

Transpersonal Psychology as a science

P. L. Lattuada MD., Psy. D., Ph. D

Abstract

Transpersonal psychology represents the newest movement within the psychological field. It was born at the end of the sixties as a natural evolution of humanistic psychology, in the wake of trends that favored the development of human potential, with the aim to expand the area of interest and jurisdiction of psychology in order to include spiritual inner experiences, the whole spectrum of states of consciousness and the full realization of the Self.

Quoting Charles Tart's definition Transpersonal psychology operates in favor of the realization of the Self and the awakening of the spiritual nature and most genuine human qualities in every individual." Tart C.T. (1992 p. 18)

In this article, I will emphasize the specificities of transpersonal psychology, which I believe offer enormous potential to psychological science, encouraging it to widen its field of application and methods – as Maslow hoped for.

In doing so I will discuss both some of the weaknesses of transpersonal psychology, which expose it to criticism by mainstream psychology, and those ontological and epistemological aspects on which it is based.

Critiques

Before entering the debate on the scientificity of transpersonal psychology, I will try responding to the ostracism declared by science, which can be summarized in the following justification:

Transpersonal psychology operates on metaphysical bases that cannot be verified or falsified through a procedure of measurement, objectively observable and replicable; therefore, it places itself outside the field of psychological science.

Moreover, I will face some of the fierce criticism coming from various areas of the psychological field.

Here are some critiques:

- *Welcoming Transpersonal Psychology into the field of scientific psychology might lead to the risk of validating its practices. (ESTP application to EAP, 2017-18)*
- *Transpersonal Psychology's mysticism, deceive those people who hardly tolerate the existential philosophical view that the creation of life starts from a zero point and that death marks an end-point where everything is over: beginning and end. Full stop! (Schulthess P. 2017 p. 14)*
- *To equate any western 'scientific' concepts with either shamanic intuition and/or the eternal mystical traditions of the high religious cultures ("philosophia perennis")³ alienates us from our present culture and also from our profession, as the argument is hardly rational and not externally verifiable. It is definitely not suitable as a referential framework for a being scientifically-recognized psychotherapy as some of the representatives of Transpersonal Psychotherapy claim. (Schulthess P. 2017 p. 16)*
- *To me there seems to be a range of different modalities that have the same belief system / ideology. (EAP – 2017-18 p. 3)*

➤ *Transpersonal psychology can actually increase a person's frustration, intensify neurotic defenses and impede the development of a healthy self-image. (Ellis A., Yeager J.R. 1989)*

➤ *There are an increasing number of reports from people in psychotherapy and counseling centers, who have been harmed through participation in various groups, courses and psychotherapies where - under the heading of 'psychotherapy' - various spiritual and esoteric practices are conducted. After an early hope of fulfillment, promises of healing are often followed by a form of disillusionment. (Schulthess P. 2017 p. 15)*

In order to face these critics will start to compare ontologies such as the vision of the nature of reality, life and consciousness.

Comparing Ontologies

Answering the main accusation to transpersonal psychology to operate in metaphysical bases we will compare its bases to the ones on which classical psychology is founded.

Pierre Weil (Weil P. 1992 p. 21), one of the founders of transpersonal psychology, outlines four assumptions that characterize transpersonal ontology:

- Consciousness is an unending and boundless flow. Limits only exist in the human mind.
- Memory goes beyond phylogeny and can be tracked back through the evolution of the living being up to the very source of the vital energy.
- Human evolution does not end in intellect but moves towards higher qualities such as wisdom, love, humbleness, sympathy, awareness, etc.
- Death is just a passage, an opportunity to reach new dimensions of being.

The “scientific” bases of classical psychology are grounded on the premises of materialistic reductionism:

- The creation of life starts from a zero point that death marks an end-point where everything is over: beginning and end. (Schulthess P. 2017 p. 14)
- Where the scientific study of the mind is concerned, consciousness and its special features are of rather minor importance. It is quite possible, indeed desirable, to give an account of language, cognition and mental states in general without taking into account consciousness and subjectivity.
- Science is objective because reality itself is objective.
- The objectivity of science requires that the phenomena studied are completely objective, and in the case of cognitive science this means that it must study objectively observable *behavior*.
- From the fact that reality is ultimately physical and the fact that it is completely objective, it is natural to assume that everything in reality is knowable by us. There is no place or at least very little place-for consciousness in this overall picture. (Searle John R. 1994 p. 28)

Going into detail on the abovementioned visions goes beyond the aim of this paperwork; therefore, I will limit myself to emphasizing the evidence that stating that everything is matter, the mind can be studied objectively through behavior, consciousness does not exist or is only an expression of brain activity, has no scientific value.

As we can see both reductionist materialism and transpersonal psychology starts from “metaphysical bases”.

“Ultimate reality is material”, “consciousness does not include matter” and “the psyche coincides with the mind” are non-observable, measurable nor replicable statements, as “consciousness is an unending and boundless flow” or “death is just a passage”,

The issue of the premises, the so called “metaphysical bases” could be easily settled by embracing the invitation of Husserl’s *epoché* (Husserl E., 2006) to base the premises on a phenomenological approach that places one’s own beliefs and judgments in brackets.

The demarcation line in order to consider any approach as valid should be moved from going into detail on its system of creation to the “way” it treats it. Any discipline should emphasize its ontological assumptions and provide epistemological guarantees regarding how it achieved its knowledge and the use it makes of it.

In so doing, the focus would shift from the discipline to the person and from beliefs to the world.

The boundary between scientific and transpersonal psychologies would be crossed and the focus would be placed on the researchers and their statements. **The limits, tasks and jurisdictions would become clear and based on a mutual recognition of a difference in the intent, object of investigation and ontological and epistemological bases.** However, these bases should not be considered as exclusive or absolutely true, but rather as starting points for the premises to be verified and the relative visions of the world to be approached with an “as if” kind of attitude.

Comparing Epistemologies

As a result, it would become possible to understand that the epistemological approach of transpersonal psychology provides tools and methods that do not invade the territory of behavioral sciences, but rather increase the validity provided by psychological science. Its object of inquiry is not the behavior but the subject itself or the dialogue between the subject and the object (I and the world).

By simplifying the transpersonal practice and relying on a phenomenological approach that suggests leaving behind one’s own beliefs and judgments, transpersonal psychology introduces as scientific method three elements: exposure, awareness and disidentification.

Exposure suggests declaring the ontological premises or beliefs, placing them between brackets and behaving “as if”, this way overcoming the well-known problem that is reflexivity¹ (Thomas W. I. 1923, Anderson R. 2017), which is the tendency of the researcher to influence the investigation in order to confirm his own assumptions, more or less consciously.

Awareness comes from the consideration that it is possible to observe thinking, offering a further tool that adds supra-rational guarantees, provided by aware thought, to the rational guarantees of critical thought, based on meta-cognition.

Disidentification allows detachment from the objective and therefore from the results of the research, non-attachment to one’s own beliefs and it reinforces the comprehension that it is possible to act “as if”. “As if” I wasn’t the content of my perception, my feelings, emotions, needs, desires, thoughts, judgments, beliefs, etc.

Classical epistemology is based on reasoning and critical thought. Transpersonal epistemology transcends and includes without denying meta-cognition and we could say it is based on exposure, awareness and disidentification.

Thanks to the three mentioned pillars, the researcher, or more generally the professional, can guarantee that he knows what he is doing and, once declared his contents, *concept* and *percept*, he is able to leave them behind and not be guided by them.

Transpersonal psychology offers an epistemological map that defines an I, place of *concept* and *percept*, and a Self, place of deidentified and aware observation, able to operate “as if” and therefore

¹

transcend the cognitive dimension of reason within the aware dimension of insight, which is that new order of comprehension mentioned by Bohm (Krishnamurti J., Bohm D. 1986).

Steiner² says:

*“Only when we have made the world content into our thought content do we rediscover the connection from which we have sundered ourselves. This goal is reached only when the tasks of scientific research are understood much more profoundly than often occurs.”*³ (Steiner R., 1995, p. 33).

And continues:

“But for everyone who has the capacity to observe thinking—and, with good will, every normally constituted human being has this capacity—the observation of thinking is the most important observation that can be made.” (Steiner R., 1995, p. 20).

In so doing, anyone can understand that thinking:

*“Is a kind of activity that is neither subjective nor objective; it goes beyond both these concepts.”*⁴ (Steiner, R., 1995 p. 37).

*And understand that the appearances of reductionist materialism, which he calls “naïve realism”, are overcome through the knowledge of thinking true essence*⁵ (Steiner R., 1995 p.53).

Comparing Cognitive Maps

The cognitive map of materialistic science is dual, linear and exclusive and it includes both rational and irrational levels. What is knowledgeable and can be investigated according to a rational method is considered to be scientific, whereas what goes beyond is irrational and therefore anti-scientific.

The cognitive map of the transpersonal approach is ternary, circular and inclusive. Knowledge can be acquired through pre-rational, (pre-personal, instinctive), rational, (personal), transpersonal (supra-rational) modalities.

We could add that the Es is the place of instinct, the I the place of reason and the Self the place of intuition. Exposure, awareness and disidentification represent the main cognitive tools for the evolutionary journey – which takes place through transcendence and inclusion, differentiation and integration – of consciousness from instinct to intuition through reason. Access to the dimensions of awareness, intuitive consciousness, supra-rational and transpersonal instances of the Self – which transcends and includes without denying, but rather by “purifying” the instinctive and rational dimensions through exposure, awareness and disidentification – provide validity guarantees that are testable and verifiable by anyone who knows the right set of instructions and is willing to follow them.

In summary:

In order to solve the problems of the fallacy of subjectivity, ineffability of consciousness and evanescence of the soul, psychological science has restricted its area of investigation to behavior and has chosen the reductionist materialistic approach of natural sciences:

- Everything is matter
 - Consciousness is a ghost to be left out of the area of scientific investigation
 - The psyche coincides with the mind and resides in the brain
-

- Reasoning the tool
- Measurement and replicability are the method

In so doing, it had the chance to develop effective methods for the study and treatment of psychopathology and behavior.

The object of study of the transpersonal approach is the participatory, unitary and interconnected dialogue between subject and object.

The transpersonal approach suggests that:

- Human experience is a participatory dialogue between objectivity and subjectivity and there are various levels of consciousness through which it can be investigated.
- Consciousness has its own independent existence that can be studied by expanding the investigation methods
- The psyche does not coincide with the mind nor reside in the brain
- Awareness and insight are cognitive tools that transcend and include reason as well as offering guarantees for the study of the true nature of the psyche
- The unity of science is not guaranteed “by a utopic reduction of all science to physics and chemistry, but rather by a structural uniformity (regularity of dynamic models) of the various levels of reality”⁶ (in Wilber 2011 p.19).

In so doing, transpersonal psychology suggests tools and methods for the study and mastery of inner experience, states of consciousness and the development of the highest spiritual potentialities and qualities.

And so we come to the second perplexity:

- Welcoming transpersonal psychology into the field of scientific psychology might lead to the risk of validating those spiritual and esoteric practices that are increasingly proposed by various groups and spiritual, religious, esoteric and new age centers, causing serious damage.

Such a statement, which aims to protect the supremacy of reason, is paradoxically based on an irrational kind of fear. There is nothing scientific about the fear that by welcoming transpersonal psychology, esoterism might be validated; it is a political statement based on risk control rather than trust in opportunity.

It is a choice that shows limited knowledge and proves itself ruinous also on a political level.

Considering work such as *Spiritual Emergency* (Grof S. and Grof C. 1993), or the works of Walsh and Vaughan (Vaughan F.E. 1989, Walsh R., Vaughan F., Walsh R. 1999), among others, would be enough to comprehend that the transpersonal approach is able of operate with competence and deal with psychological problems created by the vast world of spiritual research, providing guarantees of validity. Transpersonal psychology represents an efficient answer to the overflow of moral-less spiritual practices, as it offers psychological guidelines, maps and methods that allow studying and mastering the ineffable dimensions of consciousness with due care.

Once again, the problem lies not in metaphysical beliefs but in what a person makes of them, that is to say the cognitive system used to deal and elaborate them. It is possible Transpersonal psychology provides tools to approach a spiritual experience not with a dogmatic, confessional and fundamentalist attitude or but a laic, deidentified and aware one. Transpersonal psychology provides tools for the second kind of approach.

Circular Reasoning

Proceeding with the analysis of the criticism, we now must deal with an especially discouraging situation.

In a recent number of the International Journal of Psychotherapy, within a debate on psychology and spirituality, an article by Peter Schulthess – Chairperson of the Swiss Charta for Psychotherapy and of the Science and Research Committee of EAP – states:

“Transpersonal Psychology's mysticism, deceive the people who hardly tolerate the existential philosophical view that the creation of life starts from a zero point and that death marks an end-point where everything is over: beginning and end. Full stop!” (Schulthess P. 2017, p. 14)

Schulthess employs the classic circular reasoning, since life begins with birth and ends with death, then Transpersonal Psychology's mysticism deceives the people by stating the contrary.

Besides being wrong from an epistemological point of view, the statement also represents a generalization without any foundation.

Besides ideological beliefs, the scientific thought cannot get around the basic evidence that everything always happens within a certain space and time. Such as accusation: Transpersonal Psychology's mysticism deceive the people should be at least contextualized, when and where did this happen?

Perhaps a superficial reading doesn't allow understanding that transpersonal psychology offers maps and models, tools and methods to guide, without dogmas nor beliefs, anyone who is looking for apprehension of knowledge and takes care of anyone willing to do that and who is lucky enough to lose themselves during the journey, by providing reliable guidance and precise reference points. The research and data on how to develop spiritual competencies in the psychological field are countless (Lukoff D., 2016) (see brief synthesis in references).

A greater knowledge of the scientific documentation and comprehension of the transpersonal approach might suggest greater care and willingness to engage in dialogue. It would become possible to engage in a true debate based on the aforementioned epistemological differences and agree, as Tart suggests (Tart C.T. 2009), on the fact that there are principles and methods to investigate reality, as if life begins with birth and ends with death, this way obtaining measurable and replicable results within the fields of physio (matter) and bios (life), as well as principles and methods to investigate the *Psyché* (nous) as if it were an unlimited, synergic and interconnected flow.

As a partial justification for those who are confused, it must be remembered that transpersonal phenomenology, in absence of a map consistent with the territory, might seem to coincide with magical, superstitious and mythological contents, typical of uncritical and pre-rational fusional experiences.

Here are some examples: those who experience regressive hypnosis to past lives, typical of New Age, with an uncritical and uninformed attitude, will “truly” attribute the experience to a previous incarnation. When dealing with the emergence of an archaic memory in a patient during a process of profound exploration, the transpersonal psychotherapist is able to treat that memory as phenomenological data to work on, according to the aforementioned “as if” epistemology and contextualize the memory within a cartography that is wider than the *Psyché* and that includes the memory itself.

For those who attend sessions of new shamanism, the vision of the encounter with a black panther experienced during their journey in the lower world will be interpreted as an encounter with their power animal. For the transpersonal psychotherapist, the vision of the panther is considered as an archetypical element able to express profound qualities of the

Self of the patient, when investigated, known and let free to express himself. We could go on mentioning encounters with guiding spirits, angels, ancestors, mythological animals, fairies and elves, extraterrestrials, kundalini awakenings and so on, all archetypal transcultural, transpersonal and universal phenomena, to be welcomed, respected and mastered. These kinds of experiences are often dismissed as imaginary, esoteric and damaging by the materialistic thought, delegated to psychiatry or fed to religious dogmatism and charlatans of every kind.

The transpersonal approach offers a non-judgmental kind of listening, maps and tools, words to name things, in order to face the arduous psychological journey into territories at the doorstep of mystery, as well as competencies for a leap of consciousness that makes it possible to face the ineffable experience of the *Psychè*, beyond a literal reading, towards a further mode, symbolic, dynamic, interconnected, synergic and archetypal.

The aforementioned ternary cognitive map together with the “as if” epistemology, the tools of awareness and disidentification, the widening of the cartography of the psyche and pre-birth and transpersonal experiences, allows operating with the aforementioned vast phenomenology, integrating it in the field of psychology. Access to super-conscious, transpersonal and transcultural states of consciousness makes it possible to access deep and archetypal structures of consciousness.

As a consequence, the competencies obtained preserve the subjects of experience from the risk of using them in an uncritical, manipulative and dogmatic way, enriching psychology with tools, areas of intervention and research.

Psychologists state:

“Shamanic intuition and/or the eternal mystical traditions of the high religious cultures (“philosophia perennis”) alienates us from our present culture and also from our profession, as the argument is hardly rational and not externally verifiable.” (Schulthess P. 2017 p. 16)

Plato was aware that we are standing on the shoulders of giants. It wouldn't take much to see the historical evidence that the majority of the current psychotherapeutic practices already existed in ancient shamanic cultures. Think of the shamanic journey that led an individual into the lower world of the unconscious and the upper one of creative potentials, yoga breathing techniques and its psycho-corporal positions, interpretation of dreams of the dream masters or their incubation in the sleep temples in Ancient Greece, hypnotic and regressive induction, proving courage through initiatory rites, maieutic techniques in the Socratic dialogue, sharing circles with the use of the talking stick and so on.

Without the technical and cultural heritage of the past psychotherapy would not exist. If anything, the problem lies in the thinking that uses it, which depends on one's state of consciousness, which in turn, depends on one's cultural beliefs and emotional experience.

The need to differ from the past indicates an unresolved bond with it, which is a legitimate phase during development, but it must be transcended and included within integration once the conflict is resolved.

It is legitimate to feel overpowered by a heavy unresolved past and therefore act to overcome its shadows, for instance, thanks to the development of reason and the scientific thought that have freed us from the slavery to the superstitious-magical and mythological thought. On the contrary, it is certainly limiting to leave behind the inheritance of the knowledge and tools that those who came before us conquered and it is even more disconcerting to exclude from the community those who are not willing to do that.

Once again, the maps of transpersonal psychology, that take into consideration various states of consciousness and evolutionary stages of thought, provide psychology with tools capable of distinguishing and protecting from an inappropriate use of powerful traditional healing technologies.

A knife can be used to wound or cut. Similarly, the inheritance of the shamanic tradition or perennial philosophy can be used, according to magical-superstitious thinking, to manipulate or damage, or, when used according to transpersonal ethics and supra-rational thinking, to favor profound and authentic processes of inner transformation.

The transpersonal psychologist's knowledge of states and stages of consciousness is the necessary resource to face those risks that the psychological community sees as a threat to its own identity.

By expanding its field of application and methods through the contributions of the transpersonal epistemology and methodology, future psychological science could become a reference point capable of protecting the most authentic spiritual areas of human experience. These areas will become increasingly attractive and it would be deleterious to leave them in the hands of New Age, confessional dogmatism of Religion or even worse the dark objectives of fundamentalism and esoterism.

The "as if" ontology, epistemological maps and methodology of awareness allow traditional tools to cooperate with supra-rational modalities, purifying the process by providing guarantees of ethical and methodological validity.

In so doing, as Boadella warns, it might become possible to prevent "throwing the baby out with the bath water", giving back to the *Psychè* its original meaning and to psychology its function for the future.

Psychology or Spirituality

Another singular accusation is that transpersonal psychology contributes to spiritual visions rather than the psychology of spirituality.

There are many established clinical methodologies, namely psychotherapeutic transpersonal approaches, as we'll see later, having a vision means supporting the practice with a theoretical model that is both ontological and epistemological. Transpersonal ontology and epistemology inevitably share many statements with perennial philosophy but, as explained before, differ from it in the interpretation and application in therapeutic practice.

To summarize here some of the specificity of the transpersonal approach that trace a clear boundary with spiritual and esoteric traditions:

- The distinction between pre-personal and transpersonal contents
- The post-conventional approach favored by the supra-rational and transcultural "as if" reading,
- The definition of maps and models of the transpersonal evolutionary process
- The use of a clinical methodology that teaches how to reach, master and verify certain transpersonal stages and states.

There are many different psychodynamic, cognitive and humanistic approaches. Similarly, there are various transpersonal psychologies that present transpersonal psychotherapeutic models, referring to common matrices that reflect the entire spectrum of human experience.

Founders of the transpersonal psychology are considered to be Roberto Assagioli's *Psychosynthesis* and Carl Gustav Jung's *Depth Psychology*, in the more recent years we can the *Cosmodrama* of Pierre Weil, Stan Grof's *Holotropic Therapy*, Arnold Mindell's *Process-Oriented Therapy* and John

Pierrakos' *Core Energetics*, which stands between transpersonal and psycho-corporal psychotherapy.

Other prominent authors of transpersonal psychology have developed their own therapeutic models, such as Claudio Naranjo and his method based on the *Enneagram*, Frances Vaughan whose method is based on *Healing Relationships*, Jean Houston, John Rowan and Jean Shinoda Bolen. The contribution of the Brazilian transpersonal movement is also significant as it has developed different approaches based on *Transe*; think of David Akstein's *Terspsicoretransetherapy*, Armando Leite Naves' *Transpersonal Analysis*, or Eliezer Cerqueira Medes' *Psychotranse*.

Moreover, as reported by Tart (Tart C., 1992), there are psychotherapeutic models that clearly derive from ancient traditions of wisdom, such as: *The Psychology of Yoga*, elaborated by the Indian philosopher Harida Chaudhuri, *Essential Psychotherapy* proposed by the Californian psychologist Kathleen Riordan based on the work of Gurdjieff, *The Psychology of Consciousness* elaborated by the American psychologist Robert Ornstein based on the Sufi tradition. Even the *Christian Mystical Tradition* has inspired a psychotherapeutic methodology presented in the work of the Catholic mystic minister William McNamara. Vedanta Hinduism has inspired K. Wilber's work. Buddhism, which is probably the most psychological spiritual tradition, has been proposed from a psychotherapeutic point of view by various authors: think of the Texan psychologist Claire Myers Owens and her psychotherapeutic elaboration of Zen Buddhism, or of the Californian psychologist Daniel Goleman and his research on the "Meditative Mind". Last but not least, we can consider the contribution given by *Biotransenergetics* (Lattuada P.L., 2015), an integral transpersonal psychotherapy taught at various Italian and American Universities as well as at the Transpersonal Psychotherapy Training School in Milan, fully accredited by the Department of Education, University and Research MIUR.

A serious omission?

And speaking of departments, here are the guidelines for the practice of psychotherapy that the Austrian Ministry of Health has released in 2014. In their preamble, these Austrian Guidelines state (Austrian Federal Ministry of Health, 2014):

"... psychotherapy is an independent care process for the comprehensive, deliberate and planned treatment of behavioral disorders or cases of suffering of a psychological, psychosocial or psychosomatic nature, using scientific psychotherapeutic methods. The primary objective of psychotherapy is to ease or remove existing symptoms, to cure or alleviate conditions of psychological suffering, to provide help during existential crises and with changing disturbed behavior and attitudes, and to encourage personal development and health".

The guidelines ignore, to mention a few, the statement of William James, the father of American psychology, who considers mystic experiences as a "healthy and natural yearning" (James W., 1961) or Gustav Jung's contribution to psychology, which has probably been greater than Freud's, when he describes "spiritual experience as the best way out of neurosis" (Jung C.G., 1979). It also ignores the fact that Assagioli was the first to use the term Transpersonal "to widen the personal boundaries towards the accomplishment of a transpersonal Self" (Assagioli R., 1973), as well as Stanley Grof's work, the huge amount of clinical records he collected on transpersonal experiences and his elaboration of a new cartography of the psyche, as well as Ken Wilber's (Wilber K., 2011) integral model of the four quadrants, stages and states of consciousness.

Going further we can read:

“There is a clear and distinct difference between psychotherapy and all kinds of esoteric, spiritual and religious methods, such as human energetics, spiritual healing, shamanism and many others. These methods do not form part of psychotherapy.

The provision of any kind of esoteric content, spiritual rituals or religious healing doctrine is strictly prohibited in all psychotherapeutic education and training. Attendance of events with esoteric, spiritual or religious content will not be recognized as fulfilling the legally standardized further education obligations of the psychotherapist...”

We can see how spirituality is placed on the same level of religion, ignoring that transpersonal psychology offers maps and methods to access the spiritual dimension in a laic, non-confessional and non-dogmatic way, providing tools to avoid those risks that the aforementioned guidelines are trying protecting psychotherapy from. Not knowing these maps and methods forces a draconian and punitive regulation that ignores the state of the art.

As Young reminds us:

“On the surface, this might 'sound' clear, but it is actually a 'false positive' statement: i.e. more of a wish, than a statement of reality. The situation - on the ground - is much more diffused, complex and confusing. If one 'Googles' "psychotherapy and spirituality", one gets about half-a- million results, which might suggest that the difference between these is not as clear as the Austrian Ministry might like (Young C., 2017)”.

May Transpersonal Psychology be dangerous?

Yes, as everything. Love may be dangerous, power may be dangerous, as well as drinking a glass of water, crossing the road or climbing a mountain.

Yes, Transpersonal Psychology can be misunderstood, as it happens for many of its critics such as Ellis and Yeager. It can be misused and therefore dangerous, as anything that is efficient. Common sense should be enough to understand that such an accusation rather than weakening transpersonal psychology, it makes it stronger. In fact, if something can be dangerous it means it works, as if it didn't work it wouldn't be harmful. A car that doesn't start, a blunt knife, a medicine without an active ingredient or an attenuated virus are not dangerous.

Ellis and Yeager dedicate an entire work to explaining why the more sensible and effective RET [Rational-Emotive Therapy] approach “is better than the “dangerous transpersonal phenomenon, in whatever form it might take”, in terms of human well-being (Ellis and Yeager 1989 p. 21). And more:

“Transpersonal psychology can actually increase a person's frustration, intensify neurotic defenses, and impede the development of a healthy self-image.” (Ellis A., Yeager J.R. 1989 p.22)

As suggested by the humanistic psychology of Maslow's famous Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow A., 1954), Bateson's Ecology of The Mind (Bateson G., 1976) that reminds us how evolution is actually coevolution of an individual and his environment and Fromm's warning about the choice between having and being (Fromm E., 1977), the consideration is that a certain form of psychology has expanded its object of investigation, shifting the focus from

psychopathology and behavior to the full achievement of human potentials, a process that today has reached its peak in transpersonal psychology.

According to this psychological approach, the final objective is not well-being but rather the connection with one's true nature and one's full realization, the focus is not the behavior but the comprehension of the true nature of the Self, mastery of inner experience, non-ordinary states of consciousness and full realization of the Self.

Following the vision of humanistic psychology, think to Fromm's warning about the choice between having and being (Fromm E., 1977), we should shift the focus from psychopathology and behavior to the full achievement of human potential, considering that evolution is actually coevolution of an individual and his environment, as discussed by Bateson in his seminal book "Ecology of The Mind" (Bateson G., 1976).

This means we can't use the same evaluation system to prove the efficiency of RET or to prove the harmfulness of aware observation, empathic listening, meditative practices based on breathing, active imagination, sound, movement, dialogue with sub-personalities and shadow integration.

Yes, a transpersonal psychotherapeutic process might lead to the risk of showing the vanity of one's induced needs and narcissistic attachment to one's image causing a crisis that calls for a change; it might lead to the encounter with one's shadow, with the small Reichian man (Reich W., 1968) living inside you and therefore ask to pass through the Dark Night of the Soul; it might show one's illusionary beliefs and social achievements encouraging one to leave the castle and begin the journey of the hero where in the forest one might meet his inner ghosts, the dragon to be defeated, before being able to free the princess from the tower (Self) and unite with her within the *hierogamos*.

Using a transpersonal paradigm we can say that aim of transpersonal psychotherapy is not just well-being, which is considered as a collateral effect, rather an evolution process through a heroic journey towards oneself.

Maslow's well-known Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow A., 1954) makes it clear that the passage from the satisfaction of secondary to tertiary needs is delicate. Grof's Four Stages (Grof S., 1988) shows that the evolutionary journey of inner experience proceeds from abstract and biographical experiences to inevitably lead to a delicate stage of death and rebirth before accessing transpersonal dimensions. Moreover, Campbell's Monomyth (Campbell J., 1948) shows us that our passage from life represents much more than a simple search for well-being in his incomparable work.

Guarantees

To complete the explanation of the epistemological bases of the transpersonal approach, we must clarify that it identifies and in no way contrasts with the jurisdiction and fields of the current psychological science.

However, the transpersonal approach strongly suggests expanding the jurisdiction and methods of psychological science. For instance, it suggests complementing experimental guarantees that aim to provide results with a high objective level of certainty with historical, epistemological and experiential guarantees, more adequate to explore the inner dimension.

From evidence based to attention-oriented methodologies

The history of the validation of healing methodologies starts with the well-known Hippocratic Oath, which has beneficence at its core – to help or at least do no harm.

For centuries, the decision as to the helpfulness or harmfulness of any treatment was dependent primarily on the practitioner's ethical intent, as well as his or her judgment of the effectiveness of the treatment. With the development of modern scientific understandings and methodologies, including the modern methods of collecting evidence in support of scientific theories practices taught although beneficent in intent, may not have been beneficent in actual practice. (Stout C. E. and Hayes R. A., 2005, p.1).

The evidence based method starts thanks to the life and work of Florence Nightingale (1820–1910). Nightingale used the collection, analysis, and graphical display of healthcare data from the Crimean War to prove that conditions at the time in military hospitals were not beneficent, but in fact harmful to the lives of the soldiers being treated (Small, 1998).

The collection of medical and health-related data in terms of treatment effectiveness came to the fore, albeit briefly, with the systems of Ernst A. Codman, A graduate of Harvard Medical School in 1895, during the turn of the past century as the science of epidemiology was developing. (Brauer, 2001, p.2).

The transpersonal approach's suggestion to the scientific community is based on accurate reflections, such as the consideration that evidence based methods were born within the medical field to study the effectiveness of cures for diseases in a context where it is clear that the disease is objectifiable and there is a method that can be a protocol for external intervention.

As it occurred for the reductionist scientific method – which, after its huge success within the study of matter, was implemented for the study of the living being and the psyche, which was in the meantime reduced to the mind and placed in the brain – the evidence based method was also implemented for the study of behavior, given its usefulness for the evaluation of medical treatment.

Transpersonal psychology suggests a wider view that is not reducible only to objective data, the cure of symptoms or the study of a behavior. The object of investigation of the transpersonal approach is the participatory dialogue subject/object, where the “object symptom” and the “object behavior” are not separable from the “subject inner experience”, where the “object body” and the “object mind” are not separable from the “subject consciousness”, unitary experience of the psyche, dynamic and interconnected.

Moreover, due the self-organizing and self-transcending complexity, as well as a multiplicity of stages and states of the psyche, transpersonal psychology recognize that mere objective evidence is limiting. If the psyche is considered an expression of a body-mind unity, stratified in unconscious, conscious and supra-conscious dimensions, evidence is interpreted as appearance. Therefore, a deeper and integral investigation is needed; an investigation that respects and recognizes the complexity and mystery and that timidly, humbly and consciously explores the ineffable territories of consciousness and the transpersonal dimension searching for classifiable regularities. These regularities might not coincide tout court with the measurable evidence demanded by behavioral science, but they may be compared within a view of reciprocal respect and synergic collaboration.

Ultimately, the transpersonal approach agrees with the necessity of the experimental guarantees demanded by the reductionist scientific method if limited to the study of behavior. At the same time, for the study of inner experience, the transpersonal approach claims the most elevated qualities of the human being, the realization of the Self and states of consciousness as well as other methods and forms of guarantee, as for instance the epistemological and experiential ones.

There are specific methods of measurement for the transpersonal field, precisely twenty-six different tools that are used for research (Mac Donald D.A., Friedman H.L., Kuentzel J.G. 1999, p. 137-154), such as: the Assessment Schedule for Altered States of Consciousness, the Ego Grasping Orientation, the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory, the Hindu Religious Coping Scale, the Measures of Hindu Pathways, the Self-Expansiveness Scale and the Vedic Personality Inventory.

As it isn't limited to the study of behavior and it deals with issues such as inner experience, the participatory object/subject dialogue and the evolutionary journey of realization of the Self, the transpersonal approach suggests the necessary transcendence and inclusion of measures and falsifications within qualities, the overcoming of correct data through the identification of regularity, as well as investigation and description through attention and awareness. A lot of research within the transpersonal field present and use innovative epistemological and research approaches, as described by Anderson and Braud (Anderson R., Braud W., 2011).

We refer, among others, to the Intuitive Inquiry by Anderson, the Integral Inquiry by Braud (Anderson, R., & Braud, W., 2011), the Organic Inquiry By Clements, the Essential Science by Tart (Tart 2009), the First-Person Science by Varela (Varela 1999), the Integral Science by Wilber (Wilber, 2011) and the Second Attention Epistemology by Lattuada (Lattuada P.L., 2010, 2011, 2012).

Experience Based Guarantees

Scientific research by definition excludes from its area of investigation any subjective data, emphasizes objective data and by choice disregards the subject of experience, if not in order to submit it to a strict experimental protocol.

The scientific method is based on objective methods and empirical evidence and in order to answer verifiable questions it:

- Starts from theories, abstracts, interconnected ideas of behavior, asking questions about possible causes of thoughts, emotions and behaviors
- Yields testable predictions (hypotheses)
- Which are tested in a systematic way (research)
- By collecting and evaluating evidence (data)
- Broad conceptual frameworks are assumed to be true

It chooses not to tell the researcher's history. Other than the right to hold his position, guaranteed by his academic curricula, it tells us nothing about his ontology, epistemological premises, beliefs, passions and life experiences; he is asked to exclude them, obviating the problem of reflexivity and rigorously implement procedures with critical thought.

To face the question of the researcher and the subject of research we could begin with the issue of credit.

It is said that the value of a person shouldn't be based on his power or wealth, but rather on the credit he has.

It is clear that a statement made by a Harvard mathematician about Gödel's Theorem is more valuable than one made by a common person about the same issue.

Similarly, the statements of a recognized neuroscientist regarding the study of human behavior have more credit than those of an occasional interlocutor.

What happens when dealing with inner experience of a spiritual kind or non-ordinary states of consciousness? In this case, not willing to reduce the phenomenon to its neuro-physical

consequences, the Harvard mathematician or the neuroscientist wouldn't have much to say, unless they have documented experience in the area.

This means that academic qualifications are not enough to have credit in the study of the *Psyché* in its integral conception; it is necessary to explain one's experience and clinical history and from there deduce the knowledge that one has gained through hands-on experience. I don't mean that we should give credit to someone only because of his experience and consequently that this person is allowed to obviate the hard task of validation of his statements, but rather that anyone who is willing to embrace a discipline and make statements about it should declare in detail his experience in the matter, so that his history, coherence of method and subjective data can contribute to give value to his statements.

A firsthand science encourages complete transparency about our beliefs, values, motivations and experience related to the subject of research, as well as the exposition of our experience during the investigation.

This way, as Rosemarie Anderson (Anderson R., 2017) suggests, the use of reflexivity might help the researcher rather than represent a problem to dismiss.

Moreover, if it's true that looks are deceiving and reality is not as it appears, it is necessary to use an experience based method that teaches going beyond appearances, beyond the mind understood as rational thinking, and consequently the researcher will have to explain how he intends to obviate the issue of appearance and the tools he will use to do that.

Experiential investigation uses millenary technologies implemented for centuries by spiritual researchers from all around the world and it is implemented this way:

- Through the laboratory of personal, inner and integral experience, according to declared and validated methods, insights are reached, and they are explained to anyone who wants to verify them through the same experiential procedure and therefore recognize the veracity or falseness of the conclusions.
- As Wilber says: "there are higher domains of awareness that include love, identity, reality, Self and truth (Wilber 2011 p. 369).
- These statements are not dogmatic; they are not believed because stated by an authority, but rather because they are based on hundreds of years of experimental introspections and shared tests.
- False statements are rejected on the basis of consensual evidence; successive evidence is used to correct and tune experimental conclusions.
- In other words, continuing with Wilber" these spiritual dimensions are literally purely scientific" (Wilber 2011 p. 369). and the systematic presentations of these dimensions follow exactly the ones of any *reconstructive science*".

Following are a few more words about the method, that is to say the type of thinking through which these statements are reached.

The highest states of consciousness that operate according to modalities of supra-rational thinking, such as casual and non-dual, can be explained rationally by those who have experienced them in first hand but cannot be experienced through rational thinking (first attention). They can be reached following a trans-rational and contemplative modality (second attention) (Lattuada P.L., 2010, 2011, 2012).

We can understand the accusations of elitism and non-scientificity, but we cannot agree with them. The scientific community should simply accept that there are states of consciousness and stages of thought whose access demands precise procedures and whose

acquisitions can be described and understood with the use of a supra and trans-rational language.

Hereafter, we will report how Wilber describes a process of access to the psychic, subtle, causal and non-dual worlds, providing validity guarantees (Wilber 2011 p. 381)

- Injunction: “If you want to know this, do this”.
- Insight: as mentioned before, insight should be considered as the adequate tool to reach the true nature of knowledge; it is a direct vision that shows things the way they really are, a flash that we have all experienced once, that unveils the veil and reveals the data hidden beyond appearances.
- Shared confirmation or denial: sharing one’s conclusions with a community of equals.

Conclusions

We have tried to emphasize the specificity of the transpersonal approach, characterized by its object of investigation, the participatory dialogue between an individual and the world marked by an evolutionary journey of gradual realization of the Self towards the comprehension of the dimensions of inner experience of a spiritual kind. We have explored the guarantees of transpersonal psychology, offering a brief overview of the benchmark ontological premises, epistemological maps and models that are based on aware observation and the historical roots that support it. We have traced the outlines of an experience-based methodology that can be subject to validation and capable of engaging in debate and integrating with the methods of behavioral science.

References

- Anderson, R., & Braud, W. (2011). Transforming self and others through research: Transpersonal research methods and skills for the human sciences and humanities. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Aquinas T. (1996), *Commentary On the Book of Causes*, The Catholic University of America Press”
- Anderson, R. (2017), *Reflexivity, Projection, and the Sacred*, Transpersonal Research Colloquium, Prague 2-3 ottobre 2017.
- Assagioli, R. (1969). Symbols of transpersonal experience. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1 (1), 33-45.
- Assagioli, R. (1975). *Psychosynthesis: Height psychology. Dis-covering the self and the Self*. San Francisco, CA: Psychosynthesis Institute.
- Assagioli, R. (1976). *Psychosynthesis: A manual of principles and techniques*. New York: Penguin.
- Assagioli, R. (1989). Self-realization and psychological disturbances. In S. Grof & C. Grof (Eds.), *Spiritual emergency: When personal transformation becomes a crisis*. Los angeles, CA: J. P. Tarcher.
- Assagioli, R. (1991). *Transpersonal development*. London: Crucible.
- Assagioli, R. (1993). *Psychosynthesis: A collection of basic writings*.
- Austrian Federal Ministry of Health, (2014), *Guidelines for psychotherapists on the issue of differentiating between psychotherapy and esoteric, spiritual and religious methods*.
- Bateson G. (1976), *Verso un’ecologia della mente*, Adelphi, Milano.
- Bateson, G., & Bateson, M. C. (1987). *Angels fear: Toward an epistemology of the sacred*. New York: Macmillan.

- Boadella D. (2017), *Boundaries to the Transpersonal: a response to Peter Schulthess*. IJP: Vol 21. No. 1. P.20-24
- Brauer, C. (2001). *Champions of quality in health care: A history of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations*. Lyme, CT: Greenwich.
- Campbell J. (1948), *The hero of Thousand Faces*, Harper e Collins, NY.
- Descartes (1971), *Philosophical Writings*, Prentice-Hall Inc. NY
- Eckardt, M. H. (1984). Karen Horney: Her life and contributions. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 44 (3), 236-241.
- Ellis A., Yeager J.R. (1989) *Why some therapies don't work: the dangers of transpersonal psychology*, Prometheus Books, 1989
- Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, Istituto Treccani.
- ESTP application to EAP - A collection of anonymised responses to the application - 2017-18 p.3
- Frankl, V. E. (1963). *Man's search for meaning*. New York: Pocket Books.
- Fromm E. (1977), *Avere o Essere? Il Saggiatore*, Milano.
- Grof, S. (1985). *Beyond the brain: Birth, death, and transcendence in psychotherapy*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press
- Grof, C., & Grof, S. (1986). *Spiritual emergency: The understanding and treatment of transpersonal crises*. *ReVision*, 8(2), 7-20.
- Grof, S. (1993). *The holotropic mind*. New York: Harper San Francisco.
- Grof, S. (1996). *Theoretical and empirical foundations of transpersonal*
- Hartelius G., (2016a) *Participatory Transpersonalism: Transformative Relational Process, Not the Structure of Ultimate Reality*
- Hartelius G., (2016b) *Taylor's Soft Perennialism: A Primer of Perennial Flaws in Transpersonal Scholarship* Vol.35, issue 2-2016, Article 5
- Hartelius G., (2017a) *Zombie Perennialism: An Intelligent Design for Psychology? A Further Response to Taylor's Soft Perennialism*
- Hartelius G., (2017b) *Circular Reasoning Is Not the Uroboros: Rejecting Perennialism as a Psychological Theory* Vol.36, issue 2-2017, Article 12
- Husserl E, (2006), *The basic problems of phenomenology*, collected works, vol. XII, Springer.
- Kant I., (1998), *Critique of Pure Reason* Cambridge University Press
- Krishnamurti J., Bohm D. (1986), *Dove il tempo finisce*, Astrolabio Ubaldini, Roma., (*The Ending of Time*, www.freeweb.hu)
- James W. (2002), *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* by William James, the Pennsylvania, State University,
- Jung, C. G. (1938), *Psychology and Religion*, The Terry Lectures. New Haven: Yale University Press. (contained in *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, Collected Works Vol. 11
- Jung, C. G. (1981). *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1981 2nd ed. Collected Works Vol.9 Part 1), Princeton, N.J.: Bollingen.
- Lancaster B. L., Friedman H. L. (2017) *Introduction to the Special Topic Section: The Taylor-Hartelius Debate on Psychology and Spirituality*
- Lattuada P.L. (2015), *Biotransenergetics*, ITI Edizioni, Milano
- Lattuada P.L. (2010). *Second Attention Epistemology*. *Integral Transpersonal Journal*, 0, 7-52
- Lattuada P.L. (2011). *Second attention epistemology: Truth and reality*. *Integral Transpersonal Journal*, 1, 13-27.
- Lattuada P.L. (2012). *Second attention epistemology: Integral process evaluation grid* (III part). *Integral Transpersonal Journal*, 2, 13-27.
- Locke J. (1823), *The work of John Locke*, X voll., Thomas Tegg, London

- Lukoff, D. The diagnosis of mystical experiences with psychotic features. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 17:155-181, 1985.
- Lukoff, D. The Hero's Journey in the global age. *Association for Transpersonal Psychology Newsletter*, p. 5, Spring, 1986.
- Lukoff, D. (2016). Religious and Spiritual Problems. In Liane Hofmann and Patrizia Heise (eds). *Handbook of Spiritual Crises*. Germany: Schauter Publishing
- Lukoff, D. and Halifax, J. Psychosis: Mysticism, shamanism or pathology? The Ojai Foundation, June 12, 1982.
- Lukoff, D. and Lu, F. A transpersonal-integrative approach to spiritually-oriented psychotherapy. In L. Sperry & E.P. Shafranske (Eds.). *Spiritually Oriented Psychotherapy* (pp. 177-206). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association Press, 2005.
- Lukoff, D. and Lu, F. Cultural Competence Includes Religious and Spiritual Issues in Clinical Practice. *Psychiatric Annals*, 29(8), 469-472, 1999.
- Lukoff, D. Case Study of the Emergence of a Contemporary Shaman. In: Heinze, R. I. (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference on Shamanism and Alternate Healing*. Berkeley, CA: Asian Scholars Press, 1993.
- Lukoff, D. Spiritual and Transpersonal Approaches to Psychotic Disorders In: *Psychospiritual Clinician's Handbook: Alternative Methods for Understanding and Healing Mental Disorders*, (Ed. Mijares, S.) Haworth Press, 2005.
- Lukoff, D., Lu, F., and Turner, R. Toward a More Culturally Sensitive DSM-IV: Psychoreligious and Psychospiritual Problems. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 180(11), 673-682, 1992.
- Lukoff, D., Lu, F., and Turner, R. Cultural considerations in the assessment and treatment of religious and spiritual problems. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 18(3), 467-484, 1995.
- Lukoff, D., Lu, F., and Turner, R. Diagnosis: A transpersonal clinical approach to religious and spiritual problems. In *Textbook of Transpersonal Psychiatry and Psychology*. (B. W. Scotton, A. B. Chinen, J. R. Battista, Eds), 231-249, New York: Basic Books, 1996.
- Lukoff, D., Lu, F., and Yang, P. Religious and Spiritual Problems in Religious and Spiritual Considerations in Psychiatric Diagnosis: A Research Agenda for DSM-V (Eds John R. Peteet, and Francis Lu), (171-198) American Psychiatric Association Press, 2011.
- Lukoff, D., Turner, R., and Lu, F. Transpersonal Psychology research review: Psychoreligious Dimensions of Healing. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 24(1), 41-60, 1992.
- MacDonald, D. A., Friedman, H. L., & Kuentzel, J. G. (1999). A survey of measures of spiritual and transpersonal constructs. Part one: Research update. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 31 (2), 137-154.
- MacDonald, D. A., Kuentzel, J. G., & Friedman, H. L. (1999). *A survey of measures of spiritual and transpersonal constructs. Part two: Additional instruments. Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 31 (2), 155-177.
- Maslow, A. H. (1966). *The psychology of science*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Maslow, A. H. (1967). Self-actualizing and beyond. In J. F. T. Bugental (Ed.), *Challenges of humanistic psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being* (2nd ed.). New York: D. Van Nostrand.
- Maslow, A. H. (1969). Theory Z. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1(2), 31-47.
- Maslow, A. H. (1969). The farther reaches of human nature. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1(1), 1-9.
- Maslow, A. H. (1969). Various meanings of transcendence. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1(1), 56-66.
- Maslow, A. H. (1971). *The farther reaches of human nature*. New York: Viking Press.

- Masters, R. A. (2000). Compassionate wrath: Transpersonal approaches to anger. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 32(1).
- Perls, F.S. (1970), *Gestalt therapy now: Theory, techniques, applications*. Palo Alto, CA: Science & Behavior Books, Inc.
- Plotinus, (1918) *The Divine Mind; being the Treatises of the Fifth Ennead translated from Greek by Stephen Mackenna* (Boston: Charles T. Branford, 1918). Liberty Fund, Inc.
- Reich W. (1968), *Ascolta piccolo uomo*, Sugarco Milano. (Listen Little man, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, N.Y. 1974)
- Rosemarie Anderson (2017) *Reflexivity, Projection, and the Sacred*, III Transpersonal Research Colloquium RC Prague
- Schulthess P. (2017) *Psychotherapy should be differentiated from Transpersonal Psychology and Esotericism*, IJP: Vol 21. No. 1. P.12-20
- Searle John R. (1994), *The rediscovery of the mind*, MIT Press paperback edition.
- Small, H. (1998). *Florence Nightingale: Avenging angel*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Steiner, R., (1995), *Intuitive thinking as a spiritual path: philosophy of freedom*, Anthroposophic Press, Inc. Hudson, N.Y. p. 27-33
- Steiner, R., (1995), *Intuitive thinking as a spiritual path: philosophy of freedom*, Anthroposophic Press, Inc. Hudson, N.Y.
- Stout C. E. and Hayes R. A., (2005), *The Evidence-based practice, Methods, Models, and Tools for mental Health Professionals*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Tart C.T. (1977), *Stati di Coscienza*, Astrolabio Ubaldini, Roma. (States of Consciousness Backinprint.com, January,2001).
- Tart, C. T. (Ed.). (1992). *Transpersonal psychologies: Perspectives on the mind from seven great spiritual traditions*. San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins.
- Tart, C., T., (2009). *The end of materialism: How evidence of the paranormal is bringing science and spirit together*. Foreword by Huston Smith and Kendra Smith. Noetic Books, Institute of Noetic Science. Oakland, CA: New Harbringer Publications.
- Taylor S. (2016a) *From Philosophy to Phenomenology: The Argument for a "Soft" Perennialism*, Vol.35, issue 2-2016, Article 4
- Taylor S. (2017a) *Moving Beyond Materialism: Can Transpersonal Psychology Contribute to Cultural Transformation?*
- Taylor S. (2017b) *Keeping the Account Open: On Metaphysical Mistrust in Transpersonal Psychology (A Response to Hartelius, 2017)* Vol.36, issue 2-2017, Article 11
- The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (2005): Webster's French Thesaurus ICON Classics
- Thomas, W. I. (1923). *The unadjusted girl: With cases and standpoint for behaviour analysis*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.
- Vaughan F.E. (1989), *Spiritualità e salute nella psicologia transpersonale*, Cittadella, Assisi.
- Vieten, C., Scammell, S., Pierce, A., Pilato, R., Ammondson, I., Pargament, K., & Lukoff, D. (2016). *Competencies for psychologists in the domains of religion and spirituality. Spirituality in Clinical Practice*. 3(2), 92-114.
- Rogers, C. R. (1960), *A therapist's view of personal goals*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill.
- Vieten, C., Scammell, S., Pilato, R., Ammondson, I., Pargament, K. I., & Lukoff, D. (2013). *Spiritual and Religious Competencies for Psychologists. Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*. 5(3), 129-144.
- Walsh R, Vaughan F., 1993), *Paths beyond the Ego.*, Tarcher, Los Angeles.
- Walsh R. (1999), *Essential Spirituality*, John Wiley & Sons Inc, New York.
- Varela F., Shear J. (1999), *The View from Within*, Imprint Academic
- Weil P. (1992), *L'uomo senza frontiere*, Crisalide, Spigno Saturnia.
- Wilber K. (2011), *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality, The Spirit of Evolution*, Shambhala, Boston U.S.A.

Young C., (2017), Psychotherapy & Spirituality: What is a 'Spiritual Psychotherapist'? IJP: Vol 21. No. 1.

Author Bio

Pier Luigi Lattuada of the Integral Transpersonal Institute, Milan, Italy is a Medical Doctor. He has a Ph. D. in Behavioral Studies and a Psy. D. in Clinical Psychology. He is also a Psychotherapist.

Founder of Biotransenergetics, Pier Luigi is the Director of the Transpersonal Psychotherapy School in Milan, which has been fully recognized by the Ministry of Education University and Research since 2002.

He is also director of the Training in Transpersonal Counseling accredited by AssoCounseling.

He is Adjunct Faculty at Sofia University, Palo Alto, CA and Faculty and chair of BA on Integral Transpersonal Psychology at Ubiquity University.

Past medical director of Lifegate Holistic Medicine Clinic of Milan, Scientific Director of Integral Transpersonal Journal. He serves as co-Vice-President of EUROTAS. Pier Luigi has published sixteen books since 1985, more than 30 articles since 1980 and presented Biotransenergetics in more than 50 International Conferences in several countries: Italy, France, Spain, Austria, Moldova, Latvia, Switzerland, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, USA, Brazil, Greece, Mexico, Hungaria since 1988.

web site: www.integraltranspersonallife.com ; www.pierluigilattuada.com

Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Integral-Transpersonal-Institute/180932665277603>

Blog: www.biotransenergetica.blogspot.it

You tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/biotransenergetica>