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Contributors:

Isabel Bertelsen
Fariba Bogzaran
Hanneke Buyens
Cristina Curti

Andrea Gentili
Pier Luigi Lattuada
Sheena Necole McMahon
Steve Taylor

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Editorial

Contributions

Epistemic Uncertainty and Personal Incertitude, Something to Deal with: the Challenge of Healing

Rossana Strambaci, Ph.D.
ITJ Editor Director

In this particular moment that the world is experiencing, those who are on a path of spiritual search are asking themselves a question that covers the ground of epistemology, but also the ground of social, political and economic thought.

The question is: how can transpersonal thought and integral thought contribute to reset the patterns and behavior of the human species, in the face of one of the most pervasive pandemic forms and one of the deepest global crises in history?.

It is not difficult to observe how this dilemma resonates deeply in the existential path of each one of us. Feelings of impermanence, uncertainty, transience have become part of people's personal and social horizon, they are no longer just elements of philosophical reflection.

And it is here, on this threshold of uncertainty, in this flickering vibration as far as a mirage, that the onto-epistemology of **Pier Luigi Lattuada** is *placed*. An epistemology of "as if", which renounces the illusion of certainty to grasp the regularity of a universe that reveals itself, more and more, interconnected. It is a *psychè - cosmos* connection, a two-way connection that changes the way the Westerns thought. The goal is to find a method to deal with this connection. About this, Lattuada proposes the analysis of what he calls *Integral Transpersonal Inquiry (ITIq)*. In this type of inquiry the methodology and ontology fit together, they participate in each other.

We must keep in mind that the theme of the method is crucial. In fact, I think we can all agree that trans-personal and integral thinking is not, and does not want to be, a vague inspiration, a desire, a flight that could easily appear pindaric.

Hanneke Buyens gives her contribution to an integral epistemology, drawing attention to the different models of

thought (from *Wishful Thinking*, to *Critical Thinking*, *Lateral Thinking*, *Intuitive Thinking*, *Mindful Thinking* and, finally, *Integral Transpersonal Thinking*).

In this interpretation, transpersonal thinking is revealed as an all-inclusive perspective that combines evidence-based data with inner intuition.

Anyway, a method needs tools and one of them is the *Lucid Dream*. In this regard, **Fariba Bogzaran** investigates the theme of lucid dream as a form of meta-consciousness and reflective practice. Fariba's article discusses three research methods exploring lucid dreaming. Some of these methods are qualitative, others are quantitative but what they have in common is the goal of integrating the kind of insight that can result from a lucid dream with a critical mind awareness.

Therefore a contribution of method can also be consolidated while remaining within what Bogzaran calls "epistemic uncertainty". The contents of lucid dreams and the way in which they are accessed are actually difficult to submit to the method of scientific rational thought.

As a matter of fact, we are in the field of uncertainty. An uncertainty not only epistemic, but also personal and social. We are confronted with emptiness, with silence, even with the kind of *vacuum*

that Covid19 has brought into our lives. "The virus put us at home in silence", but "a silence full of opportunities" as **Cristina Curti** recalls in her work, which consists in the results of a qualitative interview on the subjective experiences of a small sample. Among the themes that emerge in this work, the theme of death, the theme of time and, above all, the need to live an authentic creativity, rooted in contact with one's deepest Self.

Creativity and time are themes that bring us back to the dialogue with the other "voices" collaborating at this issue of the magazine.

Andrea Gentili's work shifts the attention to the field of artistic representation and to field of creativity in the world of symbolism, examining the filmographic translation of the modern fairy tale of the Lion King.

The manifestation of archetypes, understood as ordering principles, in the different forms of human creativity, can also indicate the way, or rather a possible way, to transform the present according to its evolutionary lines not only shared, but also harmonious and truly wise.

Speaking of time, it is extremely interesting to note how **Steve Taylor** – in his work which is a kind of phenomenological analysis of the

condition of spiritual awakening – reports how the relationship with time changes in spiritually awakened people. Moreover, among the elements of the phenomenology of awakening there is the feeling of a sense of gratitude that is, according to Taylor, another marker of the state of Awakening. This observation leads us to the work of **Sheena McMahon** who deals precisely with gratitude by examining the relationship between gratitude and well-being along with emotional health. A relationship that is confirmed to be bidirectional. Furthermore, as Taylor points out, in the condition of spiritual awakening the sense of the Ego, or rather the personal identity is perceived as widely expanded.

I think it's a fact that we are now in an open-ended field, in an enlarged dimension regarding also at the level of global sociality. For this reason, now more than ever, I believe it becomes necessary to work for a widening of awareness, which has to correspond to the dissolution of the boundaries between knowledge, technologies and, to some extent, even between States.

It is necessary to bring the trans-personal into the social sphere. The awareness given by a thought that wants to structure itself as integral, must become an element of knowledge and dialogue.

We could try to incubate, as Bogzaran would say, a common dream that takes us out of the shallows water shoal, out of the flat land into which our Western culture and civilization has led us.

The complexity of today's world, which so often burns and wears us out, can be transformed into multidimensionality, can acquire depth and, finally, meaning.

The world and the universe are once again open and infinite before us. The vision comes from afar. In the words of F.W. Nietzsche, the invitation is pressing, once again: "go to the ships, philosophers!" [*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft,* aphorism 289].

Integral Transpersonal Inquiry

Pier Luigi Lattuada, M. D., Psy. D. Ph. D

Founder of Biotransenergetics, Pier Luigi is the Director of the Integral Transpersonal Institute of Milan. He is also 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 Faculty and chair of the Department of Integral Transpersonal Psychology at Ubiquity University.
He is President of EUROTAS, Global Transpersonal Network.
Pier Luigi has published twenty books and several scientific articles.
Email: biotransenergetica@gmail.com
Website: www.pierluigilattuada.com

ABSTRACT
The human experience appears as an integral participatory dialogue between the individual and his environment.
This article will outline the essential lines for an *Integral Transpersonal Inquiry* (ITIq) a method of research able to study the *Circuit of Experience* by framing the individual feeling–thinking–acting within an integral dynamic process that includes the subject of experience, the object of investigation and the field.
I'll present the ontology, the epistemology and the methodology of an integral transpersonal approach to research in the psychological field, focusing on inner experiences, its contents and vehicles.

KEYWORDS
Integral Transpersonal Inquiry, Transe, Circuit of Experience, Transe–cognition, Further Mode, Second Attention Epistemology, Integral Transpersonal Thinking.

Ontology: Focusing the Field

To study human experience as a participatory dialogue between the I and the world, *Integral Transpersonal Inquiry* (*ITIq*) focuses on the human being side, that is, on the psychically significant effects that this interaction produces as a human experience of the world.

From and ontological point of view we could recognize the human experience of the world as a dynamic and interconnected circuit whose components are the thinking, acting and sentient functions.

Therefore, the psyche, which to distinguish from the reduction that has been made to mind, we will call *Psyché*, is defined here as the totality of the human being.

By looking at the world of psychological research we can recognize different approaches, we could affirm with Tart that there are different Psychological Sciences, each one specific to a specific state, i.e., suitable for a particular look at the world and a specific field of investigation.

In fact, it is evident that studying *Psyché* in its meaning of mind, of behaviour of cognitive processes, of unconscious psychodynamics or as a circuit that pervades the I and the world

from an integral point of view requires different methodological approaches.

We could think at the clear and defined methodological approaches within Behavioral Sciences, or at Neuroscience or about the methodology of research in the psychoanalytic field focused on the therapeutic relationship (Clarici, 2011).

We can easily recognize the usefulness of reducing *Psyché* to mind in order to study its functions or dysfunctions and the need to study human behavior or to investigate its unconscious dimensions.

It becomes more complex to find ways to investigate with guarantees of scientific validity the true nature of human experience or to grasp it as a whole as an interconnected, dynamic and pervasive phenomenon of the whole being.

This is the challenging task of integral and transpersonal approaches to methodology research.

I refer to Anderson's intuitive inquiry, Braud's integral inquiry, Clements' organic inquiry (Braud, Anderson, 1998), Tart's essential science (Tart, 2012), Varela's first-person science (Varela, 1999), Wilber's integral science (Wilber, 2011) and to ITIq, I'm presenting in this article.

Psyché indeed pervades, recalling Panikkar (1992), the *bios* dimension, as a living matter, the *pneuma* dimension,

as a breath, vital energy, the *autos* dimension, as a sense of identity, the *logos* dimension as a cognitive function, the *zoè* dimension as an essential, spiritual dimension.

We have thus come to identify the psychic experience as an integral experience that takes place through the thinking, sentient and acting functions within a field.

The field remains to be defined.

The Mesocosm: the Environment as a Psychic Field

If we reflect, we easily realize that the psychic experience as well as the integral is ternary, it is not limited to the individual, the inner side, the I subject of the experience (Microcosm), but extends to the other from itself, the external side, the object of the experience out there in the world (Macrocosm) and pervades the field, the place of experience.

A part of me, a part of you, a part of the field, without these three components there is no experience.

I have attributed the term *Transe* to this ternary unit of experience (Lattuada, 2013).

Just as from the biological point of view we are made up of cells, from the physical point of view, by particles and waves, from the psychic point of view we are made up of ternary processes: *Transe*.

The concept of *Transe* underline an approach that deals with psychodynamic processes crossed by *Psyché*, which is not confined within the individual, but belongs to the *Ternary Circuit of Experience*.

This fact exposes us to an almost infinite complexity, given that the environment, in its macrocosmic wholeness ideally extends to the entire universe, hundreds of billions of galaxies of hundreds of billions of stars each. And recent data seems to confirm that visible matter is only 3% of invisible matter!

While narrowing the field to the place of experience, which with Panikkar (2005), I called Mesocosm, we are faced with several levels of complexity.

In fact, the field is not inert but psychically significant, as it inseparably influences every experience.

Think of the physical environment where an experience can be carried out, or the emotional climate that reigns in a certain situation; or think to the weather, to the historical, cultural, economic, political, geographical, ethnic, cosmic, planetary, health conditions and so on.

It is evident that both the internal environment, the Microcosm, and the external field or environment, the Mesocosm, are both deeply pervaded
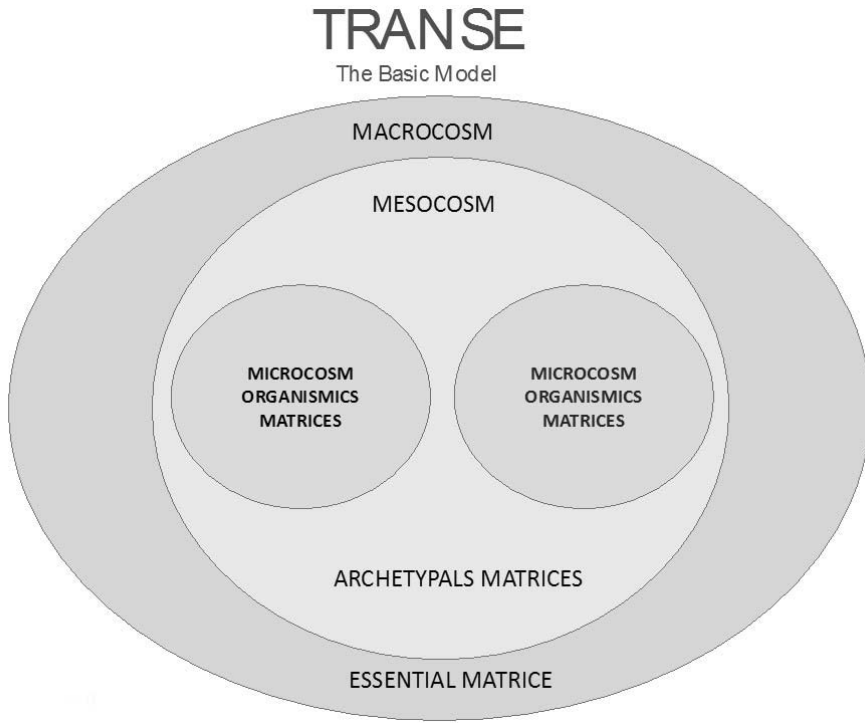
Fig. 1 *The Transe*

by psychic contents. Life appears to us as *Psyché* in action.

We will therefore call *Individual Psyché,* the inner Microcosm of the subject of experience and *Transpersonal Psyché* the Macrocosm and consequently each of its portion of Mesocosm, the outer side of experience.

The Circuit of Experience

We then define the set of thinking, sentient and acting functions in its field as the *Circuit of Experience* and the subjective side of this circuit, our

Individual Psyché with the term of *Organismic Self* to highlight its nature as a unitary and dynamic psycho-biophysical system.

Whatever can be said of human experience, it can be traced back to the three sub-systems of the *Organismic Self*: the thinking (Knower), the sentient (Feeler), the acting functions (Doer) and its contents.

The feeler collect data from outer and inner world, the knower elaborate that input organizing the data for the output operated by the doer.

However hyper-complex the experience of micro-meso-macrocosmic dialogue may be it can be traced back to the phenomenology expressed by that three sub-systems through these five following vehicles of the *Organismic Self*:

1. physical
2. energetic
3. emotional
4. mental
5. spiritual

The object of study of the *Integral Transpersonal Inquiry* (*ITIq*) is, thus further defined in its general lines as the psychodynamic processes of the Self within a field.

Epistemology: a Dialogical Participatory Process

The epistemological foundations of the ITIq should therefore be sought both in the mystical traditions of perennial philosophy and in the systemic, phenomenological and participatory approach of some contemporary scientist, scholars and philosophers. Think to the Buddhism and its concept of interdependence of all things (Suzuki, 2002), to Tantra with the concept of Mahamudra (Takpo Tashi Namgyal, 2001), to Vedanta and its nondual vision (Aurobindo, 1998), to the Tao with yin and yang principles (Lao-tzu, 2018).

Countless are the contemporary approaches to support a participatory and interconnected vision: the Batesonian systemic approach, for which the mind is a circuit (Bateson, 1972), the Husserlian phenomenology which invites to the Epoché, (Husserl, 2006) the suspension of judgement, the implicate and explicate order of David Bohm (1987), the proposals of some contemporary philosophers (Rescher 2000, Pylkkänen 2007, Marmodoro, Yates, 2016) who make explicit reference to Alfred N. Whitehead's procedural philosophy (1978), to cite a few.

The idea that animates such a proposal is that physical reality does not correspond to a set of elements (be they particles, atoms, molecules and so on towards increasingly complex aggregates) that then enter into relation with each other. Rather, the identifiability of a certain element (particle, atom, molecule) is possible only thanks to the set of relations in which this element is inserted. In other words, processualism anchors the individuality of an entity to the set of relations that entity unfolds when it binds to other entities.

We find a clear exposition of this vision in Rovelli (2017), a famous Italian physicist, which he defines as relational interpretation. The idea is to renounce

the notion of the absolute state of a physical system. In fact, according to Rovelli, quantum mechanics describes the way in which physical systems are determined in relation to other physical systems. In his opinion, the properties of such systems cannot be understood as intrinsic, but as dispositional. In other words, the specific values of a certain physical variable emerge only by virtue of the interaction with other physical systems:

"Objects are characterised by the way they interact" (Rovelli, 2017, p. 84).

"There are no properties outside interactions" (Rovelli, 2017, p. 88).

This implies, among other things, that the same sequence of events can be defined and said in many ways:

"Object properties exist only at the moment of interactions and can be real with respect to one object but not with respect to another" (Rovelli 2017 p. 90).

This means we don't experience things but modes of things.

ITIq finally, share the epistemological basis with the new emerging sciences dealing with these "self-organizing interconnected" systems collectively known as the sciences of complexity – including General System Theory (Bertalanffy L., 1968), cybernetics (Weiner N.,1961), nonequilibrium thermodynamics (Prigogine I., 1980), cellular automata theory (von Neumann, J. 1947), Thorn's catastrophe theory (Zeeman E.C., 1976) autopoietic system theory (Maturana H.R., Varela F.J., 1980), dynamic systems theory (Abraham, F. D., Abraham, R. H., & Shaw, C. D. 1990), and chaos theories (Garnett P. W.,1997), among others.

For the general claim, all these approaches seem to welcome the warning of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who advocated a science whose unity was not guaranteed: "by a utopian reduction of all sciences to physics and chemistry but by a structural uniformity (regularity of dynamic models) of the different levels of reality" (Bertalanffy, 1968).

They claim, in other words, that "everything is connected to everything else" – the web of life as a scientific and not just religious conclusion.

Ways of Corruption

To get an integral transpersonal experience, of the things in its modes, the subject of the experience should be able to participate without corrupting, taking away anything.

Operation impossible tells us modern physics and confirms the perennial philosophy: to observe is to participate, then to touch, to corrupt. You can't separate Ontology from Epistemology.

The Problem of Reflexivity

The participatory dialogue between things is necessarily corrupted by ways of knowing.

The dialogue between the *Individual and the Transpersonal Psyché* is by its true nature "corrupting", admitting and accepting it can represent the first step to study our way of participating in the "corruption of the world", of our way of "touching it".

Once we are willing to recognize that the game of human experience is the game of the corruption of the world, of its contamination, we'll solve the problem of objective truth and certain certainty by renouncing to the *Mith of Data* as Sellars call it [Sellars, 1997], to tolerate the *epistemic uncertainty* as Fariba Bogzaran suggests (Bogzaran, 2020).

"As if" onto-epistemology of ITIq suggests to renounce to the illusion of the certainty of facts in order to get basic regularities, patterns, or laws of the entire dynamic process of *Circuit of the Experience*.

This integral transpersonal science of things and modes does not claim to replace the science of things, behavior and evidences but to complement it by filling neglected areas with specific skills, the area of participatory dialogue between the I and the world.

To recognize integral patterns, it is not necessary to avoid contamination, for example with one's own expectations, desires or prejudices, just be careful, recognize them and insert them as elements in the investigation. Even expectations, desires, prejudices, in fact, as part of the participatory dialogue are contents of the *Organismic Self*, our object of investigation.

By grouping data into Maps and Matrices, as we'll see later in details, one can verifies the usefulness and coherence of the Maps and Matrices with the territory of the *Circuit of the Experience* and then compare it with accessible reference maps.

In this way we would be able to base our statements on patterns presenting a functional, dysfunctional or evolutionary phenomenology.

It could be objected that attention is a subjective fact and therefore fallacious, true.

In the scientific field, this problem, which draws on both quantitative and qualitative research, is known as reflexivity [Thomas, 1923], a concept that refers to the circularity or bi directionality between cause and effect.

In quantitative research, it is evident that reflexivity – often called the observer-observer effect and

experimenter bias – affects research results in ways that can be both conscious and unconscious to the researcher.

In qualitative research, reflexivity has come to mean an explicit and transparent account of how the researcher's actions and beliefs impact the results, including questions asked and ignored, research design elements included and left out, and finally the manner and context in which the results are presented and to whom.

For integral and transpersonal research, the personal beliefs of an individual seeker and cultural metanarratives become even more problematic, as spiritual experiences have a very profound impact on our worldview and therefore tend to influence the seeker even more.

But, precisely the study of this fallacy would allow us to develop a first person methodology of research that teaches us the recognition of increasingly reliable and less "contaminating" process and structures.

Rosemarie Anderson (2017) suggests a series of precautions in this regard:

- Total transparency on our beliefs, values and motivations in relation to the research topic.
- The use of the researcher's reflexivity to benefit his research

efforts rather than treating it as a problem to get rid of.
- Invite the Sacred to speak, learning to listen better.
- Recognize that all the elements of the research from the object of the investigation, to the researchers, to the participants represent the Sacred - each in its own way - that could try to reach us.

The illusion of non-contamination has forced science to reduce its scope of investigation to things, to objects, cutting out the subject, the other half of the sky. This scientific methodology has proved its extraordinary effectiveness when it is possible to reduce the subject to an object, the dialogue to a monologue, things in their way to simple things, human beings to matter, experiences to objective facts, the Kosmos to cosmos Wilber would say (2011).

The reduction of the subject to an object is functional to the study of the horizontal dimension of behavior and should be limited to this area.

A knowledge that wants instead to investigate tools and methods (things and modes) to master participatory dialogue also on the evolutionary, vertical, integral and transpersonal dimension is called to pass the hand to a Science of Complexity, which also

finds in the subject of experience, its guarantee of validity and in reflexivity an ally to know and use rather than an enemy to fight.

Think to Intuitive Inquiry by Anderson, the Integral Inquiry by Braud, the Organic Inquiry by Clements, (Braud, William & Anderson, 1998): The Essential Science by Tart (Tart, 2012), the First-Person Science by Varela (Varela, 1999): The Integral Science by Wilber (Wilber, 2011).

and the circle. The square represents the phenomenon, the thing, the substance, the behavior, the evidence-based event, in one word the content of the *Psyché*; the circle represents the noumenon, the mode, the form, the essence of the *Psyché*, the container. The first represents Matter end Energy (*Physio* and *Bios*), the second represents Consciousness (*Nous*). Both together represent things in its modes.

The Circle and the Square

Trying to understand or even just make sustainable statements regarding the game played between subject and object, the modes and the things, turns out to be an extremely difficult undertaking, that requires a careful balance between the warrior's *hybris* and the humility of the sage. In order to understand the psychodynamic complexity of human experience in the world, the participatory dialogue between *Individual* and *Transpersonal Psyché*, we can use the metaphor of the square
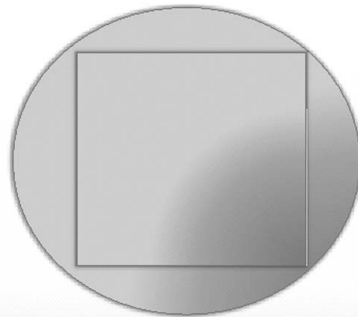
Fig. 2 *Square and Circle*

Physiological Psychodynamics tells us about the dialogue between the content, that is the expression (square) and the container, which is the essence (circle), in the same way Pathological Psychodynamics tell us about the dysfunctional distortions of this dialogue.

Evolutionary Psychodynamics emphasizes the jumps in complexity that allows the individual to gradually awaken his highest qualities and potential.

Studying this dialogue, the integral and transpersonal dimensions come to our aid.

It offers a methodology based on awareness to grasp both the evidences on stage, the square, and the unfolded patterns, the unseen structures of the process, lying on the back stage, the circle.

Just as the term integral means, untouched, the suffix *trans* indicates beyond, in this case besides the personal, but not only.

Trans also means to pervade and transform, that is, to involve all levels of a system and to transcend and include, to go beyond without denying.

The two terms together invite us to consider the human experience in its entirety and to consider a beyond, an elsewhere, a unitary place where things are not as they appear.

The tool for carrying out this investigation should transcend the classical limits of critical thinking and include them in a broader way of thinking, typical of the most advanced stages of thinking.

From cognition to meta-cognition, to *Transe-cognition* we would say.

Let's see in details.

Cognition

Perception (feeling) and thinking (thinking) therefore seem to constitute the starting points of every human activity (acting).

To understand the further methodology of *ITIq*, we need to investigate the thinking function.

The subject of experience, in fact, through the cognition, the thinking function creates models of the world, that is, it forms concepts concerning the perceived process, outlines the *World of Knowledge* (Lattuada, 2018).

Vision Logic: Metacognition

Numerous psychologists (Arieti 1967, Bruner 1986, Flavell 1963) have pointed out that there is much evidence for a cognitive structure beyond or higher than Piaget's "formal operational" (Piaget, 2002).

It has been called "dialectical", "integrative", "creative synthetic" or "vision-logic".

Following Wilber description:

> It appears that whereas the formal mind establishes relationships, vision-logic establishes networks of those relationships.
> Such vision or panoramic logic apprehends a mass network of ideas, how they influence each other and interrelate (Wilber, 2011, p. 116).
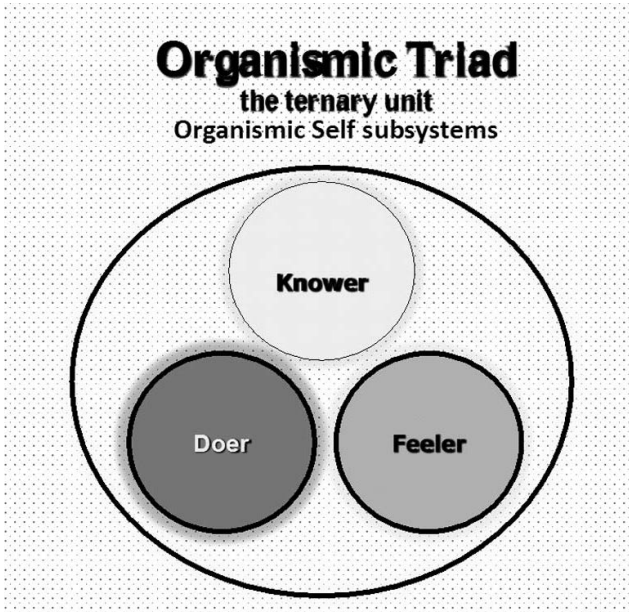
Organismic Triad
the ternary unit
Organismic Self subsystems

Knower

Doer

Feeler

Fig. 3 *Organismic Triad*

From Cognition to *Transe-cognition*

If cognition teaches us, if meta-cognition teaches us to learn, *Transe-cognition* teaches us to grasp the structures and regularities of the Great Chain of Being (Physio, Bio and Nous) that are revealed under our eyes at every moment, here and now.

If cognition get knowledge, meta-cognition reflects on knowledge, *Transe-cognition* is aware of knowledge.

Beeing aware of something means creating the conditions to notice the fundamental laws, structures and regularities of the process, here and now.

Space, time and boundaries define its contours.

Space and Time

Cognition and meta-cognition deal with phenomena that take place over time, according to the logic of rational thinking that knows in a linear and spatial way: things are always somewhere out there and occur in a certain time that proceeds from a first to a later.

Transe-cognition deals with phenomena that always occur now and here.

The Self, in fact, participates in the circuit of the feeling-thinking-acting, always here and always now.

Borders

Speaking of boundaries, we can say that cognition draws the boundaries between the internal world and the external world and deals with the objects of the external world, the so-called data.

Meta-cognition expands the boundaries by including the mind among the objects of its investigation, but limiting itself to its behavior, a phenomenal aspect of mental activity.

Transe-cognition plays with:

1. *Organismic Matrices* of the *Organismic Self;*

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2. States of Consciousness, Stages of Thinking, Lines of Development;
3. Field.

The reflection on how to think and how to learn, however, concerns the mind itself, the *Psyché* in its entirety.

Furthermore, cognition, proceeding along the steps of history passing from naming to numbering, classification, measurement, separation/explanation to verification/falsification, has come to draw a boundary between what is certain and what is not.

The *Transe-cognition* moves the boundary on attention, i.e., on the possibility and the ability to know how to grasp things "as they are".

Transe-cognition, further expands the boundaries by including the subject, the object and the field as objects of its investigation, the mind itself as a circuit.

Contemplation as a Tool

> *The real weakness of humans lies in their inability to maintain a constant state of contemplation.*
> (Plotinus)

Thanks to meditative and contemplative practices, however, the human being is able to achieve higher states of consciousness in which he realizes that even thought, like any other object, can be observed.

Contemplation is theory, i.e.,

observation of things as they are, a place of coincidence between *nous* and *noein,* mind and thinking, it allows, according to Thomas, the *cognitio dei experimentalis*, the experimental knowledge of God [Calasso, 2016, p. 307].

We would call *World of Awareness* [Lattuada, 2018] that dimension in which I realize that I can observe myself, feeling-thinking-acting.

Shifting from the *World of Knowledge* ways of organizing my experience, to the *World of Awareness* ways of organizing my knowledge of experience (structures of the process), a very significant evolutionary leap takes place.

Thus, *ITIq* should be intended as a research methodology to investigate the *World of Awareness* based on contemplation, a change in the quality level of attention, proposing a science of both the square and the circle.

This means to go beyond the rational mind using higher levels of thinking, go beyond the Piaget's "formal operational thinking", and vision logic, cognition and metacognition.

Transe-cognition is the result of a way of thinking, the *Integral Transpersonal Thinking* (ITT) [Lattuada 20118] operational tool of *ITIq*, supported by the *Further Mode* [Lattuada 2013] which underline a *Second Attention Epistemology* [Lattuada 2010].
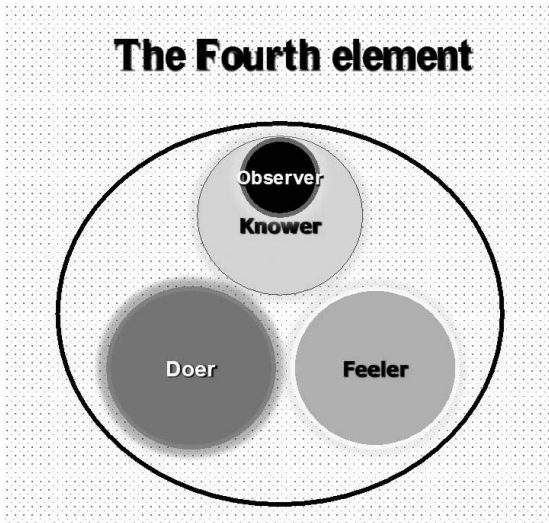
The Fourth element

Observer
Knower

Doer

Feeler

Fig. 4 *The Fourth Element*

Transe-cognition of ITT, is a way of organizing the experience of the world through contemplation, an awareness process of observing oneself, feeling-thinking-acting.

On the surface of every contact, in the presence of every boundary, in front of any event the aware observation improves the attention to a *Second Attention* (the *second thinking* of Plotinus) (Plotinus, 2018), arising from contemplation of events both on stage and on backstage.

The attention here and now, provides the expansion of the field of consciousness both of the appearances and beyond, within, without, and all around (depth, breadth and height).

Thanks, the pure unidentified presence, of the *Second Attention* the *Further Mode* grasps the unfold complementary polarity in the manifest one; for example, it grasps what reunites in separation and what separates in reunification; in what appears it unmask what is hidden.

The *Further Mode* transcends the dual perspective of ordinary consciousness as it integrates opposites and provides a unified vision of existence; allows to unify the dualisms (light and shadow, what appears, and what is).

ITT arises from the synergistic use of some basic psychic functions, namely: observation, proprioception, exteroception, attention and consciousness.

The mastery of observation leads to the realization of the conscious observation of our identifications, the mastery of proprioception, that is of what we feel inside, (*Implicit Essential Inherences IEI*) is achieved through inner listening, the mastery of external perception, that is, of the experience of the world, (*Explicit Clinical Evidences ECE*) occurs through listening to the field, the

Fig. 5 *Integral Transpersonal Thinking*

surrounding environment, the mastery of attention and conscience through intent and contemplation.

Second Attention Epistemology (SAE)

Transe-cognition therefore, underline a *Second Attention Epistemology* that beside the literal mode, of "formal operational" such as measurement, evidence based and critical processing of data, provide a *Further Mode* able of considering the variety of states of consciousness and the interconnection between the I and the world.

• SAE invite to tolerate the epistemic uncertainty of an "as if" onto-epistemology available to renounce

the certainty of facts in order to get basic regularities, patterns, or laws of the entire *Circuit of the Experience*.

• It suggests an approach to the inner and outer experience centered on the subject of the experience and on the guarantees of validity of its statements, based on *transe-cognition*.

• It outlines a method of investigation and validation based on as if "ontological beliefs" (i.e., everything is interconnected) exposed in evidence as part of the inquiry, an as if epistemology (SAE), an integral transpersonal methodology (see below) able to individuate Maps

and Matrices (of the *Organismic Self*) to be applied as an "as if" coherent and unified worldview to all three great realms of evolution, the physio sphere (matter, body), the biosphere (vital energy) and the noosphere (consciousness).

- "As if" means that the results of inquiry are not to be raised as flags of certainty but proposed instead as basic regularities, patterns and laws to be submitted to the experience.
- Thanks, the telescope of *Transe-cognition,* therefore, one can collect inner and outer data from the five vehicles of the *Organismic Self* by checking within and without, the evidences and the unfolded patterns, the unseen structures of the process.
- By grouping data into Maps and Matrices one can verifies the usefulness and coherence of the Maps and Matrices with the territory of the *Circuit of the Experience* and then compare it with accessible reference maps to check its functional, dysfunctional or evolutionary phenomenology.
- Think to the maps of the different stages of thinking, states of consciousness, lines of development.

To synthetize:

1. "As if" ontology: what is?
- Everything is a psychic event: an interconnected inseparable participatory dialogue of things and modes.
2. "As if" epistemology: How do you can say it?
- Get the *Second Attention* by observing the *Circuit of the Experience*: be aware of knower, doer, feeler thanks the *Transe-cognition.*
3. How do you verify/falsify it?
- By grouping inner data (IEI) and outer data (ECE) and comparing with references standardized maps.
- By testing its coherence and usefulness through experiences and peer validation/falsification feedback.
4. Reliability
- Trough *SAE, ITIq* seek for guarantees of validity, beside measuring and verifying the data, by checking the contemplation, the mode of attention, the way of observing and processing the experience.
- Trough *ITT ITIq* seeks to provide tools for studying the process of phenomena in an integral way as interconnected events of the Great Chain of Being that unifies matter, life and mind.

Two Consequences

Considering each event as a psychic

event occurring in a stratified integral field has two consequences.

1. The first consequence is that we have a map coherent with the territory: our experience of the world depends on what we "do" to it through our feeling-thinking-acting. We can thus consider every psychic event not given once and for all but as multiform and dependent on my way of feeling-thinking-acting.

2. The second consequence is that I can behave "as if" the event was, a dynamic and interconnected participatory dialogue between myself and the world. That is, I am part of the event, always here, always now and all around.
   If I feel-think-act in a confused way I have a confused experience, if I feel-think-act by projecting my needs and fears onto the world I will have a distorted experience, if I feel-think-act partially I will have a partial experience, if I feel-think-act in an integral way I will have an integral experience. Even if an experience is always integral in itself, the subject of the experience captures a part of it, according to his state of consciousness and stage of thinking, which in turn depend on his lines of development.

Maps and Matrices

Think of a car trip, a walk along a forest path or a trekking in the mountains. Think of maps that, thanks to GPS, show us the way, road signs, photographs taken during the trip or even memories that we take with us on our return. These maps are useful for living the experience, analyzing it, describing it, transmitting it and eventually evaluating the results.

Depending on the aspects we want to investigate about the experience we will choose appropriate maps. If, for example, we want to investigate the degree of subjective well-being or malaise expressed by the collected content, we can choose a binary matrix that can highlight the differences between a phenomenology of well-being or malaise, or harmony or disharmony, chronicity or fluidity, interference or resonance.

We might want to investigate the dysfunctional experiences or psychological qualities of the object of inquiry or the psychodynamic and evolutionary process or the degree of access to the transpersonal dimension.

ITIq suggests maps capable of organising information on a binary, ternary, quaternary or seven-yearly basis such as: Jungian psychological functions or the characters of different personality

theories, Grof's perinatal matrices or Wilber's states of consciousness and stages of thinking, Reichian diaphragms, or Eastern tradition chakra, Campbell's hero's journey or Maslow's pyramid of needs, the psychodynamic positions and dualisms of Biotransenergetics, to name a few.

Comparing ECE and IEI collected on the field of *Circuit of the Experience*, by the five vehicles of the *Organismic Self* (physical, energetic, emotional, mental and spiritual) with the systemic orders provided by the reference matrices we can identify patterns of the process analyzing the experiential data according to functional, dysfunctional or evolutionary parameters.

Practicing Integral Transpersonal Inquiry

Psychological research describes (what), predicts (when), controls (causes) and explains (why) behavior.

The *ITIq* expand that steps starting from the enunciation of an intent, which transcends and includes the goal. A dimension that the researcher draws on through a methodology that is called *Ceremony of Intent* characterized by some questions in which the researcher draws on the *Second Attention* and contemplates (what) the events (the phenomenon on the stage), is aware, looks beyond appearances (behind the scenes), pay attention here, now and all around (depth, breadth and height) through the *Transe-cognition* recognizes regularity, patterns and structures of the whole processes (how it works), organizes the territory in maps (how to do it), compare with reference maps, applies the acquisitions in the concrete action (verification / falsification), check the coherence and the usefulness, get feedbacks from peers.

There are nine phases of ITIq:

1. Premises / Exhibition
2. Theory / Contemplation
3. Current state of knowledge / gaps
4. Experiential Methodology
5. Field experience through *transe-cognition*
6. Data collection and processing
7. Exposure of experiential evidence
8. Discussion, comment and conclusions
9. Check and feedbacks

There are three cornerstones of experiential guarantee:

1. *Ceremony of Intent*
2. *Organismic Constellation*
3. *IPEG, Integral Process Evaluation Grid* (Lattuada 2012)

Premises / exhibition

The scientific method is based on theories, hypotheses and research.

In addition to the cognitive premises on theories and hypotheses, ITIq supports the exposition of its intent and its experiences collected in the *Ceremony of Intent* and in the *Organismic Constellation* through *Transe-cognition*.

<u>Theory *I* Contemplation</u>

Current psychological science starts from theories, that is, it collects ideas about behavior, questioning the possible causes of thoughts, emotions and actions, makes predictions, that is, it elaborates hypotheses that are systematically verified through the collection and evaluation of data with objective methods. and empirical evidence.

ITIq "brackets" possible cognitive theories that remain behind the scenes, think to *Epoché* of Husserl (Husserl, Hardy, 1999), and is based on conscious subjective experience. An integral, transpersonal, organismic experience of contemplation here and now of the *Organismic Self* in its environment able to find patterns in the processes of participatory dialogue (*Circuit of Experience*); an experience that depends on the state of consciousness, the level of attention and intent. This means that theories and hypotheses remain on the backstage, transcended and included in the "empty and awake" experience of the *Organismic Self,* thanks to an integral method based on *Transe-cognition*: *Integral Thinking, Second Attention and Further Mode.*

<u>Current state of knowledge *I* gaps</u>

Those who work according to a methodology of an integral transpersonal research, like any other researcher, investigate the current state of knowledge exposed in the literature on a cognitive level and identify any gaps to be filled.

<u>Experiential methodology and field experience through *transe-cognition*</u>

Psychological research usually takes place according to three different types of studies: descriptive, correlational or experimental.

The *ITIq* adds an experiential methodology that investigates the entirety of the *Circuit of Experience* by crossing the boundaries of the linear dimension towards a circular practice, which involves the integral experience of the *Organismic Self* which operates according to the *Transe-cognition*, dealing with both what appears on the stage and what remains behind the scenes and seeking guarantees of validity in attention (*second attention*).

The study of human experience, of the participatory dialogue between

the individual and the environment involves for the *ITIq*, the object studied, the subject who investigates and the psychically significant field where the experience takes place.

Data collection and processing

Psychological research relies on the resources of critical thinking to organize the data of its research.

The *ITIq* collects data from the whole *Circuit of Experience* which includes:

- The *Explicit Clinical Evidences (ECE)* that is, the data from the object of investigation and the field in which the experience takes place, collected through all the levels, vehicles and contents of the *Organismic Self*.
- *Implicit Essential Inherences (IEI)*, that is, the data from the subject who investigates in his relationship with the object of investigation and field, collected through all levels, vehicles and contents of the *Organismic Self*.
- The *ITIq* considers a primary data processing that occurs according to the tools of *Transe-cognition*.
- Secondary processing will take place comparing IEI ad ECE with reference matrices according to the standard methods of qualitative research, once they have

been collected into *Organismic Constellation* and included in the *IPEG*.

- The organization of data according to the *IPEG* allows information to be processed according to functional, dysfunctional or evolutionary dynamics based on the different structures and regularities taken as a reference and declined in the different *IPEGs*.

Exposition, discussion, comment and conclusions

As a consequence of the work carried out and the approach followed, the *ITIq* at the time of sharing the results provides for the exposure in first person also of the subjective contents (IEI) of the researchers.

Ceremony of the Intent

The *Ceremony of Intent* takes place in five phases and is repeated frequently during the process, at least before the premises, methodology and data processing.

Practicing the Ceremony of the Intent

*1.	Where am I?*

The researcher, empty and awake, listens and wonders where she/his really is, literally and figuratively. It takes

the time to listen and let insights or visions arise from within about where to start.

2. *What am I doing?*

The researcher takes the time to contemplate her/himself and what she/he is doing. Right now, at the exact moment in which she/he is preparing to start the research, as well as during different phase of the work.

3. *What am I feeling?*

In the same way, she/he allows her/himself to listen to her/himself, keep in touch, let go of beliefs, goals, strategies, judgments and take note of her/his own sense of the research she/he is about to undertake. What feelings, emotions, needs, desires, expectations, fears?

4. *What is my Intent?*

Now the crucial question, what really moves me, where does my Self want to take me? What achievements do I want to achieve? The researcher understands in self-contemplation the difference between deficient goals motivated by personal needs and the pure selfless intent that works for the common good and points the way.

Ceremony of the Intent

Participatory dialogue of life is a sacred ceremony

✓ where am I?
✓ what am I doing?
✓ What am I feeling
✓ which is my Intent?
✓ here I'm?
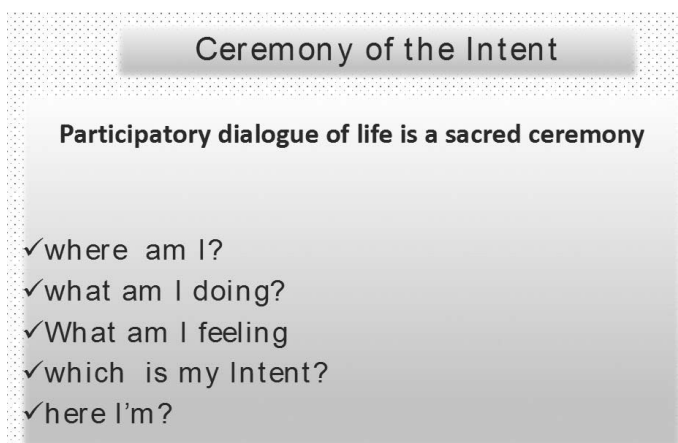
Fig. 6 *Ceremony of the Intent*

5. *I'm here.*

The researcher takes note on an integral level of her/his own place in the world, of the profound meaning of her/his research, ready to express the best of her/himself for its realization.

Organismic Constellation

The *Organismic Constellation* represents the place where the data of the *Circuit of the Experience* are collected and will provide the raw material to be compared with the reference maps in order to investigate the functional, dysfunctional, evolutionary psychodynamics.

Whether the research is aimed at data coming from the external or internal environment, the *Organismic self* is characterized as the headquarters of operations, the

space where *ECE* and *IEI* meet.

Organismic Constellations are a way of graphically representing information from *ECE* and *IEI*.

By tracing an *Organismic Constellation*, thus graphically representing information from *ECE* and *IEI* the researcher can take a snapshot of the entire *Circuit of Experience*. Also, *Organismic Constellation* would be repeated frequently by the researcher during the process, at least before the premises, methodology and data processing.

Practicing the Organismic Constellation

Here how does researcher would proceed:

- Take a sheet.
- Draw up five concentric circles as indicate on the figure 7.
- Close your eyes and feel. Pay attention to the contents of your *Organismic Self* listed below.
- Fulfill the five layers writing down the content you felt. Starting from physical to spiritual body, passing through energetic, emotional, mental, (several contents per layer, one content one circle). See example ahead:
  - Sensations on the red circle.
  - Subtle Sensations on the yellow circle.

- Moods, feelings, emotions, needs, desires on the green circle.
- Ideas, memories, images, thoughts on the blue circle.
- Insights, intuitions, visions, etc. on the violet circle.

Integral Process Evaluation Grid

The *ECE* and *IEI* data collected in the *Organismic Constellations* will then be included in the *IPEG*. This will allow to appreciate, according to the same photographic principle, the evolutionary dynamics of the processes to be compared with the reference patterns.
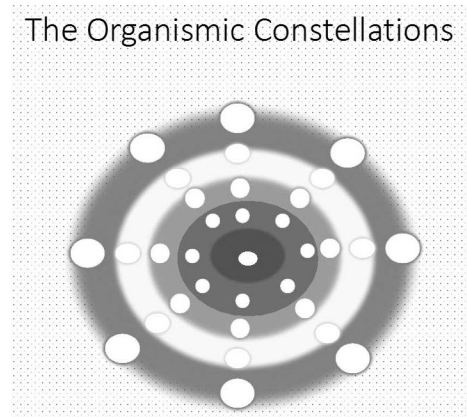

The Organismic Constellations

Fig. 7 *Organismic Constellation*

It will in fact be possible to insert in the IPEG different maps providing evolutionary regularities, such as the Perinatal Matrices or the four phases of Grof's inner experience (fig. 8), the Four Quadrants or Wilber's evolutionary
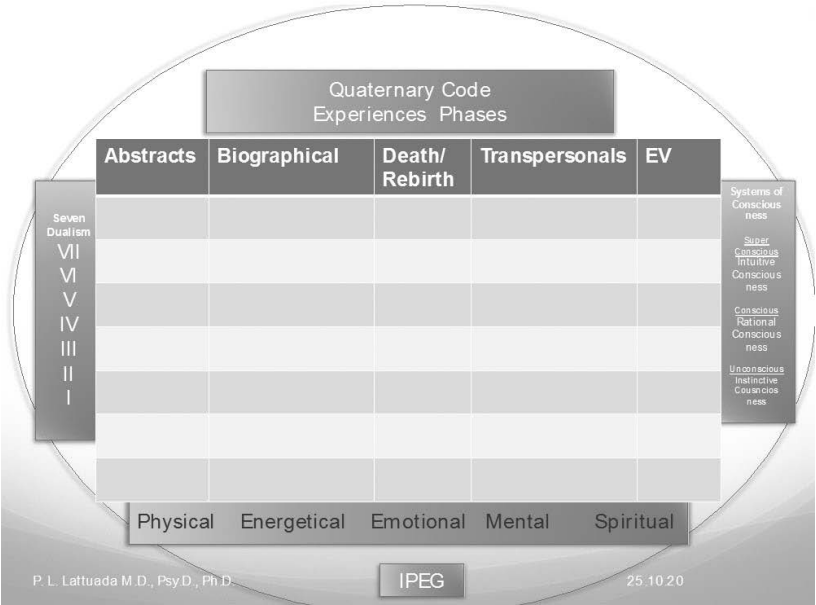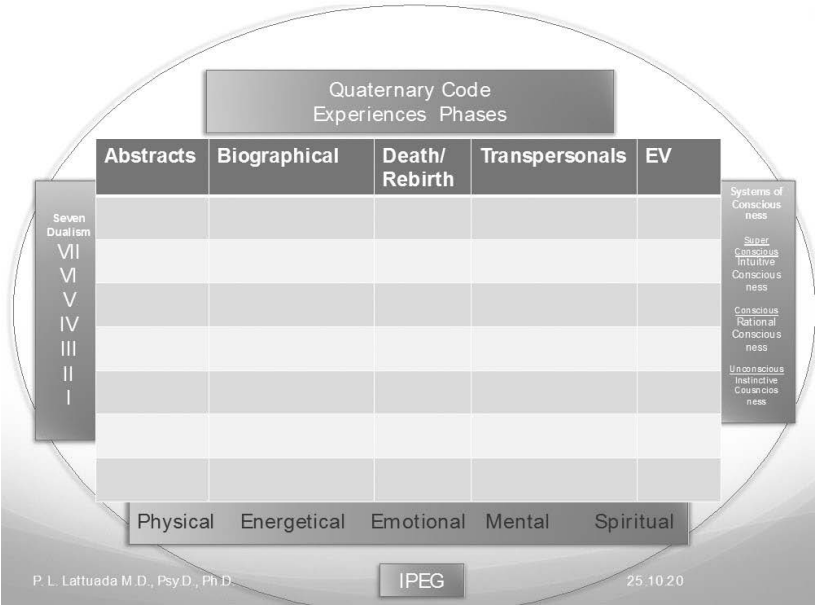
Fig. 8 *IPEG (Example 1)*

Fig. 9 *IPEG (Example 2)*

lines, Maslow's Pyramid of Needs, the phases of Campbell's Hero's Journey, the Reichian diaphragms, the chakras of the Vedanta tradition, the Psychodynamic Positions (fig. 9), the Archetypal Matrices and the Orders of Consciousness of Biotransenergetics or any other matrice one wants to consider.

Legend of acronyms

ECE: Explicit Clinical Evidences
IEI: Implicit Essential Inherences
IPEG: Integral Process Evaluation Grid
ITIq: Integral Transpersonal Inquiry
ITT: Integral Transpersonal Thinking
SAE: Second Attention Epistemology

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Creativity, Critical and Integral Thinking

Hanneke Buyens, MA

Hanneke Buyens has always been interested in human behavior, philosophy, and culture. She first obtained a master's degree in English and Dutch Literature and Linguistics (Kuleuven). At the beginning of her career, she realized that she wanted to work with people and chose a career in Human Resources. After several years of experience in Recruitment and Selection, HR Consulting and Coaching, she decided to deepen her knowledge about these subjects with a Postgraduate degree in Recruitment, Search & Selection (Kuleuven), a Postgraduate degree in Inspirational Coaching (Artevelde Hogeschool), and a course in Stress - and Burn-out Coaching. Hanneke started her own Coaching practice in 2014. During her experience in coaching people, she saw an underlying theme between seemingly distinct issues: behind all Stress and Burn-out issues lies a disconnection with the Self and the universe. The drive to understand human behavior on a deeper level and the drive to be of service in the transformational processes of her clients led her to the transpersonal field. She is currently completing a Ph.D. program in Integral Transpersonal Psychology at Ubiquity University, where she focusses on the spiritual process, altered states of consciousness and intuition.

ABSTRACT

To think, means creating patterns out of its surroundings, forming concepts about the observed process. Once the patterns are formed it becomes possible to recognize them. This system is a very efficient way of handling information because patterns are easily formed, combined, and ingrained in the brain. However, it is extremely difficult to restructure them. The thinker is concerned with the observed object of his thinking and not with the thinking or observation.

There are several ways to think: wishful thinking, Critical thinking, Lateral thinking, Intuitive thinking, Mindful Thinking, and Integral Transpersonal Thinking. In this article, I will explain the meaning of these distinct ways of thinking as I have learned to understand them. After that I will offer my personal viewpoint on the concepts that I have learned and the impact they have on my life.

KEYWORDS

Wishful thinking, critical thinking, lateral thinking, observation, questions.

Introduction

To think, means creating patterns out of its surroundings, forming concepts about the observed process. Once the patterns are formed it becomes possible to recognize them. This system is a very efficient way of handling information because patterns are easily formed, combined, and ingrained in the brain. However, it is extremely difficult to restructure them. The thinker is concerned with the observed object of his thinking and not with the thinking or observation.

There are several ways to think: wishful thinking, Critical thinking, Lateral thinking, Intuitive thinking, Mindful Thinking, and Integral Transpersonal Thinking. In the next paragraphs, I will explain the meaning of these distinct ways of thinking as I have learned to

understand them. After that I will offer my personal viewpoint on the concepts that I have learned and the impact they have on my life.

Ways of Thinking

Wishful thinking

Wishful thinking is the idea that what people want to be true, affects what they believe to be true. In wishful thinking we are driven by our beliefs. We project them onto the world. Biases like Overconfidence, over-optimism, self-serving beliefs, and cognitive dissonance can be viewed as instances of wishful thinking. Wishful thinking can cloud our evaluation of evidence.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking means to think about what you think, to make your thinking better. Critical thinking is driven by the desire to improve what we think and the point of asking critical questions is that we need a deeper understanding of what is being said. We make our beliefs coherent with evidence by critical examination. Before spending time thinking critically, it is very important to consider the question: Who cares?

In the book *Asking the right questions, a guide to critical thinking*, by M. Neil Browne & Stuartv M. Keeley (1944), critical thinking is the combination of awareness of a set of interrelated critical questions, the ability to ask and answer critical questions at appropriate times; and the desire to actively use the critical questions. Critical thinking consists of a skillset to develop your best and most reasonable answer, given the nature of the problem and the available information, with the important side note that current beliefs are open to revision. According to the book, an opinion should be selected from alternative opinions that we have understood and evaluated.

They make a distinction between the Sponge and Panning for Gold thinking styles.

The sponge is an accumulate information: you try to absorb as much information as possible.

Though this approach is productive, the planning for gold approach means being a participant in a meaningful dialogue with the writer or speaker and critically question what is being said. Trying out new answers provides as basis for our growth and improves communication, according to the book.

Critical thinking is evaluating an author's argument and to do that, there are several questions you can ask, which I will list and explain below.

What are the issue and the conclusion?

Before you can evaluate an author's argument, you must know exactly what the author is trying to persuade you to believe. "An *issue* is a question or controversy responsible for the conversation or discussion. It is the stimulus for what is being said."(Browne, M. Neil, 1944, p. 15) There are descriptive and prescriptive issues. *Descriptive issues* raise questions about the accuracy of descriptions of the past, present, or future. *Prescriptive issues*: raise questions about what we should do or what is right or wrong. The conclusion is the message about the issue that the author wants you to accept.

What are the reasons?

The second important critical question is concerning the *reasons*, the explanations for why we should believe a conclusion. The reasons in combination with the conclusion is called and *argument*.

If the quality of the reasons is good you might be persuaded to accept the conclusion.

What words or phrases are ambiguous?

A third important critical question is: "What words or phrases are ambiguous?".

If we do not question the meaning of the words used, we might misunderstand what we hear.

By asking "What could be meant?" and "What is meant by the key terms?" we can avoid misunderstandings. Identifying ambiguous words is an important step in determining whether you will accept or reject the conclusion.

What are value conflicts and assumptions?

The fourth critical question is about value conflicts and assumptions. In the movement from reasons to conclusion, we can detect value assumptions. Values are the ideas that we see as worthwhile and an assumption is a belief that supports the reasoning but is not clearly stated. They are taken for granted in the reasoning.

By identifying value conflicts, you determine whether the author's value preferences match your value preferences. Consequently, you have a tool for determining whether you will accept or reject an author's conclusion. (Browne, M. Neil, 1944, p. 69).

What are the descriptive assumptions?

The fifth important critical question is: "What are the descriptive assumptions?".

They are the link between a reason and the author's conclusion, and it can be flawed. The question allows you to

determine whether an author's reasons lead to a conclusion.

Are their fallacies in the reasoning?

The sixth question is concerning fallacies in the reasoning. "A fallacy is a reasoning 'trick' that an author might use while trying to persuade you to accept a conclusion" (Browne, M. Neil, 1944, p. 85).

The book states that reasoning should be rejected whenever you have found mistaken assumptions, distractions, or support for the conclusion that already assumes the truth of the conclusion.

How good is the evidence?

The seventh question is about evidence. "Evidence is explicit information shared by the communicator that is used to back up or to justify the dependability of a factual claim" (Browne, M. Neil, 1944, p. 107).

Several kinds of evidence can be evaluated with caution: intuition, personal experience, personal testimonials, and appeals to authorities. If the evidence that supports the reason is good, the reason better supports the conclusion.

Are there rival causes?

The eight question is: "Are there rival causes?". A rival cause is a plausible alternative explanation that can explain why a certain outcome occurred. These weaken claims. We should not confuse causation with association.

If the author does not provide reasons for why you should accept her explanation over other explanations, you should not be willing to accept her explanation and, ultimately, her conclusion (Browne, M. Neil, 1944, p. 153).

Are The statistics deceptive?

The ninth question is: "Are the statistics deceptive?". Even though statistics appear to be hard evidence, there are many ways that statistics can be misused and it is important to determine whether the statistics prove the author's point.

What significant info is omitted?

The tenth question concerns omitted information. Important information might be left out in an argument and this information might be important in assessing the worth of the conclusion.

What reasonable conclusions are possible?

The eleventh question is about the possible conclusions. Very rarely do reasons mean just one thing. What alternative conclusions might be consistent with the reasons given? "We would shrink the quality of our decision making if we did not consider alternative conclusions as possible

bases for our own beliefs" [Browne, M. Neil, 1944, p. 190]. This is the last step in deciding whether to accept or reject the conclusion.

Lateral Thinking

According to Edward De Bono, *Vertical thinking* is concerned with proving or further develop concept patterns, whereas *Lateral thinking* is the restructuring of patterns [insights] to provoke and create new insights [creativity]. Lateral and vertical thinking are complementary. Although the emphasis in education has always been on vertical thinking, we need lateral thinking as well, because of the limitations of the behavior of our mind as a self-maximizing memory system. This memory system is not good at restructuring and "updating" patterns.

This is what I often experience with my clients in my practice as a coach. People come to me with a certain issue that they do not want anymore, but they do not see a way out of their situation. They have created a pattern/belief in their mind about the situation or a way to behave and it is hard for them to restructure this belief. One of the ways I help my clients is to trigger a new way of thinking about the issue, another perspective, thinking "out-of-the-box". During the coaching session we generate new approaches to the situation.

Deliberate generation of alternatives is a skill that can be learned, and *De Bono and the six thinking hats* is a simple but powerful method to practice. In this technique a problem or situation can be looked at from six distinct "angles", each perspective has its own colored hat. When we practiced this during the live session, this resulted in a surprising dynamic. I will use this technique as an exercise in my practice to generate ideas on how to approach the situation my client feels stuck in.

Intuitive Thinking

Intuitive thinking means to access the higher states of consciousness to develop how we perceive. Here we bypass our beliefs. David Myers questions intuitive thinking in his book *Intuition its powers and perils* [2002]. He wants an answer to the question whether intuition is valid. He discusses concepts like social intuition and intuitive expertise to prove that we know more than we know we know.

In the difference between left brain/right brain we can discover a thinking without awareness. Myers states that while the left brain is adept at literal interpretations of language, the right brain excels in making subtle inferences. The idea that memory is a single, unified system is challenged: we have two systems operating in tandem:

implicit and explicit. Some things we implicitly know without explicitly remembering. Besides this left brain/right brain difference, there are two ways of knowing (unconscious and conscious). The first is simple, reflexive, and emotional; the second complex, reflective, and rational. A third example of parallel information processing (one part intuitive, one part rational) is our dual attitude system: gut-level attitudes guide our actions, and then our rational mind makes sense of them.

The difference between rational and intuitive knowing can be discussed as the difference between academic intelligence (assessed by intelligence and academic aptitude tests) and social intelligence-the know-how that enables us to comprehend social situations and manage ourselves in them.

Integral Transpersonal Thinking

With the Integral Transpersonal Thinking we observe the data of the field, the inner and outer data.

In the game of thinking we are playing, there are two distinct attention experiences. In the *first attention*, we see the universe as two opposites: the world and me. We know, do, and feel in interaction with this world. It is through the act of observation that we become aware what we experience in this interaction. We can observe ourselves observing the world. Critical, lateral, intuitive, Mindful thinking all fall under this first attention.

When detach from our thinking, the observer becomes the observation. The observation of observing myself observing the world, is the *second attention*. We no longer see the universe as two opposites, but as one field: Us. I can observe that the world and I are one. From this moment we are thinking in an integral transpersonal way. Integral Transpersonal thinking is a *further mode* of knowing. Integral means that we include all levels of Body-mind, our Organismic Self which consists of physical, energetical, emotional, mental, and spiritual data. Transpersonal means to transcend and include dualities. It goes beyond the boundaries between you and me. The further mode combines logic and analogic data. We combine our logical thinking with the inner and outer data and the states of consciousness and the field. When we look at this in a *systemic* way, we can distinguish the world of knowledge, the world of awareness and the world of essence. The first attention is the world of knowledge. This is the data we get from our body: physical awareness and subtle energy. The world of awareness is the second attention, our emotions and intuition. The world of essence is

the further mode, our spiritual "data", transpersonal consciousness. These states of consciousness can be mapped in the Organismic Self. *The Organismic Self* is based on a mapping that considers different organismic districts based on the chakra system.

The Second Attention Epistemology is a new epistemology that suggests new rules to deal with the conditions under which it is possible to have scientific knowledge and the ways to reach it. The second attention epistemology uses the second attention to explore a dynamic and interconnected field. It shifts focus from Reason to Intuition, Dualism to unity, Reality to truth, judgment to observation. The new vision of integral transpersonal thinking appears to reconcile the tradition Western and Eastern history the polarities represent. This consists of an endless dialogue between truth and reality. The second attention epistemology assumes that awareness is reached in the surface of contact with the boundary, always in the here and now. The boundary indicates the essence, the unity of all. The true- false boundary retreats into the background and the data collected with self-seeing eyes remain in the foreground. (Explicit clinical evidence supported by Implied Essential Inherences). *The science of consciousness* does not just rely

on research or evidence, but dwells mainly in the subject of the experience and what he makes of the vision. The difference that makes the differences lies in attention (mindfulness).

To deal with the dialogue between reality and truth, field and intent, patterns and process, Integral Transpersonal Thinking offers several skills. There are *5 maieutic categories* to recognize the revelation, to bring about transformation: Dissolving, navigating, expanding, prolonging, and becoming.

To summarize: In the first attention experience, I and the world are separate: what I experience, and practice is separate from the world with the knowledge. When I shift from the first attention experience to the second attention experience, I realize that I am the world, and the world is me. Even though I can try to remain objective in my thinking, there will always be a subjective part present. When we consider that there are always different types of thinking that are present in an observation of thinking, e.g. wishful thinking, critical thinking, intuitive thinking and integrate them all in our observation, we go beyond the subjective and objective to the transe. This is the second attention where I observe myself observing. The further mode describes this process, and we

can achieve this state of consciousness by practicing the *great gesture*.

When I consider that we do not think, we are being thought, that my thoughts, feelings and emotions just flow through me, I tap into the field. I see me boundaries, look beyond, feel the field, and become one. My boundaries are my previous knowledge, my beliefs about the subject, about my studying behavior, my emotions, and thoughts. Outside of the boundaries is the study material, the teacher, classmates, and outside world that have an impact on me. I am aware of these boundaries and accept them. I release my judgments. I become the mirror, the essence, my true Self, and I am in the presence, connected to the field of all possibilities. I see that I am not only the student in the group, but I am also the group of students. We are not only learning, but also teaching. We are not only observing, but also creating. This is the dialogue between me and the world through the field. All these possibilities are there.

My Personal Viewpoint and Impact on my Life

1. On the different ways of thinking

When I look at the different ways of thinking, I see an influence on my life from my environment. To me, it looks like I was raised in a *mythical way of thinking*: "Let's do what we know works". This meant that I was taught to behave in a certain way means according to certain standards, because they were the norm. Certain types of behavior were black, and others were white, because it was what everyone else in the village did. Doing it differently, was frowned upon. I had a little more *wishful thinking* in me, when I was younger: if I love you, you are a good person. It is nice to think this, but it is a little naive to think this way.

When I learned to think *critically*, mostly during my education at university, my wishful thinking was shattered and replaced with the trust that the framework of scientific knowledge would offer me a safe world view. This of course, is not true. The last couple of years, I was confronted with things that my critical mind cannot explain, which has led me to search for a new world view, a new way of thinking.

I remember exactly when this shift happened in me. It was when I was in so much pain and frustration about not being able to deal with all the things that I could not explain to myself, that did not fit in my critical world view. Suddenly there was a shift, and I found the connection with my essence and everything fell into place. It was my first conscious encounter with the

Transe (me + you + the field). I heard a voice, my *intuition*, saying repeatedly that everything is connected, that I am everything and that everything is me. This opened a whole new range of possibilities to me, such as trying to recognize the archetypes in my life, trying look beyond this life, beyond this world. The latest step in the development of my thinking was the giant leap I took the last couple of months, when learning to understand on how to think in an Integral Transpersonal way. I will explain this leap in paragraph 3. But first I will offer my point of view on critical thinking.

2. On critical thinking

To explain my view on critical thinking, I will use the example of something I posted on the University's discussion board on the lockdown that had just occurred in my country. On March 13th, the Belgian Government had announced a lock down because of the Covid-19. The guidelines they had announced, and their different interpretations clearly showed the difference between the sponge technique and the planning for gold. As stated in the book *Asking the right questions, a guide to critical thinking*, by M. Neil Brown & Stuart M. Keeley (1944), there is a time and a place to use the planning for gold technique. Sometimes

it is not necessary to be critical and just abide. When a government imposes a lockdown it is of the utmost importance that people follow this guideline. However, sometimes there are responsibilities that prevent people from following them. A lot of discussion had occurred in the WhatsApp group of my daughters' class in kindergarten. The Government has arranged daycare for children of people who work in healthcare or for children who did not have anyone else taking care of them. People who can work from home, can keep their children at home. However, people who are expected to go to their workplace, were having difficulties to find an alternative solution.

This created a lot of tension, where people who could easily abide, frowned upon others for pairing up together to alternate days of caring or are angry with people who send their children to the school's day care. I was observing the difference in people's reaction. I think many people are like sponges, absorbing all the information being fed to them in the media and others are more critical and dare to put their own opinions on a shelf.

To me, what occurred, is a great example to really consider when to be critical and when to abide. Questions like: why do these guidelines exist?

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What are the potential problems that may arise from this guideline? Which conclusions can I make? Should be made instead of imposing strict rules. Consequently, questioning other people's behavior to understand their course of action, instead of simply following orders and judge. In hindsight, this whole period of lockdown, has been a practice of thinking critically. Every new measure the government took, and is still taking, is a test in trying to understand and forming one's own opinion or truth. I experienced personally that when I practiced this, when I questioned what was happening around me with the intention to gain understanding, it was easier to navigate this extreme situation.

3. On intuitive thinking & the further mode

When I first experienced being more than my thoughts, than my mind, when I first abandoned disidentification of my limits, it felt as a huge relief. Whenever I change my awareness from within my head to the whole of my head, body, and close surroundings, I feel an expansion, a liberation. Which can be described as *the process of awareness to the transcension of the limits that obstruct the full expression of Self*. This transcension feels like a completion to

me. Now I understand that is because of a *shift in awareness from the square to the square and the circle containing it*. Since then I have learned that I am more than what my mind thinks.

In this society, it is easy to limit ourselves to what we think. What we feel is often suppressed because it makes other people uncomfortable or because it makes ourselves feel uncomfortable. What we sense is often denied. We rush through our lives, without stopping, because stopping is scary. When we stop, we are faced with all the things we are denying, and this is too overwhelming. That is why we keep going and going in our fast lives. Whenever our suppressed feelings and senses almost catch us, we numb ourselves with addictive behavior like, binge watching tv, online shopping, eating, drinking, drugs... This happens to me often and I see this kind of behavior around me a lot, in my family, friends and clients.

When we *stop identifying ourselves with our critical minds* and make room for everything else that makes us a human being, it can be scary, because we don't know how to cope with the "data" we are suddenly seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking... However, if we learn to disidentify from what our senses are telling us an take a step back, disappear, we can *connect with our essence*. We go

beyond our mind, beyond our feelings and senses and connect to our true self, our essence, to our ultimate self. To me this is the ultimate connection with everything that is. I am connected to everything and everything is connected to me. Therefore, I am everything and everything is me. On the one hand I am not my thoughts and feelings, they are just visitors, they come and go, and I try not to fight them. "I do nothing". On the other hand, *I am also my thoughts and feelings, but not limited to them.* I am much more, I am, as is everyone, the essence.

This is what I truly believe to be right, I can feel it, understand it, and "know" it. Whenever I connect with the essence, my essence, then I remember this. However, when I lose connection with myself, I lose this "knowing". I often get caught up in my daily struggles with thought and feelings. When that happens, the trust is gone, and I feel like a prey waiting to be eaten by a lion. My whole life I have built behavioral patterns to deal with this anxiety. I assume everyone has his or her own way to cope with this survival instinct. My instinct says that I must please everyone, or I will die. That is why I have learned to deeply empathize with other people, so that I can give them comfort, help them, make them like me.

I have been able to use this instinct in a positive way in my coaching business and to care for my family and friends. However, it has also led me to live a life based on other people's expectations. This discovery itself, of course, brings about all sorts of thoughts and feelings and when I connect to my true self, I can release them, step back and gain trust.

I feelt the challenge to discern when to respond, and act to what I want. There is a difference between desire and intent. To me it was not always clear when something I "want" was a desire or an intent. I questioned whether an intention was always rooted in desire? Are the two simply two sides of one experience? Is the one an ego-based way of trying to fulfill, and the other an 'essential' way to fulfill something? I saw that desire comes from lack and intention comes from abundance: "Wouldn't it be nice if...?" Now, I find it easier to trust that the steps to fulfil my intent will unfold and the desire vanishes. The reason for this is that I learned to trust my own intuition, my own truth in the last couple of months.

Before, this distinction between academic, evidence-based data and intuitive data provoked a personal "aversion" in trying to "prove" that intuition is valid. Personally, I sensed that I know more than what can be

assessed by intelligence and academic aptitude tests. The aversion was an emotional response because I identified with my intuition and I often felt that this part of me was rejected by society. The mere questioning of the validity of intuitive thinking was hair-rising to me. This "extreme" response to the questioning the value and validity of intuitive thinking also caused me to resist critical thinking. When I keep in mind that critical thinking is a tool to better understand what is being said, instead of trying to undermine the validity of what is being said, this relieves the resistance. When I apply this to my own intuitive thinking, I can question my intuitive thinking to understand it better, trying to create a pattern/structure, but not to disregard the message.

It was a relief to learn about the further mode. The all-inclusive perspective that combines evidence-based data with inner data, is to me the only possible "truth" in how to assess the several ways of thinking, rising above the polarity and my inner conflict. Before these insights, I was already aware of my intuition, the connection between myself, the world, and the field. I was already aware of the quantum perspective. What I learned recently, is a way to apply these concepts to my own thinking, create a structure/

pattern to "explain" two seemingly opposite ways of thinking. I learned how to reconcile the critical mind I had developed during my education with the intuitive skills that I am still developing. It is easy to choose one of these two ways. Only relying on critical, rational thinking will get you far in this society, although not far enough. A lot of my clients, as I, have suffered because of extreme rational thinking. There comes a point when you cannot deny the other data the Self is providing. The other way is also possible. When you only rely on intuitive thinking, there is not enough structure, and you can get lost in all the possibilities. Critical thinking can then help to structure and discern. In the further mode both are combined, and we do not have to choose which way of thinking is better than the other. This course has given me the courage to allow the intuitive messages that I receive, because they are just another source of data.

The results of this insight are extraordinary and are visible in many ways. Before, I often struggled to make time for the practice to go to the "zero". When I was relaxed and connected, I understood that it was the "busy" life style and the survival instinct that wanted to keep my eyes closed, remain unconnected and plough through, but

when I was in this state of unawareness, it was so hard to open my eyes and make time to connect heart and mind, to transcend, to take care of myself. It was hard to step into the metathinking, observe myself, because I was in "battle". It was the illusory separation between I and Self. I knew that when I was in this state, I suppressed my intuition.

Sometimes, my intuition tried to wake me in my dreams, or during the day. If I listened closely, I would get the answers I needed. When I did not listen, I got frustrated. "Home is where the creativity is". When I am home, my creativity can flow, and this makes me happy. When I am not home, my creativity is contained, stuck, it cannot flow.

With the acceptance of the intuitive data and the ability to step into the further mode, I accepted more of myself. I now live MY life. I am free to understand my own truth and discern. This feels like a huge leap. Because of this, I spend a lot more time BEING at home. Now, I listen to my intuition and to my critical mind and combine the answers or 'data'. Therefore, I do not need a structure anymore to "plan" meditating. I released control and trust the inner and outer data to let me know when it is time to stop doing. Although I was already familiar with the "zero", tools such as Passage from

the Zero and the Organismic Self, have helped me understand even more the impact of meditation and my state of consciousness on my thinking.

Another remarkable consequence of my newly gained insights is that my life's mission has become a little clearer to me. Although there are other influences that have catapulted the transformation I experienced, the recognition of intuitive thinking and placing it in a larger whole, helped me to open up to, acknowledge and develop my own intuition and mastery of my consciousness. I discovered my ability to speak light language, which is a way to transfer energy by sound and the ability to connect to the field and receive intuitive messages. Now I have the courage to share my own insights with the world, whether they come from rational, evidence-based data or from inner experiences or a combination of both. This means that for the first time in my life, I feel comfortable to share my written articles and spoken intuitive messages.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to say that I am very grateful for the insights that I have gained by studying the different types of thinking. I was a bumpy road for me because the content provoked

several strong reactions, and the time and environmental circumstances were extraordinary. However, I want to note that where the resistance is the greatest, the bigger the growth is, and that is exactly what happened. I have learned several valuable life lessons, which I will apply and already am applying in my life.

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Methods of Exploring
Transpersonal Lucid Dreams:
Ineffability and Creative Consciousness

Fariba Bogzaran, Ph.D.

Scientist/artist founded the dream studies program at John F. Kennedy University where she taught for over twenty years. She was part of the team of researchers with Stephen LaBerge at Stanford Sleep Laboratory (1986-1989) and conducted the first quantitative research on lucid dream incubation and transpersonal experiences. She is the coauthor of two major dream books: *Extraordinary Dreams* (2002) and *Integral Dreaming* (2012) both published by the State University of New York (SUNY) Press. She is the founding director of the Lucid Art Foundation.

ABSTRACT

Lucid dreaming is being conscious and aware while dreaming. Lucid dreaming is a form of meta-consciousness and reflective practice that calls in to question habitual behavior, fixed perceptions, core beliefs, and presuppositions. From an epistemological perspective, lucid dreaming could be considered as a way of knowing. The practice of lucid dreaming ultimately leads to the practice of lucid waking, creating a recursive relationship between waking and dreaming awareness.

This article discusses three research methods exploring lucid dreaming and specific transpersonal experiences within lucid dreaming I call "Hyperspace Lucidity". Hyperspace Lucidity is the experience within lucid dreams beyond time and space, transpersonal in nature, nondual, nonrepresentational in content, and at times, extraordinary and impactful. These inquiries were conducted over two decades, however, their significance and implications

are becoming relevant today as the topic of lucid dreaming is discussed within psychological and spiritual frameworks. Each research project informed the next. It began with quantitative research designed to explore the transpersonal experiences in lucid dreams, expanded into a phenomenological study including some of the lucid dreamers from the first study, and then finally it evolved into an art-based inquiry involving the public.

KEYWORDS

Dreaming, transpersonal experience, dream signs, creative consciousness, research.

Lucid dreaming is being conscious and aware while dreaming. Beyond concepts and thoughts, beyond desires and ambitions, beyond perception and psychological complexes, lies timeless awareness. Lucid dreaming is a form of meta-consciousness and reflective practice that calls in to question habitual behavior, fixed perceptions, core beliefs, and presuppositions. Not only is self-inquiry an integral aspect of this practice, exploring lucid dreaming is a vehicle to observe the mind's multidimensional nature and an occasion to encounter a complex range of possible experiences.

Lucid dreaming can have varied applications, and it can be viewed as a contemplative, spiritual, and creative practice. From an epistemological perspective, lucid dreaming could be considered as a way of knowing. The practice of lucid dreaming ultimately leads to the practice of lucid waking, creating a recursive relationship between waking and dreaming awareness.

This article discusses three research methods exploring lucid dreaming and specific transpersonal experiences within lucid dreaming. These visionary studies were conducted over two decades ago, however, their significance and implications are becoming relevant today as the topic of lucid dreaming is being discussed within current psychological and spiritual frameworks. Each research project informed the next. It began with a quantitative research method to explore the transpersonal experiences in lucid dreams; then expanded into a phenomenological study with some of the lucid dreamers who participated in the first study; and

then finally took the form of art-based inquiry that involved the public.

In the research, I call certain transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming "Hyperspace Lucidity". *Hyperspace Lucidity* is the experience within lucid dreams beyond time and space, transpersonal in nature, nondual, nonrepresentational in content, and at times, extraordinary and impactful. In choosing the term, I did not rely on the literature of psychology, theology, or metaphysics, mainly to avoid assumption-laden terms. For example, the word "Numina" can be related to light; "God" is interpreted differently in varied spiritual systems; and "Emptiness" has reference to Buddhist practice. I adopted the term Hyperspace from physics, which implies that the phenomenon is beyond space, but within the context of lucid dreaming it is an umbrella term under which many transpersonal experiences can take place.

When confronted with the transpersonal aspects of lucid dreaming, using a methodology, in particular traditional scientific ones, can be limiting. The problem of method has to be addressed in light of this investigation. We might have to rely on multi-epistemology. We often depend on personal experiences, anecdotal cases, mystical writings, and philosophical texts to catch a glimpse of these extraordinary experiences. Yet, in characterizing numinous experiences, words are poor substitutes in describing the phenomena. In the past three decades, I have utilized several different creative methodologies to address the same phenomena starting from quantitative research methodology to phenomenology to art-based research. The research started with *Experiencing the Divine in Lucid Dream State* (Bogzaran, 1987-1989).

Epistemic Uncertainty

To explore the unknown or the unknowable one has to be comfortable with not knowing. Thus, what I named "Epistemic Uncertainty" acknowledges the fact that in *not knowing* there is a *knowing,* but it is not necessarily expressed in words. It is almost presumptuous to think that the only way we can express knowing is through the written word. There are many different ways of knowing, including the intuitive, creative, performative, and others (Bogzaran, 2012).

Early on, before beginning my scientific inquiry, I explored several mystical texts, philosophers, and ancient wisdom traditions. I studied them academically and became deeply

engaged in their hermeneutics. Their work assisted me in broadening my view while I engaged in research on transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming. I will discuss two of these texts that enabled me to move toward multi-epistemology, which in turn led me to the *Hermeneutics of Creation*.

Perhaps one of the most well-known and widely translated Eastern philosophical texts on the nature of timeless awareness is the *Tao Te Ching* (*Dao De Jing*) (Tzu, 1948), written sometime in the sixth century B.C.E. by Chinese philosopher Tao Tzu (*Lao Tzu*). Translated, its title means Tao (*The Way*) Te (*Virtue*) Ching (*Classic, Canon, Great Book*). Lao Tzu offers his major philosophical presupposition clearly in the very first verse of this classic text. Although it exists in numerous translations, the first verse reads: "The Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao". In many translations, the word "expressed" has also been translated as "talked about". Lao Tzu does not need to give the reader a major explanation or description, but from the beginning, he is reminding us that if we try to express and talk about the "Unknowable" we might be missing something. Through philosophical and poetic expression using nature metaphors, Lao Tzu hints how the Tao

might be experienced. Lao Tzu also reminds us that there are different ways of knowing other than through words or the usual means of expression.

Another mystical text I explored in relation to this topic is by the prophet of the Baha'i Faith, Baha'u'alla, which lays the groundwork for the spiritual seeker and levels of advancement toward the Beloved (in Sufi mystical texts, the Divine is often referred to as the Beloved). Baha'u'alla's book (1945) *The Seven Valley's and the Four Valley's*, written in 1863, was inspired by a question of a student directly connected to the work of the twelfth-century Persian Sufi poet Farid-ud-Din Attar and his significant text *Mantiq-ut-Tayr* or *Conference of the Birds.* Attar poetically used the metaphorical language of birds that are traveling on a journey to meet the greatest bird, *Simurgh (the Phoenix).* Each bird represented different aspects of life, such as the lover, immortality, and so on. The birds had to pass through the Seven Valleys to reach *Simurgh*, metaphorically the Beloved, demonstrating the different journeys of the seeker toward attaining their Divine nature. Within the Baha'u'alla text, the Sixth Valley is called the *Valley of Wonderment* and focuses on the dream world. It contains a passage of great relevance to the transpersonal inquiry

within dreams. Baha'u'alla proclaims that: "One of the created phenomena is the dream. Behold how many secrets are deposited therein, how many wisdoms treasured up, how many worlds concealed" (Baha'u'alla, p. 152). In Tibetan Buddhism, they often refer to treasure revealers. In my numerous dialogs with a Tibetan teacher, Lama Tarchin Rinpoche, we both agreed that the treasures are the wisdom hidden in the deep layers of the mind (or the dreaming mind) ready to be discovered or "revealed" by an advance practitioner[1].

These two passages selected from the *Tao Te Ching* and *Seven Valley's* have been guideposts for me to approach transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming. One text implies that there are worlds concealed in dreaming that we are able to explore when we are ready and prepared; the other reminds us that we might not necessarily be able to communicate what we find with known or "regular instruments" (words). In all of my research into the world of lucid dreaming, I first discovered that only when the dreamer is ready can the multidimensionality of these spaces

reveal itself, and second, language may fall short in describing these profound experiences.

Creative Consciousness and Dream Logic

The common initial encounter in becoming aware in a dream often takes place in a particular dream narrative, which usually involves one or many of the following: dream ego (the dreamer in the dream), dream characters (those we encounter in dream), and dream objects or dream settings (the environment). These experiences in dreams are referred to as "dream signs" (LaBerge, Levitan, 1989). The awareness of these dream signs, together with recording and reflecting on them, can provide significant clues into our own dream ecology. Each of these dream signs contain their own set of complexities. For example, a dream object, such as a teapot, might look like a teapot but might not function as expected. In pouring tea, noodle-like strings, in the form of undulating lines, might flow out of it. In looking inside the pot, one might find a golden egg as the source of these strings! Even though the objects (teapot, noodles, strings, and eggs) are all recognizable and familiar, they are out of their normal context, collaged into a new narrative. Within the creative

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[1] Lama Tharchin Rinpoche (1936-2013), Tibetan Dzogchen master in the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. We cotaught a retreat on *Lucid Dreaming and Dream Yoga* and were in dialogue for five years about this topic.

dreaming mind, such an intersection, combination, or fusion of objects, events, environments, and dream characters is a normal occurrence. To use a musical metaphor, the dreaming mind is more akin to improvisational jazz than to classical music.

Dreamers may choose to engage in lucid dreaming for multiple reasons. Often the dreamer's intention intersects with a particular application or activity, such as healing, meeting the deceased, resolving nightmares, and creative problem-solving, among others.

These activities (incubated or spontaneous) may arise within the confines of a narrative based on known scenarios, or they may be created as a surreal collage of events with new twists. If we understand the nature of the dreaming mind as creative in essence, then the dream narrative has its own epistemological reality. From waking perception, the dreaming mind may follow a nonrational path; yet from the dreaming ego's viewpoint, dreams follow a logic of their own. Dreams are inconsistent in subscribing to rules of the physical or social worlds and even to their own rules. For example, in the same dream, gravity may exist and then cease to exist. Dream's malleable, spontaneous, and organic nature follows the principles of creativity.

When we dream, we are inside *creative consciousness.*

By engaging creative consciousness, we think beyond the constraints of perception or structure. Creative innovation brings disparate events or skills together, perchance to create a new synthesis and birth a new idea (Gardner, 1993). Dreams employ the self's innovative capacities to construct new personal narratives, solve problems, connect events, and create new scenarios. For all these reasons, exploring the ingenious nature of dreams is one method for us to observe creative consciousness. Of course, in lucid dreams, this creative aspect of the mind is fully on display to the dreamer. Even if dreams are not remembered or lucid, creativity in dreams continues without awareness, but it has an invisible influence on waking life, as dreams are nightly experiences. Depending on the dream, it can have an emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual impact (Bogzaran, Deslauriers, 2012, p. 98).

Ineffability and the Problem of Method

A fundamental challenge arises when reporting dreams: the multidimensionality of dreams cannot be fully captured in words and narrative.

This situation is even more problematic in the case of "Big Dreams", involving transpersonal and other extraordinary experiences. Much of the detail is lost in trying to translate one's experience. Recalling a dream becomes an act of selective perception. While focusing on the central dream image, it could be that certain spatial depths, images, and situations fade from memory, partially because they are unfamiliar or incomprehensible. Unintentionally, we may be "bracketing" or leaving out what is unknown to us.

What happens when the known perception and the familiar landscape disappear, and the dreamer is confronted by unknown images and experiences? What I am referring to here is not a bizarre construct or surreal image, such as a table with a tail and a head of a beast as per the surrealist paintings of Victor Brauner or the melting clock of Salvador Dalí. Both Brauner and Dalí used familiar elements and objects either from dreams or creative thoughts to construct "dream-like" images. In paintings of this type, classic surreal images were often laid within a dream landscape with one horizontal line referring to time[2]. Rather, what I am

alluding to is a particular experience whereas the dreamer does not have visual, kinesthetic, or auditory references from waking life. The construct in this case is not the collage of unrelated known images or narratives, but it is a construct of unknown and never-before-experienced ones. Among these, *Hyperspace Lucidity* and extraordinary dreams are of inner light, Void, Emptiness, Unity Consciousness, often with no reference to the outer world and categorized as ineffable. Because of their numinous quality, they are also defined as "spiritual", a term I refrain from using too often because it can have varied implications for different people. The word "ineffable" is defined as "too sacred or too great to be expressed or described in words". Stanford art scholar Elliot Eisner explores different types of knowledge and offers an argument for multiple ways of knowing: "Not only does knowledge come in different forms, the forms of its creation differ. The idea of ineffable knowledge is not an oxymoron" [Eisner, in Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 5].

Within the experience of *Hyperspace Lucidity* dream images, known environments, dream egos, and actions

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[2] Yves Tanguy eliminated the line of horizon, which implies objects float in space without reference to time. Roberto Matta's works of the early 1940s also implies objects suspended in the air, yet his construct of lines implies motion, which also implies time.

can disappear, and at times, dissolve. The dream may become devoid of content or concepts, yet consciousness remains. Because these experiences are often difficult to describe, it is challenging to communicate about or even research them.

Extraordinary dreams, as such, pose challenges regarding research methodology. What is the best method to research complex, infinitely open, and potentially unknown phenomena? How best to gain access to them or communicate about them? Quantitative methods engage phenomenon horizontally (with quantitative descriptions), and qualitative methods vertically explore the depth of themes related to the experience. What happens when words fail? If the phenomena are incomprehensible or too complex to be narrowed down to the sequential framework of language, inquiry demands that the researcher invent new methodology to explore them.

Therefore, research into the unknown territory of consciousness, then, poses methodological concerns. Charles Tart (1972) launched a program called *State Specific Science* to train researchers to enter particular altered states of consciousness from which they might be able to develop observations – and

theories based on those experiences – so as to apply a scientific method to evaluating whether experiences have an inherent logic of their own (pp. 1203-1210). His attempts to develop methods from the transpersonal experiences of experts in the field show the challenges of using known scientific instruments to deal with the invisible realms of the psyche. In contrast, using creativity might complement and offer new perspectives to spark original ways of inquiry within hard science.

To best address these methodological issues, I have, over time, used five cross-disciplinary and complementary modes of inquiry to research and to communicate the transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming. I began with modern traditional quantitative methods combined with an ancient dream incubation approach (1987-89); then used qualitative methods, in particular phenomenology (1991-1994); and then I progressed to various art-based research (1997-2017). Each method addresses a different pathway of exploration and communication--some using linguistic means and others artistic. Some of these methods could be deemed traditional while others were creative in nature. If we are multidimensional beings and dreams are multidimensional, then the methods

to address the complexity of the mind need to be innovative.

Transpersonal Experiences in Lucid Dreams: A Research Method

The first method I used for exploring lucid dreaming was meditation. The skill of self-reflectiveness allows the mind to enter lucidity in the hypnagogic state: that is, the state between wakefulness and sleep. In this "in-between" or "twilight" state, the world of inner activities rapidly displays itself. The phenomenology of this state of mind is different than the REM (Rapid Eye Movement) dream state. However, fragments of the dreaming mind emerge out of consciousness with the characteristics of the fragments of vivid dream images, which can be, at times, colorful, geometric, or auditory experiences, such as hearing music (Mavromatis, 1987). This first threshold of the dreaming mind is fertile ground to practice lucidity. In Tibetan Buddhist teachings, this state is invoked by calming the mind and by the practice of *Samatha* (Rinpoche, 1990). This can lead to the practice of Dream Yoga, of which lucid dreaming is only one aspect. The Hindu tradition of Yoga Nidra is a method used to calm the mind and relax the body before falling asleep. In the early 1970s, I experimented with this state of consciousness by calming my mind and using the skill of meditation to observe naturally emerging experiences in hypnagogia. Then, I began carrying intentions into the dreaming mind through the aperture of hypnagogia. Of course, later I discovered through research that this was an ancient practice in many traditions, in particular with the work of Greek healer Asclepius and his practice of *incubatio.* Using the incubation method, I devised the first scientific research exploring the transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming while working with a team of researchers led by Stephen LaBerge at the Stanford Sleep Laboratory in the late 1980s.

Even though this research was novel at the time, however, it continues to be relevant today. Creating a scientific method to seek God in dreams is presumptuous. In particular, using a quantitative research method seemed paradoxical. It became apparent that the key is to work with and be aware of the limitations of the method, rather than limiting the phenomena. The quantitative method is one way of knowing. Instead of thinking this method would bring an ultimate answer regarding the magnitude of the phenomena, I viewed it as an initial step toward gathering information about the

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varied experiences. Is there a monopoly on the experience of divinity in dreams, I asked, or do diverse individuals, depending on their historicity and religious beliefs, experience the phenomena differently?

LaBerge provided me with an archive of countless letters related to lucid dreams that he had received from people from all over the world. From the pool of about 2,000 letters, I was able to choose 250 experienced lucid dreamers to invite to participate in the research; 77 joined the study, of whom 35 were able to carry their intention in to the lucid dream. I proposed the incubation period be two weeks, which seemed the right amount of time to sustain the participants' interest and intention (Bogzaran, 1989).

Before embarking on this research and during it, I followed my intuitive knowing: to have a deeper engagement with this experience, it was essential for me to not only rely solely on my few previous spontaneous lucid dreams on this topic, but to dive deeply into it by using the same method myself. Like an astronaut who takes the risk of launching into the great unknown, I, as an *oneironaut*, launched deeper into the inner universes of the mind through the practice of lucid dreaming. Although the study was quantitative, objective, and

scientific, and there was no requirement for the researcher to even have the experience, I realized if I partook in the research, I would be able to view the findings with a much wider lens. Consequently, I undertook a personal semi-retreat for over two years to incubate lucid dreaming. First, I utilized the two-week incubation method that I had created, then I continued to incubate while I was conducting and writing about the research.

I had a variety of intense, numinous experiences while on this semi-retreat. These experiences ranged from the known narrative Hypnagogia, morphing from surreal imagery to phenomena of inner light and the numinous, to experiences of massive funnel-like movements transforming all content to another space-time. My dreams also ranged from abstraction of the content to experiences of no content. Often, the nondual nature of the experience became also nonlocal. They seemed to correspond with the opening of the energetic systems in my physical body. These systems are well recognized in ancient wisdom traditions, such as in the meridian channels in Chinese medicine, the circulation of *qui* in Qigong practices, and the activation of *uma* in the spine within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, plus other systems

of yoga. This "streaming" of life energy, as psychologist Wilhelm Reich referred to them, is also an essential occurrence in Kundalini activation. Two decades after my research, Ted Esser conducted research using the same method examining lucid dreaming and Kundalini experiences, both employing qualitative and quantitative research methods (Esser, 2013).

My research with seventy-seven participants across the United States and Canada with different cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs clearly demonstrated that it is possible to have transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming via the incubation method. An example of a simple intention used by participants to incubate a lucid dream before falling asleep was: "tonight when I am dreaming, I want to become lucid and experience the Divine".

Findings showed a strong correlation between core spiritual beliefs and the experiences in lucid dreams. This relationship indicated that our experiences can be limited or expanded based on our belief systems. The power of core beliefs and assumptions, in turn, can affect our perception of reality. In addition, the way in which we set our intentions can invoke and influence experiences. The study revealed that in light of a flexible view, unexpected experiences might arise. Further, it showed that setting an intention and choosing a particular vocabulary can direct behavior inside the dream. Therefore, the way we construct language and set intention plays an important role in the direction of our thoughts and behavior in dreams. The effect of language on consciousness in dreams became obvious. For example, if the incubation phrase is, "I want to seek the Divine", in the lucid dream, the dreamer will actively seek the Divine by looking for it. Whereas, if the dreamer set the task of "I want to experience the Divine", the dreamer waits passively and lets the mind present the dream. This *active* versus *passive* action in the dream also demonstrated that there was a correlation between knowing and unknowing; to look for something we know as oppose to waiting to see what emerges out of the unknown.

The implication of this study shows us the power of our intention; the impact of language on consciousness; the influence of core beliefs on perception, experiences, and constructed reality; and how they determine our behavior and actions.

Presuppositions about phenomena might bring known results. But what happens when there is no expectation? If we presuppose that the experience

of the Divine ought to be a certain way within a certain form, it is likely that we will encounter that in our dreams. If there is no expectation or presupposition, then surprising experiences beyond the expectations of the dreamer may arise.

In addition, the study showed that if the mind is presented with an existential question or major inquiry, such as experiencing the Divine or the nature of reality with no attachment to outcome, then unexpectedly complex phenomena can occur. The sustainability of these experiences depends on the dreamers' level of practice, openness, flexibility, or capacity to receive potentially enormous energetic events. These experiences unfold the depths of creative consciousness within the lucid mind, and their dimensions are often far too complex to capture in words. The experiences of Emptiness, Void, state of Awe, and Grace are often used to describe the essence of these experiences, but reflecting deeply on each of these terms, one finds presuppositional references to waking consciousness's attempt to understand the phenomena. Perhaps poetry is a more appropriate form of communication that can bridge waking and dreaming.

The study, and various synchronicities and extraordinary experiences of my own during and following the research, clearly showed that there is "knowing inside not knowing". This *Epistemic Uncertainty* requires keen listening, intuitive knowing, and then creative action. The study organically led me to examine core beliefs and explore a qualitative research method addressing this particular philosophical and practical quandary.

Images of the Lucid Mind: a Phenomenological Study

In 1989, through various synchronicities, I met the surrealist painter Gordon Onslow Ford and recognized his paintings as resembling the transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming. Certainly, I thought, he was a lucid dreamer who was illustrating his dreams, however, neither was he a lucid dreamer nor did he know much about this phenomenon. Our meeting was before the internet era, so lucid dream images were not readily available, except those found in books, films, or periodicals. Few anecdotes were published about these states of consciousness. How could his paintings resemble transpersonal Divine experiences in lucid dreams? It was through his intention of exploring the "inner worlds" that led him to spaces similar to the phenomenology of transpersonal lucid dreams. The

confluence of his intention combined with methodical study and visual methodology led him to parallel dimensions. He called his inquiry and exploration a quest into the *Great Spaces of the Mind.*

In looking at the history of his inquiries, I found that not only was he exposed to Theosophical literature, he also deeply studied the work of Russian philosopher Peter D. Ouspensky, and was aware of the teachings of George Gurdjieff and Helena Blavatsky.

Before joining the surrealist group with this artist friend Roberto Matta, they traveled to Brittany, France, and spent the summer of 1938 painting and studying philosophy. The book they read thoroughly was Peter D. Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum* (1937). Ouspensky's book introduced Onslow Ford and Matta to a completely new perspective, allowing them to connect the concept of the fourth dimension with their new discoveries in painting. Ouspensky proposed a crucial question: "But what in reality do the dimensions of space represent – and why are there three of them?" His answer offered an expansive vision of the self:

> We bear within ourselves the conditions of our space, and therefore within ourselves we shall find the conditions which will permit us to establish

correlations between space and higher space" [Ouspensky, 1937, p. 79].

The text challenged and inspired the young artists, while also offering them a new direction in art--the possibility of engaging with the enigmatic realms of consciousness and with *Epistemic Uncertainty*. Ouspensky referred to the "habit of the positivistic method of searching always for the visible", enticing readers with the idea that "beyond this visibility there is a whole 'invisible world' – a world of – to us – new and incomprehensible forces and relations. The knowledge of the existence of this invisible world: this is the first key to it". Ouspensky (1937) declared that in order to "understand the noumenal world we must search for the hidden meaning in everything" (p. 166).

Matta and Onslow Ford were deeply affected by the following passage:

> Science does not sense it and does not recognize it... Now we have a *form of knowledge* which senses this difference perfectly, knows and understands it. I am speaking of art. The musician, the painter, the sculptor well understand that it is possible to walk differently – and even impossible not to walk differently [Ouspensky, 1937, p. 160].

In this radical statement, Ouspensky (1937) acknowledged art as epistemology

– a way of knowing. He further instructed that the artist "must be a clairvoyant: he must see that which others do not see" (p. 162). These passages guided Onslow Ford for the rest of his life.

Onslow Ford and a circle of his close friends established the inquiry into the "inner world" through their paintings as an important direction in art. Seeing the parallel between his inner world paintings and the phenomenology of the impersonalized experiences in lucid dreaming launched my next research project using the qualitative method rooted in phenomenology called "Experiential Methodology" (Kidd & Kidd, 1990). This method developed by Sunnie and James Kidd keeps the premise that a metaphysical methodology needs to address transpersonal human experiences. Beside many philosophers, they support their theory based on Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical approach to methodology. Gadamer (1975) writes:

> ...it is useless to restrict the elucidation of the nature of the human sciences to a purely methodological question; it is not simply a question of defining a specific method, but rather, of recognizing an entirely different notion of knowledge and truth (p. 10).

While lucid dreamers may call their transpersonal experiences ineffable, too difficult to talk about, when they were shown paintings of these inner world artists, they recognized the imagery parallel to what their experiences were in lucid dreams. After seeing the images, they were able to describe their dream experiences in more detail. The images created from the nonrepresentational aspect of the mind correlated with the experience of lucid dreamers of a similar phenomenon.

The study demonstrated that through visual images the dreamer can more easily articulate the seemingly ineffable transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming. It also illumined the fact that the incubation and intention to explore transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming and the application of creative artistic epistemology toward the same goal can provide common ground, even if different modes of inquiry are employed. In addition, the research showed that approaching art with the intention of inquiring into the mind is a way of exploring deeper layers of consciousness that otherwise may not be accessible. Above all, it illustrated that even if we use different vocabularies and different methodologies to explore transpersonal experiences, the actual phenomena remain constant and infinite.

In experimenting with various methods, it became clear to me that

utilizing multiple innovative techniques for exploring multidimensional experiences offers a closer "felt sense" of the phenomena. The first study, *Experience of the Divine in Lucid Dream State* (1989), investigated the possibility of incubating transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming, and the second study, *Images of the Lucid Mind* (1996), illustrated the parallels between art and consciousness.

The third inquiry, *Through the Light: An Exploration into Consciousness* (Bogzaran, 1997)[3], opened the research to a much wider audience. This research involved taking lucid dreamers to the studios of artists whose intentions were to explore the inner worlds. The painters in this study were Gordon Onslow Ford, Lee Mullican, Richard Bowman, and John Anderson. The lucid dreamers contemplated or meditated on the artworks, and then were encouraged to write a description of their experience. These lucid dreamers had transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming or meditation that included light phenomena and multidimensional spaces of the mind, which led to reports of spiritual experiences. Collectively, they responded to some artworks and not to others. The participants'

resonance with the artwork, inner experiences, and collective themes in their descriptions dictated which artworks were selected for a major exhibition. These artworks evoked familiar imagery or spaces, and even, the remembrance of forgotten dreams.

During the exhibition, the public was invited to select an artwork, contemplate it, and write their responses that were in turn added to the research. This art-based research illustrated that exploring the inner world through art can elicit in the viewer aspects of the inner worlds, forgotten dreams, memories, and transpersonal experiences difficult to express in words. The images assisted with the articulation of the experiences. The study also showed that visual art is an important mode of knowing, and that it has a place as an integral inquiry method when exploring ineffable experiences.

In conclusion, lucid dreaming can be a threshold to multidimensional aspects of the mind. There are many types of lucid dream experiences from ordinary to extraordinary. Certain transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming may be incomprehensible to waking consciousness.

The exploration of the depths of mind through the study of consciousness in sleep is limitless. The cultural movement toward interdisciplinary

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[3] The study was supported by the Institute of Noetic Science.

views of consciousness and integral views of dreaming seems to be the next paradigm to explore subtle inner realities and develop methodology to address these states of consciousness. The intersection between new physics, consciousness, and creativity might be the catalyst for the development of new approaches to explore transpersonal experiences in lucid dreaming.

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Omolù at the Time of Covid–19:

Interviews and Reflections on the Archetype of Death and Rebirth During the First Seclusion March – April 2020

Cristina Curti

Cristina is a counselor and counselor trainer in Biotranenergetics, entrepreneur, reiki and grief facilitator, she has been involved in market research since she was a law university student during the 80s. In 1995 became an associate of what she always felt as her "creature". Still living in Milan, her dream is to go living in a house with a sea view. She has spent her life in searching inside and outside herself, traveler of the world and of the soul, when she was 11y.o., she realized that the limen between visible and invisible was really thin. That was the beginning of her inner journey that she is still living.
Email: cristina@cristinacurti.it

ABSTRACT
During the first lockdown for virus Covid–19, March and April 2020, the author reflected on the strength of Omolù, the archetype of illness–healing/death and rebirth, that was permeating the entire world; if and how it was perceived and if, despite the evidence, illness and death were still events to hide or if people felt It as rituals of passage or as an opportunity for spiritual and psychological transformation. To explore this, the author conducted a qualitative research using a questionnaire for depth interviews. The survey aimed to understand the differences of perception of the archetype between those who were following

the BTE method and practices, those who were following other spiritual paths and those that did not started any spiritual or psychological pathways.
All answers have been collected, observed and reported using also verbatim to underline the strength of the results.

KEYWORDS
Biotransenergetics, Covid-19, Archetypes, Omolù, Death and rebirth, Spiritual transformation.

Perception of Omolù Archetype Before and During the Lockdown Due to Covid-19

In our modern society death and even funerals, have changed their deep meaning. We have observed that in our metropolis death and more in general all ritual passages have been forgotten as well as the sacrality of life. In one previous document I described how death and funerals become an execrable moment that must be hidden to others' sight.

Funerals and burials become a private moment with few elements that reminded us this natural passage and how life includes death. The virus, Covid-19, is still (date of writing September-October 2020) circulating all over the world, but the most shocking time was the total lockdown that has been decided, for Italy, last spring.

Italy and especially Lombardy, the most touched region, was physically paralyzed and emotionally touched by this decision. During this seclusion I had the feeling that this was a real opportunity to take to analyse the strength of the archetype because the entire world was feeling the same emotion.

As M.D. Pier Luigi Lattuada says, the virus shows us the hyper complexity of the human being. Even in the development of the disease each of us

behaves differently: some do not get sick despite being positive, others get sick, some are positive but do not have symptoms, others die. Some take the liver, others take the pulmonary alveoli, others manage to survive and get away without respirators, others enter the intensive unit and do not get out. There is biodiversity, a complexity even in the event. In the face of this biodiversity,

what can we observe? That we are all on the same level in front of ourselves. You're small, really small, and there's something bigger [...] The virus put us at home in silence (Lattuada 2020).

Time stopped during this quarantine, we used to run, to stay "out" instead of staying inside ourselves, we had TIME. Time to think, time to read, time to cook and time to stay.

Staying in front of our frailties. Time to observe our fears.

This is the gift of the Covid-19: the time.

We had no excuse; it didn't allow us to postpone. I wondered how, this time, has acted upon us, how this time has served us, is serving us to give space to a greater awareness, to a greater unity. The pillars of transformation say "stay instead of leaving" The question is: how much I have remained in my fears, how much courage I have had and how much determination it has taken to be able to look myself in right in the eyes, in this times that does not admit any "ifs and buts"? I therefore interviewed people who are on the path of greater self-awareness and self-discovery, to understand how, what they have acted and what insights they have received and also who, not following BTE paths, has faced all this.

Objective of the research: to understand how BTE is and was able even at the lockdown time, to lead to awareness with its practices. I asked to the respondents if they perceived Omolù, as a helpful Force to proceed with the death and rebirth of their Self, but also as a support at a time that for many people was perceived as dark, a moment of darkness of the soul.

I carried out a qualitative survey with depth interviews, lasting 70-90 minutes.

Target Criteria

10 respondents
70% Women 30% men
Age: 25-60 y.o.
Mix between people living in major cities and those who live in a rural environment.
Split as follows:
Participants in the seminars co-conducted with Sandra Corona, (Counselor Trainer BTE).
People who do not follow any psycho spiritual training or path.
BTE Counselor
BTE Counselor Trainer
Counselor in training.

Questionnaire: the questions were written to let people answering in a non-directive perspective that BTE pursues. I tried not to route and convey the answers, but to allow independence so that the respondents would be able

to interpret the question itself, with their own tools, their own experience and their own stage of awareness.

Data analysis: as the questionnaire has all "open questions" I decided to let the person speak, exactly as if it were a counselling session, so that I could also observe the metamessage: metacommunication- posture, tone of voice, breath, orientation of the look and so on, in addition to the content of the answers to the questions asked.

Reports or results: For each question, the answers will be summarized with the addition of verbatims.

Introduction: During this meeting we will talk about death and rebirth in a symbolic sense, we will talk about Omolù. We will deepen how this archetype helped you to transform yourself. We will see how Omolù supported you, during the quarantine days in changing those sides of you that became heavy somehow, or in those changes that require some form of transformative choice.

All questions will follow below.

Report and Results

All the people I have interviewed expressed a deep sense of contact with the archetype and inevitably it

happened both to those who are part of the BTE entourage, and those who do not follow a real spiritual path. This is, in my opinion, due to the archetype that was in the morphogenetic field. It was strong, palpable in millions of images, in the parade of army trucks carrying the bodies (for example: Ansa, March 2020), but also in the unreal silence of the city. Everywhere. It is also true that we observe inevitable differences between those who have followed a path through the BTE practices and those who have not relied on this methodology.

Question: daily routine the sense of isolation perception and emotions about it.

All the respondents described a kind of acceptance of the situation that turned, after the initial shock, into a sense of necessary introspection.

The slowness and the times were perceived more as an opportunity to be taken, rather than an external imposition. In general, everyone felt the isolation as a chance to do or to stop doing things as they were used to and to get out of the daily routine imposed by the roles they played. Even their jobs were seen with different eyes.

For those who continued working remotely they could find more time for themselves anyway:

"*Work was a routine job, but I realized that without the commuting, I had more time for me to cure my back. I took care of my health*".

Someone could find a different meaning in it:

"*I have rediscovered its value and I realized how important work is. It's not just an obligation. It is not obvious to have it and it is not obvious to do it with passion*".

I asked the interviewees if and how much they felt this kind of imposed **loneliness** to ensure that there were the conditions for any transformation. I observe that you are alone when you die, and that metaphorically, the isolation creates the opportunity to be alone, without distractions, without contacts with the "outside" or limited to virtual ones to get in touch with yourSelf.

"*The lack of human contact, the isolation belonged to me even before Covid-19, even before I took my spaces, but the insulation did not have the same depth that it has now. The sense of isolation arose from a need and anyway I was confused and I was looking for a goal. Now there is no goal, there are no expectations, but only experience*".

"*I felt a strong freedom in this isolation. Freedom to take breaks from work and manage it the way I wanted.*

A new way of thinking: what was impossible has become possible".

It's a silence full of opportunities: we could choose whether to continue to fill our days with the same rhythms, avoiding any deep contact with ourselves or listen to the silence and let it speak. It is not only a matter of quietness but the quality of it that makes the difference.

This is clear among those who follows BTE:

"*Initially I was so occupied with webinars, courses, readings, it was as I almost wanted to resume the time I'd lost, but I felt that the more I was doing the less I was feeling fine. A binge of things to do. A kind of bulimia of doing. Since we resumed the meetings via Zoom with Bte's practices I felt that something was calming down. I had the opportunity to enter into the silence of isolation and to stay*".

Those who have never approached this methodology:

"*More than isolation I feel the sense of global and overall suffering Time is not enough for me to enter and emotionally live very complex moments. My mood is unstable and I pass from a state of irrational personal despair not related to a specific event, to another. I feel like a*

wave that comes, but you don't know what it is".

With this silence, with the BTE's practices we noticed that messages come to us from the unconscious: I can tune in to my Self and have insights. In general, the way of sleeping and **dreaming** have changed for everyone: people that clearly remembered dreams before Covid-19 can no longer do it despite their sleeping well; those who have not followed the practices BTE dream having nightmares, restless sleep and had feelings of fear and bewilderment.

"*Generally I remember dreams but not in these months if not vaguely. Lately I feel that they are strange and frightening within nightmare that I cannot even remember*".

Others being in contact with the archetype through practices note that they act and continue even sleep durations:

"*I continued to make dreams that were a "Ricapitolazione") a going down into deep to see situations that I had forgotten, stimulated by the path and the practise. To pick up the threads of somethings I had completely forgotten*".

Some people even had a dreamlike meeting with Omolù who told her to start to cure herself with the practices:

"*I had a dream immediately after the seminar, I was a little distressed about my back because I see things bigger than they really are, I am a little fixed on it and I'm obsessed and I know I am **in the first attention**, but that's what it is. I asked, before I fell asleep, Omolù and Iansa, to give me a message to heal my back. That night I had this dream: I was in the street and I met an unknown man in a suit, he approached me and said: vomit! I told him that I didn't want to vomit, so he come close to me and put his mouth on mine and after a few moments I vomited, I looked in the street and I saw Pier Luigi Lattuada. The man, I felt he was Omolù in person, then told me: go to him he can help you. The morning after I waked up and texted Pier to start my journey with Omolù*".

Q. Let's talk about illness and death are there any differences with the past? Did your feelings about disease and death change? If so, how?

Many respondents experienced disease personally even before Covid19. We assume that the contact with the physical disease is a crucial moment in life that leads to great moments of reflection.

These sicknesses that have an overwhelming impact in life can be

compared to the initiating diseases of shamans. The body stops you, but if you feel the emotion hidden, you can discover a great truth for yourself.

"I know the disease well. I had a cancer diagnosis when I was 16 y.o. It was all right, I recovered, but last summer I had to have surgery because the radiotherapy I had undergone at the time, had damaged the thyroid. They took my left lobe off. However, I realized, especially recently, after the session with Omolù, that now I know how to look to my illness without denial or without panicking. It's my life... and this contributes to slowness and optimism I can see myself and my life with optimism".

For those who have not had experienced BTE practices before Covid, they feel the disease in a more detached way. Something that cannot happen to me or my family. There is a sense of omnipotence that also emphasizes a sense of denial of the concept of death. This concept is overturned during the pandemic:

"Maybe we don't know how many people die in a year. The pandemic brought back to us Westerners an idea of death than before, something that we had forgotten on a collective level especially in the metropolis. In the countryside everything is more natural, *you are more in contact with nature for example with dead animals, the cycles of nature follow one after the other and are more visible than in the city. Therefore it reminds you that death is natural, primitive. The apotheosis of the distance is reached in RSA (Hospices) that have become no longer a place of care, but places where death is hidden and people are invisible".*

Although she had no contact with the actual archetype, the morphogenetic field is informed and people rethink to disease and death as never before. The only difference is the awareness that comes from this and the action that leads to a transformation.

Q. What this period is teaching you?

Using Wilber's four quadrants map, I thought to ask if there were any changes felt on a personal level, in relation with the other, with society - the family or more broadly the world and finally compared to the place they occupy. These are the main words that reveal a newfound connection first with oneself: slowness, time, compassionate gaze, rediscovery of oneself, transparency in communication, ecology, self-respect, the other, the land choice, revision of consumption.

Thanks to the practices carried out both personally and during the seminars,

many have understood their uniqueness and perfection despite their "shadows". The relationship between me and my Self, my being a fragile man/woman gets rid of personal history and going up the river of my own biographical history I observe my life with different eyes understanding and accepting who I really am despite what happened during my life , rediscovering that every moment I lived was a "master " that led me to be what I am.

"It allowed me to go further inside both for the time I have available and because it was a succession of moments of shock and bewilderment that brought me back to relive and review my personal history and accept it, and accept who I am ... this happens if you do the ricapitolazione practice".

Omolù as we said gives no postponement: it puts you in front of your "pustoles", your shadows and you decide whether to feel ashamed or feel the healing.

"It was a rediscovery: I am what I am with my ugliness, with my beauties, the relationship changed and become lighter and softer.

I saw parts of me that I did not want to accept and see. When you change, the world around you changes".

Having   more   compassion   for ourselves and our limits we look at each other differently. It is not, however, condescension,   but   an   acceptance without judgment or criticism. During the lockdown those who had long-exhausted   relationships   had   the photography of reality:

"I told my husband I don't love him anymore. The moment I did it and realized it was true I made my love die, doing this I've realized that this gave space for something else. We went back to a deep way of relating ourselves, we confided, and we resumed our strength, our alliance. We discovered that this union has never disappeared, and I accept that it exists beyond what we are. We are living the relationship as it is, and it makes more sense. It gives me much more strength".

As we can read from N.'s own words, the connection with the archetype, the silence, listening to the other in a different way, created that sacred space of contact with the Self that generated in her an insight, a deep understanding of her real feelings for her husband and with the strength of this profound revelation, she managed to transform the relationship into something new and authentic.

Even those who did not attend the BTE seminars, however, felt in the field a sense of care for the other both in

interpersonal relationships in a wider area such as the social one as well as the small one the family. This mode is felt as "good" and to be maintained even after quarantine.

"Me and my family are passing, for the first time, 24 hours a day together Thank to the caring gestures and things that we do in this period at the home, we feel more pampered. We feel we need to be cautious and put care in relationships and in what we do and it's important to keep this even after seclusion. I feel free to be myself in this new everyday life now, and I think this can led us to have a new relationship".

Others who felt "wrong" about how they related with others find themselves to be simply different and unique:

"I've always felt wrong because I didn't have friends physically close. For various reasons I found myself having friends all over the world. No one close though. This was pointed out to me all the time and I was somehow judged as the one who has no friends because I can't see them physically. Now that everyone can't meet until virtually, it made me realize that I already had real contacts with them, and that's a contact of affection, presence and friendship. It was true regardless of physical presence".

This distance also revealed which affections were true and important. Some have discovered how the grandmother, the mother-in-law, their friends had a great importance and they no longer took them for granted.

Another lesson comes from nature: for everyone, it is clear that the human-to-land relationship needs to be changed. Respondents felt how nature is sovereign and how man is just a guest like everyone else on this earth.

The social media were full of videos of animals, thanks to human's isolation, took over streets, towns and moved freely. It was a beneficial shock that further opened the mind and showed that a different view is possible far from the consumerist view that has been protracted from now. The awareness about one's body has expanded, as we have already said in terms of care, but not only".

Paradoxically, the deprivation of liberty in being able to go shopping has made us realize that we can live with much less, it has dampened compulsive purchases by showing them for what they were: the need to fill something.

This "something" is now filled by a need to find a place and a new way to be in the world:

"When you work on you, social change inevitably is triggered. When

you work on yourself, the social vision that becomes vibrational and behavioral expression changes. These vibrations also reached politicians who were immersed in barriers and prejudices instead a part of the world created a small crack and doubt came up to them. There's a little revolution. I'm ready for subversion. It is no longer a boycott, but a communion between the spiritual aspect and the social and political intervention that I see, I see it as possible, feasible At least on my part".

The world, the earth is not an instrument for our purposes so a relationship with nature and existence, as said, must change. We can all do it and we are asked to do it. With the closure, with the quarantine we saw that it is possible to do it in a different way.

Hoping that this new way of being in the world is experienced not only with a greater perception of one's personal power understood as "*I can do it too, although alone and single, I can make the difference*", but also a new credo that brings back to a natural naturalness. That is: if all change, we are more aware, we consume less, we respect nature, we can arrive at the real change that is not only an inner transformation, but also a social one and vice versa.

Q. There is no life without death and there is no death without life what

sense this phrase makes to you if it makes sense (Do you feel that a deep understanding of life also requires awareness of the need for death)?

When the Roman generals returned triumphally after a conquest and collected the honors by parading through the streets of Rome, so that they would not be overwhelmed by pride, someone behind his shoulders reminded him that he was only a man and as such, sooner or later, he would die, so all these honors and this glory would die with him. We forgot it. All this tradition reminiscent of our transience has been outclassed by the arrogance of medicine which, despite its effectiveness, tends, as already seen, to make people believe in the immortality of the human being. Not of the soul, but of the body. That's why I wanted to probe the perception of life and death among the people I interviewed.

"We escape from the thoughts of death. Even the Catholic Church gives us this illusion, to be invincible. In our current society everything about decay is turned away and rejected: if you get old you use Botox, you give yourself a touch up with cosmetic surgery. Women, but also men wear this kind of western burqa to forget age, to forget that you will die sooner or later. BTE put me

in front of my death. The death of the parts of myself: the memory of each seminary leads me to rethink the old me, and you feel that every time it was the beginning of a transformation and you let yourself die and then reborn... With BTE it's not just theory: you really have to look it in the face".

Q. The practices we did together with the archetype/the Orixà Omolù. Can you describe how did you feel this archetype and what practices have you felt particularly effective and transformative?

As we said above, the practices that were proposed during the meetings before the Covid and during the quarantine via Zoom they had equal strength and effectiveness. One difference was the morphogenetic field in which we were immersed. In addition, as one of our participants pointed out at the virtual meetings, during the sessions via Zoom, *we were all called to take on more responsibility.*

Everyone was responsible for the energy that was putting in at that moment, even though they were immersed in a field that was already extremely strong and palpable. For this reason too, the effectiveness of the practices changes depending on the moment, the state of the body and the

awareness of each one. That's why we can say that there are no better practices, with more or less effectiveness, but all of them are. The only thing that changes is the moment you do them. The stage of your consciousness.

Different practices that lead you to awareness: some people have perceived a transformative effectiveness from the first movements of the Dreaming Body, some others in the sacred dances, someone else during the recapitulation, others during the guided meditation.

"During the Dreaming Body I felt the cure, I felt that the cure was for me and a quality in the world, everywhere, that was the one I perceive when there is Omolù".

"It happened that, during the dreaming body, I felt the possibility to get in and out from life and death. I felt the fluidity and not the polarity and even if I have never experienced the mourning, I was there... I didn't want to stay in one polarity, life or death, everything was neutral even during the recapitulation".

As we said the dimension of the cure is among the characteristics of the Orixà. It is easy in fact with this archetype to come into contact, especially after the recapitulation, with our own grown parts, with our inner child or with those pieces of soul that have been torn in

the course of our lives. Recapitulation is an effective tool to heal precisely or to mend fears.

"I heard my inner little girl and a cry coming out of the way I felt this already at the beginning of the practices, even before we started. Then I got up to practice dreaming body and I had a pain that came from my heart, my chest, my throat and I got the image of this little girl. I knew I loved her deeply, a little girl who loved life but she suffered so much. A girl who needed to be hugged, pampered and she was me! Then I the adult me. gave this love to myself child and we mutually supported us. Suddenly she told me to see life with the eyes of the heart, to play and not to forget the wind in my hair! And it was so intense, it moved me so much".

The effectiveness BTE practices is proven by more than 20 years of individual courses, seminars and therapies. This document only supports what has already been experienced in the past years. Of course, there had never been an event with such a global reach. That's why I thought I'd ask, mainly to those who know this methodology, what were the differences in perception of the archetype. Let's say a before and a during the pandemic. Respondents pointed out, as mentioned a palpability of the qualities of this Orixà. An obvious

"presence" that we define by the name of Omolù. L. reported the fact that the stronger the sense of *"Possibility to enter the dimension of healing. and not just the disease".*

Recognizing that those that are symptoms can become allies.

Others pointed out a strong feeling of impermanence they had forgotten. That transience of phenomena, the remembering that everything is fleeting, everything changes, that living thinking of some form of static is an illusion of the mind. I accept that my life can change and I stop fighting to maintain a status quo. Others have perceived that the holy care of Omolù is so close in this timing that the healing happens. It is not magic, it is not being in magical thought, but being in contact with all our Self that you can really feel that it exists, is there, you just have the intent to access it, relying on the archetype without a desire for control.

Q. What you would like to see die and be reborn in yourself and around you?

Perhaps the synthesis of what has been asked until now and, the fulcrum of everything.

The keywords are:

Trust

Security

Creativity

Nature

Ecology and environment

Healing

Awareness of your own value

Awareness of your place in the world

Intuition

Time for me

Slowness

Indulgence towards myself

I observe how in all respondents the need to see a new opportunity to take care of themselves and their passions and how it became important to bring out a renewed creativity. An authentic creativity, not dictated by the fashions of the moment or external stimuli, but a deep listening to one's own talents. Intuition perceived as a source of pure creativity not only in artistic creative act, but above all in a new way of doing things. A greater unity between one's essence and self-expression. A creative act that can also be embodied in a new awareness of slowness:

"I allow myself more time to stay inside my way and I realized that it is the same, others, my family did not tell me anything. So I notice that the full empties and the void fills. Now that I've got my job back, I understand I don't have to run anywhere, because you don't need to run. We have seen that if something has to come to stop us it comes

anyway, whether you want it or not".

R. she firmly wants to find a calm in doing things. This newfound creativity also emerges from those who have not taken the BTE courses:

"Even the artistic proposal. I do watercolor now I'm nauseous because everyone posts on social media paintings in watercolor, I want to rediscover a true passion that is really mine because I don't have to prove anything to anyone. I would like to abandon this sense of need for external recognition, to regain my inner strength".

Someone else adds:

"I would like to see my creativity and naturalness reborn. I'd like to see that old, old way of doing things die for myself and for everyone. Let's take off the masks and we be real".

In addition to a creative act, there is a need to see a sense of authenticity reborn. When Omolù acts, he metaphorically removes the flesh and leaves only the bones. This is, in my opinion, the meaning, of the authenticity. Be authentic, without masks without pretending to be what you are not.

"Have the courage to expose yourself. Courage that had emerged with the practices done during the seminary with Ogun and now that I feel this

compassion for me and for others, I want you to bring it into everyday life. Expose myself to make my voice heard, without judging me, but precisely with compassion for my limitations, in a total acceptance".

Someone else.

"To die in order to regain confidence in one's abilities, in one's own gifts combined with an acceptance of one's own shadows, to emerge from traditional paradigms in order to regain its place in the world as we mentioned in the previous paragraph, and states "[...] In addition, I want to have new awareness of my place in the world, on earth, in creation I would like to live in a society that does not think that the earth is one tool from which to benefit only and finally I want to see the sense of living in slowness reborn. Only then do we have a chance to see a little leaf that is born".

Sense of respect for nature and the environment combined with trust and acceptance in order to see a different world reborn in and around ourselves.

Comments and Conclusions

This document does not claim to be a research of scientific value, but rather a point of view, a photograph of some lives, on how BTE's practices have been effective and what transformations BTE has brought in the consciences of the participants. The document then stressed that those who started a journey with the BTE have had tools to face in a conscious way, even this pandemic. The use of practices and contact with these "carriers" called Orixà was the quid that made the difference. Orixà of which at times we vaguely perceive the presence, whilst at times they are so present in the morphogenetic field that they reach almost saturated. This happened during the lockdown for Covid19 in which we were pervaded by the power of Omolù. Certainly, everyone felt the presence of both disease and death strong in the field, but it was not grasped by everyone as an opportunity for personal growth. Those who are not part of the BTE world have seen the ecological opportunity to change the status quo, but have not gone beyond or at least this is my feeling about it.

Words like social distancing, electronic bracelets, fear, economic problems, depression, uncertain future are the only words that resonate in minds[1].

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[1] This information was collected thanks to a quantitative survey with a sample of 100 people distributed throughout Italy who asked: "What impact had the Covid 19 on you and your family" only 10% saw a possibility of growth and sharing. The remaining 90% see only problems of various kinds, which is mentioned above.

On the other hand, there is a greater openness to everything that is social and that can lead to a change, but we also note that it happens by those who somehow had a contact with transpersonal disciplines or very close to this area.

I would say that: the colleagues, the course mates, the clients and those who have followed our courses had a strong contact with the archetype and the transformation took place. Everyone has had insight, deep self-understanding and this has led to decisions about their lives. Decisions that had not been taken before due to a sort of fear or even just because they had hesitated. Another condition that has occurred concerns a new awareness of one's body with a recognition of even physical blocks that have been finally seen with transformative eyes and not only as symptoms. Last but not least, the criteria of consumption and contact with the planet have been reviewed.

And finally, a true sense of impermanence that is the key to everything. Impermanence which does not mean fear of death, but only an entrance into the flow of life which also includes death. Omolù is an Orixà it is difficult to relate with, we have neglected him and somehow he has made us surrender putting us on our knees until a new human will reborn.

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The Archetypal and Transpersonal Dimension in Modern Narratives: Watching the Lion King as a Process of the Self Realization

Andrea Gentili

Integral Transpersonal Counselor graduated from Integral Transpersonal Institute, Milan.
He has a bachelor's degree in Economics.
Leads experiential groups, oriented to self-exploration and self-realization, following the Biotransenergetics discipline.
Passionate scholar of archetypal and Transpersonal psychology, also through the search for myth and symbology in comics and cinema.
E-mail: and.gent89@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Reworked and taken from a thesis work in Transpersonal Counseling (*Integral Transpersonal Institute*, Milan 2020), this paper starts from archetypical and trans—personal dimension in psychology and mythology. With the eye of the integral and transpersonal vision of the Biotransenergetics discipline, we will look at the story of *The Lion King* illustrating the imaginative, symbolic and archetypal processes as the expression and structure of the journey of realization of the Self. In the stories of myths, ancient and contemporary, the plots and evolutionary keys of our lives are revealed.
A deep heartfelt thanks to Dr. Simona Vigo, supervisor of the thesis from which I reworked this article.

KEYWORDS

Archetypal, Psyche, Anima, Self, realization, myth, narratives, Biotransenergetics, image, hero, lion, king.

Introduction

One can look at the relationship between *reality* and *truth,* between staging and meaning, between what appears on the surface and what takes place in depth, extended to every aspect and field of life, as if every moment were a scene.

We may realize that always something happens simultaneously on different levels, involving the context in which it takes place, the place, the situation, the objects present, the people and that the whole is like a representation: a staging, in action, of thoughts, feelings, moods, will, dreams, fears, needs, images.

We can look at life as a continuous and complex "imaginative representation" without this word inevitably evoking the ghost of falsehood. Seeing in terms of imaginative representations allows us to appreciate and enjoy the poetic image, the metaphor, the symbol, the myth and the truths of the meaning of archetypal representations, on which this work is based.

The aim is to illustrate how archetypal and transpersonal dimensions are expressed and speak to us in modern narratives. This will allow us to see in the innumerable interweaving offered by modern works a useful potential for personal evolution in the work that is perhaps most dear to us, which is our life.

In the stories of myth, of religions and spiritual traditions, of legends and fairy tales are regularly manifested, in the form of characters, narrative nuclei and images, those ordering principles of the *Psyche* that in psychology are called archetypes.

We will illustrate what is meant by archetypal dimension, looking at the archetypes with the eye of psychology, and specifically the transpersonal one according to the *Biotransenergetics* discipline, re-discovering a network of personifications and dynamics that binds together spirituality, myth, fairy tale and psychology.

The same archetypal principles that flow in the traditional sacred texts, in the manifestations of nature, in the encounters and trials of our lives, continue to present themselves to us through films, TV series, comics, novels. We can see this in order to nourish the connection with those deep parts of ourselves and grasp the sacredness that is found in the dimension of participation in the totality of life's expressions and in that terrifying and sublime mystery from which every form emerges.

Are there still works worthy of an archetypal, and even "spiritual"

reading? That is, that it talks about the *journey* of the *spirit* in the *soul* as that of consciousness, individual and collective, in the journey of life?

Yes, but the answer is not so much in the work itself, as in the *eye* of those who watch, read and listen.

We will then have to define a context, illustrate some vision tools, and we will observe together a famous example of modern fairy tale.

With the right tools and a necessary contemplative attitude the narratives can be significant for several reasons: for the processes and evolutions that are expressed in the adventures of the characters, for the significance of the archetypal dynamics represented, for how the work exemplifies and can nurture the transpersonal vision itself. All this will reveal to us the intrinsic dynamism and multi-dimensionality of the psyche. Through the stories, the images, the contexts, the characters, the dialogues, the narrative turns, are released meanings and processes that reveal how much all these faces, masks and forces are connected and tell us substantially about the *game* of the *Self*, of the totality of our personality and beyond, of all that *is* and *exists*.

To listen to a story, to read a comic and to watch a film, can then become an activity of *dis-veiling* the fiction that entertain and holds us back, and thus to enter the place of truth starting from fiction, which is always a staging of something essential, literally of the *Essence*.

There are stories that can "touch" us: at a more or less conscious level for us. In other words, they can encourage *contact* with an element of "disturbance" or "resonance", allowing us to proceed on an inner path of awareness and *transformation* of consciousness.

Archetypal Vision in Psychology

The term "Psychology" literally means "study of the soul", *Psyché* for the ancient Greeks. It, as Plato states in *Laws X*, directs all things with its own movements: *Psyché* passes through everything and everyone and directs its action and experience. Regardless of faith and personal beliefs, we can accept the words of the philosopher as an invitation to look in this way to our experience, or, as the founder of Biotransenergetics Pier Luigi Lattuada would say, to make "as if"[1]

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[1] As Lattuada (2019) describes, acting and observing "as if" means necessarily recognizing one's own circumscribed and personal convictions, visions, and references in order to be able to leave them aside, so that they do not guide us, and embrace a supra-rational point of view, expanded and dis-identified, with which it is possible to observe the experience as it stands and to grasp the unity of phenomena, transcending and including the conventional and rational cognitive plane.

there was a unitary principle behind everything and manifests itself at all levels of the world and experience.

The soul moves a continuous and interconnected flow of actions, sensations, emotions, images, thoughts, and we can see in the metaphor of fiction as a journey of encounters with characters, trials, transformations, a frame that connects endless phases and aspects of our personal and collective life; we are in the presence, in a word, of *archetypes*. The archetypes, as we know from the research of Carl Gustav Jung who reintroduced them in modern psychology, are principles that make our life take a certain form and connect us to a deep meaning of our existence. Thanks to his work the individual discovers that he is the repository of contents that go far beyond the reach of knowledge of personal history, influenced by instincts, models of behavior shared by the whole species, subject to visions, images, dreams that sprang from mythology, traditions, all kinds of imaginative sources. The archetypes are all these things together, as recurring motifs that exemplify what is happening in the depths of the individual and at the same time direct their experience, as magnetic forms capable of conducting psychic energy.

They are so full of life and meaning that Jung conceived the process of *Individuation* precisely through the relationship with archetypal images: a process that leads us to reveal and embody our most authentic and total nature.

The process of individuation is based on the principle of our psyche that, reflecting on itself, implements a mode of knowing by oppositions in a continuous cycle of identifications and dis-identifications with something conceived from time to time as *other*. The process was illustrated as an encounter with fundamental archetypal figures: *Persona*, *Shadow*, *Anima* and *Animus*, *The Self* or psychic totality: the archetype of meaning, the principle that organizes and represents the beginning, the journey and the completion of the process.

These archetypes result as ordering principles and containers in which all the images, thoughts, sensations, gestures, influences, tensions, needs and everything we encounter in our lives come together.

Jung also reveals that the process itself is represented by what he calls *archetypes of transformation* [Jung, 1981], that is, places, means, ways that symbolize the particular transformation that is taking place.

According to the writer, here Jung can suggest how the process of individuation, which we remember being life itself, is basically an archetype that presents itself according to certain structures and regularity in infinite dynamic configurations evoked by images, which exemplify the particular passage in progress.

The archetypal dimension develops and manifests itself in streams of primordial images that are part of dreams, myths and the fairy tales. Following the analysis of Marie-Louise Von Franz, (2002) Jungian analyst and one of the most famous collaborators of the psychiatrist, it is possible to say that fantasy works tell us about psychological dynamics through the forms of the dream realm and that through the symbol and images they illustrate the development of consciousness and unconscious, personal and collective. Fairy tales of kings, queens, princes and princesses transmit the dynamic models of the psyche of the individual as of the community. And with James Hillman (1997), psychologist and founder of archetypal psychology, we realize that Psyche, the unitary principle, appears as a projector of images organized by archetypes.

Our psychology can become a study of the relationships of ourselves with images, forces and principles that influence, sustain, direct, and express themselves through us: man rediscovers the gods within himself, and his life as a flow of mythical scenes, following the suggestion evoked by the thought of James Hillman (1997).

An archetypal vision of life gives us the opportunity to see our difficulties in the light of myth, to access stories that tell us through divine and heroic personifications the dynamics of what we are facing psychologically.

Transpersonal Vision and Biotransenergetics (BTE)

Transpersonal psychology, together with the integral vision of Biotransenergetics (Lattuada, 2012, p. 214), observes the dimension of human experience as a constant and dynamic expression of a participatory dialogue between each individuality, the *Personal Self*[2] at different levels of awareness, of complexity and wholeness, and the *Essence*, out of time and space and ultimate subject of every experience, the *Transpersonal Self*[3].

[2] The individual Self of our body-mind unit.

[3] The Self of the Transpersonal Consciousness, the Totality, the Macrocosmos.

In the light of this glance the archetypal dimension is the *middle world*: the *Mesocosmos* in which the forms that emerge from the *Essential Void* inhabit and propagate at every level of existence to express themselves in phenomenal reality. So everything and every event is archetypal.

The archetypal principles essentially are rhythmic-vibrational models, *informing forms* of a field in which we are all immersed (Lattuada, 2012, pp. 131-132): they cross and constitute everything and colour the human being with qualities and contents.

Seeing the world through the enchantment of poetry, metaphor, symbol, archetypal and essential dimension, together with a coherent mode of knowledge and tools to experience it, is a pivotal element of the BTE.

With transpersonal psychology it is possible, in an academic, clinical and personal context, to study and understand in a more comprehensive map of the psyche the experiences of non-ordinary states of consciousness: expansion and sensation of unity with the other realms of *Creation*, memories of past life experiences, identification with the archetypes of the collective unconscious, of mythologies and religions of every time and place. In this way it can be seen in the imaginative and genuinely fantastic element of the stories, something that is related to our interiority, that captures the scenarios that we live when we are faced with universal truths.

With the BTE we can use a broader point of view, comprehensive and at the same time "surgical", as this discipline provides the keys to grasp in every fiction, in every "staging on stage", and in every element that falls under our attention in life, a bridge of connection between the plane of *reality* and that of *truth*, that is, of a deep and essential meaning, of an implicit order below the surface of what is manifested.

From this point of view, we look at the archetypes and structures of the process of individuation and realization of man in the Self: from the great and ancient mythologies to the modern ones, grasping the intimate and essential evolutionary and spiritual aspect.

The Realization of the Self: Mythology and Psychology of the Hero's Journey

The principle of realization of the Self leads to observe the structure of the life of the individual as a continuous unveiling and fulfillment of his authentic nature.

The famous mythologist Joseph Campbell (2008) reveals to us the map of the process of spiritual realization of the human being that has always been told to us through myths, from those of spiritual traditions to fairy tales. It is a unique myth with infinite variations that tells the story of the hero as archetypal image of the principle of regeneration, transformation and evolution of the psyche and give to us a fundamental trace of the structure of the Journey of life as realization of the Self.

This *monomyth*, described and outlined in stages and in encounters with archetypal images/characters, has been further studied and applied in the context of the film narratives by Christopher Vogler (2007) who highlighted the functional and narrative component.

We do not bother here to dissect the model because it will be recalled and indicated in the phases and regularity that we will meet "reading" the fairy tale in a moment. Here we need only recall that the structure of the myth follows that of the rites of passage and of the initiation ceremonies of traditional and tribal societies, and in which there is a model of shamanic knowledge: the *separation* from an *ordinary world*, *initiation* into an *extraordinary world* with different *trials* to be faced, and the *return* with a *power/gift*, symbol of the revelation of the Self.

The hero's task is to retreat to the deep and causal areas of the psyche. This is the place where we meet the images of difficulties, neuroses, obsessions, all our pathologies, and those of a world composed of the matter of dreams, elaborated by a narrow, infantile, closed, judgmental, identified gaze. But it's also the realm in which the instinctual and super-conscious forces can meet in the centre of Self, where the projections of the outside world can be contacted and withdrawn. The elements, images, characters and actions narrated in myths are symbols and metaphors of what happens internally.

The BTE describes with an integral psychological model the meta-narrative map of the journey of the individual in the process of realization of Self: a *journey of the hero* made of continuous transcendences and inclusions of *dualisms*, archetypal oppositions and conflicts that dissolve and recompose themselves in units of consciousness and thought structures that are gradually more complex and integral.

Each state of consciousness is the

result of an archetypal dynamic, of a complex of forces that organize it and express themselves in the physical-energetic state, in character, in emotions and thoughts, in the quality of connection with the Essence: in short, at every level of what is called the *Organismic Self* of our body-mind. Each archetype carries a world-view, a particular "way" or *Transe* (Lattuada, 2012, p. 154) of the experience of totality. It expresses genuine qualities and also its "shadows": the unbalanced expressions of spiritual strength that nourishes chronicity, neuroses and pathologies.

This means that in the relationship with them, in the contact and mastery of the experience of the particular type of energy, of quality, of thought, we find an important evolutionary key. The judgemental, conventional and ordinary mind makes a separation in terms of categories and arranges the experience of life in a game of dualisms at different orders. Depending on the level of satisfaction of needs and awareness, in terms of observation and self-mastery, characteristic orders of conflict and separation will arise.

According to the epistemology of *Further Mode* in BTE (Lattuada, 2012, p. 242) there is a mode that allows the individual to experience the complementarity and unity of opposites, opening to the observation of the contents beyond ordinary judgment, expanding their consciousness to what is in shadow, to see what must be seen, to feel and to free what is hidden, to grasp the aspect of strength, "which is the implicit side of every dualism" (Lattuada, 2012, p. 229), and to restore the balance in the original dynamic between the whole and the part, between *I* and the *Self*.

Based on the above, with the BTE map of the *seven dualism* (Lattuada, 2012, p. 227) integrated with that of the *Hero's Journey* (Lattuada, 2012, pp. 123-132) we can look at the entire life, but also of certain cycles and passages. Each stage of the process is symbolically represented by a narrative stage of the journey and is organized by archetypal principles that bear both the shadows of judgment and dualism that one experiences, both the qualities to awaken, to allow us to master the experience necessary to transcend it. Each stage is also characteristic of a chronic phase in a structure that tells us about the evolutionary position of the person and the dominant *archetypal matrix* (Lattuada, 2012, p. 229) in his experience: from the affirmation and integration of the archetypal principles of nourishment

and survival to those of self-expression and transcendence.

In the myth with Campbell we say that the flow of life forces sustains the individual, the cosmic order and that the gods are symbolic personifications of the laws that regulate it.

This interconnected flow of forces can be found in the map of the archetypal constellations of the Afro-Brazilian shamanism gods, the Orixàs (Lattuada, 2012, pp. 134-136). Each of them is a force of nature represented by deified ancestors, and is a symbol and image of an archetypal principle that illustrates a particular aspect of the totality of the Self and its laws.

They come from a specific culture but in the proposal of the BTE, as they are integrated as archetypal principles, they act as structures-containers of images, symbologies and phenomenologies that go beyond the culture of origin. In fact, the contexts and processes of the narratives illustrate the richness of the interconnection and transculturality of the archetypes.

The structures of the process of realization and the monomyth of the hero are found in modern works and it is possible to grasp the phenomenology of evolutionary processes thanks to the vision, maps and tools we have

presented. Now we will see it in the story of *The Lion King*.

Watching *The Lion King*

The Lion King (1994) is a modern fairy tale that reveals the fascinating archetypal elements rooted in the essence of the *Hero's Journey*, in a film with a sublime mythological interweaving.

As at the beginning of the myths, we are presented with a kingdom, in the African savannah, where all animal creatures rush to *Pride Rock*, a formation symbol of the *castle:* the cradle of the hero's childhood (Lattuada, 2008, p. 123). The kingdom celebrates the birth of the royal lion cub, son of King *Mufasa* and Queen *Sarabi*. The Prince *Simba* is baptized by the master of ceremonies and shaman, the baboon *Rafiki*, and raised in front of the cliff to be welcomed with joy by all animals.

According to the maps[4] of Campbell and Vogler this is in the myth the first "chapter" of *The Departure*, the presentation of the *Ordinary World* from which the journey of the hero begins.

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[4] When not otherwise indicated, the stages and meetings of the journey written in italic refer to those so called and described by Campbell and Vogler.

The balance of the world appears firm, bright and in a prospect of prosperity for all the years to come with the blessing of a dynastic succession already consecrated.

But the scene immediately shifts to *Scar*, the brother of the king and the dialogue between the two, to show us how the balance is precarious due to the polar dynamics and conflict between the two lions, which takes on the connotations of a real archetypal duality in the field of consciousness.

Mufasa reprimands his brother for not having presented himself at the baptism of his nephew, while Scar lets shine through all his envy, lack of respect for Simba and dissatisfaction for having lost any chance of becoming heir to the throne.

Mufasa embodies the archetype of the *wise* and *righteous king*, severe but compassionate towards his children. With him the *Lands of the Pack* live in harmony and justice. According to the map of the archetypal constellations of the *Orixàs* in BTE, we could say that he represents the qualities of justice of Xangò (Lattuada, 2012, p. 144) and the harmony of the sunlight of Oxalà (Lattuada, 2012, p. 144), the principle of the harmonic and Apollonian Self. At the same time, Scar is the counterpart of this light, his Exù

(Lattuada, 2012, p. 138), although he is cunning, envious, eager for power, ambiguous, ambivalent and in lean and dark forms, where Mufasa has a proud, authoritative posture and has a powerful physique.

Although they are presented as separate characters, such an archetypal dynamic actually occurs at every level of existence, including within the individual.

Simba grows happily thanks to the teachings of the father, the first figure of *mentor*, *guide*, of the *Self* that one day from the top of the cliff-castle illustrates the boundaries of the kingdom on which they command and that, at the death of Mufasa, will be governed by the son. "Everything the light touches is our kingdom" reveals the king to Simba, now intrigued by the *shadow zones*, where he is forbidden to go.

The hero is curious, stubborn, self-centered and at times presumptuous, being also a child and a prince, eager to become king as soon as possible. The impatient uncle Scar entices him cleverly to *cross the First Threshold* of the Hero's Journey, the area forbidden by the father: the elephant cemetery which is the territory of the hyenas, the *archetypal shadow* of the lands of the herd, the dark and instinctive

side, disrespectful of the eco-systemic balance of the kingdom of lions, where these instead embody the elegant appearance, regal and responsible for archetypal and symbolic election among animals.

The call to adventure for Simba can then be read in negative terms compared to what is its destiny as designated reigning from birth. The cub, tempted by the delights of being able to easily demonstrate his courage, irresponsibly endangers himself and his friend, and betrothed *Nala*. They escape only thanks to the intervention of the king that clears the attack of the *shadow*-hyenas.

Mufasa admonishes Simba but instead of punishing his son, he teaches him the value of courage and wisdom, which does not deny fear and risk: if he needs, after the death of his father, he will find the support of kings in the stars.

Scar orchestrates a plan with hyenas, his henchmen, to kill the king and usurp the throne. He accompanies Simba in a gorge near where the wildebeests graze and tells him to train with his roar while waiting for Mufasa to surprise him. Simba's roar echoes and the wildebeests pours down the canyon, actually stirred and forced by hyenas. Simba is now in danger but is saved by Mufasa, who remains

trapped, hanging on a rocky wall from where his brother fatally pushes him down, killing him. Simba attends the fall of his father without seeing what really happened and, lost, desperate, is again misled by the uncle-shadow that incites him to escape, making him believe that his father's death is his fault. The cub, in distress and unable to act responsibly, escapes and is hunted by the hyenas but manages to sow them. Now he is believed dead by all, as swallowed in the mythological *Belly of the Whale*, crossing *The Threshold of the Extraordinary World*, the infernal areas, the *exile* in which the hero will accomplish his journey of growth and individuation: *The Initiation* has begun.

Scar proclaims himself king and establishes a reign of terror along with the hyenas to keep the lands in check by abusing the power of the usurped throne. The king died together with the *centre* of power and consciousness; now the perspective of harmony, that is, the prince of the *Self*, is in exile and the kingdom without king becomes the land of a withered and tyrannical consciousness, in which life cannot be renewed and prosper.

Campbell (2008) reminds us that the theme of exile is very frequent and that:

must go through a long period of darkness. It is a time full of dangers, obstacles and humiliations. The child is induced to retreat into himself or to face the unknown; in any case, what he encounters is always an unexplored darkness. This is an area of unsuspected presences, both good and bad.

The first presences that come to Simba as *Supernatural Aid* and *Allies* to support him are the meerkat *Timon* and the warthog *Pumbaa*, who welcome him in a new dimension far from his recent past.

Based on the BTE map of the *Journey*, *the hero left the castle*, precociously, forced by the uncle and the sense of guilt thus encountering the *chronic Transe* (Lattuada, 2008, p. 121) of the *first of the seven dualisms*, *live or die* (Lattuada, 2012, pp. 123-124): a sense of life as something undeserved, weakly pushed by an archetypal survival principle not fully established and sustained.

Unable to accept his past, he is encouraged to turn his backs and remove it, to embrace a carefree and cheerful lifestyle with the new allies: superficial and irresponsible, addicted to vice and ease. He grows up to become a young adult lion, *prey to pleasure and fleeing from pain*, a conflict characteristic of the *second dualism* (Lattuada, 2012, pp.

124-125): unable to extract the *sword of responsibility* of his feelings. But after a melancholy evening suspended between the memories of the teachings and the nostalgia of the father comes, in a fantastic way, the realization by the wise shaman of the court that the lion is still alive and that soon would return.

Sometimes the right time for the evolutionary leap is determined by a set of factors that arise from within the individual when he's mature enough and by synchronicity of external elements: the arrival of an old friend, an old ally, a help from the outside world: *The Rescue from Without* as in the myth.

Simba is called by destiny to become king, which is the image of the father, and this adventure appears as a continuous *refusal* to accept the *truth* and the *call*. Fleeing from himself, he is fleeing from his father and his own destiny, from his *Self*, that is, the right place in the *Circle of Life*, as the interconnected *mandala-kingdom* of the Lands is called in the film.

As in the Gnostic hymn attributed to *Bardesane* and quoted by Jung (1981), the heir son in search of his father "forgets between the pleasures himself and his task, until a letter from his father reminds him of his

duty". In our story this letter comes symbolically by *Anima*, Simba's betrothed. Nala, exploring the lands to seek food and help, finds Simba. The two lions recognize and love each other: it is the *Sacred Marriage*, the *Meeting with the Goddess*. Simba is driven by new life force and in contact with his feelings. He is now potentially capable of embracing new dimensions of awareness and decision. But as soon as the daring lioness, as an image of *Iansà Orixà* (Lattuada, 2012, p. 140), bearer of the archetypal principle of freedom and responsibility, asks the beloved to return to the kingdom of which he is the rightful king and to expel his uncle, Simba refuses again his destiny. Unable to free himself from guilt, confront the past and take responsibility for leadership and the right action is still too difficult for him. Nala confronted him with everything he's denied so far and the image of the father he feels abandoned by. The *dragon* of victimhood, and the shadows of irresponsibility and personal importance, however, can now be put in the corner, faced, seen, recognized and overcome.

In a process that recalls the regularity of the transformative dynamics of what in BTE is called *secondary cycle* (Lattuada, 2012, p. 245): *Anima* brought Simba in deep *Contact* with what he feels, animated and *mobilized* his energies, so that he is now uncomfortable, angry. It is the right time to *direct* the awakened force towards *transformation*, and transcend the *Third Dualism, I succeed/I fail* (Lattuada, 2008, pp. 125-126), and assert his own power and value, to approach the central test, *The Ordeal,* of the Hero's Journey.

The Self of Simba is ready to emerge, and a further help comes through the archetype of the *Sage*, embodied by the baboon Rafiki who spurs our hero, teasing him, bothering him, intriguing him, to address the question "Who am I?". The baboon is the animal with which in ancient Egypt was represented the god *Thot* of magic, writing and messenger of the gods, who shares many aspects with the psychopomp god *Hermes*. Even in this film the role of the baboon is archetypal and consistent with that of the god, to intercede the human with the divine, leading him to expand his consciousness.

Simba is invited to look at his reflection in a mirror of water and see his father Mufasa following the instructions of the shaman: "He lives in you".

Simba is ready to dialogue with

his *Self* in the image of the father among the stars of the sky that first admonishes him for having forgotten and then reminds him to be more than what he has become, that is to be, in psychological terms, beyond his own egoic identifications, to be his son and the one true king. This is the moment of the mythological and spiritual *Atonement with the Father*. The Father and the Son are of the same substance, the one is the reflection of the other. Simba accepts life, welcomes the wounds of the past and the mission, of fulfilling its destiny by recognizing his *right place* and bringing the will of the Self into the world. The abandoned son finds the father who in reality had never left him: beyond the images of childlike reassurance, beyond the idea of being able to have caused evil and to fail there is firmness, responsibility, power to do what is right.

The principle of justice is realized, the evolution that through the integration of the qualities of *Xangò* makes it possible to transcend the *third dualism*.

Simba, risen with the sun, plunged into the shadows, now again in the centre, chooses finally to recognize the king himself and to bring him back to the light of consciousness. As for the heroes of spiritual mythologies, and each of us, and as for Christ, after the dark night of the soul, feeling abandoned by the Father, he is found as a voice within himself, in the supreme surrender of "Thy will be done". The hero will return to the *ordinary world*, will rise from the *extraordinary world*, (*The Resurrection*) as the one who brings with him the connection with the *Source*, to dethrone the tyranny of the *little Ego*, now represented by Scar. "The king is back", celebrates Rafiki with Nala and with the new allies Timon and Pumbaa, but there is still a past to face and a kingdom to free. Here is *The crossing of the Return Threshold*, the final comparison with the *antagonist*, with the *shadow*. In truth Simba has already won in himself as he found himself, but the teaching is nothing if it is not manifested as a right action. And this for the warrior hero goes by bringing the creative power in the world of civilization in ruins, in cleaning the field from the forces that hold it in check.

Blessed by the Father and strong of the new alliances, the lion orchestrates a plan to free the land and manages to get face to face with Scar.

The mother Sarabi and the lionesses are amazed to still find Mufasa among them and happy to discover that he is

instead Simba, the "resurrected" son. He is in fact the holder of the power of the spirit, the Self, the image of the father destined to bring new harmony and justice to the world.

Scar still attempts to accuse his nephew of the king's death, but Simba confesses the incident and refuses to be considered a murderer. His vision is now lucid, not corrupted by the darkened senses of the past. In the final duel the tyrant seems to have the upper hand, but in a fit of vainglory Scar unmasks himself revealing to have killed Mufasa. Like the lightning that strikes the dry grass under the cliff of conflict, blazing in a fire, Simba finally acts with all the force of justice against Scar for himself, for his father, for the kingdom. However he does not kill, is not confused with the shadow of the killer on which he won, but to defend himself from the last left-handed shot of his uncle, he hurls him off the cliff where he is fatally mauled by hyenas, of which he had only taken advantage. The shadow is thus put back in its place and it is the time of the celebration of victory, of the reconstituted order, of the rain that washes away sorrows and injustices, soothes the fire and fertilizes the ground. From renegade to resurrected, mindful of the *Father-Self*, of the voice that continues to say

"remember", aware of its value and importance not only for himself, but for the balance of the world, Simba now climbs the cliff to free and finally express the roar of the Lion King who had always been and now is. His roar is like the *Elixir, The Ultimate Boon* in the Hero's Journey, of justice that frees from evil, from the chronic cages of guilt and afflictions.

The final realization through the roar shows us an emblematic example of soul liberation through voice and expression. Simba's characteristic archetypal sound was blocked from the moment when his guilt arose, and his soul resulted as imprisoned. According to the epistemology of BTE our chronic, defensive structures and limitations, traumas, manifest themselves in the different levels of the body-mind blocking the expression of energies and therefore qualities of our self. In fact, there is a panorama of methodological tools that make the work with the voice an alliance with the principle of freedom, responsibility, and expression.

The *fifth dualism* (Lattuada, 2008, pp. 127-128) of integral self-expression is now resolved, manifesting that force that emerges from the *Essence* and reverberates through the individual, for collective and transpersonal

justice: a new family, new child, new friends, a vivified land and a new circle begins.

This story tells us the archetypal dynamics between the poles of light and shadow that revolves around the principles of *Xangò* and *Iansà*: the value of the righteous, power, responsibility and freedom from identification with one's own personal history. It illustrates archetypal values and qualities, superior to personal attachments and identifications, which allow us to understand what the archetype of the King means, the power and freedom to choose to do what is right, in order not to abdicate our own role and place in the world in harmony with the transpersonal law of *Oxalà*: the centre, the Self.

The light of consciousness, distinctly "high", solemn and somehow separated from the rest in Mufasa, must descend and touch the dimensions of the shadow to regenerate and re-emerge to a more human dimension, comprehensive, complex, integral. The adventures of Simba exemplify the archetypal process of these *catabasis* and *anabasis*, as a necessary movement of consciousness that evolves through continuous deaths and rebirths.

Moreover, marrying a non-dual thought, Mufasa and Scar represent the two faces of God, they are Oxalà and Exù, the compassionate and just aspect, and the tyrannical and perverse one. Simba travels between these two poles to the centre of himself, meeting his father at a higher level, beyond the biographical, and returns to the world as the representative the self that gives new life and new beginning to the world and to himself.

Simba will have to preserve the memory of the unity he has recognized and, in order not to become tomorrow's tyrant/Scar and trigger again the cycle of *separation/initiation/return* of the child, he will have to act in the *reality* as one who is in connection with the *truth*, in the wholeness and unity of our being: he is *Master of the two Worlds*.

Conclusion

Adventures such this offer us a corresponding of our archetypal process of realization on an imaginative plane.

They are expressions of dynamics and archetypal principles of the Self. The realizations and plots of fictions are symbols and metaphors of those of our lives. We can see amplifications and correspondences that are no different from our inner images that *'from behind'* direct and represent

the scenes in reality, by expressing themselves on its *stage*.

The narrative can also engage us on a personal aspect and reveal possibilities of our evolutionary journey, suggest characters and forces to whom pay attention and that support us in the archetypal dynamics that are represented at that moment in our life.

The Hero's Journey also appears as a narrative of genesis, development and return from a pathological dimension and reveals the power and value of archetypes as catalysts and organizers of the process of transformation and healing.

The phenomenology of states of consciousness, its transformation and evolution, starting from the original traditions of shamanism, mythology and stories of spirituality, passing through fairy tales and popular productions, to the present day, speaks to us with streams of images and recurrent motifs of the archetypal structures that form, inform and direct the experience of the Self in existence. Everything appears appreciably translatable, expressed and originated by an imaginative flow which manifests the regularity of evolutionary and transformative processes, is directed by the archetypal principles and

archetypal structures of the *journey*, and disseminates the qualities of which it is coloured in the dynamic interconnection of each event.

There is but one story, written in different forms and images, that tells of the hero on his journey to the Self to return with the gift of his presence.

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The Characteristics of Wakefulness:
What Does it Mean to Be Spiritually Awakened?

Steve Taylor, Ph.D.

Steve Taylor is an English author and lecturer/researcher in psychology, who has written several books on psychology and spirituality. He is a senior lecturer in psychology at Leeds Beckett University and is the current chair of the Transpersonal Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society.

ABSTRACT

This paper summarises my research into the state of "wakefulness". I put forward the "essentialist" view that the concepts of a higher-functioning ideal state in various spiritual traditions are conceptualisations of the same essential landscape of expansive human experience. Based on a thematic analysis of transcripts of interviews with 85 individuals who reported an ongoing experience of wakefulness, I describe 18 characteristics of the state. These characteristics can be divided into perceptual, affective, conceptual (or cognitive) and behavioural. I include quotations from my interviews to illustrate the characteristics, and suggest reasons why they are associated with the "wakeful" state. I suggest that there are two "meta characteristics" of wakefulness: fluid or labile self-boundaries (bringing a sense of openness and connection) and inner quietness.

The article is written in British English, the author's Native Language.

KEYWORDS

Wakefulness, characteristics, sleep.

Over the last ten year so, one of my aims as a psychologist has been to study the state of "spiritual wakefulness". I have summarised my research in my recent book *The Leap: The Psychology of Spiritual Awakening* (Taylor. 2017a) on which this article is mainly based. The state of wakefulness is conceptualised in various ways in the world's spiritual traditions – for example, as *sahaja samadhi* (in Vedanta), *baqa* (in the Sufi tradition), *satori* (Zen Buddhism), *ming* (Taoism) or *henosis* or deification (Christian mysticism). In this essay I assume the "essentialist" position that these states are depictions of the same ranges of psychological experience. The depictions vary to some degree, in the same way that people may describe the same landscape in different ways, depending on their location and perspective (Taylor, 2017b).

Some transpersonal psychologists (and scholars of religion) are sceptical of essentialism (or perennialism) (for example, Ferrer, 2002; Hartelius, 2017), believing that similarities between mystical or spiritual experiences across different traditions have been over-emphasised, and may be due to other factors, such as cultural contact or human beings' shared neurology and physiology (Hartelius, 2017).

However, there is a great deal of evidence for essentialism, with strong arguments against contextualist or neurobiological explanations of spiritual experiences (for example, Marshall, 2005, 2014; Studstill, 2005; Rose, 2016; Taylor, 2016, 2017b). This evidence is too detailed to discuss at length here, but it is worth mentioning the many studies using Hood's "mysticism scale" (1975), which have shown that mystical experiences feature the same core characteristics across different traditions (e.g., Chen, Qi, Hood, and Watson 2011; Chen, Hood, Yang, & Watson, 2011) and also *outside* traditions, in a secular context (Streib and Hood, 2013).

In my psychological interpretation, wakefulness is an expansion and an intensification of normal human awareness. This process of expansion or intensification can occur across four different areas. In wakefulness, awareness intensifies in a *perceptual* sense, as the phenomenal world becomes more vivid and alive. Awareness also intensifies in a *subjective* sense, as we become aware of increased depth and richness in our own subjective experience. In addition, awareness intensifies in an *intersubjective* sense, as we become increasingly empathic and

compassionate towards other human beings, other living beings, and the whole of the natural world. And finally, awareness expands or intensifies in a *conceptual* sense, as we develop a less egocentric or sociocentric and more global or universal perspective.

In this essay, I will summarise the characteristics of wakefulness, as revealed by my research. The summary can be seen as reliable, since it is based on a detailed thematic analysis of the transcripts of my interviews with 85 individuals who reported having undergone spiritual awakening. This enabled me to identify the main themes mentioned by participants. The first batch of interviews was for my PhD thesis (Taylor, 2013a), for which I interviewed 25 people who believed that they had undergone the process of spiritual awakening. Other interviews were conducted as research for my book *The Leap: The Psychology of Spiritual Awakening* (Taylor, 2017a) while others were conducted as a part of research projects on individuals who had undergone awakening in situations of intense psychological turmoil (Taylor, 2011, 2012, 2013b; Taylor, 2020a; Taylor, forthcoming).

It is worth nothing that my research (Taylor, 2017a) suggests that wakefulness can occur in three different ways. Firstly, it may be innate to a person, without any need for spiritual practice or transformation. Secondly, wakefulness can occur gradually, usually when a person follows spiritual practices or a specific path. Thirdly, wakefulness may occur suddenly and dramatically, usually triggered by intense stress or trauma, such as bereavement, a diagnosis of cancer or addiction. (These three modes may also occur in combination.)

For ease of understanding, I have divided the characteristics into four different categories: perceptual, affective, conceptual (or cognitive) and behavioural. The categories and characteristics are summarised in Table 1. However, these categories should not be seen as distinct. There is a lot of overlap between them, and some are interdependent, in the sense that they feed into another, and help to generate one another. But since the landscape of wakefulness is so uncharted, I think categories can be useful to provide some orientation. Note that the 18 characteristics are the *major* characteristics of the state, which were described by almost all of the individuals I interviewed. There were two other characteristics mentioned in *The Leap* that I omit in this summary, because they were only

mentioned by half of my participants. [These are "Heightened/Increased energy" and "Inner Security and Stability/Authenticity"] .

In general, the characteristics are fairly uniform and evenly spread. That is, if wakefulness is a person's normal state, she or he tends to experience

Category	Characteristics
Perceptual	Intensified Perception
	Increased Present-ness/Timelessness
	Awareness of Presence or All-Pervading Spiritual Energy
	Aliveness, Harmony and Connectedness
Affective	Inner Quietness/Less Identification with Thoughts
	Transcendence of Separation/Sense of Connection
	Empathy and Compassion
	Well-Being
	Absence of (or Decreased) Fear of Death
Conceptual/Cognitive	Lack of Group Identity
	Wide Perspective – Universal Outlook
	Heightened Sense of Morality
	Freedom from the "Taking for Granted Syndrome" – Appreciation and Curiosity
Behavioural	Altruism and Engagement
	Enjoyment of Inactivity/Ability to Be
	Beyond Accumulation and Attachment/Non-Materialism
	Autonomy/Living more authentically
	Enhanced (more authentic) relationships

Table 1 – *The Characteristics of Wakefulness*

almost all of these characteristics, usually at the roughly the same level of intensity. The extent of this uniformity was one of the most striking things that emerged from my research and emphasises the validity of seeing wakefulness as a distinct psychological state.

The only significant variation is in terms of the *overall* intensity of wakefulness. There is a whole continuum of states of wakefulness, ranging from less intense to very intense. The intensity of the characteristics of wakefulness obviously varies according to the intensity of a person's overall wakefulness. That is, if a person experiences a high intensity of wakefulness, they will obviously also experience a high level of well-being, a high degree of mental quietness, a very pronounced tendency towards altruism, and a very pronounced lack of group identity, and so on. And obviously the reverse applies for someone with a lower intensity of wakefulness.

Perceptual Characteristics

A clear way that wakefulness manifests itself is in terms of the wakeful person's different perception and experience of the world around them. Awakened individuals do not perceive the same world as other people. The world is as different a place to them as the world of a child is to the world of an adult – or you might say, as the world of a pre-traditional indigenous person is to the world of a modern westerner.

Intensified Perception

In wakefulness, perception is vivid and direct. Awakened people see the world in a very child-like way, struck by the wonder, beauty and intricacy of phenomena which other people take for granted, and do not pay much attention to. The world is a brighter, more fascinating and beautiful place to them. In particular, they are struck by nature – the amazing is-ness and beauty of natural landscapes, of the sky and the sea; the intoxicating perfection and drama and intricacy of the earth.

This is the part of the reason why so many poets and artists have been awakened individuals. When you feel awestruck by the is-ness and beauty of your surroundings, there is often an impulse to express or frame the experience, perhaps in a poem or a painting. Certainly, this sense of awe was the mainspring of the work of poets like William

Wordsworth or Walt Whitman and of painters like J.M.W. Turner and Caspar David Friedrich.

This intensity of perception is sometimes experienced as an *openness* to experience – or in slightly different terms, an increased *sensitivity*. It is as if filters have been removed, or shutters have been opened, and as a result more impressions seem to *come into* our minds, and to affect us more powerfully. What is normally a "measly trickle of information" (as Aldous Huxley, 1988, refers to it in *The Doors of Perception*), becomes a powerful flood. In sudden awakening, this can sometimes feel overwhelming (as it can also be in psychedelic experiences), but it usually is not a problem once wakefulness becomes established. We learn the ability the turn off our attention to the impressions when we need to concentrate or think abstractly. In others, we learn to consciously close down the shutters when we need to.

All of the awakened individuals I interviewed commented on this intensified perception. One person told me how the world had become "sharper, more real" while another was "struck by how fresh everything seems" (Taylor, 2017a, p.185). Another person remarked that "colours seemed brighter, more alive" (Taylor, 2017a, p.185). Others described a sense of awe, and a new appreciation for simple pleasures and activities like walking, cooking, eating and simply attending to their surroundings. One person described vividly how she had come to relish "simple things – a simple cup of tea, looking out of the window, the sunshine on the leaves, the wonderful green of the trees" (Taylor, 2017a, p.185).

Why does the wakeful state feature this intensified perception? The best way of describing this type of perception from a psychological point of view is *non-automatic*. In our normal sleep state, perception becomes automatic as an energy-saving measure, because of the massive energy consumption of our powerful sense of ego. But in the wakeful state, our sense of "I" is much softer and weaker, and is not surrounded and maintained by a constant whirl of thought-chatter. As a result, it does not consume as much energy, and so there is no need for automatic perception. So perception remains fresh and intense.

Increased Present-ness/Timelessness

Wakefulness also brings a different perception of time – or, you might

say, a shift in time-orientation. In wakefulness, the future and the past become much less important, and the present becomes correspondingly more important. Awakened individuals spend much less time recalling past experiences or ruminating over past events, just as they spend less time "looking forward" to the future, daydreaming about future events or focusing on future goals. Instead, they focus on their present experience, on the surroundings they are in, the people they are with and the sensations and impressions they are having.

For some people, this increased present-ness leads to a sense of the *expansiveness* of time. Time seems to somehow open up, to slow down, or even disappear altogether. One person described how, because of her present-ness, "Every day seems full. A day seems to last for such a long time" (Taylor, 2017a, p.186). Another person described an awareness that "There is no time... No past no future, just things appearing and happening. Everything just is" (Taylor, 2017a, p.186).

Even more intensely, a woman called Lynn who had a sudden awakening after the bereavement of her husband and her mother (in quick succession) described "an intense mind-boggling feeling of the past, the present and the future all existing at once" (Taylor, 2017a, p.186). This is the sense of the "eternal now" which is sometimes described by mystics, when the past, future and present all merge into one.

Why does wakefulness bring this different "time-orientation"? It is partly related to the awakened person's intensified perception. Because their surroundings and their experience are more real and vivid, they naturally pay more attention to them, in the present. It is also related to the inner quietness of the wakeful person, particularly their lack of (or reduced) associational thought-chatter. One of the main reasons why we normally spend so little time in the present is simply because we spend so much time immersed in thought-chatter.

Ultimately, the future and the past are concepts, created by the human mind. We never actually *experience* either, since our minds and bodies are always in the present. The past and the future only exist in thought, whereas the present does *not* exist in thought. A large proportion of "thought-chatter" is related to the future or the past in some way. So, the quieter our minds are, and the less we are immersed in thought-chatter, the more we are present.

In addition, as I suggested in my book *Making Time* (Taylor, 2007), our normal linear perception of time is a mental construct, generated by our normal strong sense of ego. The weaker our sense of ego becomes, the more linear time seems to fade away, and our perception of time becomes slower and more expansive – and eventually disappears into nowness.

Awareness of Presence or All-pervading Spiritual Energy

One aspect of intensified perception that becomes prevalent at *higher* intensities of wakefulness is an awareness of a kind of presence or force which seems to pervade the whole world, and all things in it. In my research, one person described this as a "a deep sense of a living presence within that is both magnificent and also very ordinary" (Taylor, 2017a, p.187). Another person described a "a vast presence which is just infinite and pretty mind-blowing. Especially in nature" (Taylor, 2017a, p.187). Another person spoke of an "awesome presence" which he referred to as "God" (Taylor, 2017a, p.187). This force was sometimes described in terms of a "source" too, something underlying and fundamental which did not just pervade all things, but gave rise to them too. In a sense, all things are the manifestation of this force.

This is clearly the same force which the Indian Upanishads refer to as *brahman* – the spiritual force which pervades all things, the space between all things, and which also manifests itself in human beings, as *atman*, our own spiritual essence. Elsewhere, it is conceptualised as *Dao* in Chinese Daoism, or in the *dharmakaya* of Mahayana Buddhism – or in the energetic all-pervading form of "God" described by Christian, Jewish or Sufi mystics. It is also fundamentally the same as the all-pervading spirit-force which most of the world's traditional indigenous peoples perceived. To give just a few examples, in America, the Hopi Indians call this spirit force *maasauu* (Heinberg, 1989), and the Lakota call it *wakan-tanka* (literally, the "force which moves all things"; Eliade, 1967). The Ainu of Japan call it ramut (Monro, 1962), while in parts of New Guinea it is called *imunu* (Levy-Bruhl, 1965). In Africa the Nuer call it *kwoth* (Evans-Pritchard, 1967) and the Mbuti call it *pepo* (Turnbull, 1993). The Ufaina Indians (of the Amazon Rain Forest) call it *fufaka* (Hildebrand, 1988; see Taylor, 2005, for further examples).

My view is that this all-pervading spiritual energy is a reality that our

normal automatised perception prevents us from perceiving. In our sleep state, when we look at the sky, we do not see a spiritual energy shimmering through space, we just see *empty* space. When we look at rocks or rivers or trees, we are not able to sense spiritual energy radiating through them – we just see them as inanimate objects which we are entitled to use for our own devices. Due to the massive energy demands of the ego, our attention is "switched off" to this spiritual force. As a consequence, the world which seems to be so sacred and spiritual to indigenous peoples becomes a mundane inanimate place.

Aliveness, Harmony and Connectedness

At a lower intensity of wakefulness, a person may not be aware of this spiritual force *directly*, but still be able to sense it indirectly, in terms of its effects. One of these effects is a sense of *aliveness*. To the awakened person, there are no such things as inanimate objects. Even natural phenomena which aren't biologically alive (such as clouds or the sea or stones) and even man-made objects (such as pieces of furniture or buildings) shine with the radiant aliveness of spirit. And objects which are biologically alive become *more* powerfully animate. One woman described how "Everything looked and felt ultra real and alive. I kept staring out of the window and just marveling... I could almost *see* the atoms in everything I looked at. I had the strongest feeling that everything was perfectly okay and perfect in the universe" (Taylor, 2017a, p.188).

This quote touches on another indirect effect of this all-pervading spiritual force – a sense that "all is well". As spiritual texts and mystics have told us, the nature of this energy is blissful. It has a quality of bliss or joy, in the same way that water has a quality of wetness. So when we perceive its presence in the world, there is a sense of harmony – again, an awareness which was commonly described by indigenous peoples. There is a sense that the universe is a benevolent place, and that harmony and meaning are its fundamental qualities.

And finally, because this spiritual energy underlies and pervades all things, it creates a sense of connectedness or oneness. All things are folded into oneness in its embrace. So even if an awakened person is not able to direct sense *brahman* in the world, he or she may still have the sense that the boundaries between superficially separate and

distinct objects have melted away. They may still sense what some of my participants described as "the oneness of everything" or "the oneness of the universe".

Affective Characteristics

When we wake up, our *inner* life changes. There is a shift in how we *feel* inside, in our psychological experience. We take on a new identity, as the wakeful self-system emerges and replaces the old self-system of sleep. In cases of gradual awakening, this identity shift happens very slowly, as the old self-system is gradually "re-moulded" into a different form. It may not even be noticeable, except in retrospect. But in sudden awakening, the shift is so abrupt and dramatic that many people can pinpoint the exact moment when it occurred. One of my participants reported that her shift began at "March 2, 1993, about 8:30 am, Eastern Standard Time US" (Taylor, 2017a, p.189). Another person described her shift as "very sudden – instantaneous really. It happened in February 98" (Taylor, 2017a, p.189).

So in this section we will examine all of the inner changes which contribute to this overall sense of becoming a completely different person.

Inner quietness/less identification with thoughts

One of the significant changes which wakefulness brings is a dramatic reduction of the "inner noise" of our thought-chatter. In our normal state, this streams through our mind almost constantly – a whirl of associations and images, worries and daydreams that only usually stops when our attention is absorbed in external things. This thought-chatter is such a normal part of our experience that many of us take it for granted. We are so immersed in it – and so identified with it – that we do not even realise It is there, and certainly do not realise how powerfully it affect us. In my view, It is one of the main sources of psychological suffering. It creates a sense of disturbance inside us, and also gives rise to negative thoughts and emotions. It separates us from the essence of our being, and constantly reinforces our ego-identity, and our sense of separateness.

A small proportion of the awakened individuals in my research reported that their minds had become *completely* quiet, with a complete cessation of "thought chatter". For example, one person described how her mind "was so calm and still It is

absolutely wonderful. Sometimes I just sit and I wish everyone could have a quiet mind. When I see people getting impatient in a queue I think "I wish you could have that quietness". (Taylor, 2017a, p.190). Another person described how inside him "there is nothing there apart from a still silence, a very peaceful still unifying silence that permeates everything". (Taylor, 2017a, p.190).

More typically though, people reported that there was still some thought-activity in their minds, but much less than before. One person told me that he had "nowhere near as much" thought-chatter as before, and that "a lot of the time my mind is very still" (Taylor, 2017a, p.190). Another person also described an awareness of a background of "silence" inside himself, and remarked that "Because I notice the thoughts, because they are set against silence, they are not always there and I no longer have the chatter endlessly" (Taylor, 2017a, p.190).

Others reported that, whilst quite a lot of "thought-chatter" was still there (although not as much as before), they felt less identified with it. They were able to stand back, observe their thoughts and let them flow by, without becoming immersed in or overly affected by them. For example, one person described his discursive thinking as "like walking into another room, with the TV playing in the background. I do not have to pay attention to it" (Taylor, 2017a, p.190). Another described his thoughts as "Clouds drifting by. The point would be to let them drift; not invest life-force in them" (Taylor, 2017a, p.190).

Some of these variations may be due to different degrees of wakefulness. Perhaps those who experience little or no thought activity are generally at a higher intensity of wakefulness than people who still experience a significant degree of thought-chatter but no longer feel identified with it.

Transcendence of Separation/ Sense of Connection

In wakefulness, the sense of otherness between us and the world fades away. We no longer feel that we are "in here" looking out at a world which seems to be "out there". We no longer observe from a distance, but are part of the flow of the world's unfolding is-ness. Separation dissolves into connection. In the same way that we sense that all things are connected to each other, we feel that we are connected to all things. We are part of the oneness of all things. This sense of connection manifests itself

in different ways, and at different degrees of intensity. At the most basic level, a person may feel a strong sense of connection to other human beings, other living beings in generally, or to the whole of the natural world. For example, a man called Eric told me that, "I feel a part of nature...I feel a connection with people, but I also feel connected with tree and birds and grass and hills" (Taylor, 2017a, p.192). At higher intensifies of wakefulness, there may be a sense of connection to the spiritual force which pervades the whole universe, and which forms the essence of our own being. In other words, we may not just be *aware of* this spiritual force, but sense that we are connected to it. For example, on person told me that she experiences life as "an interconnected co-creative partnership with some kind of intelligent force or ever-present sentiency" (Taylor, 2017a, p.192).

At a still higher intensity of wakefulness, a sense of connection may intensify into a sense of *oneness*. A person may feel that they exist in a state of unity with all things, and even that they *are* all things. They may not just feel that they are *one* with the world, but that they actually *are* the world. Their sense of separation may dissolve away to the extent that there

is no distinction at all between them and what they perceive. For example, a participant called Kelly described how, "The deep aliveness of space is so amazing it takes your words away. I do not feel connected to it. I feel like I am it" (Taylor, 2017a, p.192).

All of this stems from the softer boundaries of the wakeful self-system. The awakened person's sense of identity is not confined to their own body or mind, but stretches out and incorporates other phenomena. In our normal state, we are like a wave which has somehow deluded itself into thinking that it is a separate entity, distinct from the ocean which has given rise to it. But in the wakeful state, we realise our true condition, as a part of the ocean.

In this way, the sense of connection or oneness of the wakeful state is a direct apprehension of the essential sameness of our own being with the being of everything else which exists. It is a direct apprehension of the oneness of our own *atman* with the all-pervading *brahman*. The essence of our own being is also the essence of every other beings, and of the whole universe itself.

Empathy and Compassion

In wakefulness, this sense of connection gives rise to a high level of

empathy. When we are connected to other beings – animals and the natural world as well as human beings – we become able to sense what they are experiencing, to feel what they are feeling. If they are suffering, we sense it, and feel the impulse to comfort them or to try to alleviate their pain. Other people's pain *touches* us because there is   no separation between our being and theirs.

Empathy gives rise to forgiveness too. It enables us to understand the reasons why a person hurt or exploited us and generates an impulse to establish a bond with the person, and eradicate the negativity between us and them. In addition, if a person behaves unkindly to us now, our empathy means that we are less likely to respond with hatred, or to feel a desire revenge or to create conflict. Another woman who had suffered abuse described how "One of the major effects of awakening was coming to a place of love and forgiveness for those who abused me and the understanding that came about what was going on – I began to see all that happened in the light of the bigger picture. A great love grew inside me for them" (Taylor, 2017a, p.193).

Well-Being

This is perhaps the most obvious affective change that wakefulness brings, but I have saved it until after "reduced cognitive activity" and "sense of connection" because it is partly the result of those two characteristics.

Awakened individuals may not live in state of complete, uninterrupted bliss, but they are generally *much* more contented than previously. One major source of this well-being is that they are largely free from the psychological discord which plagues human beings in our sleep – habitual worry   about the future, feelings of negativity about the past, and a general sense of unease. Awakened people are much less prone to negative states such as boredom, loneliness and dissatisfaction. Their atmosphere of their inner world is less charged with negativity, and much more harmonious.

Many people I spoke to commented on this freedom from worry and anxiety. One person described how "Something inside me has changed in the way that I do not worry about anything – I know everything's okay... I feel a huge sense of peace" (Taylor, 2017a, p.194). Similarly, Irene described how "I'm at peace. I'm free, I do not worry about a thing. I do not have anything to worry about. I do not live with stress" (Taylor, 2017a, p.194). More generally, others described

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an "inner contentment" and "peace and a sense of freedom". Even more powerfully, a person described how "Most of the time there is absolute bliss. A deep lingering peace which is unshakable, which is just anchored" (Taylor, 2017a, p.194).

This freedom from psychological discord is mainly the result of the awakened person's inner quietness and their transcendence of separation. After all, the discord is generated by the disturbance and negativity of our normal thought-chatter, and by our normal sense of separation, which creates a sense of lack and of fragmentation, as if we have been broken off from the whole. So to experience an inner quietness and a sense of connection means freedom from psychological discord.

The well-being of wakefulness is also related to a sense of appreciation. In wakefulness, people are more likely to feel a sense of gratitude for their health, their freedom, their loved ones, and the other good things in their lives. In our sleep state, it is likely that we will take these things for granted and fail to appreciate their true value. (I will explore this in more detail in the conceptual section below).

Absence of (or Decreased) Fear of Death

This is another contributing factor to the well-being of awakened individuals – and at the same time a significant characteristic of the wakeful state in itself. Fear of death is human beings' most fundamental fear. The ego feels especially fragile in the face of death. The fact that death could strike us down at any moment – and will eventually reduce everything we have achieved and accumulated to nothing – creates a basic sense of meaninglessness, especially if we do not believe in the possibility of life after death. It is therefore not surprising that, in modern secular Western cultures, death has become a taboo subject, which we try to avoid contemplating or talking about.

To lose one's fear of death is therefore a powerful and liberating experience. For example, Robert described how he had "no fear of death any more. I'm not in a rush to die, but I'm not attached to the body and the life and the possessions. Life is a miracle and a mystery, and I'm happy with that" (Taylor, 2017a, p.196). Similarly, a man called Chris – who experienced gradual awakening following a long period of turmoil in his life – told me that he felt "very calm about [death]... I would quite be willing to accept it if I was told my death was to come, even though I do not want to die just yet" (Taylor, 2017a, p.196).

This decreased fear of death is related to the transcendence of the separate ego. Since our own ego is not the epicentre of our universe anymore, its demise no longer seems such a tragic prospect. We know that our own death is not the end all of things, and that the world that is part of our identity will continue.

However, perhaps the main reason why the awakened person loses fear of death because of a different attitude towards – and understanding of – death. Awakening brings a sense that death is not the end, that the essence of our being will continue to exist after the dissolution of our bodies. As a lady called Maylene – who underwent awakening a few years after the death of young daughter – told me, "We are just like little fireflies – bursting forth from this main energy. We are just sparks and we go back to that source and we spark some more" [Taylor, 2017a, p.197].

As well as sensing that death is not the end, there is a new sense that *dying* is not a painful process to be dreaded, but potentially a positive process of liberation. Helen described how she "used to think there was absolutely nothing. I thought people who believed in life after death were idiots… I'm not afraid of death at all – in fact in some ways I think it is a something to look forward to, a kind of liberation" [Taylor, 2017a, p.197]. While as Marita – who underwent sudden awakening in the midst of the turmoil of having a new baby – described dying in terms of going "back home again", of being "outside of time, outside of space… like stepping outside of prison walls" [Taylor, 2017a, p.197].

Conceptual and Cognitive Characteristics

The conceptual characteristics we are going to look at now refer to how awakened people see themselves in relation to the world and other human beings, and how they conceive of the world and other human beings in themselves. It is useful to think in terms of *perceptual* awareness – the direct awareness of the phenomenal world around us – and *conceptual* awareness, which is our *understanding* of the world, our own lives and the whole human race. We have seen that wakefulness dramatically changes our perceptual awareness, and the same is true of our conceptual awareness.

Lack of Group Identity

In wakefulness the need for identity and belonging fades away. People no longer feel affiliated to any particular

religion or nationality, just as they longer feel that they are defined by their career or their achievements. They no longer feel that they *are* an American or a Jew or a scientist or a socialist. They do not feel any pride in their nationality or ethnicity or their achievements, or any sense of other-ness or enmity to members of other groups. They feel that such labels are superficial and meaningless. They do not see any difference between Americans or Iraqis, Christians or Muslims, and treat them all people with equal respect. If they see themselves with any kind of identity, it is as global citizens, inhabitants of the planet Earth, beyond nationality or border.

In my research, this lack of identity and of the need for belonging was exemplified by two men, Simon and Graham, who used to be big fans of soccer teams. After their transformation, they found that they no longer felt the need to support their teams, although they still felt a strong enjoyment for the game itself. As Simon reported, "Even my love of football has waned. It was a massive part of my life but that desire to belong has pretty much gone. Everyone seems to need to belong to a particular group but I do not need that anymore (Taylor, 2017a, p.201). "Similarly, Graham – who

underwent awakening following the death of his son and wife – told me that, "I do not support a football club anymore… Now I just watch football matches and I just think "I hope they all win, I enjoy the game for its own sake" (Taylor, 2017a, p.201). Graham also said that he no longer thought of himself as English, or even as male.

Awakened individuals often have a similar attitude to different spiritual traditions too. Even if they be affiliated with a particular tradition, they do not feel that this tradition is the only true and valid one, as religious fundamentalists do. They have a very open and ecumenical attitude, and recognise that different traditions are simply expressions of the same underlying truths. In the words of the Indian mystic Ramakrishna – who frequently read the Christian Gospels and the Qu'ran – "All religions are true – as many faiths, so many paths".

Wide Perspective – Universal Outlook

Awakened individuals have a wide sense of perspective, a "macrocosmic" outlook. They aren't preoccupied with their personal problems and concerns to the exclusion of everything else. They know they are not the centre of the universe.

This means that they have an awareness of the wider impact of their individual actions. They are aware of how their own life choices affect others, or the Earth itself, and so are more likely to live ethically and responsibly. For example, they may decide not to buy or use goods that were produced by exploited workers or by oppressive regimes. Aware of how their own lifestyle could contribute to damage to the environment, they are more likely to adopt an "environmentally friendly" lifestyle.

This wide perspective also means that, for awakened individuals, social or global issues are as real and as important as their own personal concerns. They are likely to feel a sense of concern for oppressed groups, for social problems like poverty and inequality, or global problems like climate change and the extinction of other species.

Heightened Sense of Morality

This wide sense of perspective has moral implications too. Wakefulness makes people more moral in the sense that they usually behave more ethically and responsibly, and become more compassionate and altruistic. But wakefulness also makes people more moral in the sense that they develop a more *all-encompassing* and *unconditional* type of morality. Awakened individuals do not practice "moral exclusion" – that is, they do not just show concern and kindness towards people who share superficial similarities of religion or ethnicity with them, but extend their benevolence to all human beings indiscriminately. (This is obviously related to a lack of group identity too).

Another "moral" aspect of wakefulness is that the awakened person's sense of right and wrong (or good and bad) is not culturally determined, but stems from an *innate* knowing, a deep, moral certainty which transcends their own self-interest and their own culture. For awakened individuals, justice and fairness are universal principles which transcend laws or conventions. They may even be willing to break laws if necessary, and even to potentially sacrifice their own well-being – perhaps even their lives – in order to uphold moral principles. This is why, throughout history, many of the world's great idealists and social reformers were awakened to some degree (or at least to have experienced moments of wakefulness), such as Gandhi, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and

possibly figures such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela.

Freedom from the "Taking for Granted Syndrome" – Appreciation and Curiosity

In Wakefulness, people do not "get used" the good things in their lives once they have had them for a while. They appreciate the value of their health and their freedom, the beauty and benevolence of their partners, or the innocence and radiance of their children. They have the ability to "count their blessings", no matter how long they have had them. They feel a profound sense of gratitude for small and simple experiences. (As we saw earlier, this is an important factor in the well-being of the wakeful state.) For example, Phoebe – who experienced an awakening following the death of her high school friend – described how she "felt profound love and gratitude toward everyone in my life, everyone who was alive, and for everything I saw and experienced" (Taylor, 2017a, p.203). A woman called Cathy – who had an awakening after being diagnosed with breast cancer – described how she "began to feel real gratitude for the birds visiting my garden, the rays of sunshine streaming through trees, the light took on a

richness which I found so beautiful" (Taylor, 2017a, p.203). More generally, a person told me how her awakening had "led me to inner contentment and an intensification of gratitude" (Taylor, 2017a, p.203).

Behavioural Characteristics

In a sense, the behavioural characteristics we are going to examine now are the outward expression of the perceptual, affective and conceptual characteristics we have examined already. They are the "fruits" of those inner changes, expressing themselves in terms of new traits and habits, and new ways of living.

Altruism and Engagement

Altruism is the natural fruit of the awakened person's strong sense of compassion, their universal outlook, and their innate sense of justice. As a result of these characteristics, they feel a strong impulse to help alleviate other people's sufferings or to help them to fulfil their potential. They feel a strong idealistic desire to change the world for the better, an impulse to *serve* other people, and to contribute to the human race in some way. They may feel a sense of *mission*, to help the human race move through our present phase of chaos and crisis

into a new era of harmony. As one person told me. "Now I feel a very strong sense of purpose and sense of spiritual calling. I feel called to serve the evolution of human consciousness, to support others through awakening" (Taylor, 2017a, p.205).

Enjoyment of Inactivity/Ability to Be

Awakened individuals develop a great love of doing nothing. A lady called Susan who experienced gradual awakened due to spiritual practice and self-investigation, described how "I really love my quietude. It gives me the chance to read and delight and meditate in a different way that allows for reflection and for an ever-deepening" (Taylor, 2017a, p.205). Another person gave me a beautiful description of how "The silence is so beautiful. In the silence everything is taken care of. It is so nice just to sit and do nothing. That's one of my favourite times. I can just sit in silence for hours" (Taylor, 2017a, p.205).

Others described how their ability to "be" meant that they were never bored, even if they had nothing in particular to do. Simon noted that "Some people cannot sit still and get bored very easily. I do not get bored anymore. I only work two days per week and all I do otherwise is read

books go for walks and meditate" (Taylor, 2017a, p.206). In a very similar way, some people described that they never felt lonely, even if they were alone for long periods. As one person told me, "I can be on my own for long periods of time and doing nothing and that is okay with me" (Taylor, 2017a, p.206).

In sleep, the constant need for distraction and activity in sleep is like a drug addiction; It is a constant struggle to keep ourselves supplied with what we need, and we often feel uncomfortable and anxious between our "fixes" of distraction. So to be free of this constantly nagging need makes life much easier.

Beyond Accumulation and Attachment/Non-materialism

In wakefulness, the impulse to *accumulate* falls away. It is no longer important to accumulate possessions, wealth, status, success of power. Some people I spoke to described the falling away of accumulative impulses as one of the most visible effects of their new state. They recognised that before their transformation they had tried to hard to offset their inner discontent by spending money or accumulating wealth, but those impulses had now disappeared. A man called Marcus

described how he had been "absolutely focused on being a millionaire" (Taylor, 2017a, p.207). He had a lucrative career as a health consultant, giving talks around the country and appeared regularly on television. He drove a £70,000 Jaguar and bought the most expensive clothes and consumer goods. At the same time, he was deeply unhappy, and reached the point of contemplating suicide. He had had a number of glimpses of wakefulness before, in the midst of his turmoil, but now he underwent a permanent shift of being. And after this shift, Marcus off-loaded most of his possessions, and was happy to share an old second hand car with the rest of his family.

Similarly, Simon told me that he used to be "consumed with having the latest biggest car and gadgets" but now "this has all dissolved into thin air" (Taylor, 2017a, p.207). While Kelly described how "I used to shop and be addicted to home and garden television…I was looking to possessions as a way to feel better but now I do not need to feel better…I do not need things" (Taylor, 2017a, p.207).

With awakening, there is a shift away from accumulation to *contribution*. The energy that people used to invest in trying to alleviating their own psychological suffering is now redirected into trying to alleviate the sufferings of others. As Marcus described it very appositely, there is a shift in focus from "what can I get from life to what I can give to life" (Taylor, 2017a, p.207).

Autonomy/Living more Authentically

In the sleep state, most people are by and large the product of the environment they are born into. They tend to conform to the values of their cultures, and happily go along with the kind of lifestyles that are expected of them. But awakened individuals tend to be more autonomous and "inner-directed". They feel less identified with their cultures values, and are likely to reject them, in favour of following their own impulses. They have a greater confidence in their own choices and preferences, and are more liable (partly because of their inner security) to stand by them, even in the face of ridicule or hostility. They live their lives according to their own sense of what is right, rather than trying to please others or to do what is expected of them.

One person described this sense of autonomy in terms of having "more courage to do what I believe in now. I am going to trust my instincts more and my inner knowing, rather than

listening to what others think is the right thing to do" (Taylor, 2017a, p.208). While Kimberley told me that, "It is very important for me to follow my own rhythms and cycles, whereas before I was disconnected from that, pushing myself based on timescales and diaries and expectations. Now I'm more authentic and more aligned and in tune with who I really am" (Taylor, 2017a, p.208).

Strictly speaking, this sense of autonomy is a conceptual characteristic, but I have included it here because It is difficult to separate from the new way of life it gives rise to. People often realise that, prior to awakening, they were not *really* living their own lives, but largely just following social conventions or trying to please other people. But after awakening it becomes much more important for them to live authentically, and to follow their own impulses. Other people may view them as rebels or eccentrics because they are liable to disregard social norms and not to follow trends. They are likely to reject the consumerist and status-oriented values of their culture, in favour of a life of simplicity. They usually have little interest in the latest popular TV shows or pop bands, in acquiring the latest gadgets or goods,

or in trying to impress people with their appearance, their status or their sophistication. They may shock other people with their unconventionality, and their willingness to contradict consensus opinions.

Enhanced (more Authentic) Relationships

In some cases, friends and relatives resent the awakened person's new authentic way of living and misinterpret it as selfishness. This contributes to the relationship problems that can sometimes occur after awakening. In general though, awakened individuals feel that their relationships have become deeper and more fulfilling. The authenticity of their lifestyle also expresses itself in more authentic relationships.

This is partly due to their increased empathy and compassion, which means that they become more tolerant and understanding, and less judgmental. For example, Helen told me that her relationships had improved because she has "a lot more compassion and understanding. If people are behaving in a certain way, I'm aware that there are reasons why they are like that" (Taylor, 2017a, p.209). Similarly, a person described how her relationships had improved because "I

am more tolerant and less judgmental of other people" (Taylor, 2017a, p.209). As a result, awakened individuals are less likely to react with hostility and animosity to others, and less likely to initiate conflict. As Graham remarked, "Things [about other people] that might have annoyed me or irritated me do not affect me at all. I just let it go" (Taylor, 2017a, p.209).

The ability to be *present* in relationships is a factor too. If you are not present to the people you are with – if you are thinking of other things while talking to them, or even writing texts or reading e-mails – then your companions will (rightly) feel rejected. This may lead to discord and hostility in the relationship. But if you are fully present to people – as awakened individuals are likely to be – it will create a bond of empathy, and lead to mutual respect and trust.

Characteristics at Different Intensities of Wakefulness

The intensity of a person's overall wakefulness can be measured in relation to the intensity of these characteristics. In perceptual terms, you can gauge the intensity of a person's wakefulness by how vivid their awareness of the phenomenal world is, or how present they are. From an affective perspective,

you can think in terms of the degree of well-being and compassion they feel, how quiet their minds are, or how much they fear death. The conceptual and behavioural aspects offer an equally reliable gauge of wakefulness too. You can think in terms of how wide a person's sense of perspective is, their degree of appreciation and gratitude, and whether they have moved beyond group identity. You can also consider how authentically they live, how much they enjoy quietness, or how altruistic they are.

As I mentioned above in the introduction, wakefulness usually occurs across all of these areas roughly in parallel. You cannot be awake in perceptual or affective terms without being awake (at least to some degree) in conceptual or behavioural terms too (or vice-versa). Different intensities of wakefulness express usually themselves fairly evenly across all the different aspects and characteristics. At the same time, if there is one particular area where wakefulness does not manifest itself as strongly, it probably means that this is an area which a person needs to work on, and needs to cultivate more through spiritual practice.

Consider a person who experiences a lower intensity of wakefulness, for instance. They might sense that the

world around them is alive and that life is somehow meaningful, without being directly aware of the all-pervading force which is the source of these qualities. They might experience a strong sense of connectedness to other beings, nature and the world in general, without actually feeling *one* with the world, or that they actually *are* it. Whilst they may experience regular periods of mental quietness, they might still experience a lot of thought-chatter, although they may be aware of it as just a process which they can let pass by without identifying with the thoughts. They might feel a general sense of well-being, but one which is sometimes disturbed by some degree of anxiety, stress or frustration.

In conceptual terms, a person with a lower intensity of wakefulness may veer between feeling deeply appreciative of different aspects of their lives and sometimes taking them for granted. Although they might generally have a universal outlook, they may sometimes lose perspective and find themselves immersed in a narrow world of personal concerns. In behavioural terms, they may feel a small degree of attachment to material goods, or other kinds of accumulation. They may enjoy quietness and solitude, but also sometimes find themselves getting caught up in unnecessary activity.

And now let's consider a person who experiences a high intensity of wakefulness. They can sense spirit-force pervading the whole of their surroundings, and see the whole world as the expression or manifestation of this force. They have a quiet mind, with little involuntary thought-chatter. They feel a sense of oneness with the whole world, and all things in it. They might even sense that they *are* all things, aware that their own being is also the manifestation of (and is also pervaded by) spirit-force, so that they are *of the same essence* as everything else. They are likely to have a constant sense of equanimous well-being, including a constant sense of appreciation.

In conceptual terms, the events and issues of their personal lives have little significance to them – certainly less significance than social and global issues, and than the sufferings of others. They are completely free of the impulse to accumulate possessions, wealth, success or fame. They are content to be, to live harmoniously within themselves, within the present moment and within the world. At the same time, they harmoniously *in union* with other human beings, other living

beings, the whole of nature, and the whole cosmos.

The Two "Meta-Characteristics" of Wakefulness

All of these characteristics are generated by the self-system of wakefulness, in the same way that the characteristics of our normal state (such as ego-isolation, automatized perception, inner discord, and the need for group identity) are generated by the self-system associated with sleep. This is why the characteristics are so closely linked – because they are all related to the same underlying factors. They can all be traced back to the same fundamental aspects of the wakeful self-system.

One way of looking at this is to think in terms of "meta-characteristics" – that is, fundamental features of the wakeful self-system which generate a wide variety of other characteristics. These features appear directly, as characteristics themselves, at the same time as manifesting themselves more indirectly, by generating other characteristics.

In my view, there are two "meta-characteristics" – or fundamental features – of the wakeful self-system. The first, and most important, is its lack of boundaries, its fluid openness, which provides a sense of connection in place of a sense of separation, lack and vulnerability. In addition to being a characteristic in itself, this transcendence of ego-isolation is closely linked to many other characteristics – for example, increased empathy and compassion, loss of fear of death, inner security and stability, loss of the need for group identity, a wide, universal outlook, altruism, and a non-accumulative lifestyle. To some degree, all of these characteristics are related to either an increased sense of connection, or a falling away of the separate ego's need to be strengthened or supported.

The second meta-characteristic is the inner quietness of the wakeful system. This is strongly linked to the perceptual aspects of wakefulness. Without thought-chatter, our perception becomes more direct and infused with energy. We also become much more present-centered, which enables us to attend more fully to the world around us. Inner quietness is also strongly linked to the ability to be, to enjoy quietness and inactivity. While our minds are full of thought-chatter, it is almost impossible for us to do nothing; we feel an impulse to immerse our attention in distractions or activities in order to escape the discord inside us.

These two meta-characteristics obviously connect with each other. You could see inner quietness as partly the result of the transcendence of separation, since ego-separateness *encourages* self-absorption and self-reflection. At the same time, you could see the transcendence of separation as partly the result of inner quietness, since constant thought-chatter reinforces our sense of ego, and our self-boundaries.

There are also several characteristics of wakefulness which are linked to *both* of these meta-characteristics, combining their effects. For example, well-being is largely the result of the loss of the anxiety and incompleteness generated by ego-separateness, but also of freedom from the inner disturbance of thought-chatter, and from the negative states of mind produced by negative thought-patterns. At the same time, well-being is the result of connection to the spacious radiance of our deeper being, which ego-transcendence brings.

In a similar way, altruism stems partly from the strong sense of connection and empathy that ego-transcendence generates, and also partly from becoming free of the self-preoccupation created by constant thought-chatter. Finally, the de-automatised perception of wakefulness is largely the result of inner quietness but is also related to the soft boundaries – and overall structural softness and slightness – of the self-system. In our sleep state, it takes a lot of energy to maintain the strong boundaries and structures of our normal self-system, as well as to fuel its constant thought-chatter. The wakeful self-system takes much less energy to maintain, which frees up more energy for perception.

The Wakeful Vision of the World

In our normal sleep state, there is a tendency for us to assume that we are seeing the world as it is, and that our view of life is objective and true. This is the basic assumption which underpins modern materialistic science, which is basically a paradigm of reality derived from the sleep state (Taylor, 2018). According to this paradigm, matter is the only (or at least the primary) reality, and all phenomena can be explained in terms of the actions and interactions of matter. Consciousness can be explained in terms of brain activity, or is a "user illusion" (Dennett, 1991). Evolution can be explained in terms of random mutations and natural selection, and all human behaviour can be explained in terms of

genetics and neuroscience (Dennett, 1995). The world is a fundamentally inanimate place, and human beings are nothing more than biological machines (Dawkins, 1976). Inevitably, when people make value judgements based on this worldview, these tend to be very bleak – for example, that the universe is fundamentally is without purpose or direction, that life is fundamentally meaningless, that human beings are essentially selfish, and so on (Taylor, 2018).

However, the wakeful state shows us that the world is *not* an inanimate place, that matter is not the only reality, that life is not meaningless or purposeless, and that the universe is not indifferent to us. It tells us that consciousness is not just produced by the brain, but is a fundamental quality of the universe which becomes channeled into our own individual being (Forman, 1998; Taylor, 2020b). It tells us that we are not isolated individuals but share the same spiritual essence as every other living being, every object, and the whole universe itself. It reveals to us that there is meaning to life – a meaning which cannot necessarily be explained (at least not directly) but which can certainly be sensed. We can look above us at the sky and sense something benevolent in it, a harmonious atmosphere. We can walk outside and sense a meaning filling the landscape around us, emanating from the trees and fields. We can sense an energy flowing between us and other people, as a radiant connectedness, a sense of warmth and love. We can sense this spiritual energy inside us, as the radiant, blissful nature of our deepest being. Wakefulness reveals to us that the fundamental nature of reality is harmony, meaning and love.

However, a sceptic might argue that the wakeful vision of the world just a different perspective, which has no more validity than the sleep perspective. How can one perspective be more true than another?

The important point here is that the worldview of wakefulness is based on a *more intense* awareness of reality. It comes from an opening and an expansion of awareness, and a falling away of the mechanisms which normally restrict or dilute our awareness. It stems from an intensification of perceptual awareness – in the sense that the world around us becomes more vivid and real – and an expansion of *conceptual* awareness, in the sense that our sense of perspective becomes wider and more universal. The worldview of the wakeful state is therefore more

valid in the same way that a detailed, panoramic view of a landscape is more valid and true than a blurred view through a narrow perspective.

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Using Gratitude to Increase Well-Being

Sheena Necole McMahon, MS, PhD(c)

Psychology professor at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in the Human Factors and Behavioral Neurobiology and Transpersonal Psychology PhD(c) student at California Institute for Integral Studies.

ABSTRACT

Many people are seeking ways to live a happier and more fulfilling life. There is a plethora of books, articles, and expensive workshops about how to be happy. One quick, easy, and free way to improve happiness and overall well-being is to practice gratitude. Practicing gratitude only takes minutes to do but it has lasting effects. This paper offers definitions for both gratitude and well-being, reviews current literature, and gives a critical analysis of two recent studies. In addition, this paper explains how gratitude and well-being are measured, offers various ways to practice gratitude, and states why gratitude and well-being are important.

KEY WORDS

Happiness, well-being, gratitude, satisfaction, affect.

Emmons and Crumpler (2000) define gratitude as "an emotional state and an attitude toward life that is a source of human strength in enhancing one's personal and relational well-being" (p. 1). Throughout history many religions have viewed gratitude as fundamental to well-being (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000) however, the study of gratitude has largely been neglected until the recent emergence of positive psychology. Traditionally psychology has focused more on what is wrong with humans (such as mental disorders) as opposed to the more positive aspects such as, gratitude and well-being (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001). Grateful people have been shown to have more positive views of their social environments, they utilize productive coping skills, report better sleep, and focus on the positive in their lives with greater appreciation which are all elements of well-being (Wood, Maltby, Stewart, Linley, & Joseph, 2008). Gratitude also breeds mindfulness. Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005) found that both feeling and expressing gratitude can help shift focus back to the present moment. It also helps to shift their attention to appreciation instead of want. One element of well-being is a feeling of contentment. By shifting from want to contentment well-being is increased. In addition, Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) state that cultivating gratitude could help avoid the desire to own more and more possessions by ensuring daily appreciation of events and material objects Fostering gratitude also increasing well-being by creating positive emotions such as joy, love, and reduces negative emotions such as anxiety and depression.

In order to study gratitude and well-being data is collected from a variety of scales. According to Emmons (2003) two of the most common and accurate assessments are the Gratitude Questionnaire-Six-Item Form (GQ-6) and the Gratitude Resentment and Appreciation Test (GRAT). The GQ-6 is a six question, self-report survey that assess one's disposition to experience gratitude. The participant rates each question with a number from one to seven (1 =strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree). Two items are reverse scored to avoid bias. The survey is positively related to life satisfaction, forgiveness, empathy, optimism, hope, spirituality, prosocial behavior, and optimism. It is negatively related to anxiety, depression, envy, and materialism. The Gratitude Resentment and Appreciation Test or

GRAT is another way to gage gratitude. The GRAT is a 44 item self-report survey that includes three factors: abundance, simple appreciation, and appreciation for others. There is also a revised 16 item version. On the 16 item survey participants are asked to assign a number value to each response. (1=strongly disagree and 7 strongly agree). The revised survey also includes a nine item GRAT Short Form. In a study by Emmons (2003) both measures were shown to have good reliability and validity.

Emmons and McCullough (2003) believe there could be a strong correlation between gratitude and well-being. Well-being can be broken down in several ways and include various elements. Seligman, a prominent researcher in positive psychology describes wellbeing as five separate elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement. In addition, well-being could include better sleep quality (Wood, 2009), increased physical exercise, optimism, life satisfaction, decreased negative affect, and a positive self-image (Froh, 2008). In psychology well-being can be broken down into subjective well-being (SWB) and psychological well-being (PWB). Aristotle was the first to make the distinction between SWB and PWB when he proposed that well-being can be broken up into hedonistic and eudemonic components. The hedonistic component includes the experience of momentary pleasure.

Eudemonic well-being is acting in a way which is constructive, socially beneficial, and leads to personal growth (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In more recent studies (since 2001) the hedonistic element is often referred to as subjective well-being (SWB) which also includes an experience of positive affect, a rare experience of negative affect, and a feeling of satisfaction (Diener, 1984). On the other hand psychological well-being (PWB) includes the more eudemonic elements such as positive relationships with others, personal growth, self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and autonomy. (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Increasing well-being can lead to a happier and more fulfilling life. Gratitude can increase well-being by improving some or all of these elements.

In order to study, compare, and determine the relationship between gratitude and well-being various assessments are given to participants. A common measurement tool to study well-being is the Subjective Happiness

Scale (SHS). The SHS, developed by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999), uses an absolute rating from one to seven (1=not very happy to 7=more happy). In addition, one of the questions on the scale asks for a happiness rating relative to peers and two other questions give brief descriptions of happy and unhappy people. After the brief description participants are asked to rate which one describes them (1 being not at all and 7 being a great deal). The Responses to Positive Affect Questionnaire or RPA-Q (Feldman, 2008) may also be used when testing well-being. The RPA-Q is a 17 question self-report survey that focuses on three main factors: self-focused savoring, emotion-focused savoring, and dampening. The purpose of the questionnaire is to assess how participants react to positive responses verses negative responses. Participants are asked to rate each question using a scale from one to four (1=almost never, 4=almost always). Wood, Joseph, and Maltby (2009) were the first to study the connection between PWB and gratitude.

Wood et al. (2009) examined 201 undergraduate students (128 females and 73 males) to assess whether gratitude predicts psychological well-being (PWB). Participant's ages ranged from 18-26 and ethnicity was predominantly white (75%) or Indian (13%). Participants were instructed to visit a secure university website to complete the questionnaires. Data were collected using the gratitude questionnaire-6 (GQ-6: McCullough et al., 2002) to measure gratitude and PWB was measured with the 18-item scales of psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Elements of the participant's personality were also assessed such as extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness, and conscientiousness referred to as the "Big Five" (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Domains and facets of the Big Five were measured with the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The results of the study suggested that gratitude was an important predictor of PWB. Results also showed that gratitude was positively correlated with certain facets of the Big Five such as extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. There was a negative correlation between gratitude and neuroticism. In addition, gratitude improved aspects of overall well-being such as: the prediction of personal growth, purpose in life, self-acceptance, and positive relationships.

While the Wood et al. (2009) study does make a sizeable contribution

to the study of gratitude and PWB it has its limitations. The study focuses only on psychological well-being and does not include subjective well-being. The study also relied mainly on self-report which is often unreliable and only examined undergraduate students. Moreover, the results cannot be generalized to the general population being that the ethnicity of the participants were only Caucasian and Indian. In future studies other aspects of personality and PWD should be studied to see how gratitude correlates. The researchers assumed that gratitude is a predictor of PWD when it could be that PWD is a predictor of gratitude. Gratitude could also be considered an aspect of personality instead of an affective trait or an emotional state. More research needs to be done to include various cultures, ages, and races so that results could be generalized. In addition, more research is needed on the different kinds of gratitude (such as transpersonal gratitude which is gratitude felt towards a higher power) to see which affects PWD and how. Furthermore, there should be a distinction made between feeling gratitude and expressing gratitude.

One of the most respected gratitude researchers, Emmons (2003) published a study with his colleague McCullough (2003) that examined the effects of writing gratitude diaries. The participants were 201 (147 women, 54 men) undergraduate students. The students were separated into three groups, each group kept a weekly journal for 10 weeks. The first group recorded up to 5 things that they were grateful for (blessings), the second group recorded hassles and annoyances, and the third group recorded neutral events. After the 10 weeks the students were given various surveys examining physical symptoms, reactions to aid, and global appraisal (the way participants see the world). The results showed that the gratitude group did report feeling more positive about their lives in general, they reported fewer physical ailments, were more optimistic about the upcoming week, and spent more time exercising (as opposed to the other two groups). However, keeping the journal did not lead to a more positive affect as the researchers hypothesized.

Although Emmons' (2003) study does suggest that gratitude can improve elements of well-being such as feeling more optimistic about the upcoming week and exercising it does not demonstrate that gratitude leads to an overall sense of well-being and

positive affect. Only recording what participants were grateful for once a week may not have been enough to see the results the researchers anticipated. Emmons (2003) speculated that if the students kept daily dairies there may have been a stronger correlation. Also, most of the participants were women. It would be interesting to see if the results would be the same if the study was conducted with an equal number and men and women. Furthermore, the studies above use undergraduate students as their sole participants. There may be a difference in results if the study was conducted with a larger age range. It could lead to a better understanding of well-being in general and determine whether well-being increases with age. If well-being did increase over time gratitude could be measured to see if the reason for the increase is that we also become more grateful as people age.

In addition to the associations between gratitude and well-being mentioned above several researchers have examined particular facets of this relationship. Verduyn (2007) conducted 2 studies in which he attempted to explain the variability in the duration of emotional experience. Participants were asked to report the duration of fear, anger, joy,

gratitude, and sadness that they felt on a daily basis. From these studies Verduyn (2007) found that "state, or current, gratitude could be enhanced by the importance of the stimulus, by the intensity of the emotion at onset, and through the physical or mental reappearance of the eliciting stimulus" (p. 1). Consequently, the more important and the intense the stimulus was to the participant the more gratitude they felt. This could suggest that if the stimulus had little meaning to the participant they did not feel as much gratitude for it and therefore it would not increase well-being. The stimulus would need to be something they cared about deeply in order to increase well-being. Wood (2009) was the first to conduct research on gratitude related to sleep. Wood (2009) preformed a cross-sectional questionnaire study in a community sample (186 males, 215 females ranging in age from 18-68 years old). The measures included gratitude, sleep quality, pre-sleep cognitions, social desirability, and scales of the Big Five personality traits. Wood's (2009) results showed that gratitude predicted greater subjective sleep (both quality and duration), less sleep latency, and less daily dysfunction. All of which led to

a greater sense of well-being. Gysels (2008) conducted a study among cancer patients and determined that gratitude was one of the highest motivators behind participating in a palliative care research study. In other words the more grateful they were the more likely they were to participant. In addition, Froh (2008) studied 221 early adolescents and determined that participants with lower levels of positive feelings were more likely to experience gratitude in a gratitude intervention. He also found that counting your blessings was associated with increased optimism, life satisfaction, and a decreased negative affect (which are all elements of well-being). In addition, Froh (2008) found a significant relationship between gratitude and satisfaction with school experience.

Lastly, Polak and McCullough (2008) found that gratitude may have the potential to reduce the negative effects of materialistic strivings. One of the factors of well-being is a sense of contentment and which striving for less material items could create.

Practicing gratitude to increase well-being could be used as an intervention in a clinical setting as well. Some researchers such as, Geraghty (2010) report that certain gratitude practices such as, making a gratitude list (things and/or people that you are currently grateful for) could help cognitive restructuring in regards to patients with a negative body image. This reconstruction could lead to a more positive body imagine and a more positive self-image in general (which is an element of well-being). Other researchers such as Clark and Watson (1991) suggest that practicing gratitude could increase positive emotional experiences and therefore may be helpful to patients exhibiting depressive symptoms (because they tend to have a deficit in positive affect). A decrease in depressive symptoms is an element of well-being as well as positive emotional experiences. Patients with depressive disorders may also experience negative beliefs about themselves, the world, and their future which gratitude practices have been shown to improve (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979). Being that positive beliefs about themselves and the world are both elements of well-being patients could see an increase in that area as well.

Even though many of the studies mentioned indicate a correlation between gratitude and well-being, not all researchers agree about the association. For example, Kashdan

(2006) investigated whether gratitude predicted daily hedonic and eudemonic well-being in combat veterans with and without post-traumatic stress disorder. Kashdan (2006) found that veterans with PTSD, compared to those without, exhibited significantly lower gratitude. Kashdan (2006) also found that gratitude predicted a greater daily positive affect, a higher percentage of pleasant days over the assessment period, and increased self-esteem in the veteran group with PTSD but not in the group without. From these findings Kashdan (2006) concluded that hat gratitude was positively correlated with well-being among the veterans with PSTD (but not among the veterans without PTSD). These results suggest that more research on the relationship between gratitude and well-being needs to be done on trauma victims in particular. Kirgiz (2008) conducted a study in college students in which he compared a gratitude exercise such as writing a letter to someone who made a positive impact in the participant's lives with a neutral emotional practice. He found that levels of gratitude did not relate to overall well-being at all. Henrie (2007) conducted a study among divorced middle-aged women in which he compared those

who kept a gratitude journal versus those who just read educational materials and those on a waitlist (control group). None of the groups showed a significant improvement in their overall life satisfaction. Furthermore, Ozimkowski (2008) looked at the effects of a "gratitude visit". He categorized a "gratitude visit" as writing a thank you letter to a loved one and delivering it. Ozimkowski (2008) concluded that the gratitude exercise was not related to an enhanced sense of well-being. These findings indicate that we do not yet fully understand the relationship between gratitude and well-being and that there are other components involved in this correlation that need to be studied further.

Examining different gratitude practices in different populations could lead to a better understanding of what the most effective practice for increasing well-being is and who it works best for. There are many ways to practice gratitude to improve well-being. The simplest way is just to notice all of the good things you have in your life from moment to moment. Another way to practice gratitude is to keep a gratitude journal (similar to the study above) in which you record one or more things you are

grateful for on a daily basis. You could also use gratitude to reframe your thoughts in a more positive way. For example, instead of being upset that you have to go to work think of how nice it is that you have a job and that it allows you to provide for yourself. In addition, you could write a thank you note to someone or tell a loved one how grateful you are to have them in your life. Furthermore, a gratitude meditation is a good way to practice both gratitude and mindfulness.

According to the evidence presented in this paper adopting a daily gratitude practice is one of the quickest and easiest ways to increase quality of life by increasing elements of well-being. Just by thinking about things to be grateful for, thanking and expressing gratitude to others, and/or keeping a daily gratitude journal optimism, social relationships, resilience through the use of productive coping skills, and emotional well-being could improve (Wood, Maltby, Stewart, Linley, & Joseph, 2008). Increasing gratitude and therefore increasing well-being is beneficial because research indicates that people who have an increased sense of emotional wellbeing are more productive, learn more, and earn more money (even after factoring out variables such as parents' income and

grades). Those with a higher level of well-being perform better in almost every job as well (with the exception of law), and are more successful in sports (Barrick & Mount, 1991). In addition, emotional health and well-being are predictors of physical health and therefore could also predict longevity. Increased well-being can lead to a sense of optimism and optimists have been shown to live eight to nine years longer than pessimists (Rius-Ottenheim et al, 20011).

Given the evidence stated in this paper adopting a gratitude practice does seem to be beneficial in many areas especially for increasing well-being. However, it is also important to note that not only gratitude but other factors as well contribute to one's overall well-being. And that the stimulus the participant is grateful for must have meaning to them in order to increase well-being. The more meaning and importance it holds, the more grateful they feel, and the more well-being is increased (Verduyn, 2007). In addition, various populations such as trauma victims and children (as well as different races and ethnicities) need to be studied further to determine if the correlation is limited to a certain group or if they can be generalized to the general

population. Additionally, more follow-up research should be conducted in order to see if the results of using gratitude to increase well-being are only temporary or long lasting.

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Elías Capriles' *The Beyond Mind Papers*: *transpersonal/integral philosophy and psychology, and philosophy and psychology of Awakening*

by Isabel Bertelsen
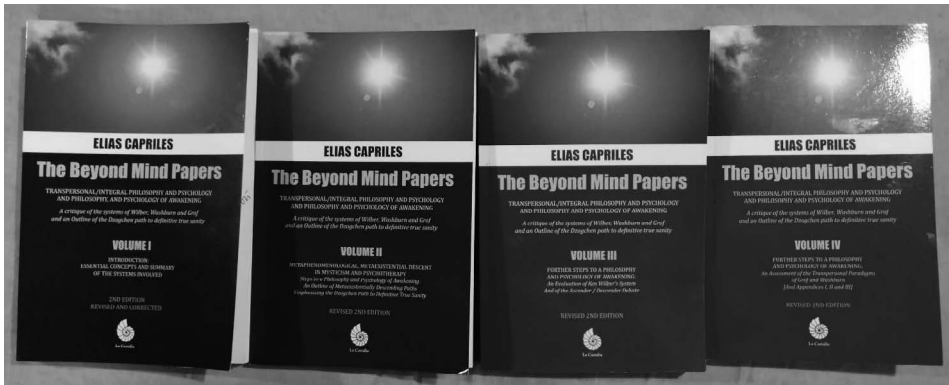
Elias Capriles's acclaimed *The Beyond Mind Papers* has been republished in a revised and corrected version. The book in question is on its way to become a classic, both regarding the process of Awakening, and with respect to transpersonal and integral psychologies and philosophies.

Capriles shows some of the most influential, leading theorists of the transpersonal and integral movements to have failed in properly discriminating among: (1) different kinds of transpersonal and holotropic states; (2) the diverging effects of those different kinds of states in the individual; and (3) among views of what "true sanity" would be. In particular, he makes the reader aware of the ways in which most of those theorists misconceived and misrepresented the Path and the psychotherapies leading to such genuine sanity.

Drawing from the Dzogchen teachings, on the basis of his own intensive practice of those teachings since the mid 1970s, his experience with avant-garde psychotherapies (including his establishment and management of spiritual emergency refuges in India and Nepal in the early and mid 1970s), and his profound knowledge of Western philosophy, Capriles developed what initially he called a "metatranspersonal philosophy and psychology", and which now he has rechristened a "philosophy and psychology of Awakening".

In spite of his own engagement with the Dzogchen teachings, throughout the book Capriles illustrates his views with citations from Sufism, Shaivism, Taoism, Kabbalah, and sayings of South American so-called "shamanism" — showing some forms of these teachings to be representatives of what he now calls a "philosophy and psychology of Awakening", and other forms of the same traditions as deviating from the authentic Paths of Awakening. In the Introduction he writes:

> The terms Awakening theory / philosophy and psychology of Awakening, rather than designating a wholly new theory produced by conceptual, deluded mind, refer to the views that spontaneously issue from the Realization or Fruit of authentic spiritual Paths, as expedient means for leading humans from the regretful, distressful and detrimental cyclic condition called *saṃsāra* to the absolute freedom and plenitude of supreme, nonstatic *nirvāṇa*—their expedient nature owing to the fact that the condition from which they issue is characterized by freedom from adherence to views, on the one hand, and the
> capacity to put forward whichever views may lead to freedom from delusion (and hence from adherence to views), on the other. The term thus applies to the teachings of the higher and most authentic forms of Buddhism, Taoism, Bön, Śaivism, Ṣūfīsm and Kabbalah, among other systems, and the most genuine mystic teachings within Christianity—all of which, as all other forms of Awakening theory, were conceived as a basis for genuine Awakening practice and would make no sense and be useless in the absence of the latter.
>
> The reason why I "adjectify" the noun Awakening to refer to the systems in question is that, when the varieties of theory and practice subsumed under the labels 'transpersonal' and 'integral' are assessed from the perspective of such systems (and in particular from those of the higher forms of Buddhism, and especially from that of Dzogchen), in most of them grave pitfalls and shortcomings are detected that may be validly related to the etymology of that label. Among these, at this point it should suffice to mention the prevalent failure to distinguish among transpersonal and holotropic states that are instances of *nirvāṇa*, transpersonal and holotropic states within *saṃsāra*, and transpersonal and holotropic states which belong neither to active *saṃsāra* nor to *nirvāṇa* and which are instances of the

neutral condition of the base-of-all or kunzhi lungmaten, and to rightly appraise these three radically different kinds of states— which has led most transpersonal theorists to wrongly view all of them as means to achieve genuine sanity, and thus to blur the difference between the authentic Paths of Awakening and their counterfeits. What I call Awakening systems, on the other hand, rather than indistinctly treasuring all transpersonal and holotropic states, on the basis of a sound discrimination of the sign and value of transpersonal states, prize and employ as a Path to genuine sanity only the conditions that pertain to *nirvāṇa*— and though they may also induce samsaric and neither-samsaric-nonnirvanic states, they do so only if and when it is expedient to use them as a platform for the manifestation of *nirvāṇa*, or when other circumstances make it necessary.

Among those who currently apply to their own systems the label "transpersonal", the leading theorists are widely acknowledged to be Stan Grof — Founding President of the International Transpersonal Association — and Michael Washburn. Ken Wilber, for his part, was considered a leading transpersonal theorist until, in the 1980s, he stopped characterizing his thought as "transpersonal" and began labeling it as "integral". However, since Wilber continued to be mainly concerned with transpersonal states and their role in achieving what he deems to constitute genuine sanity, and since, like most transpersonal theorists, he continued to fail to properly ascertain the signs and values of the different transpersonal states and to incur in what this book denounces as errors common among transpersonal theorists, I continue to class him as a "leading transpersonal theorist".

The Awakening theory I expound in this and other works is based on my personal practice of the higher forms of Tibetan Buddhism— and most especially of Dzogchen Atiyoga, which I set out to apply in the 1970s, having done so from 1977 through 1983 mostly in strict retreat in cabins and caves in the higher Himalayas, and thereafter as far as possible in everyday life (occasionally refreshing the practice in short retreats). However, the theory in question is not a mere repetition of the teachings of the higher forms of Buddhism in general and of Dzogchen in particular, as it includes a sizeable quantity of concepts and explanations arisen from the standpoint of the latter in response to the disparate views of different Western philosophers, psychologists and theorists

of other fields—and, in the case of the papers contained in this book, especially in response to the distortions I perceived in the above-mentioned leading transpersonal theorists. Moreover, it incorporates what my experience in running spiritual emergency refuges in Goa (India) and Svayaṃbhū (Nepal) in the mid 1970s taught me about so-called psychotic and psychotomimetic states.

The original edition of this four-tome book was published in December, 2013, and quickly received enthusiastic endorsements from personalities in the transpersonal scene. Some of the endorsements written for the original edition were:

"The human brain evolved not to find truth but to attribute meaning. This, in itself, was a remarkable achievement. However, the contemplative traditions have endeavored to take humanity a step further than mental projections, leading to what is often called 'the awakening' or 'enlightenment.' In recent years, Dzogchen Buddhism has been adopted by many Western writers as the apotheosis of this endeavor. However, their background has not enabled them to appreciate the subtleties of the Dzogchen writings, and a number of errors have slipped into their articles and books. This remarkable manuscript corrects these mistakes and presents the Dzogchen insights in reader-friendly English that will instruct and inspire its readers. Its importance cannot be underestimated. Indeed, it is destined to become a classic guide to spiritual development".

—STANLEY KRIPPNER, PH.D., ALAN WATTS PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY, SAYBROOK UNIVERSITY; CO-AUTHOR, *A PSYCHIATRIST IN PARADISE: TREATING MENTAL LLLNESS IN BALI*; AND ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN AND MOST HONORED TRANSPERSONALISTS

"I can't pretend to understand all of what Professor Elias Capriles has written in these magnificent four volumes. The parts that I can understand are absolutely brilliant and right on target. The parts that I can't understand have a strange effect on me. I start reading them, and tend to go off in a trance-like state, after which I have little remembrance of what I've read, but I feel it to be some of the most profound writings I've ever encountered, something that I am not yet ready to grasp, but which beckons me. My own hope is that my boundaries will expand to increasingly be able to receive the wisdom I intuitively feel contained in the parts of these that

I am yet unable to grasp, while the parts that I am able to grasp are extremely helpful to my scholarship and life. I have the utmost appreciation for the rare combination of impeccable scholarship and lived wisdom that Capriles has shared".

—Harris L. Friedman, Ph.D., Professor (retired), Counseling Psychology Program, University of Florida;
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Senior Editor, *lnternational Journal of Transpersonal Studies*;
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"Collectively, these works display a breadth of content and complexity of discourse that is rarely seen in modern scholarship. In these volumes, Capriles presents us with an immense erudition, one which reflects his achievements on the Dzogchen spiritual path and his emergent understanding of the implications of these achievements for the present and future of transpersonal psychology. A challenging but exhilarating adventure for any readers interested in existential,
humanistic, and/or transpersonal psychologies and their intersection with Dzogchen philosophy and practice".

—Douglas A. MacDonald, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Detroit Mercy;
Editor Emeritus, *lnternational Journal of Transpersonal Studies*;
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"Professor Capriles brings to his contribution to transpersonal psychology a formidable level of insight born of his intensive involvement with Buddhism. These volumes exemplify precisely the direction in which I for one would like to see transpersonal psychology grow: Capriles articulates profoundly innovative ideas about the nature of mind and transformational processes through a solid grasp of the insights from a specific religious tradition. It is rare indeed to find a writer who is able to comment on the works of key thinkers in transpersonal psychology from a position of such mastery".

—LES LANCASTER, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF TRANSPERSONAL
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We may or may not agree with Capriles in his enthusiastic presentation of what he calls a "philosophy and psychology of Awakening", or in his criticisms of the leading luminaries of transpersonal and integral psychology and philosophy, but there can be no doubt that reading this book will illuminate both the personal spiritual practice, and the professional approach to psychotherapy, of whoever unprejudicedly reads the four volumes of this monumental work.

***The books* are available with Amazon at the URL
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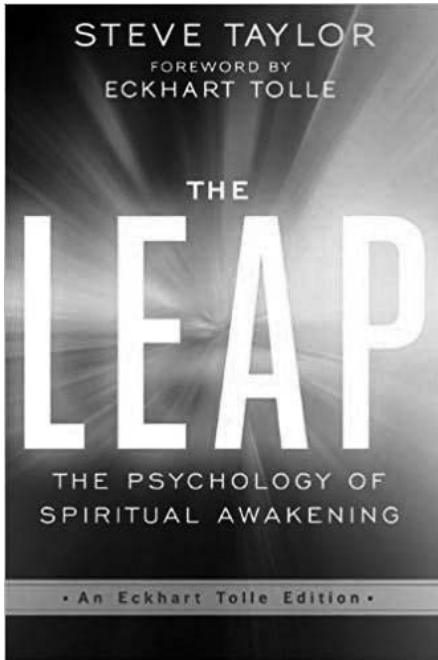
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