anomalous phenomena found that undiagnosed groups reported more spiritual, psychological and normalizing appraisals and higher perceived understanding from others than those in the diagnosed groups (Brett, Peters, Johns, Tabraham, & McGuire, 2007; Lovatt, Mason, Brett, & Peters, 2010). Heriot-Maitland et al. (2012) compared the phenomenological and contextual similarities and differences between psychotic-like experiences in clinical and non-clinical populations. They found a large

number of similarities across groups (e.g., negative emotion, isolation, deep contemplation, subjective meaning), with the major differences being that non-clinical participants were better able to integrate their experiences due to prior conceptual knowledge. However, the main reason for greater successful integration for the non-clinical group was validation and acceptance from others. The authors concluded that the contextual factors involved with triggering such experiences are different to those involved in integrating the experience, with the latter implicated in the development of psychosis.

While the link between religion, spirituality and psychosis remains unclear, neuroimaging research has found that patients exhibiting psychotic symptoms display increased right brain hemisphere activation, similar to that associated with non-pathological mystical experiences or paranormal beliefs (Lohr & Caligiuri, 1997; Makarec & Persinger, 1985; Pizzagalli et al., 2000). Clarke (2010b) and Claridge (2010) discussed the notion of a spiritual-psychosis continuum, whereby spiritual and psychotic experiences may be related by common or underlying mechanisms (e.g., transliminality, a hypothesised tendency for psychological material to cross thresholds into or out of consciousness; Thalbourne & Houran, 2000). Thus, despite attempts to differentiate between SEY and psychopathology (e.g., Grof & Grof, 1991; Lukoff, 1985), it is reasonable to suggest that an individual may be experiencing varying degrees of both (Lucas, 2011), the outcomes of which are largely dependent upon contextual factors and appraisals by self and others (e.g., Allman et al., 1992; Brett et al., 2007; Heriot-Maitland et al., 2012; Morrison, 2001; Watson et al., 2006).

When using v-code V62.89 clinicians require an ability to differentiate between religious and spiritual problems with or without the presence of a mental disorder (Lukoff et al., 1992). For example, a patient may present with an Axis I disorder (e.g., obsessive-compulsive disorder, manic or psychotic episode) that manifests religious or spiritual content and the clinician is required to differentiate the pathological from the non-pathological and potentially transformative aspects of the experience (Lukoff et al., 1995). Turner et al. (1995) also stated that more severe SEY experiences may precipitate forms of mental disorder or exacerbate existing disorders, requiring that clinical disorders (e.g., psychotic or affective disorders) be coded in conjunction with v-code V62.89. According to the guidelines of the American Psychiatric Association (Lu, 2000) and American Psychological Association (Pargament, 2013), “V-code 62.89 can be used and included in the diagnosis either (a) independently, (b) next to the diagnosis of a mental disorder or (c) within the diagnosis of the disorder if its symptoms have a religious or spiritual content” (Prusack, 2016, p. 178).

In their survey of mental health clinicians working in exemplar specialty clinics, Hathaway et al. (2004) found that most clinicians (92%) believed they could distinguish healthy from unhealthy religious and spiritual functioning in their clients. In a second study, the authors surveyed a random sample of clinical psychologists. Most believed they could discern healthy and unhealthy client religiousness and spirituality and over half strongly believed that religious and spiritual functioning is a significant and important domain of human adjustment.

However, these clinicians' perceived ability to identify religious and spiritual problems did not facilitate their use of v-code V62.89.

Measuring Spiritual Emergence(y)

Lukoff (2014) developed a brief spiritual assessment tool to help identify religious and spiritual problems in a clinical setting. The SOPP is a mnemonic representing assessment across the following domains: **S**trengths religious/spiritual; **O**rganized religion/spirituality; **P**ersonal religion/spirituality; and **P**roblems with religion/spirituality. The SOPP is designed to help guide and encourage the healing process in recovery, although research on its use does not currently exist. It is proposed that additional tools (i.e., measurement instruments) may assist in both the identification of SE(Y) phenomena (e.g., Herrick, 2008) and the effective use of v-code V62.89 (e.g., Brown, 2005; Hathaway et al., 2004), as well as guiding empirical research in this area.

With this aim in mind, Goretzki, Thalbourne, and Storm (2009) developed the first questionnaire designed to ostensibly quantify SEY. The *Spiritual Emergency Subscales* are based upon ten formulated categories of SEY (see Grof & Grof, 1989, 1991). Goretzki et al. performed an exploratory (principal axis) factor analysis (EFA) using the ten subscale scores as variables. The authors deemed their sample size ($N = 109$) adequate as the ratio of participants to variables was larger than 10 to one. They reported a one factor solution, labelling this factor 'spiritual emergency.' Subsequently, Goretzki, Thalbourne, and Storm (2013) presented a shorter 30-item version of the scale (*Spiritual Emergency Scale*; SES), and a revised version (Goretzki, Thalbourne, & Storm, 2014). In order to create the short version of their scale, Goretzki et al. (2013) correlated each item on the 84-item SES with an obtained factor score and selected the 30 items that correlated most highly with the factor score. The authors reported empirical validation results for both versions of the scale (Goretzki et al., 2009, 2013, 2014).

Insofar as the ten subscales purportedly capture different types of SEY experiences, Goretzki et al.'s (2009) single factor solution is appealing as it supports the conceptualization of SEY as a single overarching construct. However, the authors used a single dataset for all reported analyses. While it is acknowledged that Goretzki et al.'s (2013) aim was to create a more concise version of their scale to make it more appealing for use in clinical and research settings, Widaman, Little, Preacher, and Sawalani (2011) explained the problematic nature of basing item selection on a single dataset when creating a short version of a questionnaire from a longer original version. This approach capitalizes on chance results in a single sample, as the subset of items that appears optimal may vary across datasets. Additionally, given the small sample size, it would have been optimal for the authors to obtain further evidence for the robustness of their factor structure by either replicating the study with a larger sample or applying further statistical techniques (i.e., bootstrapping; Osborne, 2014).

Harris, Rock, and Clark (2015) attempted to replicate Goretzki et al.'s (2009) original study using a larger sample size ($N = 224$). The authors deemed their

sample size adequate based upon guidelines offered by Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999) who recommended a minimum of 150 cases, and Guilford (1954) who stipulated at least 200 cases. Like Goretzki et al., Harris et al. obtained responses using a dichotomous (Yes/No) format. The authors were unable to replicate the approach taken by Goretzki et al. (i.e., using the ten subscale scores as variables), as assumptions regarding the unidimensionality of subscale scores were not met. Goretzki et al. did not report whether such assumptions were met for their data. Consequently, Harris et al. performed principal axis EFA using the 84 items as variables and reported a four-factor solution, which is inconsistent with the single factor solution reported by Goretzki et al. Harris et al. acknowledged that their sample did not meet recommendations provided by Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1995) (i.e., subject to item ratio of 20:1), although this ratio would have been met had the data been amenable to the same analysis as Goretzki et al. (i.e., subscale scores as variables). Consequently, Harris et al. justified their analysis with reference to Costello and Osborne (2005) who stated that smaller samples can be adequate if the data are strong enough.

Harris et al. (2015) proposed a revised version of the SES, comprising 40 items from the original scale along with the addition of a visual analogue scale (VAS) to adequately capture the 'crisis' aspect of SEY, which they asserted the SES in its current form is unable to do. Harris et al. and Cooper, Rock, Clark, and Harris (2015) each reached this conclusion based upon findings that SES scores were unrelated to emotional instability (Harris et al., 2015) and ego-grasping orientation (a personality trait measuring the degree to which an individual is bound by the limits of rationality and Western concepts of control; Cooper et al., 2015; Knoblauch & Falconer, 1986). Additionally, Harris et al. observed a (non-significant) *negative* relationship between SES scores and tension.

Bronn and McIlwain (2015) reported empirical support for Goretzki et al.'s (2013) 30-item SES based upon the results of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Cooper et al. (2015) pointed out that Bronn and McIlwain acted under the erroneous assumption that Goretzki et al. (2013) had conducted an EFA on the 30-item SES. However, this was not the case. Goretzki et al. (2009) performed EFA on the full-length SES but the authors did not perform a similar analysis on the 30-item version of the scale. Nonetheless, Bronn and McIlwain were perhaps justified in conducting CFA on the 30-item SES given Goretzki et al.'s (2009, 2013, 2014) conceptual claim that the SES measures a single construct, namely SEY (Byrne, 2005). In line with recommendations made by Goretzki et al. (2009), Bronn and McIlwain collected responses via a five-point Likert scale. The results of the authors' CFA confirmed a single factor solution for the 30-item SES. However, this study also utilized a relatively small sample ($N=30$ for the initial pilot study and $N=212$ for the main study), and the authors provided no justification for their sample size. Additionally, the authors did not perform statistical comparison of their two samples (i.e., pilot and main study groups) in terms of model and measurement invariance (Schmitt & Kuljanin, 2008; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000), and did not consider and compare alternative models to the one-factor model that was tested. It is possible that their one-factor model may have resulted from 'overfitting', which may occur with statistical procedures that optimize the fit of the model to the given data, resulting in erroneous conclusions (Byrne, 2005; Osborne, 2014).

Subsequently, Cooper et al. (2015) were the first to perform EFA on the 30-item SES, also using a five-point Likert scale response format. Consistent with Harris et al. (2015), the authors reported a four-factor solution. A typographical error must be noted to avoid confusion. Table 1 (Cooper et al., 2015, p. 252) states that analysis was undertaken on the 40-item SES; however, analysis was undertaken on the 30-item SES. In addition, the authors state that “Table 1 shows the factor loadings for the four factors after rotation, with cross-loadings of $>.30$ suppressed for ease of interpretation” (p. 251). The information presented in Table 1 does include suppression of cross-loadings $>.30$ (see Costello & Osborne, 2005) as illustrated though the use of bolded vs. unbolded text. However, there are a number of other values excluded from the table (which appear to pertain to factor loadings $<.30$), and the reason for their exclusion is not explicitly stated. It should also be noted that both teams consisted of the same authors, bar Cooper from the Harris et al. study. As such, the interpretation and reporting of results is subject to possible consistency and confirmatory biases. Both Harris et al. and Cooper et al. concluded that the SES may be more accurately regarded as a measure of SE than SEY. That is, the authors argued that the scale may be ‘tapping’ into a broader set of SE experiences but does not capture the ‘crisis’ aspect that is characteristic of SEY.

Storm and Goretzki (2016) rebutted claims that their SES is not measuring SEY. With regards to Harris et al.’s (2015) suggestion that a VAS could be used to assess an individual’s degree of subjective crisis, the authors reported that two versions of the SES have recently shown to positively correlate: (a) a forced-choice version (i.e., ‘Yes’/‘No’), and (b) a five-point Likert-scale version (i.e., ‘Never’ to ‘Very Often’) (see Storm, Drinkwater, & Jinks, 2017). Storm and Goretzki subsequently argued that the Likert-scale version indicates *degree* of crisis. However, it is argued that a Likert-scale version of the SES simply assesses the degree to which an individual has experienced the phenomena described within the item, and does not in any way assess subjective crisis associated with such phenomena.³ Storm and Goretzki’s argument is based upon an assumption that ‘crisis’ is inherently implicated within the items of the SES, and a Likert-scale response format quantifies this. Whilst some items do contain wording that may be indicative of crisis (e.g., Q.1 *Have you ever lost your sense of reference as your outer and inner worlds dissolved?*), others do not (e.g., Q.6 *Have you ever undertaken a powerful inner experience that involved a journey into another world?*).

Storm and Goretzki (2016) provided a list of items from the SES that they believe “overtly” illustrate emergency/crisis symptoms (p. 193). Such items include Q.16 *Have you ever been aware of the presence of spiritual entities?* However, such experiences do not inherently indicate crisis, and may even be perceived in a positive manner. For example, Taylor and Murray (2012) investigated the experience of individuals who reported routinely hearing the voices of spiritual entities. None of the six participants interviewed experienced distress in relation to their experiences. On the contrary, voice-hearing was perceived as positive and personally meaningful, in accordance with previous research on the topic (e.g., David, 1999; Romme & Escher, 1989).

Other items, while intimating the experience of crisis, are convoluted and ‘double-barreled’, which may be perceived as ambiguous and difficult for a respondent to

answer with confidence (Clark & Watson, 1995). For example, Q.22 *Have you ever been overwhelmed by powerful emotions and physical sensations, concerning yourself and others in various circumstances and historical settings?* An individual may have felt overwhelmed by powerful emotions (but not physical sensations), concerning themselves (but not others) in various circumstances (but not historical settings). As such, an individual may feel that there is no viable response option that accurately reflects their position, which impacts upon the validity of the scale.

Some additional points in the ongoing dialogue between the abovementioned authors (i.e., Cooper et al., 2015; Goretzki et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2015; Storm & Goretzki, 2016) require clarification. Storm and Goretzki (2016) appear to suggest (p. 191) that Harris et al. (2015) and Cooper et al. (2015) argue that the SES *is* a measure of *emergence*, and that to make such a claim would be unethical. It should be clarified that Harris et al. and Cooper et al. did not make such a claim, but took a more conservative approach by suggesting that the SES *may* be a measure of emergence. Where the teams of authors differ is in their views about the SES' ability to capture the crisis aspect of SE(Y). Storm and Goretzki believe the SES *does* capture crisis, whereas Harris et al. and Cooper et al. believe it *may not*. Further, it is noted that Goretzki et al. (2009, p. 83) have recommended that "persons who score more than one and one half standard deviations above the mean of the given subscale be *tentatively* classified as having definitely experienced the relevant spiritual emergency." It may be argued that any statements alluding to an individual having 'definitely' experienced a particular phenomenon based solely upon questionnaire scores should be deemed highly questionable. We also deem it problematic that the authors continue to defend the validity of their scale, despite not having conducted any empirical research that extends beyond their original dataset. Additionally, Storm and Goretzki suggested that Harris et al. presented a 40-item version of the SES as their own (see p. 193-195). It should be noted that Harris et al. did not claim ownership of the 40-item SES, but suggested that it may provide a neater factorial structure than Goretzki et al.'s (2013) 30-item version. We add that additional testing and analysis with larger sample sizes would be required in order to verify this claim.

Storm and Goretzki (2016) criticized the four-factor solutions obtained by Harris et al. (2015) and Cooper et al. (2015) on the grounds that the labelled factors were "unwieldly and conflated" (p. 197). We agree with Storm and Goretzki's point that "EFA is probably better suited to data comprised of a heterogenous set of items that do not owe their origins to categories" (p. 198), as does the SES. Addressing the issue of unidimensionality of subscales and their use as variables in EFA, Storm and Goretzki reported that subsequent analyses assessing the unidimensionality of their ten subscales (Goretzki et al., 2009) returned multiple factors for most subscales. However, the authors maintained their position regarding the use of subscale scores as variables by arguing against the 'Eigenvalue > 1.00' rule (Slocum-Gori & Zumbo, 2011; Storm & Goretzki, 2016).

A major problem with efforts to compare the abovementioned research findings is that the analyses and versions of the SES and its response format differ across each study. For example, Goretzki's (2009) original analysis used the 84-item SES with a Yes/No response format, using subscales as variables for EFA; Harris et al.

(2015) used the 84-item SES with a Yes/No response format, using items as variables for EFA; Cooper et al. (2015) used the 30-item SES with a Likert-scale response format, using items as variables for EFA; and Bronn and McIlwain (2015) used the 30-item SES with a Likert-scale response format, using item parcels as variables for CFA. Consequently, analyses undertaken at different levels of conceptual complexity have influenced the manner with which each team has interpreted the SES and, consequently the SEY construct. Both Goretzki et al. (2009, 2013, 2014) and Bronn and McIlwain have concluded that the SES accurately represents a unidimensional conception of SEY, while both Harris et al. and Cooper et al. have concluded that the SES is multidimensional and, thus, SEY may be conceptualized as a multidimensional construct. These findings appear to result from the use of either subscale scores or unit parcels (Bronn & McIlwain, 2015; Goretzki et al., 2009) as variables, compared to items as variables (Cooper et al., 2015; Harris et al., 2015). However, Goretzki et al. (2009) did not appear to consider the possibility that an item-level analysis may have produced a more factorially complex solution than their original scale-level analysis.

An alternative option that has not been addressed in the published research to date is that the SES (and the SEY construct itself) may lend itself to a higher order factorial structure (Osborne, 2014). For example, Harris et al. (2015) and Cooper et al. (2015) both reported factors that showed similarities in content, along with moderate to strong degrees of intercorrelation between factors. These results could be subjected to further second-order FA of the first order factors, which may elucidate the possible existence of a common higher order (i.e., hierarchical) factor structure. A bifactor structure should also be considered whereby each item loads on a general factor (i.e., a single latent trait), with two or more common factors (i.e., subtraits) present in the model (Byrne, 2005; Osborne, 2014; Reise, Moore, & Haviland, 2010). The wider implication of such findings would be the conceptualization of a multidimensional model that allows for the retention of a single important target construct (i.e., SEY).

Directions for Future Research

It is strongly recommended that a measurement instrument be sufficiently validated to assist in the clinical diagnosis and appropriate treatment of SEY experiences. A valid instrument suitable for use in a clinical environment will supplement DSM v-code V62.89 (APA, 2013). Goretzki et al. (2009, 2013, 2014) have attempted to construct and validate a measurement instrument. However, there are concerns over the validity of the instrument as a measure of SEY, as well as unresolved debate regarding the factor structure of the instrument (Bronn & McIlwain, 2015; Cooper et al., 2015; Harris et al., 2015; Storm & Goretzki, 2016). In the interests of moving forward, the following recommendations are proposed:

(1) Researchers investigating the SES (i.e., Bronn & McIlwain, 2015; Cooper et al., 2015; Goretzki et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2015) should pool their statistical data in order to create larger sample sizes that are more suitable for factor analytic techniques. These analyses should address the possible conceptualization of the SES (and, consequently, the SEY construct) as comprising a first-order

multidimensional factorial structure or a bifactorial structure. A high degree of methodological rigor is necessary to establish the SES as a valid measure of SE(Y). This process should include cross-validation of exploratory results and transparency in the reporting of statistical findings (e.g., factor loadings, loading matrices).

(2) Crisis theory experts posit that psychological crisis must be subjectively perceived by the experiencer (Lewis, 2005; Roberts, 2000). Therefore, it is recommended that a measurement instrument should be self-report whereby the individual evaluates his/her own experience. It is also recommended that the questionnaire response format is continuous. In this way, the instrument may still be relevant for individuals who are not experiencing high degrees of crisis or distress (i.e., less clinically apparent forms of SE[Y] that may still benefit from intervention), as well as individuals who are experiencing SE that is void of crisis.

(3) The instrument should differentiate between past and present states of SE(Y), as this may determine varying degrees of crisis and growth. That is, if SE(Y) potentially facilitates growth outcomes (Bragdon, 2006, 2013; Grof & Grof, 1989, 1991; Jung, 1983; Lukoff, 1985; Perry, 1999, 2005), an individual who has experienced SE(Y) in the past (but not currently) may experience lower levels of crisis and higher levels of growth than an individual in a current state of SE(Y).

(4) Haynes, Richard, and Kubany (1995) specified that establishing a valid assessment instrument requires that the target construct is carefully defined and subjected to content validation (i.e., in the form of expert review). Goretzki et al. (2009, 2013, 2014) based the construction of the SES on a review of the literature as it pertains to Grof and Grof's (1989) original conception of SEY. It should be noted that much of the theoretical SE(Y) literature is dated and not necessarily reflective of the current day experience and understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, it is recommended that future research include empirical validation of a definition of the SE(Y) construct, along with qualitative research procedures to explore the present-day lived experience and expert understanding of SE(Y) and related phenomena. In doing so, it is recommended that researchers consider the position of the SE(Y) construct within the broader conceptual framework of spirituality.

Conclusion

In summary, empirical research indicates that religion and spirituality may contribute, both positively and negatively, to psychological and physical health and wellbeing (see Koenig, 2015; Rosmarin et al., 2011). SEY (Grof & Grof, 1989, 1991) is a process of SE (i.e., a transcendental and transformative process, whereby one's conscious awareness expands or awakens beyond their ordinary level of waking consciousness) that includes a state of psychological crisis. Transpersonal researchers stress that SE(Y) experiences hold the potential for positive transformation and growth if treated appropriately (Bragdon, 2006, 2013; Grof & Grof, 1989, 1991; Jung, 1983; Lukoff, 1985; Perry, 1999). A diagnostic v-code exists within the DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), originally designed to help clinicians identify SE(Y) experiences (Lukoff et al., 1992, 1995,

1998; Turner et al., 1995). However, research suggests the v-code is not being utilized by clinicians due to lack of understanding and knowledge (Brown, 2005; Hathaway et al., 2004).

While there is increasing focus upon the cultural competence of clinicians (Vieten et al., 2013), research indicates that appraisals of anomalous experiences are largely influenced by both client and practitioner variables as well as cultural and contextual factors (e.g., Morrison, 2001; O'Connor & Vandenberg, 2005; Peters et al., 2012). Therefore, the clinician's role is crucial in determining the outcome of religious and spiritual problems. A valid measurement instrument may assist with the appropriate identification of SE(Y) experiences and effective use of v-code V62.89, although it must be emphasized that a measurement instrument is not a substitute for clinical assessment. While some effort has been made to construct and validate a suitable measurement instrument (Goretzki et al., 2009, 2013, 2014), there is some evidence to suggest that the SES may be a valid measure of SE but not SEY (Harris et al., 2015; Cooper et al., 2015). Thus, it is proposed that the next steps involve: a collaboration by researchers investigating the SES as a measure of SE(Y) to further investigate the factorial structure and validity of the scale; potential modification of the SES or development of a new scale to measure SE(Y) that employs a continuous response format and the capacity to differentiate between past and present states of SE(Y); and empirical validation of a definition of SE(Y) as well as an exploration of the current day lived experience of the phenomena. Such a deep and comprehensive understanding is necessary to inform the validation of a measurement instrument that may supplement v-code V62.89. Given the expanding number of potentially positive health benefits associated with healthy religiousness and spirituality, facilitating this potential outcome for those experiencing more pathological forms of religiousness and spirituality should be of paramount importance to mental health professionals.

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Notes

¹ Grof and Grof (1991, p.45) provided a table outlining the differences between spiritual emergence and emergency. Such differences purportedly involve a gradual, welcomed infusion of new spiritual awareness in the case of spiritual *emergence*, compared with an overwhelming influx

of new insights that are frightening, overwhelming and difficult to integrate in the case of spiritual *emergency*.

² Roberts (2000) and Lewis (2005) specify that (a) perceived psychological trauma and (b) perceived problems in coping efficacy are *necessary* conditions of psychological crisis, although they do not specify whether these two necessary conditions constitute a *sufficient* condition.

³ It should be noted that Argyrous (2005) has argued that it is not appropriate to calculate the mean as a measure of central tendency for Likert-scale data. Although, Reckase (2000) noted that practical applications of Likert-scaling indicate that treating the scale as interval does not appear to cause serious harm.

The Authors

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BOOK REVIEWS

SIEGEL, IRENE R. (2017). *The sacred path of the therapist: Modern healing, ancient wisdom, and client transformation*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company. x + 213 pp. ISBN: 978-0-393-71241-4. Hardcover. \$27.50. Reviewed by Irene Lazarus

Dr. Irene Siegel received her doctorate from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (now Sofia University) and her master's degree from Columbia University School of Social Work. An Approved EMDR Consultant, speaker and teacher, she has also studied authentic ancient healing traditions in North and South America over many years. EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Training) is an evidence based psychotherapeutic modality developed by Dr. Francine Shapiro and used in the treatment of traumatic experience. It is a focused mindfulness practice that uses elements of bilateral stimulation and cognitive restructuring.

Sections of Dr. Siegel's book are derived from an article that appeared in *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology (JTP)*: Therapist as a container for spiritual resonance and client transformation in transpersonal psychotherapy, 45(1), 49-74, 2013, with permission of the *JTP*. Dr. Siegel thanks Rosemarie Anderson, her dissertation chairperson and Marcie Boucouvalas for their assistance. She acknowledges that "portions of chapters 1, 2, 3, and the Epilogue in this book" derive from her *JTP* article (2017, p. x).

In the spirit of full disclosure, besides sharing the same first name, Dr. Siegel and I have shared many experiences. We both received our doctorates in transpersonal psychology at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (now Sofia University). We are both transpersonally oriented psychotherapists. We are also both EMDR certified therapists, though Dr. Siegel has gone quite a bit farther in her EMDR training and practice than I have. I have taken her class, "Applications of Mindful Awareness and Resonance to Psychotherapy" twice and just yesterday signed up for a third retaking to stay current with my EMDR certification, deepen my understanding and practice of her shamanic approach to EMDR, and enjoy her teaching of elements of transpersonal psychotherapy to the broader psychotherapeutic community. I find myself drawn again and again to the shamanic and meditative practices that permeate the course.

There are many strands that Dr. Siegel develops in her book. She says in her introduction, "This book discusses the evolving role of the therapist as both therapist and healer" (p. 2). She goes on to note that case examples are included in which "the therapist-healer maintains a centered spiritual resonance, uses internal intuitive senses to track information and energy flow, and assists the client in bringing awareness from personal issues to the collective or archetypal range of awareness where transformation becomes multidimensional" (p. 2).

She says to the EMDR therapist:

I want to teach you to dance within that field of spiritual resonance with your client, following your own sacred path. You can explore for yourself whether the

psychotherapist's introduction of coherent and conscious energy into the energy field of the therapeutic container becomes an important element in the activation of an expanded consciousness response in the client that is transforming and life changing. (p. 10)

She continues:

Through the written word, I attempt to explain and teach the skills of alternative ways of knowing, tracking information and energy, holding a resonance in a shared field based in connection to a divine source, and weaving the process into the psychotherapy session. (p. 10)

The volume includes 8 chapters. Chapters include didactic material and case examples as well as guided meditations and journaling suggestions designed to help integrate the material and guide the therapist on the path of developing alternative ways of knowing and entering into spiritual resonance with their clients. Dr. Siegel defines spiritual resonance as “a vibrational pattern of greater cosmic wholeness, which is experienced as soul awareness. Spiritual resonance is realized through expanded awareness, usually brought about through spiritual practice, and is nonlinear, transcending time and space” (p. 186).

In Chapter 1, Mindfulness, Attunement, and Spiritual Resonance, Dr. Siegel discusses mindful awareness in clinical practice. Dr. Siegel notes:

The term *spiritual resonance* emerged from an exploratory qualitative heuristic study that I conducted. I found that as my clients were processing traumatic memory in silent space, I was also dropping into an experience of inner focus and connection to a larger cosmic whole. I was being present from a place of expanded awareness familiar to me through meditation. The consistent experience of being in resonance with my clients vibrationally and emotionally, tracking energy flow, and blending within a shared field appeared to set the foundation for my clients to have awareness from what I will call a higher consciousness or soul perspective. The key ingredient was the experience of being in divine presence and that presence permeating the field. The experience of both therapist and client was a felt sense of connection to a greater cosmic whole. (p. 25)

In Chapter 2, Transpersonal Theory to Practice, Dr. Siegel mentions the work of Carl Jung (1976), Carl Rogers (1989), Abraham Maslow (1968), Ken Wilber (2000), Charles Tart (1993), Roger Walsh (1993), Stan Grof (1995), Frances Vaughan (1993) and Ram Dass (1993), among many others. In an exercise “Piercing the Veil,” she invites the reader to surrender to the experience of expansion and higher awareness, “quieting the mind, and remembering a part of yourself that has been hidden from conscious awareness” (p. 55).

In Chapter 3, Elements of a Transpersonal Therapy Practice, Dr. Siegel includes therapist accounts of a variety of these transpersonal elements such as the therapist's attunement as a doorway to spiritual resonance; internal feedback mechanism using alternative ways of knowing; internal focus of attention; transmission of energy; and nonattachment to ego, goals, expectations and outcomes.

For example, research participant Anne describes using alternative ways of knowing:

Spiritual resonance is very much about what is happening in the energy field and the strong intuitive connection between therapist and client. When this happens, I get goose bumps all over my body indicating something important and truthful is occurring and I need to pay attention. When something feels off, or blocked within my client's process, I tune into my own body and my emotions. I pay attention to where in my body or energy centers I feel the resonance with my client. That intuitive knowing helps me to reestablish a higher resonance with the client based in a higher consciousness which helps them move through the blocks. (p. 61)

Chapter 4, *The Human Energy Field*, includes sections on the chakra system, subtle energy bodies, energy healing, and distance healing.

In Chapter 5, *Resourcing, Cosmic Interweave, and Ego Integration in EMDR*, Dr. Siegel describes the first two phases of the standard EMDR protocol and transpersonal aspects she has integrated into the protocol. EMDR therapists are familiar with a practice known as "cognitive interweave," which includes questions that a therapist might ask to help a client become unstuck in the processing of a traumatic event. She presents an example of a cognitive interweave:

Client continues to believe that he is a bad person because he did not fight off an adult sexual abuser in early childhood, at age 7. He believes that he should have been able to say no. I ask him if he knows any 7-year-old boys now. He says yes. "Do you think that this 7-year-old boy should be able to fight off an adult man?" I ask. "Of course not," he says. "That would be ridiculous." I ask, "Why is it different for you?" (p. 118)

Dr. Siegel describes a transpersonal practice she has added to the EMDR protocol that she calls a "cosmic interweave":

Let's now take this process into the transpersonal range of awareness. Recall Cara, who believed that she didn't matter to her parents. Therefore, her negative belief about herself was "I don't matter." She could not shake this belief about herself and it permeated her world and all relationships. I held open a field of spiritual resonance, and she was able to join me in the experience. I did not use a cognitive interweave. I used what I would describe as a cosmic interweave, filled with divine presence and cosmic consciousness. I sensed the shared field beginning to flow with energy and light as she calmed down and felt more at peace and ready for the process. I remained very centered. The shifting energy within the shared field triggered a peak experience of realization of her connection to her higher self and a divine source. Knowing that divine connection helped her evolve her positive belief from "I do matter," to "I am," as she bathed in the light of spirit. (p. 118)

In Chapter 6, *Healing the Wounds of the Past*, Dr. Siegel reviews phases three through eight of the EMDR protocol and includes longer transcriptions of healing

sessions. She integrates Rhea White's work on Exceptional Human Experiences (1993, 1994, 1997).

Chapter 7, Changing Our Destiny, begins with these words: "The Shaman believes that we dream our world into being. Whatever we manifest in our lives begins with our beliefs and our vision. All begins as energy and then takes form" (Villoldo, 2008, in Siegel, p. 143).

What follows is a rather breathtaking transcription in which Dr. Siegel works with Helen and the small tumor in her breast:

Helen had a small tumor in her breast that was about to be biopsied. She had successfully reprocessed old trauma in treatment two years earlier. She returned to treatment to specifically work on healing the factors related to the tumor. She had postponed the biopsy for a couple of weeks. She closed her eyes and relaxed with three deep cleansing breaths. I did the same, bringing up the light body energies as taught in Awakening Your Light Body. Spiritual resource filled the office. I could sense her connection to one open flow of energy, in the light of Spirit, flooding the office. She described the tumor as being black on the inside, with a red outer shell. I used my inner senses to find her tumor as energy, and I held it in my awareness.

I asked Helen to bring her awareness deep into the image of the tumor, describing the color, size, weight, and then the emotion held there. "Fear," she said. I asked, "What is the belief about yourself that this tumor is holding for you?" "I am helpless," she replies. I asked the consciousness of the tumor to take us back to the earliest memory of feeling helpless. Helen brought all of her focus into the image of the tumor, and she recalled a very early memory that she had not recalled before. "My father was hitting my mother, and I was in the crib watching this. I think I was about 2 years old," she said. "I was terrified and felt helpless." The theme of feeling helpless was not new for her. She had previously worked with it in therapy, as it related to her feelings about herself in her marriage. Her marriage had improved greatly as a result of the personal work that she had done. Now the core essence of the belief was coming to the surface from an unconscious level.

As I introduced BLS, Helen was accessing the consciousness of the tumor through her imagination. In my imagination, colors of light from above transformed the color of the tumor to a soft pink. I watched the transformation with my inner vision. Helen's level of emotional disturbance was reduced from a SUD (subjective unit of distress) of 8 to a 0, as the positive belief was installed that she is not helpless now and she has an ability to take control. This seemed very true to her ... as she had taken control of her health care decisions by entering therapy before moving forward with her biopsy. She was able to put the past into the past.

I perceived a radiant light entering the room. Helen reported the same experience, perceiving it as her higher power. She felt reassured that she would be fine. She felt as if she was being embraced by this light. Her energy blended

with my own. It was like floating in a warm gentle sea, the two of us completely in harmony with the movement of this sea of light. “My higher power gave me a gift,” she said. “It was a beautiful ball of golden light that infused into my heart.” She was glowing with golden light and felt completely at peace.

Helen returned for a session after her scheduled biopsy. She related with much glee that when she went for the biopsy, to her doctor’s surprise, he could no longer find the tumor. Helen had a big smile on her face. Although there is no scientific evidence that psychotherapy dissolved her tumor, she had a deep sense of knowing that her inner wisdom led her in the right direction. She believed that she changed her destiny. (pp. 148-149)

I conclude this review noting again that much of the book includes findings from the exploratory heuristic study Dr. Irene Siegel reported on in her *JTP* article (2013). I believe Dr. Siegel has tapped into a very large and very promising vein for research in transpersonal psychotherapy and I do hope she and many others will follow up and develop this work. I see many possible benefits in this future research for clients and practitioners of transpersonal psychotherapy and also for EMDR therapists and their clients. I also want to thank Dr. Siegel for the extensive teaching she is doing that introduces aspects of transpersonal psychotherapy to colleagues in our field of psychotherapy who are more traditionally trained.

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The Reviewer

Irene Lazarus, Ph.D., LMFT, received her doctorate from the California Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in 1985 (subsequently named the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, and now Sofia University). She served on the faculty of this school, both globally and residentially, between 1985-2010, and has practiced as a transpersonally oriented psychotherapist for over 35 years. Dr. Lazarus' article, A transpersonal feminist approach to family systems, which appeared in the *International Journal for Transpersonal Studies* in 2010, describes an approach that she developed with colleague Kathryn Lazarus Baron. Dr. Lazarus is Associate Editor (Clinical) for *JTP*.

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MELICK, JILL, (2018). *The red book hours: Discovering C.G. Jung's art mediums and creative process*. Zurich, Switzerland: Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess. 454 pp. ISBN: 978- 3-85881-816-4. Hardcover. \$90.77. *Reviewed by Janice Geller*

A transformative journey is awaiting you, as you open the pages to Jill Mellick's book, *The Red Book Hours*. She asks the reader to follow her into the creative process, and art techniques Carl Gustav Jung adopted in creating *The Red Book*. A self-reflective manuscript, *The Red Book* created by C.G. Jung, was a tether for recording his "visions, dreams, active imagination, and commentaries" (p. 18), portraying them in calligraphy and illuminated images. "*The Red Book* was considered by Jung to be the foundation of his theoretical work" (p.17) and can be

seen as “the most influential unpublished work (until 2009) in the history of psychology” (p.17).

The fertile grounds of Bollingen, by the waters of Lake Obersee offered a refuge for Jung. Mellick quotes Jung, “I immersed myself in nature, crawled as it were, into the very essence of nature and away from the whole human world” (p. 408). If you choose to enter your own inner world, Mellick asks you to climb the stairs to the tower at Bollingen, find a place where you can be “entirely yourself” (p. 103). As Barbara Hannah wrote, “a place for spiritual contemplation” (p. 103). The tower at Bollingen, a visible witness “to the emergence of inner visions and symbols to form- a space to renew your spirit in timelessness, introversion, silence, natural beauty, and structured, intentional conviviality” (p. 102). She asks you to sit at his desk, feel the texture of the colored pigments that Jung explored in creating *The Red Book*, and allow the glistening waters of Lake Obersee to open the flow of your creative unconscious.

She asks you to come inside Jung’s world and explore as he did the images that arose as he pondered his inner visions. She asks you to examine in detail his images and partake in the creative process that Jung engaged to investigate his unconscious figures and develop active imagination. It is like a mystery novel, as the details begin to intertwine into a transpersonal adventure into the inner life of the man that launched analytical psychology.

The suggestion is that you follow Jung’s lead, as if you were one of his patients. “Our task, in his [Jung’s] opinion, was to embark on our own work; to experience our own symbolic realms, to create our own versions of *The Red Book* in whatever medium fits us, and to come into relationship with those experiences” (p. 35). Jung exhorted his patients to “go thou and do likewise,” to give outer expression to inner experiences (p. 31).

Mellick gives voice to Jung’s suggestion on how to value the images that appear from the unconscious.

He [Jung] actively made a practice of not valuing the ‘artistic productions’ of his patients, encouraging them to view their work as being without artistic worth, yet he simultaneously exhorted them to keep it, sit with it, hold it precious. Its worth was priceless, but it was a worth measured neither aesthetically nor financially, but by soul. Its worth resided in the experience that makers have in first encountering an image, a symbol, the beginning of a personal myth, and intimation of an archetype; in experiencing and expressing a symbol in a form to which they can then relate, revisit, ponder, re-experience, and re-absorb, each time with more understanding of their own inner world. (p. 37)

Mellick quotes Jung in a letter he wrote: “I let my patients find their own symbolic expressions, their mythology” (p. 422).

The Red Book Hours is a masterful and captivating work that unfolds through Mellick’s compelling writing, quotes from Jung, details of the illuminated images, photographs of Bollingen where Jung created *The Red Book*, and quotes from

Jung's family members, Jungian analysts, artists, and authors. She has created a scholarly and stunningly beautiful book that speaks of her awe for, and research about Jung, and his creation of *The Red Book*. Her research methods have foundations in "psychology, anthropology, ethnography, oral history, art history, art conservation science, graphic design studies, and technical art history, among other areas" (p. 19). She successfully interweaves sources as diverse as a calligraphy scholar who influenced Jung's calligraphy style (pp. 340, 347), the Tewa-speaking Pueblo people's concepts (p. 36), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's studies of creative individuals (pp. 38-41), and Japanese concepts of space (p. 391-397). This original research is applicable to those interested in exploring "art history, psychology, technical art history, Jungian studies, creativity studies, art therapies," and much more (p. 19). Yet, where do psychology, art therapies, and creative expression interlace? Mellick writes, "His [Jung's] inclusion of creative expression in analytical work is one of the earliest examples, best documented, yet hitherto unacknowledged examples of the use of arts for psychological growth and healing" (p. 31).

In the last chapters of her book Mellick proposes "Art-making as a spiritual practice" (p. 381). Mellick writes:

Many schools of meditation are characterized by the same qualities that certain artists expect of themselves and seek in the creative process and their environment: concentration, contemplation, a quiet mind, and absorption: a closer relationship with inner realities: a sense of ritual, mystery, the sacred, the ineffable; a sense of timelessness: and an unswerving commitment to outcome, yet detachment from it. (p. 386)

In the chapter entitled "Space in Potentia in Jung's Creative Work," Mellick introduces the Japanese concept of Ma, and invites the reader to enter Ma, along with Jung, as he entered Ma in exploring his unconscious. "Ma is the stillness, the emptiness just before and after sounds, sights, expressions, gestures, actions. It is not nothing; it is the present moment, unfolding eternally" (p. 392). Mellick quotes Richard B. Pilgrim: "Such intervals are thus referred to as creative, substantial negative spaces, imaginative spaces, or emotional spaces that the positive space, narrative sequences, or forms of an art help create but into which they dissolve" (p. 397). Mellick writes, "The bounding lines created a space in which he [Jung] would experience, again and again, the mysterious place between imagination and expression. He was creating a space in which the numinous could be" (p. 397).

In the last quotes of her book, she gives us a glimpse into how Jung entered his visions and images to contact inner figures. Jung writes:

Only use the retina of the eye at first in order to objectify. Then instead of keeping on trying to force the image out, you just want to look in. Now when you see these images you want to hold them and see where they take you, how they change. And you want to try to get into the picture yourself- to become one of the actors. When I first began to do this I saw landscapes, and the figures would talk to me and I would answer them. (p. 424)

The Red Book Hours is a brilliant complement to the mysteries of *The Red Book*.

If you ever had an inclination to read *The Red Book* and be transported by the illuminated images, you may be compelled to open its pages, after reading *The Red Book Hours*. Perhaps you have read *The Red Book* and want to explore in greater depth Jung's creative process and art mediums, then *The Red Book Hours* is a must read. Jung's documented spiritual transcendent experiences through image and calligraphy in *The Red Book* were inspirational in my uniting image and word in writing *Creative Pathways to Inquiry*.

The Author

Jill Mellick, Ph.D., professor emerita, is a clinical psychologist and consultant, researcher, author, poet, and artist. Her publications include *The Natural Artistry of Dreams*; *The Worlds of P'otsunu: Geronima Cruz Montoya of San Juan Pueblo*, with co-author Jeanne Shuts; *Coming Home to Myself*, with co-author Marion Woodman; *The Art of Dreaming*; and contributing author to *The Art of C.G. Jung* for the foundation of the works of C.G. Jung.

The Reviewer

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SOTILLOS, SAMUEL BENDECK. (2018). *Psychology without spirit: The Freudian quandary*. Chicago, IL: The Institute of Traditional Psychology. 486 pp. ISBN: 1567446264. Paperback. \$59.95. Reviewed by Binita Mehta

In his book, Samuel Bendeck Sotillos provides a very detailed and nuanced assessment of Freud's psychoanalytical views. A unique facet of the book is that it examines the framework from the perspective of the sapiential traditions of the world. He gingerly unearths the fundamental assumptions of the psychoanalytical framework.

Sotillos discusses how, as compared to the view of self as presented in the religio-spiritual traditions, Freud promotes a highly curtailed view of human possibility. These traditional frameworks recognized multiple modes of being and knowing and located the foundation of human nature in the transpersonal domain of the

Spirit and the Intellect. Freud, under the influence of Darwin's theory of evolution, "equates the human being with the animal" (p. 68). Freud asserts that "the deepest essence of man is instinctual impulse, whose elemental nature is the same in all men and which directs him to the satisfaction of certain primal needs" (quoted on p. 72). Juxtaposing the Hindu *cakra* (chakra) system with the Freudian perspective, what one finds is that Freud limits human consciousness more or less to the functioning of the three bottom *cakras*.¹ The top four *cakras* are what lifts a human being above animality and brings complete integration of being and experience of fullness. Sotillos argues that by denying and pathologizing the transcendent (but also immanent) spiritual dimension, Freud leaves the human self without an objective reference point and in a very fragmented state of disparate and conflictual forces. While the spiritual traditions speak of the wide range of 'I-ness', in Freud, and also in the modern western psychology and philosophy for the most part, the I-ness is restricted to a highly individuated and dualistic consciousness. Hindu and Buddhist schools present arguments to show that the individualized self-existence is beset with negative states such as alienation cravings, fears, jealousy, pain etc. in the face of the wide field of otherness. What Freud describes as the human predilection for destruction and which sets each human being against others, as Sotillos argues, is the consequence of a "highly materialistic view of man's nature" (p. 68). An encompassing and universal sense of 'I-ness' would fundamentally change the relationship between a person and the world. In the non-dual condition of self-consciousness, as conceived in the school of Advaita Vedānta, everything is experienced as the Self. Love becomes the spontaneous expression of one's being. Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) too articulates a similar idea: "Loving thy Self, thou lovest all men as thy Self" (quoted on p. 112).

Sotillos addresses how Freud and his disciples, and others have attributed a greatly exaggerated sense of novelty to his conception of the unconscious and to his psychoanalytical theory. James Strachey, for instance, has cast Freud in heroic proportions as "...the man who was the first able to recognize a whole field of mental facts which had hitherto been excluded from normal consciousness, the man who first interpreted dreams..." (quoted on pp. 59-60). Sotillos observes that the notion of the unconscious can be found in many religious traditions of the world and a close familiarity with the texts and the practices of these traditions reveal that the inner life of the soul was studied with extremely high sophistication. The Hindu Yoga and Advaita Vedānta schools, which have a long history, describe the nature of the 'unconscious' in ways much more intricate and comprehensive than what one finds in the psychoanalytical frameworks. It, like many other spiritual schools, recognizes two fundamentally different modes of operation of the unconscious. The Indian yogi Aurobindo (1872-1950) employs the term 'subconscious' to refer to the lower mode and the 'superconscious' to the higher, transpersonal level. It is worth stating in some detail the assessment given by Aurobindo of the psychoanalytical theory, which the book cites:

Freud's psychoanalysis...takes a certain part, the most obscure, the most dangerous, and the most unhealthy part of nature – the lower vital subconscious – then isolates a few of its most morbid phenomena and attributes to them an action out of all proportion with their true role in nature...these psycholo-

gists...look from below above and explain the higher lights by the lower darkness; but the foundation of things is above and not below, in the superconscious and not the subconscious... (quoted on p. 136)

Sotillos notes that dreams too were analyzed in societies across the world and that unlike Freud who reduced them all “to the contents of the unconscious,” dreams in many other cultures were also viewed as a doorway to higher understanding” (pp. 136-137).

Sotillos emphasizes the critical importance of relying on the Spirit-Intellect for achieving mental health. The chaotic psychic tendencies, habits and drives of the ‘subconscious’ can be expunged by entering the deeper consciousness of unity and oneness of being. This is not repression, Sotillos astutely points out, but a transformation of being which uproots them (p. 171). In the Yoga-Vedānta perspective, the ‘subconscious’ and the base impulses are the consequence of falsely enclosing self-consciousness within the narrow limits of an individualized state; they do not belong to the essential reality of the Self, which is understood as unsullied beatitude and pure consciousness. Titus Burckhardt, whom Sotillos cites, shows that in the case of the psychoanalytical therapy, the person does not “distance himself from the chaotic and obscure depths of his soul, which the analyst unveils or stirs up, but on the contrary, he accepts them as his own...” (quoted on p. 151).

The notion of the transpersonal consciousness of oneness of being leads to a very different view of desire and sexuality. The phenomenological analysis presented in Advaita Vedānta, for example, traces the source of desire to the consciousness of duality. In the state of non-duality the self experiences itself as the all-inclusive reality; in such a state of plenitude, all desires come to be extinguished. Two points can be made here. First, in contradistinction to Freud, who sees sexual instinct as an inalienable aspect of human nature and which can be “sublimated” only partially (pp. 173-174), the Vedānta school presents the possibility of entirely overcoming the sex impulse. The Yoga-Vedānta psychology postulates that greater the alienation and confinement within dualistic self-consciousness, the greater the disturbing effects of the sexual desire. Secondly, the notion of the sacred dimension of sexuality as found in schools of mysticism across diverse societies and which Sotillos elaborates (pp. 279-283), suggests that there are different types of sexual activities with widely varying effects on the psyche. An act in which the other is approached as the embodiment of the divine can bring a higher experience of wholeness, whereas if sexual life is approached as sheer means for the release of the desire then the resulting consequence could be psychic degeneration and emotional imbalance.

Sotillos considers the question whether Freud’s own personal experiences and personality played a decisive role in the formulation of his theory of human nature. The book presents many biographical details to give a picture about Freud’s outlook in life. Freud comes across as less than a wholesome personality. We find out that Freud struggled with depression (p. 161), suffered from a messianic complex and a great ambition to attain the status of Moses like figure as the new Lawgiver (p. 183), often adopted a dismal attitude towards his patients (p. 8), made

use of cocaine; its harmful effects were not fully known at the time Freud was consuming it (p. 251). The claim that Freud's theory is a projection of his own psychic tendencies would seem very plausible given that Freud's view of human faculties disallows participation both in the subjectivity of the other and in the transpersonal reality. Freud usurps the role of Intellect, which is the faculty of participatory and intuitive understanding. In intellectual knowledge, the subject raises her awareness to attain unity or identity with the object. But where there is no transcendence of one's psychic and mental outlook in the absence of the intellectual function, in this case the subject, and not the object, serves as the measure for interpreting the object. Sotillos makes the point that Freud's own attempts at self-analysis for the purpose of overcoming psychic obstacles reached an impasse (p. 243). Sotillos also brings to light many facts that are likely to be unknown to many such as that Freud maintained an inner secret circle which he strictly monitored (ch. 3), that initially Freud "concluded that most adult neurosis was due to sexual abuse in childhood" (p. 257), but later interpreted the childhood sexual trauma as the fantasies of the patients and by which he reinforced his theory about Oedipus complex in males and the Electra complex in females (ch. 23).

In his book, Sotillos persuasively shows that Freud's stark picture of human beings that eclipses the spiritual and moral dimensions and one might add the aesthetic – since higher order beauty plays no role in Freud's theory – normalizes the lowest echelons of behavior. Sotillos argues that the proof of the efficacy of psychotherapy as envisioned by Freud is minimal (ch. 20). The desacralization of the cosmos and the human consciousness – a direct manifestation of the alleged European Enlightenment that was further championed by Freud's psychoanalytical movement – has precipitated a rise in mental illnesses. Sotillos has garnered a great variety of sources to formulate his critique of Freudianism. His discussion of the scope, the foundation and the effects of the psychoanalytical movement is very impressive.

Sotillos illuminates with great insight the deeper meaning and implications of the truths found in different religions of the world. This book will be relevant for those in the fields of Humanities, for therapists, for those who wish to deepen their understanding about the cultural climate of the modern and postmodern worlds, and also for those engaged in spirituality.

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Note

¹ Thus, the Indian sage Rāmakrishna (1836-1886) associates the undivined lower three *cakras* (i.e. when not transformed by the awakened *kuṇḍalinī* energy) with the ego serving sex desire and desire for worldly power, wealth and success. See pp. 97-99 in *Selections from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

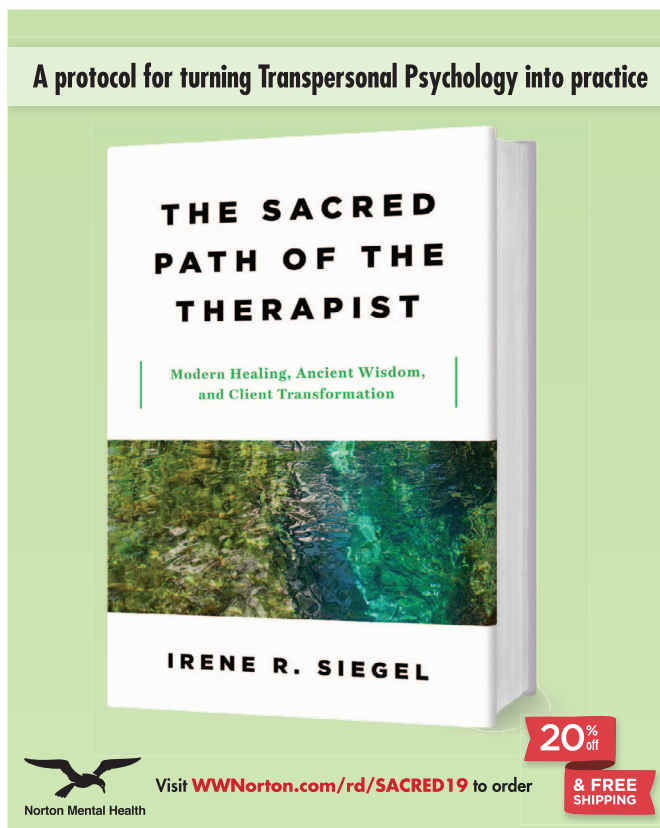
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The Reviewer

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Books Our Editors Are Reading: A Retrospective View The second decade (1980-1989)

This document continues the efforts begun in Volume 50(2), 2018 (50th Anniversary Issue of the Journal) to extract information about the Books Our Editors Were Reading over the lifespan of the Journal, and organizing the material by Editorial Board member. The 50th Anniversary issue covered the years 1969-1979, but due to space constraints future decades were promised for subsequent volumes. This issue covers the decade 1980-1989.

1980-1989

Marcie Boucouvalas

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- Masuda, Y. (1981). *The information society as post-industrial society*. Washington, DC: World Future Society.
- Nalimov, V. V. (1981). *In the labyrinth of language: A mathematician's journey*. Philadelphia, PA: ISI Press.

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- Mann, R.D. (1984). *The light of consciousness: Explorations in transpersonal psychology*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

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- Guillen, M. (1984). *Bridges to infinity: The human side of mathematics*. Los Angeles, CA: J.P. Tarcher.
- Wilber, K. (Ed.). (1984). *Quantum questions*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala.

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- Fritz, G., & Fehmi, L. (1982). *Open focus handbook*. Princeton, NJ: Biofeedback Computers.

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Alister Brass

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