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**European Transpersonal Association**  
**(EUROTAS)**  
Heimbachweg 1 A  
D – 79299 Wittnau  
GERMANY

**Centro para una psicología de la consciencia**  
**(OXIGEME)**  
Vicente Ferrer, 16  
28004 Madrid  
SPAIN

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# **Folk Healing, Spirituality and Official Mental Health Sphere in Kyrgyzstan: The Experience of Living Together Being Different.**

Sanación Popular, Espiritualidad y Salud Mental Oficial  
en Kirguistán: La Experiencia de la Convivencia en la Diferencia

**Elena Molchanova\***

American University of Central Asia  
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

## **Abstract**

Kyrgyzstan is a country where folk healing, Islam, and the official mental health system exist together in the society, allowing the people to choose among a variety of professions and methods to solve their different health problems. This article provides a short explanation of the three methods, particularly the folk healing, and the interrelation of the three methods. Problems and solutions for these interrelations are also included.

## **Key Words**

Kyrgyzstan, Shamanism, Psychopathology, Mental Health

## **Resumen**

Kirguistán es un país en el que actualmente todavía conviven la medicina tradicional con la medicina ancestral del pueblo kirguis. Por medicina tradicional (oficial) se entiende la medicina académica y occidental. Por la ancestral se entiende la originaria del chamanismo, influida posteriormente por el Islam. En este artículo se explica fundamentalmente en qué consiste la medicina ancestral, y cómo ésta se relaciona con la medicina tradicional y la religión oficial del país; el Islam. Se comentan algunos problemas existentes en este campo por dicha conjunción, así como algunas ideas para su solución.

## **Palabras Clave**

Kirguistán, Chamanismo, Psicopatología, Salud Mental

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There are two quite different streams of epistemological assumptions of psychotherapy and counseling in Kyrgyzstan: the first is closely connected with traditional healing practice and is referred to as “natural Kyrgyz folk psychotherapy”; the second is recognized by the official government and is rooted in universities and training academies and has its origins in Soviet and now Russian psychotherapy, which is less popular than folk psychotherapy among Kyrgyz people.

One of the main challenges for specialists in psychology and counseling is the prestige of folk healing in Kyrgyzstan. For example, 89% of patients who visit the Psychotherapeutic clinic and approximately 100% of patients in the other mental health wards of the Kyrgyz Republic Center of Mental Health have met with traditional healers prior to seeking psychotherapy (Molchanova & Aitpaeva, 2008). Official Kyrgyz medical organizations try to discourage access to traditional healers by portraying “shamanism” as negative in the mass media, but statistical data show this to be ineffective: the number of traditional palm readers in the Issyk-Kul and Talas sacred sites has doubled since 2005 and psychological problems have been the main reasons cited by individuals seeking help (Molchanova & Aitpaeva, 2008).

Folk healing is so embedded in the culture and appears so natural that its effectiveness does not require any proof or scientific explanation; people just *believe* the methods of folk healers. Belief in folk healing is supported by the apparent positive effects of healing therapies at *mazars* (sacred sites), described in oral histories of miraculous healings. Shared beliefs about the world, passed on through myths and oral histories, are typical ways of perceiving reality among Kyrgyz people and inform social attitudes and behaviors.

A unique combination of ancient beliefs and Islam is a characteristic feature of contemporary spiritual life in Kyrgyzstan (Light, 2008). Religious ideas of the ancient Middle East penetrated deep into Central Asia and significantly influenced Siberian and Central Asian shamanism, contributing to its contemporary practice. With the arrival of Islam as the main religion in Central Asia, the peoples of Kyrgyzstan chose to merge the two influences; there was a fusion of the official religious ideological system of Islam with local pagan religious philosophical systems. The overwhelming majority of rural Kyrgyz people and spiritual leaders consider themselves Muslims although they also practice a shamanistic spiritual life. This type of blended Islam with shamanism is typical and widespread in Kyrgyzstan, but not commonly recognized or acknowledged. Current Islamic leaders, however, consider this type of Islam “impure”.

Traditional healing in Kyrgyzstan is very heterogeneous. It includes ancient Turkic beliefs of shamanism within the traditional spiritual practices of *Umai-Ene* (Mother), *Khan-Tegri* (Father), a daemonic being of *Albarsta*, worshiping spirits of predecessors and their mazars, and fetishization (worshiping) of traditional objects. The Kyrgyz continue to have some religious beliefs specific to paganism. Rites, rituals, and relics from prehistoric times as well as elements of totemism, animism, and shamanism are still preserved in Kyrgyz traditional culture. To this day, there are several types of healers, practicing at mazars (Adylov, 2008).

A *Kuuchu*, which literally means “the one who chases away”, is similar to a shaman in their shared use of rituals. Shamans are able to communicate with spirits by using altered states of consciousness to enter a “different” reality of the spirits. The ancient *Kuuchu* was a combination of a pagan (priest) and a doctor (daryger), but unlike a shaman, a *Kuuchu* did not differ from other members of society in the clothes he wore or in his daily activities. Yet, the *Kuuchu* was required to wear white clothing to be able to fully communicate with spirits during rituals. The *Kuuchus* are keepers of the Kyrgyz shamanistic traditions and are subdivided into “white”, associated in traditional Kyrgyz culture with purity, high status and good health, and black, which does not have positive associations. The *Kuuchus* use a variety of symbols in their work. Stripes and pendants symbolize an image of the *arbak*, the protector. Pendants in the form of tails (*candoleck*) symbolize a strong mythical beast resembling a bear. A knife or a *kamcha* (whip) are symbols of protection from evil spirits. The *Kuuchu* set rhythms during collective magic rituals with an *asataiyak* – a special stick, symbolizing life. Different household items and foods symbolize change. *Kuuchus* are rare and live almost exclusively in rural areas.

*Bakshy* consider healing to be their main profession; they are religious men and women who observe all rites and teachings of Islam. Like the *Kuuchu*, *Bakshy* men wear white robes with long sleeves that cover the body and use an *asataiyak*, however, they also have beards. Female patients frequently give presents like headscarves to *Bakshys* in appreciation for their healing power. When engaged in healing processes, a *Bakshy* must wear a long white robe, which is the traditional national style. Men frequently wear a white *tiubeteika* (an embroidered skull cap) even when wearing ordinary clothes, while women *Bakshy* wear white headscarves. At times they wear medical robes. Wandering *Bakshy* (*Duvana*) dress in old clothes, sometimes in rags. Like *Kuuchu*, *Bakshy* use oral folk stories, messages or poetry, develop their own style of language, and are known for skillfully introducing unique proverbs into their speech. These healers are believed to be endowed with eloquent poetic skills by the spirits. Many healers believe the first appearance of a spirit is indicated when a person gains the gift of poetic improvisation. Among the *Kyrgyz*, poetic talent is considered a gift endowed from above. By combining poetry and the knowledge of myths and healing folklore, *Bakshy* and *Kuuchu* shamans are skillful healers. Music and rhythm are important in healing rituals as well. The rhythm is set by an *asatayiak* and many healers play *kumuz*, which is a traditional three-stringed instrument. The healing process starts with calling for spirits, and music and motet (singing songs) are used.

Asian medical traditions, such as Chinese, Korean, Tibetan, and others strongly influenced the healing practices of the *Tabibs*. A *Tabob* (*Tabyb*) or *znahar'* (indicating doctor) is a healer who uses medication alongside traditional and Islamic cures and is able to heal dislocated bones and fractures using a diagnostic procedure based on testing the pulse. The *Tabobs* have their own classification of diseases ("cold and hot ones"), medications to cure them, as well as non-medicinal methods (such as acupuncture).

A *Kioz-achyk* ("the one who sees visions") is a clairvoyant man who is considered able to foresee the future, solve something from the past, and diagnose diseases. He works with people who are having difficulty making choices, who have been robbed, who struggle with interpersonal problems, and those who have been diagnosed with a disease or illness. *Kioz-achyk* engage in healing only on a part-time basis. Healers of this group are not considered by traditional healers to have as comprehensive a practice as *Bakshys* or *Tabibs*. Typically they have an "opening (disclosing)" by spirits during their sleep or in a trance with a more experienced healer, but they have insufficient knowledge of mythology and of the basics of pagan Turkic and Islamic traditions for interpretation. Some engage in new forms of practice, actively studying with more advanced healers, while others who may have completed training actively practice healing without sufficient experience and knowledge (Adylov, 2007). According to an ancient Turkic belief all healers possess an *arbak*, (the spirit of an ancestor) who perceives by using a third eye and "sees" human diseases.

The healing process goes in two directions – one is aimed at the patient, the second is aimed at the healer himself. It is not surprising that most frequently healers are the healthiest members of their community. A vital element of a healer's practice with a client is mysteriousness, which has several components. In the dyad "healer – patient", the former plays the role of the main source of information and emotional support, while the latter is in need and may be unsure and anxious. The healer reads prayers in Arabic, which are mysterious for *Kyrgyz* patients, whose language is *Kyrgyz*. The healer's use of mythology, talismans (*tumars*), special places of healing (e.g., *yurts*), and ritual costumes are common and may contribute to the placebo effect of folk psychotherapy.

Exorcisms take place with the use of hypnotization. A healer looks closely into the left eye of a patient. This method has been in practice for a long time and it helps the healer to concentrate completely on expressing particular phrases while watching the patient. Fixing the gaze of the patient on the bridge of the healer's nose produces the same effect. Experienced psychotherapists also use these methods when moving patients into trance. Other methods include fixing a patient's gaze on a burning candle, sparkling item or on beads, or having a patient maintain a certain pose. For the enhancement of hypnotic impact, a healer can apply touch.

Several cognitive models inform different views on psychopathology in Kyrgyzstan (Solojenkin, 1997). The first, a “natural model of reality,” includes belief in the interconnectedness of human beings with nature. Therefore, humans and nature are considered inseparable so if a separation appears to occur, the results are psychologically damaging. This model of reality includes a strong belief in the close connection between the health of Kyrgyz people and their spiritual practices. For example, talented poets, such as *akyn*, recite improvisational poetry while tellers (“*manaschi*”) of the ancient Kyrgyz epic “Manas”, the guardians of sacred sites, are considered able to connect to the unseen world through different states of consciousness and work within a sacred time (e.g., Thursdays are traditionally considered to be sacred days) marked by rituals and symbols. *Akyn*, *Manashi* and the guardians of sacred sites understand this work as a calling to accept a spiritual mission, which diverges from the modern rational understanding of reality embedded in contemporary Western counseling. According to many folk stories, people who do not accept their spiritual mission are afflicted with serious disorders or even death.

The “natural model” of reality also maintains the existence of a minimum of two worlds (Adylov, 2008). The first is our natural one, which is considered accessible to everyone. The second world is the reality of spirits (*arbaktar*) and only a few persons are able to communicate with them. Those persons have to exist between two realities and mediate communication between spirits and common people. According to these beliefs, psychopathology is the “result of a misunderstanding of the spirits’ demands”. For example, hypochondriasis is often interpreted as the spirit’s desire to help a person in the process of self-actualization and the spirits’ task is to bring the person around to the right way. In some cases the person with a conversion disorder is considered to be “punished” by the spirits or to have the “devil eye on him or her”. An initial psychotic episode is usually considered a “spiritual emergence” and a patient generally has to visit with a number of traditional healers before a psychiatrist takes care of him or her.

The mechanical model considers psychopathology a result of brain malfunction (Solojenkin, 1997). Diagnosing psychopathology in such cases is quite difficult due to the presence of alexithymia and a general denial of psychological problems. For example, depressive symptoms are considered laziness and people who believe in this model seldom become clients of a psychotherapist. The quality of memory is perceived to be the main sign of human psychic health or disability. Those who subscribe to the “mechanical model” of reality and struggle with memory problems prefer to seek the help of neurologists rather than psychotherapists.

A “distress-model” of psychopathology (Solojenkin, 1998) is often subscribed to by urban citizens in Kyrgyzstan. According to the “distress-model” psychopathological symptoms are the result of traumatic or stressful events in everyday life. People who believe this particular model often use psychological terminology to describe their conditions (i.e., stressful event, depression, anxiety). The common expression, “all disorders are due to feeling upset” highlights the root of psychopathological symptoms as resulting from stressful periods in life.

Client’s presenting problems, like languages, reflect cognitive structures in the human mind: what people consider to be psychological disorders or problems are closely related to what they are capable of understanding. Language structures are a way of thinking and perceiving the world (Sapir & Whorf, 1929/1984) so presenting problems are dependent on the available lexicon.

The Kyrgyz language reflects the history and the complexity of the Kyrgyz people. For instance, Kyrgyz people have more than 130 definitions of ages of horses, cattle and sheep, many definitions for weather, and a rich lexicon for defining family relationships and qualities of family members. Perhaps due to a history of manual labor, Kyrgyz people find it difficult to express emotional states in their own language. There are no equivalent words for “mood”, “depression”, or “anxiety” in Kyrgyz; all of these concepts are captured by “I feel badly” without any clear definition of what, where and why this sense of feeling badly is. This phenomenon can be considered a cultural alexithymia, a lack of ability to express emotions verbally (Sifneos, 1978/2005), and makes diagnosing mental disorders difficult.

In combination with the cognitive models of reality previously discussed, the help-seeking behavior of Kyrgyz individuals is quite predictable. The first (and often the last) person they would like to see is a

traditional healer. In some cases a traditional healer is the one person who can refer the client to a specialist in the mental health field. The types of psychological problems people present to traditional healers reflect the most important values of Kyrgyz society today (Aigine research center, 2007). The main cluster of problems is family difficulties; for example, complicated relationships between mothers and daughters in law, and infertility. Other presenting problems are alcohol-related or business failures. Somatic (or somatoform) symptoms often serve as the impetus for people to go to a traditional healer after receiving ineffective treatment from general medical specialists. Psychotic symptoms rarely send a person to visit a traditional healer. But, if there is a case, a qualified specialist in “natural folk medicine” usually advises a patient to see a mental health specialist. Based on a long term study of healers and their occupational activities, Adylov (2007) described the professional conduct of healers. The first and most important criterion is that healers refer to medical doctors if medical intervention is warranted.

The situation in official psychotherapy, however, is different. The usual client of a psychotherapist or counselor is an urban citizen who believes that he or she has a “psychological problem”. It’s important to say that this idea, so common in Western culture, has only recently become a part of our contemporary usage mainly due to the influence of mass media. Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, people rarely used terms such as “stress”, “frustration”, or “breakdown”. These terms were rare in Soviet culture. For example, the words of a very popular Soviet song states that a Soviet person should have “a fiery motor instead of heart”. In other words, to be depressed or anxious meant to have a weak will, which was abnormal and shameful. Understandably, during Soviet times, psychotherapists were the least likely choice for individuals with affective symptoms. Typically, help-seeking behavior included an initial visit to a medical doctor, then a neurologist, and then a medical specialist such as an endocrinologist or an oncologist. As the “last hope” an individual might seek out a healer followed by a psychotherapist when he or she believed, “I have nothing to lose”. Close relatives of a patient usually initiated visits to mental health specialists on behalf of the patient.

The situation has been changing during the last ten years. The terms “emotional stress”, “feelings”, “psychological problems” and even “intrapsychic conflict” have become more and more popular, and the professions of psychologist and psychotherapist are increasing in social prestige. Now there is a social need for qualified counselors, although a discrepancy exists between the client’s expectations that their problems will be immediately solved by hypnosis and the actual outcomes and goals of counseling.

Trends in the evolution of Kyrgyz psychotherapy and counseling make it possible to speculate about future developments which incorporate both Western and Eastern models of helping.

The first trend is the development of cognitive and eclectic approaches to counseling as integration between different branches of psychological counseling in modern Kyrgyzstan continues. The appearance of a new generation of Kyrgyz counselors with Western educational degrees facilitates connections with Western specialists in psychotherapy and their entry into world psychological societies. Therefore, Kyrgyz psychology will continue to be shaped by Western developments.

A second trend is the conflict over how to resolve the presence of two healing traditions. “Folk counseling” (traditional healing practice) and official psychology and psychotherapy are sometimes viewed as opposing poles of how mental phenomena are perceived and understood. A rapprochement of the two different perspectives has been considered problematic. There have been movements to render the official mental health service the dominant approach in Kyrgyz society and relegate traditional healing practice to the past. Given the popularity of traditional healing in Kyrgyzstan, however, this seems to be an impossible aim for the near future.

One of the ways of solving this problem is well known by the patients of the Republic Center of Public Health, who are typically comfortable seeking help from both doctors and traditional healers. They separate the cause of a disorder from its symptoms. The cause of the disorder is usually explained within the framework of a traditional mystical paradigm (for example as the disturbance of the connection between nature and man), so only a traditional healer is able to help with the initial suffering. The

symptoms of the disorder, however, continue even after a healer's intervention, thus necessitating the help of a mental health professional. Patients make sense of this by maintaining that the cause of their disorder is spiritual, but the medical practitioner or psychotherapist may be able to help with the "extracted roots" of the disorder. This compromise between folk and official psychotherapy is important in treatment for patients who find themselves in both worlds.

Another way of integrating the two is using the methods of traditional healers in scientific applications of mental health treatment. Milton Erickson's method of informational overload, for example, has its roots in Latin American "magic" techniques. This method is used by psychologists today and is considered to be effective. Inclusion of folk methods within contemporary psychotherapy requires comprehensive research of the treatment components of folk psychotherapy before they can be applied in official applications of psychotherapy. This method is far from ideal, however, because it removes a major component of the healing process, the mystical belief system of the healer and his or her healing rituals. For example, if a psychiatrist in a formal counseling session were to use the rhythmic knocks of an *asatayak* (special stick) in therapy, he or she may not be taken seriously.

Another possibility is to appreciate the positive aspects of "folk counseling" and to try to use them in contemporary mental health practice. For example, The Therapist –Spiritist Training Project in Puerto Rico. (Koss-Chioino, 2005) brings together two world views on healing: a traditional one, used by folk healers, and an official medical approach. One of the results of the project was the development of the emotional regulation mechanisms that are used during the interaction between a medium–healer and patient. This confluence of different perspectives on treatment resulted in a new system of training, far richer than the sum of its two parts and allowed for the preservation of both approaches in the healing process. This approach could lead to the dissolution of false borders between "natural" and "formal" counseling in Kyrgyzstan and create a culturally relevant form of helping for Kyrgyzstan.

Psychological counseling is a rather new branch of mental health service in Kyrgyzstan. During the cold war period Soviet academic psychology and Western psychotherapeutic approaches were developing separately. The concept of "psychological counseling" did not exist until the middle of the 1990s. The influence of the official Russian school on the one hand, and the prestige of traditional folk healing practice on the other, are creating a unique prototype of Kyrgyz psychological counseling, which is a product of both psychotherapy and traditional healing.

The integration of contemporary Kyrgyz helping methods with modern scientific applications dictates the development of new and progressive techniques of psychological help. For example, crisis phone lines, which are nonexistent in Kyrgyzstan, should be developed. Such new helping methods will require cooperation between Kyrgyz and Western health care specialists, who have greater experience in this area.

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\* **Elena Molchanova**, MD, is associate professor at psychology department of American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and counselling psychiatrist at Republic Center of Mental Health. The area of her research interests includes cultural psychology and psychiatry, cognitive psychology, and philosophy of science. She has more than 100 scientific publications both in Russian and English.  
E-mail: [molchanova\\_e@mail.auca.kg](mailto:molchanova_e@mail.auca.kg)

# Autoconciencia Histórica, Muerte y Formación: Una Introducción

Historical Self-Conscience,  
Death And Education: An Introduction

Agustín de la Herrán Gascón\*  
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid  
Madrid, Spain

## Resumen

Esta breve introducción define la autoconciencia histórica y su relación con la muerte, como conceptos investigables y relevantes para la educación y la formación.

## Palabras clave:

Autoconciencia histórica, Conciencia, Formación, Pedagogía, Didáctica

## Abstract

This introduction defines the history of self-conscience and explores its relationship to death. Both are viewed as valuable concepts, worthy of investigation in the formation of education regarding the dying process.

## Key words:

*Historical self-conscience, Consciousness, Formation, Pedagogy, Didactics*

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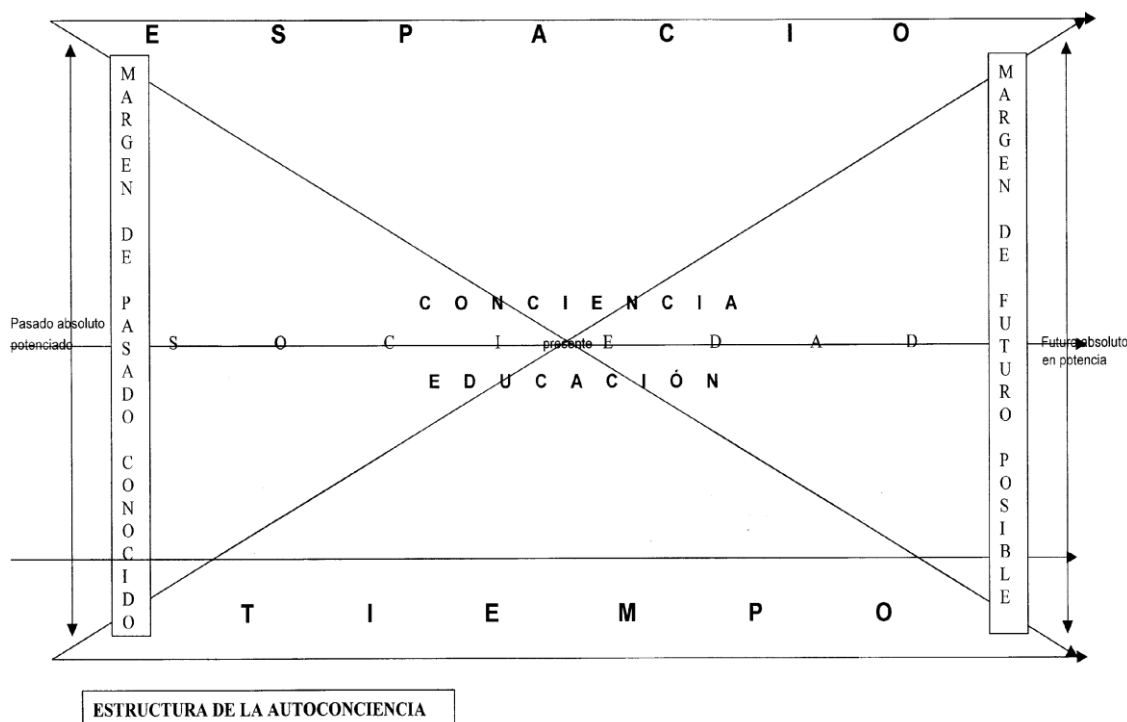
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## I

Todos podemos intuirnos más allá de las pequeñas coordenadas tiempoespaciales en que nuestra existencia sucede. Y todos estamos capacitados para hacerlo con cierto rigor. Decía M. Scheler, en “El porvenir del hombre”, que: “El sumo ideal del hombre contemporáneo es ya el hombre planetario, el todo-hombre, que contiene todas las posibilidades antropológicas. Se busca la Humanidad una, que no ha sido el punto de partida de la historia sino que es algún futuro que está en la dirección de la Meta del hombre”. Entre otras muchas intuiciones geniales y en un sentido semejante, Hegel desarrolló el concepto de “hombre total” como aquel que condensaba en sí todo lo pasado, y le proporcionaba conciencia y acción: “El mérito incomparable de Hegel es haber concebido al ‘hombre total’ como el que lleva en sí todo lo que las generaciones de hombres han creado, aprobado y concebido por medio de sus trabajos, sus luchas y su pensamiento (Garaudy).

## II

Desde esta perspectiva, educar puede comprenderse -como decía J. Martí- como “depositar en cada hombre toda la obra humana que le ha antecedido: es hacer a cada hombre resumen del mundo viviente, hasta el día en que vive: es ponerlo a nivel de su tiempo, para que flote sobre él, y no dejarlo debajo de su tiempo, con lo que no podrá salir a flote; es preparar al hombre para la vida”. Obviamente no se trata de simple acumulación reproductiva, sino de herencia consciente. Esta idea no se define sino por su orientación y por su proyecto, siempre más allá del egocentrismo y de lo comprendido como propio. La humanidad y su evolución posible aparecen aquí como referentes de pertenencia activa y anhelo, de sentimiento y de trabajo. Quizá por razones como éstas, el "Che" Guevara concluía en un escrito fechado en febrero de 1964 que, más allá de la dimensión social y temporal inmediata, “el hombre es el actor consciente de la historia”.



### III

Los planteamientos anteriores son naturales, intrínsecamente evolucionistas y, en cuanto a su proyección educativa, muy fértiles: poco hay más práctico que lo que orienta la interioridad del ser humano hacia la compleción desde la superación de egocentrismo colectivo y la complejidad de la conciencia. Y es que el ser humano es, por el hecho de serlo, un "ser histórico" y, por tanto, en este sentido, orientado a lo "total". Lo que ocurre es que no es autoconsciente de ello. Desde esta postura, podríamos considerar a cada persona como cúspide de la misma evolución, lo que confiere a cada ser un valor infinito: aparentemente insignificante pero insustituible. (Este fenómeno, desde luego, supera todo intento de bajar la cotización del ser humano, una pretensión –consciente o inconsciente– en el que algunos países poderosos parecen estar empeñados, empeñando a los demás.) La anterior razón se ajusta a la descripción de un fenómeno más que a una opinión. Diremos con el genial R. Eucken (1925) que: "El hombre es en esencia un ser superhistórico, y sólo se hace histórico en el desarrollo y la conquista de su propia esencia. Se forma últimamente menos por la historia que en la historia" (p. 163). Desde una actitud que calificaríamos como *teilhariana*, Paulo Freire escribía en su "Pedagogía del oprimido" sobre la vocación del ser humano para "ser más". Esta predisposición la anclaba en la percepción del hombre y de la mujer como seres históricos, en tanto que interminados, incompletos, inacabados o inconclusos. En un sentido semejante, F. Savater (1997) ha reflexionado que educar es completar la humanidad del neófito. Y, decimos nosotros: ¿Y quién no lo es? Ése es el valor de educar, que no solamente hay que orientar centripéticamente, sino lo más social y conscientemente posible. Ése es el valor de la educación.

### IV

Desde este hecho, se puede acceder a lo que el mismo P. Freire denominó, con motivo de la concesión del Doctorado Honoris Causa por la Universidad de San Luis, "experiencia de inconclusión", desde un punto de vista fértil y optimista. De ello se desprende automáticamente su sentido inherente: la curiosidad y la búsqueda esperanzada, determinada por esa misma incompleción. Así pues, para P. Freire (1996), la "experiencia de inacabamiento" justifica la condición histórica del ser humano y su motivación profunda por ser más. Y en esa conciencia crítica radica la educabilidad de las personas y la educación, como experiencia que califica de "autoconsciente" y específicamente humana. Con independencia de su mayor o menor conciencia de incompleción, ocurre que, permanentemente, estamos haciendo historia, que somos punta de flecha, vértice y vórtice de la historia en su conjunto, desde el presente continuo en que existimos. De cada quien depende la totalidad de la historia en cada instante, porque en cada momento todo se hace por nosotros:

*Los problemas del mundo se albergan ahora dentro del alma de los individuos, se lucha por el todo y a costa del todo, lo que sucede adquiere sentido por el todo, y lo particular deja de serlo. La vida individual consigue, así, una historia; la suerte del individuo tiene interés por sí misma, mientras que antes sólo la obra es lo que interesaba a la colectividad (R. Eucken, 1925).*

### V

*Cada generación, cada persona se da a su entorno sociotemporal, y sobre esa reflexiva donación orgánica, psíquica y noosférica, la evolución a sí misma se genera. El resultado del proceso es un continuo alumbramiento en el que nada se pierde: ni los hitos, ni las mínimas acciones, ni los pensamientos, ni siquiera lo que se deja por hacer. El conocimiento de la trascendencia se transforma así en penetración y en conciencia de la consecuencia de continuación. Lo explica K. Sekida (1995):*

*Cada acción deja su influencia sobre las acciones que la sucederán. El momento presente ha heredado todos los acontecimientos pasados que, sin ninguna omisión, nos han sido transmitidos por*

*incontables ciclos de existencia. En este sentido, este momento depende del pasado entero. Mira hacia el futuro, y este mirar hacia delante, causa, igualmente, una dependencia sobre el futuro (p.132)..*

*Si esa articulación se realiza consciente, solidaria y maduramente, ante él aparece algo muy diferente al sórdido y vulgar miedo a la muerte: su consideración y posible desarrollo educativo y didáctico como imperativo formativo: del tabú al crecimiento personal (A. de la Herrán, y M. Cortina, 2008). Porque, como decía M. Gascón (1998): "El objetivo de la vida no es la muerte, sino la trascendencia. Y trascender es entregar a los demás lo que cada ser humano pueda aportar al perfeccionamiento o mejoramiento de la humanidad. Por eso hay dos clases de vida: la vida que muere y la vida que trasciende y que nunca muere del todo" (comunicación personal).*

## VI

*Se deduce de todo lo anterior que, en este proceso construcción autoconsciente, es relevante la presencia de aquellos que murieron. Una parte insignificante pero insustituible de ellos seremos nosotros dentro de muy poco. A partir de aquí, podemos razonar así: una cosa es, como afirmaba W. Blake, "conducir la carreta y el arado por encima de los huesos de los muertos" (eso también lo hacen los grillos y las salamandras, sin pretenderlo), y otra muy distinta, como decía A. Einstein, "pensar mil veces al día que la propia vida, externa e interna, se basa en el trabajo de otros hombres, vivos o muertos". Cuando se es consciente de esto, la propia labor se transforma automáticamente en una tarea compartida, en un quehacer cooperativo que se origina y se proyecta más allá de nuestra vida concreta, una de cuyas fuentes de motivación es esa responsabilidad naturalmente heredada y por legar. Este modo de apercepción requiere de y puede ayudarnos a enfocar la vida más allá del ego individual y colectivo, quizá desde una conciencia transpersonal más y más compleja, hasta ser capaz de otorgar a la vida su justa importancia. Entonces, sólo entonces, puede experimentarse que: "El ser humano es un reflejo de la Consciencia Pura. Cuando uno disuelve su ego en la Consciencia, vivir o morir carece de importancia" (R.A. Calle, 1997, p. 164).*

## VII

Por tanto, la muerte es una necesidad fenoménica, en la medida en que todo el fenómeno humano, natural y cósmico se encuentra sumido en un proceso evolutivo permanente, cuyo sentido puede reconocerse, y que se desarrolla a través de ciclos relativos, muertes, renacimientos, renovaciones a escalas diferentes y complementarias. Dijo C. Cristos, el médico cuya muerte progresiva fue grabada por A. Pérez Canet (2006): "Me gusta pensar que sin la muerte todo nacimiento sería una tragedia". La muerte es una necesidad, no sólo como fenómeno (es imprescindible que la muerte de todo lo viviente se produzca, para que la vida continúe fluyendo y no se atasque), sino también como conocimiento. La muerte está relacionada con la necesidad de religión, de educación, de ciencia... mientras que partida dura, precisamente para mejorar las condiciones de vida (existencia y conciencia) de quienes en el momento presente juegan su partida. Siendo así, necesario será, para reconocer esa necesidad, que el conocimiento se sitúe en ese proceso evolutivo más amplio que las muertes concretas, y que realza su categoría comprensiva.

## CONCLUSIÓN

Como decía M. Gascón (1996), ocurre que no hay tema más "constante" e "indiferente" que la muerte. Quizá no sea el acto de morir lo que ocasione mayor rechazo, sino la indiferencia que conlleva:

*Por eso he pensado que toda muerte humana está inserta entre dos posibilidades o límites: el de la indiferencia, que la mayoría de las gentes no sabe cómo superar, y el de la trascendencia, con múltiples versiones, unas más seguras que otras, pero cuya certidumbre se alcanza cuando la vida humana tiene un objetivo calificable como trascendente. Y a mí me parece que no hay ninguno mejor que el de existir empujando o acelerando el proceso de evolución y mejoramiento de la VIDA HUMANA (comunicación personal).*

Si se percibe desde las coordenadas del presente familiar y social, lo anterior equivale a razonar como C. Cristos: “La leña se consume, pero a mí no me importa, si al arder da un buen fuego” (en A. Canet, 2006). Si se contempla desde las coordenadas de la evolución, cada muerte es un paso hacia una mayor evolución de la conciencia, con lo que, aunque dolorosa, no es negativa, y compone un continuo indiferenciado con la vida. A esta tesis responde la *perspectiva complejo-evolucionista* (A. de la Herrán, 2003). Desde esta perspectiva, el hecho es que el futuro de todos se agota poco a poco, porque la vida se renueva. Se acaba *nuestro* futuro, para que emerja *el futuro* siempre más humano, que se hace a sí mismo más y más consciente desde todos y de un modo irreversible. Consecuentemente, la Educación para la Muerte es, para nosotros, una rama esencial, de un árbol mayor, la Educación de la Conciencia (A. de la Herrán y M. Cortina, 2008), definitivamente transpersonal, compleja y evolutiva. Desde esta perspectiva quizá se pueda entrever una redefinición de la enseñanza y de la formación y desde aquí una fase novedosa pero no nueva de una Pedagogía y una Didáctica más autoconscientes en todos los sentidos, y por ende favorecedoras de una mayor autoconciencia formativa.

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**\*Agustín de la Herrán Gascón**, es doctor en pedagogía. Profesor Titular de Universidad del área de Didáctica y Organización Escolar en la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Es autor y coautor de cincuenta libros y ciento treinta artículos, que relacionan la Didáctica, la formación del profesorado, la evolución humana y la educación de la conciencia, desarrollados desde una perspectiva compleja y evolucionista. Coordina el Posgrado en Educación de la UAM, “Apuntes de Pedagogía”, del CDL de Madrid, y la revista “Tendencias Pedagógicas”. Ha recibido varios premios oficiales por su trayectoria académica e investigadora. Ha impartido numerosas conferencias en congresos nacionales e internacionales. [www.uam.es/agustin.delaherran](http://www.uam.es/agustin.delaherran)

# Developing Humans

## Humanos en Desarrollo

**Vitor Rodrigues\***

European Transpersonal Association  
Evora, Portugal

### Abstract

This article presents a broad view of human consciousness with the personal identity as its "visible face." This visible face is explored as the fundamental variable for defining humans, understanding human psychological development, and foreseeing a hopeful future for Humankind.

**Key words:** Development, Consciousness, Identity, Mirrors, Values

### Resumen

Este artículo presenta una amplia visión de la consciencia (e identidad como su cara visible) como la variable fundamental para definir a los humanos, entendiendo el desarrollo psicológico humano y previendo un futuro esperanzador para la condición humana.

**Palabras clave:** Desarrollo, Consciencia, Identidad, Espejos, Valores

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Human Development can be studied in several ways and it has been so for many decades. Demography, Geography, Anthropology, Biology, History, Sociology, Psychology – all of them have built broad perspectives on it. Each Scientific Discipline can contribute in a rather unique way both taking the view of phylogeny or ontology. Humanity is out there for some time now and we can study the development of individuals and of groups or societies. For the purposes of this article, however, we are more interested in Psychology.

Textbooks on Psychological development are widespread. Some will present specialized views on areas of Psychological development (Social, Cognitive, Psychomotor and so on) while others present a Life Span view, encompassing Biological, Social, Cognitive, Affective development, approached from several theoretical models with somehow different emphasis on the issue of Nature vs. Nurture as chief developmental influences and also different perspectives on the driving forces behind it (see for example Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2001; Berk, 2001 or Crain, 1992 for a good review of the major theories in the field). The usual idea is that we are intelligent organisms trying to adapt to, and survive in, our complex world. Biologically hardwired motivations will make us search for what we need, be it love, security, food, shelter, sex and so on. Becoming human will imply a strong contribution from Society and socialization processes. Our personal history is the full story to be told about us while of course we are part of the larger story of Humankind, seen as one very special animal group. The fact that we internalize Culture while developing our bodies makes us humans (Bruner 1983); the way we use Culture and contribute to its preservation and development makes us differentiated individuals.

Is something lacking in the picture? Apparently It would not seem so. Lots of different textbooks emphasise different areas of human development but the ones to be included seem quite straightforward. One can include psychomotor, emotional, social, cognitive, moral, self-development, identity development, motivational development (see Wilber, 2000, for a good review in the context of a “integral psychology”), even consciousness (Smith, Nolen-Hoeksma, Fredrickson & Loftus, 2003), but the general ideas will remain the same with a Darwinian ghost somehow always lurking in the background: we are rather adaptive, intelligent animals, struggling for pleasure and survival in a complex society born out of the same picture. Our self, consciousness, identity, are to be explained (or explained away?) as adaptive functions. Now about alternatives.

What if we could not really define a Human being without putting Consciousness as the major variable in the equation? Skinner (probably the most known author for classic behaviourism) will haunt me because of this but let me borrow some reasoning from LeShan (1984). Almost everybody would prefer a rather imperfect conscious companion to a perfect unconscious android, even if it would mimic the majority of human verbal behaviours. We do so because for us being human is about being conscious of ourselves. The specific kind of human consciousness is the mirror-like consciousness, the possibility of recognizing ourselves in physical mirrors or in the social mirrors other people give us. That is why vampires don't see themselves in mirrors: they don't have a soul, meaning they don't have a human consciousness. Now what if we define consciousness as the most fundamental variable for defining humanity? What if we acknowledge that human Culture and History only make sense because we are conscious witnesses of them? What if Art was only possible because we are aware of the conscious experience it produces on us – we are a public – and what if Philosophy, even Science, would not make sense without consciousness of our existential reality and our interrogations?

If we do place Consciousness where it belongs in what concerns Humans, meaning at the core of what being human is all about, lots of consequences will ensue. When we start studying Consciousness, one notion comes forth immediately: Identity. Because we are conscious, we identify ourselves with something and we keep doing this. Changes in identity are the tangible correspondent of the development of consciousness. The Transpersonal perspective brings with it a full array of ideas around this. At first, both as Human species or as individual humans in our ontogenesis, we tend to identify with our bodies; then emotions become more and more important, then thought gets more salient; then we go for other



modes of knowledge (namely intuition in the deep sense of direct knowledge of Reality) while coordinating the rest in unique ways. Perhaps in the future of Humankind identification with Divine realms will become normal; for now we see it in some very salient individuals. World Religions and Spirituality will have a lot to say about this since from the point of view of a Psychology of Consciousness they are mostly consecrated to a redefinition of identity.

Now for the purposes of this article I will skip any attempt at discussing the more or less Scientific character of current assumptions in the Transpersonal field. I will instead examine what they imply for our hypothetical view of human development.

(1). If we are more than just biological-material entities, then perhaps we don't just bring to our individual development a biological-genetic nature; we will also bring along with us a spiritual nature, a sort of "soul genetics". This is, of course, the same we find in traditions that speak about Karma.

(2) Then, if we are spiritual beings and if we are out there before a new physical body is built, we will have to admit that the life span extends indefinitely both to pre-birth and post-mortem areas. Along with this, helping the development of individual humans implies that while nurturing their biological-social-psychological natures we will have to nurture their "transpersonal" natures, both at psychic and spiritual levels. This in turn will imply taking care of the "energy" surroundings of a developing child both during pregnancy and afterwards. Grof (2000), while theorizing from abundant clinical data that important roots of violence in our modern society can be found in perinatal traumatic experiences, goes on to suggest that deep improvement in this area can bring a strong decrease in general violence and an increase in consciousness expansion. So perhaps a perinatal education and a death education will become a necessary part of the picture. And so will an Education of consciousness dealing with so important and so incredibly neglected areas as learning how to identify and de-identify, to focus and to distract, to associate and dissociate from mind and sense experiences, how to deal with pain and pleasure (as both are very well-known intensifiers of awareness) and finally, how to construct and deconstruct areas and layers of identity. Also, if we consider the hypothesis that reincarnation exists, each rebirth will amount to a harmonious rebuilding of an identity and sensible parents will be alert to signs of previous knowledge, skills and areas of difficulty. Perhaps we can even give new value to the ideas of Alice Bailey (1980) about Education as the process of building the Antakharana or the "string of consciousness" between our deeper nature and our outside, mundane, being. Even then, the dimension of the prenatal building of the antakharana (See Chamberlain, 2003, for some groundbreaking research belonging in this theme) or the breaking of the antakharana from our physical bodies known as death (see some interesting research about this and other relevant themes in Schmicker, 2002 or other works concerning Thanatology, like the ones from the Palliative Care movement) must receive deep consideration.

(3) If we do have a process of preparation for each new life and a process of reaping the fruits of each previous one, this will need some consideration. Also the trajectory for a new life implies, according to esoteric traditions and some strange experiences from this author, the crossing of several psychic layers until we reach a new womb. This crossing through several layers will entail, according to the moment we go through each one, a special imprint from the momentary energies that are stronger. This imprint, in turn, will make us more sensitive to, or more ready to tune into, special qualities of energy and special states of mind. So perhaps a Psychology of the Development of Consciousness will take Astrology seriously...

(4) When we start studying the possible nature of humans as mostly conscious beings aware of themselves and dealing with their identities, we also stumble easily across the fact that the Psychic realms of human Archetypes, magical forces, astral entities, chakras and the like are not the same as the Spiritual realms of Platonic Archetypes, pure impersonal Love or Cosmic experience. The first are still under the spell of personal identifications while the later ones correspond to the experience of a impersonal (transpersonal) identity, that is immortal and has no boundaries.

(5) Because of such and other distinctions, we need cartographies of consciousness while of course keeping in mind that maps are not the territory. Assisting the development of human individuals through their life spans becomes the same as assisting them in their journey through both physical and

non-physical worlds, through both psychical and spiritual realms, through both the process of retrieving some of their inheritance from previous lives and the process of going for new developments, perhaps retrieving a deeper divine inheritance. During our lives we may be not just re-building bodies and human personalities but also structures and functions of consciousness (Wilber, 2000).

(6) Now thinking about us as Human Race, a change in perspective about the core definition of what we are will entail a different perspective about the driving forces of History and the possibility of going for new worldwide developments. If our History is also a History of Consciousness and identity, then perhaps the way human groups (village groups, tribes, regional, national groups and the like) have identified themselves in the past with ideas, emotions, attitudes or activities will explain part of their ways. Past terminology like “conquerors”, “warriors”, “empire”, “kingdom expansion”, “crusaders”, “holy warriors”, “national pride” and others can say a lot about it. During the last thousands of years, human groups identified with power, aggression, armies, fortresses, weapons. They identified with territories and felt like expanding them was a way of expanding their sense of worth. Growing as a nation was all about growing in territory or possessions. Different ideas or creeds would invite war as if religious or philosophical groups were protecting their right to live. The equivalent of the identification with fallible, limited, mundane aspects of human personality can be found through history in societies. And like with human individuals that can feel angry, fearful, aggressive, frustrated, or anxious when something threatens such aspects or just invites change, groups can behave in the same way, sometimes to a greater extent because emotional climates can grow very fast in a mutual reinforcement inside groups. Nowadays we see the beginning of a new rise for female values closer to the Arts, the power to generate or create, “weak” emotions like caring, showing vulnerability, friendship as intimacy and sharing; however this will only bring the change and development Humankind needs if it also implies a real transpersonal development. Meaning big national or smaller groups will de-identify with their group personalities to re-identify with abstract values, impersonal love, Nature, abstract feelings and representations of the divine, the Cosmos... So contributing to the development of Nations or Humankind in general will need some emphasis on new group identities. Human groups must learn ways of identification with constructive, abstract values (like knowing the Good, therefore practicing it – see Lourenço, 2002) and to develop a sense of self esteem through devising their unique ways of contributing to a symphonic whole. Nations must find ways of feeling that their expansion is now to be found in inner realms and the uniqueness of their cultural contribution to the whole through the Arts, Philosophy, and their specific qualities of energy. Such qualities will be apparent in the ways each human group lives fundamental impersonal values (the landmark of the Transpersonal, according to Descamps, 2008) Or, as some of us like to think in Portugal, the “fifth Empire” is not one to be established on Earth but to be found in the Realms of the Soul. As Humankind is finding the limits to the very ugly and no longer defensible capitalistic philosophy of limitless economic expansion and limitless exploration of material and human resources everywhere, it can now progress to the true area of limitless expansion: consciousness and “energy literacy” – meaning the cultivation of the knowledge of the kingdoms of the Psyche. One recent sign of such kind of expansion is obviously the development of Deep Ecology – a direct consequence of Love and the direct experiential sensitivity to Nature and its representatives like animals, plants and even minerals. Sometimes I even feel that nowadays Humankind is facing the challenge of “transcending or dying” as keeping its old ways and the corresponding aggressive identities will bring destruction both through techno wars and climate catastrophes. But the possibilities lying ahead are infinite and beautiful... Murphy (1992) made an excellent work inventorying and presenting evidence for extraordinary human capabilities and “transformative capacity”. In such inventory we can find stigmata, powerful placebo effects, hypnotically-induced bodily, psychic or even spiritual effects, extreme feats in sports, extraordinary capacities of religious adepts, mystic phenomena, psychological phenomena. We also know that deep healing processes can be produced through consciousness and identity change, new focusing of the human psyche, creative visualization and the like (see Schlitz, Amoroc and Micozzi, 2005, or Pert, 1997, for good examples). So perhaps we do have a growing number of pioneers evidencing new human capabilities in the paranormal field, deep transpersonal experiences and/or deep

identity and values transformations. If this is so, in the future we can optimistically picture a very different Humankind.

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\***Vitor Rodrigues**, President of the European Transpersonal Association (EUROTAS), is a Psychologist and Psychotherapist, owning a PhD in Educational Psychology. He is the present coordinator of the EUROTAS Committee for Certification and Accreditation. He is also a writer, with ten books published in Portugal and several articles. He was Teacher of Educational Psychology and latter of Developmental Psychology at the University of Lisbon (for 14 years) and then at the Nursing School of Evora and the University of Algarve, Portugal. He is used to deliver lectures, courses and workshops in Transpersonal Psychology and Psychotherapy, Parapsychology, Regression Therapy, Stress and Emotion Management. He collaborates regularly with the Faculty of Medicine of Lisbon for a free course in Clinical Hypnosis. Contact email: [psicosophos@sapo.pt](mailto:psicosophos@sapo.pt)

# The Transmission of Wisdom: The Task of Gnostic Intermediaries

## La Transmisión de Sabiduría: El Cometido de los Intermediarios Gnósticos

**Roger Walsh\***

University of California  
Irvine, California, USA

### Abstract

Wisdom is one of the seven qualities that authentic contemplative traditions aim to foster. This wisdom is said to be a combination of existential understanding and practical life skill, as well as transrational, intuitive insight. Transmitting this wisdom is the task of gnostic intermediaries, and this transmission requires three things. First, it requires cultivating wisdom through contemplative practices; second, mastering the linguistic and conceptual system of the community to whom you wish to communicate; and third, translating aspects of the wisdom into this linguistic and conceptual system. This is obviously a demanding task. However, it is also an essential one for our time, as scholars and practitioners seek to understand the deeper significance of contemplative practices, psychologies, and philosophies.

**Key Words:** Contemplation, Gnostic intermediary, State of consciousness, Transmission, Wisdom

### Resumen

La sabiduría es una de las siete cualidades que las auténticas tradiciones contemplativas se proponen fomentar. Se dice que esta sabiduría es una combinación de entendimiento existencial y habilidad de vida práctica, así como transrational, comprensión intuitiva. La transmisión de esta sabiduría es la tarea de los intermediarios gnósticos, y esta transmisión requiere tres cosas. Primero, requiere cultivar la sabiduría mediante prácticas contemplativas; segundo, dominando el sistema lingüístico y conceptual de la comunidad a quien se desea comunicarse; y tercero, traduciendo aspectos de la sabiduría en este sistema lingüístico y conceptual. Esta es obviamente una tarea exigente. Sin embargo, es también una tarea esencial para nuestro tiempo, como estudiantes y practicantes que procuran entender el significado más profundo de prácticas contemplativas, psicologías, y filosofías.

**Palabras Clave:** Contemplación, Intermediario Gnóstico, Estado de Consciencia, Transmisión, Sabiduría

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Happy are those who find wisdom....  
She is more precious than jewels,  
and nothing you desire can compare with her....  
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,  
and all her paths are peace....  
Get insight, get wisdom: do not forget  
(Jewish Torah, Proverbs 3:13, 17, 4:5).

A central claim of contemplative disciplines is that they cultivate wisdom. In fact, cultivating wisdom is one of the seven central practices common to the world's great religious and spiritual traditions (Walsh, 1999).

Likewise, a central claim of many contemplative psychologies, philosophies, and texts is that parts of them conceptualize and analyze aspects of this wisdom. Examples include psychologies such as Buddhist Abhidharma, philosophies such as Chinese Taoism or Indian Vedanta, and texts such as the Christian contemplative *Philokalia*.

What we usually think of as wisdom, I would define as deep understanding of, and practical skill in responding to, the central existential issues of life. Greek philosophers referred to this understanding as *sophia*, and to this practical skill as *phronesis* (Sternberg & Jordan, 2005).

However, the wisdom that contemplative disciplines claim to cultivate, and that these philosophies and psychologies analyze, adds something further. For contemplative wisdom finds its deepest basis in a direct, intuitive transcendental apprehension (Walsh, 1999; Wilber, 2006). This wisdom has many names, such as *gnosis* (Christianity), *jnana* (Hinduism), *prajna* (Buddhism), *hokmah* (Judaism), and *ma'rifah* (Islam). This transrational wisdom, which we might call *transnoia*, seems to foster *sophia* and *phronesis*, while also adding further depth and richness to them. It is therefore not surprising that some of history's greatest contemplatives have also been regarded as some of history's wisest sages, e.g. Christianity's Dionysus, Hinduism's Shankara, Islam's Ibn Arabi, Kashmir Shaivism's Abinavagupta, Neo-Confucianism's Wang Yang-ming, and the Buddha.

However, the distinctive nature of contemplative wisdom immediately presents a challenge to anyone who would comprehend it, and even more to anyone who would communicate it. For this wisdom is largely obtained in altered states of consciousness and postconventional stages of development that are usually accessible only after considerable contemplative practice. Understanding contemplative wisdom may therefore require experiencing these states, stages, and relevant insights, for oneself.

This is a specific example of a more general principle that there are limitations on understanding transpersonal experiences and insights without direct experience of them. These limitations can be understood in several ways. For example, they can be considered in terms of states of consciousness as examples of state-specific knowledge (Tart, 2001). Likewise, they can be considered developmentally as stage-specific understanding; in classical epistemological terms as the requirement that we open "the eye of contemplation" (Wilber, 1996); and linguistically as the inherent difficulty of understanding a signifier (word or term) without having experienced the relevant signified experience (Wilber, 2001).

What then does it require to apprehend and understand the transpersonal wisdom of contemplative disciplines? In a word, it requires practice. One must take up a contemplative practice so as to open one's own "eye of contemplation." Only by actually doing contemplative practices can we mature and open ourselves to the deeper insights and understandings they offer. As the translator of Patanjali's yoga sutras wrote:

It is axiomatic in the yoga tradition that ‘knowledge is different in different states of consciousness’ (Rig Veda). In other words our level of consciousness completely determines how much of the truth we see in any given situation. The clearer our minds, the more correctly we evaluate our experience (Shearer, 1989, p. 26).

However, to communicate these insights and understandings effectively requires something more. It requires that we become *gnostic intermediaries*. So what is a gnostic intermediary? Carl Jung (Jung, 1966) used the term to refer to Wilhelm, the translator of the *I Ching*, who Jung suggested was able to transmit, not only the ideas, but also the underlying wisdom of the *I Ching*. Jung does not seem to have developed the concept further, but we can amplify it as follows.

First, let me suggest a definition. “A *gnostic intermediary* is a person who is able to effectively translate and transmit contemplative wisdom from one culture or community to another. This translation/transmission can be across cultures (e.g. Indian yogic wisdom to Western culture) or across times (from archaic language and concepts into contemporary forms, e.g. communicating early Christian contemplative wisdom to contemporary Christian communities).”

What does this require? Well, it seems to require three tasks and three corresponding capacities:

- First, one must imbibe and become the wisdom oneself, since while one can *have* knowledge, one must *be* wise. This, of course, is a major task. In fact, when we are talking about profound contemplative wisdom it can take a lifetime. The essence of this step is contemplative practice.
- The second requirement for gnostic intermediaries is linguistic and conceptual competence. They must master the language and conceptual system of the people and culture to which they wish to communicate. For professionals, this means mastering one’s professional conceptual frame work, e.g., psychology or philosophy.
- The third requirement is translational. Gnostic intermediaries must be able to translate the wisdom from the wisdom bearing culture or tradition into the language and conceptual system of the recipient community. The goal is to make the wisdom understandable, legitimate, and even compelling.

This is the challenge and opportunity for all those who would draw from and communicate the world’s contemplative wisdom. As such it is a challenge and opportunity of our time for teachers of contemplation, for transpersonal and integral psychologists, and for scholars of the world’s contemplatively based psychologies and philosophies.

It is a large task. However, it is also an essential one for our time, as scholars and practitioners seek to understand the deeper significance of contemplative practices, psychologies, and philosophies. It may also be vitally important for our culture and species, which are drowning in information, but comparatively lacking in wisdom. In fact, it may be that we are in a race between wisdom and world disaster, between consciousness and catastrophe. We are in great need of wisdom, and of gnostic intermediaries to communicate it.

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\***Roger Walsh**, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, University of California College of Medicine, Irvine, CA. 92697-1675.

# **Reflections and Announcements**



# **TRANSPERSONAL MANIFESTO**

## ***Remembering, Retracing paths: Greatness and misery. Transpersonal psychology under review.***

**MANIFIESTO TRANSPERSONAL**  
***Haciendo Memoria Haciendo Caminos:  
Grandezas Y miserias. La psicología transpersonal a revisión***

**Manuel Almendro\***

Oxigeme: Centre for a consciousness' psychology  
Madrid, Spain

### **Abstract**

This article examines a perspective of more than twenty-eight years in the field of new psychologies including transpersonal psychology. It is a critical reflection of what has happened in this context, especially in Europe and America. What is transpersonal psychology in all its vagueness? What diagnosis and what treatment might be needed? What is being done in this respect?. It is therefore a reflection that raises the issue of the possible death of this psychology, the resurrection of its cadaver, or the attempt to create a new path in order to leave fantasy, unbearable opportunism, and a lack of rigor behind.

### **Key words**

ATRE, Modern Science, Ancient Wisdom, Rigor, Naïve Universalism.

### **Resumen**

En este escrito se hace balance de una perspectiva de más veintiocho años en el campo de las nuevas psicologías y entre ellas de la psicología transpersonal. Es una reflexión crítica sobre lo que ha pasado en este ámbito, especialmente en Europa y en parte en América. ¿Qué es la Psicología Transpersonal dentro de sus múltiples vaguedades, qué diagnóstico y qué tratamiento podría necesitar, y qué se está haciendo al respecto?. Es por lo tanto una reflexión que plantea la posible muerte de esta psicología, la resurrección del cadáver o tratar de crear un nuevo camino para salir de la fantasía, el oportunismo insoportable y la falta de rigor.

### **Palabras clave**

ATRE, Ciencia Moderna, Sabiduría Antigua, Rigor, Universalismo Ingenuo

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It is the first question always asked: “And you? How long have you been in this...?”

Perhaps one has always been in “this,” in what we genuinely and in confusion call *transpersonal*, as if from infancy an arrow indicated the path—an aspect we can appreciate in people as distant as the mystic Teresa of Jesus and in scientists such as David Bohm, Fritjof Capra, and many others. They either express it or they don't. And this is what appeared to me to be enormously significant: it was not that these well-known, and other less known, scientists encountered the end of matter or Krishnamurti's talks—which is the case with those named—but rather that for all of them, the experience of the infinite appeared in their childhoods. What came afterwards were detonators of something whose seed had already been planted, probably outside of time.

Therefore there is nothing better than remembering ....

Once upon a time... at the beginning of the seventies, in the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Barcelona we heard the first accounts of what was going on in California. The internet did not exist, nor was there capital for intercontinental flights. The commentaries were full of hope and excitement. And it was already in the mid-seventies when I became deeply involved in Zen, with masters from the Eastern tradition such as Deshimaru and later Poep, Soen Sa Nim, Dhiravamsa, and so on. And as I am quite tenacious, I crossed the Pond at the start of the eighties, led by an arrow that pointed me towards the indigenous world. I have come to realize this in my collaborations and above all in my latest book, *Shamanism: The path of the native mind*. Several shamans whom I met when they still lived solitary lives today appear in films and on the internet. But this is not what I wish to talk about here.

In effect, the eighties were favourable to finding out who those Californians, about whom we hardly heard anything, were. Stanislav Grof's name appeared and I signed myself up for his training program, taking advantage of my stays in Oaxaca and California, of course much cheaper than what was being offered in Europe. To this I added a knowledge of who Maslow, Naranjo, Wilber, etc., were, and so my path began. Firstly came the task of explaining what transpersonal psychology was. Strangely enough, today one has to explain what it is not. Out of all this my book *Psychology and Transpersonal Psychotherapy* was born, written in 1992, and published by Kairós in 1995. It was important for me to realize that transpersonal psychology was not a case of flag followers—although some would like to see it this way—but rather a point of convergence in time of many wills that had “that” between their fingers and that in the end found a name. Following the trail, I contacted Marc-Alain Descamps from the French association who would collaborate on the book *Transpersonal Consciousness* and who gave me the names of two people who were also interested: Fernando Rodríguez Bornaetxea, who later initiated the first classes on transpersonal psychology in the Faculty of Psychology at San Sebastian, and David Gonzalez Raga, translator at Kairós. Finally, together with the Jungian Enrique Galán, we formed ATRE, the Spanish Transpersonal Association, with various conferences in the Canary Islands, Madrid and Barcelona. And as we are at the start of a new journal, I would add that various issues were published under the editorship first of Eduardo Miño and later of Senesio Madrona, with a quality attested to by many readers.

### **But what is the transpersonal?**

For years the French maintained a journal entitled *Qu'est-ce que le transpersonnel?* As we have seen, the transpersonal is *that which never stops being defined*. Now, this opening up brings with it bitter-sweet consequences, in part because it is not possible to stem the tide and in part due to the lack of scruples based on *anything goes*. The gravest consequence has been the disillusionment that in the end has taken its toll starting from dispersion and fraud. As a result, I have seen important people being lost along the way—people who having started out with good will ended up abandoning the project. Therefore, before entering into what the transpersonal is, I believe it is necessary to take a look at *how the transpersonal is doing?*

The deception does not only exist in relation to the problem already laid out by Sam Shapiro from the University of Hawaii, based on the abuse of the term transpersonal psychology as *an umbrella for everything*\*. It also appears in Wilber's *The demise of transpersonal psychology*†—without entering in depth into an evaluation of these opinions—revealing the pseudo-spiritual opportunism that sneaks in due to a lack of integrity and rigor. This carelessness ends up detracting from the project, the opportunity for a correct opening up thereby being lost by not having the necessary rigor in contributions as much at the intellectual level as at the experiential.

In order to answer this question, I need to continue the process of remembering. From 1990 onwards ATRE was present at the first meetings of EUROTAS—the European Transpersonal Association—participating in its beginnings, and it was first Fernando Rodríguez and later Jaime Llinares, the Vicepresident, who were responsible for representing us, as in September I regularly found myself working in America. At the start, these first paths have always been governed by the *fascination with the new* and therefore everything goes smoothly. From those times I especially remember the fluid and continual communication, and several visits, for example to Ian Gordon-Brown (in London) for whom I still have fond feelings. Gordon-Brown was a wonderful president of EUROTAS. He was the only person who had read a Spanish author: Vicente Beltrán Anglada. Unfortunately Gordon-Brown died prematurely and left things half finished at his school in London as well as at EUROTAS. Not long after I began to hear directly the first dissensions, discrediting. In principle this was resolved with the presidency of Laura Boggio Gilot, who at the same time was the president of the Italian association, and a woman whom I consider to be capable and prudent enough to manage the ins and outs of such a complex association. However, all ended in rupture. In the end the discrediting made EUROTAS split in two. One group remained with the name and the other created the ETPA (European Transpersonal Psychology Association) with the idea of focusing more on psychology. Astonished, I received faxes and calls to my office in which accusations and answers poured out. As we can see this was pure yoga—mystical union, pure consciousness without boundaries (I'm being ironic). “Division was there, a power struggle took place, and it wasn't looking transpersonal at all”.

What am I trying to say by recalling all of this? Firstly, that the transpersonal world is prone to hiding sin; that this incident has never been mentioned and is considered taboo, when it is there that the thorn lies. Thus we have to accept that the European transpersonal associations maintain the same relationship as football clubs. Perhaps we would do well to recognize this and come down from the pedestal of the chosen.

If things are this way in Europe, it would be a good idea to take a look at what's happening in the United States. I take my hat off to those representative pioneers of the transpersonal, especially in California. To the movement started by Anthony Sutich, Maslow, Bateson, and later names such as that of Grof, Walsh, Vaughan, Wilber, Tart, Naranjo, Krippner, Shapiro, etc., for whom I have the deepest admiration and respect and whom I lovingly refer to as *the legends*. Several of them read in Spanish. I believe that although the group was a little closed—according to some—they were able to generate bases upon which the rest of us could grow, and I count myself among these. At the end of the seventies, the first international association, ITA (International Transpersonal Association) was founded. The Americans are quick to name their organizations international, although later they don't practise it too much. The first publications, such as *ReVision*, the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, began and it was this group that initiated the movement with deserving success. Publishers such as Shambhala, academies of study such as

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\* Shapiro, S. Legitimization and the transpersonal vision. *Australian Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* Vol.8, 68-72, 1989.

† Wilber, K. *On critics, Integral Institute, My Recent Writing, and Other Matters of Little Consequence: A Shambhala interview with Ken Wilber*. Shambhala Publications, CA. 2000.

the California Institute of Integral Studies, Saybrook, The Institute of Transpersonal Psychology are representative of the transpersonal chreod of that time in California.

Now, what remains of the innovative spirit of that time? I was personally acquainted with the California of the eighties on, and I believe that I also absorbed parts of the expansive environment of the sixties and seventies in my practically uninterrupted stays there. But it was not until 2005 when I was finally able to free myself from work commitments and live in California. Deception is the word that best summarizes my time there. The expansive and creative transpersonal had become the *chic transpersonal*, a fashion for those who could pay. Among some of the opinions of the legends communicated in private, was the criticism that “those guys don’t pay any attention to the past” or simply that “the transpersonal is following the decadent rhythm of our times,” with the following graphic example: “the only thing that worries an American here in San Francisco today is not ending up homeless,” in other words not ending up collecting boxes. Other criticisms were harsher.

Now that we have seen how the patient is doing, we can move on to “what is the transpersonal?” and, if this existential course is producing disagreements, I believe at least at the theoretical level, we can try to find common ground. Putting this into practice is another thing altogether; it is the most difficult of the yogas. To begin with:

For those who set out to know *what the devil the transpersonal is*, for those who are not very up to date, and because I believe it is necessary, given what is being seen nowadays, it has been established that transpersonal means going *beyond the ego* but through the personal. It is not about fleeing from responsibility for the personal in order to sing like angels on a postcard.

Furthermore, in summary, it is:

- ✓ Establishing bridges between science and spirituality.
- ✓ A synthesis between *modern science* and *ancient wisdom*, which implies a bridge between East and West, without forgetting the intermediary bands.
- ✓ A synthesis and a meeting of opposites. This has to do with the age-old meaning of *religare*, *yogas*, *stutras*. Trying to get closer to the origin, to borrow a phrase from Salvador Pániker.
- ✓ Trying to focus the totality without borders, and I stress, without shirking the responsibility of the personal.
- ✓ Recovering age-old wisdom, the legacy, for example, of the mystery and meaning of life revealed in texts as ancient as they are in need of rereading. I’m referring to Gilgamesh in Babylon, to the Tao Te King of Lao Tse (I’m moved by no. xxxviii), Confucius in Ancient China, the Upanishads of India, or trying to access the compass of the universe like the dervishes and—why not—the wisdom of Christianity that we always discount for being close at hand.
- ✓ We would do well to realize that we are not the only ones nor the first; that already at the dawn of our civilization, Plato, Pythagoras, Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, and many others entered into the mystery.

None of this seems to be echoed in the European transpersonal conferences that I have been witness to. So, what is happening?

In order to clear things up, we need a diagnosis and a treatment. The Sword of Damocles seems to be descending. I can see it now....

## Diagnosis

Transpersonal pathology has to do with certain assumptions, many of them personally perceived, others via occasional spectators, conference participants, sympathizers or members of associations.

- ✓ **Letter to Being.** From the beginning of the seventies and for more than twenty years I have attended national and international conferences, moving from a continuous to sporadic attendance, and from there to only attending on certain occasions. Taking stock, I realize that in many lectures and workshops what was being offered was work from the outside towards the inside. On other occasions something of great impact was presented, but with the passing of time this began to dissolve. Few were the contributions directed towards a structural, integral and profound transformation of the person. Perhaps this is because what can be offered is the part that one has been able to see for himself. After twenty-eight years in professional psychology and being able to confirm that the new paths forged in this field are created by people who are seekers but who have little base and an evanescent constitution, with too much provisionality and simplism, I have the impression that perhaps only 10% would support an integral transformation. Thus what is for the most part on offer at conferences can be better understood as tidbits rather than a staple food. A friend explained it to me in the following way at one of those events: “here there are a lot of people at the station but few ready to get on the train.” I therefore ask myself why those people who make up these types of groups—let’s call them spiritual—are so easily inflamed in the moment and lacking in commitment in terms of their actions? Or rather, *Why, Manuel, do we have so many borderline people in the transpersonal movement?*, as a Californian friend commented half-jokingly to me. I have observed that these fickle groups in spiritual or socio-spiritual environments are nevertheless reduced in meditation groups such as those of Zen, and it is because here an interiorization is asked of one and there is little “staging.” I have observed with respect movements such as that of Deepak Chopra in the sense that it expands a new human relationship in the world, but I understand that if there is not a previous radical transformation it will be difficult for the ship to reach the dock. Transformation is commitment. Therefore I have seen many of these imported worlds in the United States that, if they offer an expansion without exclusion—and I have participated in some of these—suffer from triviality and evanescence. How is it possible that most of the participants in these events are ignorant of the depth of European thought such as Plato, the depth of the “Apollonian-Dionysiac path-caduceus,” R. Lull, to Victor Hugo, Huxley, Jünger, Jung, without forgetting Spanish and European mysticism? The consumerist triviality of the spiritual is unbearable and it asphyxiates any path of transformation. With a certain harshness someone told me not long ago, “it’s that those who are undergoing transformation don’t go to those places.”

I would like here to specify and emphasize the following:

- ✓ A tendency towards the magical-esoteric with a spiritual disguise. I am referring to a simplism of an emotional type, readily influenced and, depending on the case, saleable. This is pure New Age. This converts transpersonal events for the most part into projections of ignorance that sow dispersion and I understand that it is difficult to build on a shifting bog. The tendency is towards a spiritual bluff that negates the shadow—pure cream with no consistency.
- ✓ A *naïve universality* that leads us to *anything goes!* As a consequence opportunism slips in along with the lack of rigor seen in conferences, papers, communications, etc., due to an evident lack of knowledge, preparation, commitment and dedication. Speaking of this with trustworthy people there are abundant commentaries regarding the fact that there is a high percentage of people who give talks or workshops with no preparation, who go to someone who is prepared only to then “sell” the seminar the following weekend. There are also those who sign up for the transpersonal for a day and then disappear, as well as those who access it more for friendship than for the

organization. As a consequence there are those who were committed to the cause who end up abandoning it. If in addition we remember the power struggles, the disagreements that have generated confusion and *anti-transpersonal* separations, how can we end an event or related correspondence with the words “hugs and kisses!” or “I love you!” in the midst of a spiritual soufflé. I have been witness to people who have abandoned their seats under my nose, renouncing that paraphernalia and “staging.” It is also true that people outside the transpersonal movement who work with crystals, decks of cards, witchcraft, etc., are using the name transpersonal psychology, even on radio and TV programs. It is always good to trust that time will end up clearing the landscape... we can only hope.

- ✓ Where is all this paraphernalia taking us? The answer is: to forget the dangers of the transpersonal traps that renowned authors such as Daniel Goleman, Frances Vaughan, in the transpersonal arena, and Thérèse Bosse, Thomas Merton in the spiritual field, among others, have already revealed. I am referring to the fact that early writings already warn us about becoming swollen-headed (starting with Jung), about the indigestion of the process, those who fake realizations, the danger of spiritual egos, the powerful self, the honey-coated self, spiritual baskets in which everything fits, etc.
- ✓ Universities. Inquiries have been carried out with a view to transpersonal psychology entering the university, overcoming the resistance of the scientific apparatus and opening doors in this indispensable area. Given the situation, this panorama does not appear to be clear. But this is not only due to our errors. We have to take into account that scientific materialism openly despises anything that has to do with an open line towards consciousness, as this is indefinable and reflects the partiality and fragmentation of scientific materialism—by which I do not mean science in general—itself. *An anecdote*: At the start of the nineties I attended S. Grof’s training in California, as I have already mentioned. Grof’s talks are very attractive, but I missed some of these in order to walk around admiring the *Pocket Ranch* in the north of California where these seminars took place for some time. On one of my walks, Barbara Findeisen, the director, invited me to enter her office, whose doors were open because of the heat. She told me that already in California “if you wanted to receive economic aid you could not mention transpersonal psychology, Holotropic Breathwork... because you would not receive a single dollar.” This obviously shows that things were changing in California and furthermore, that in the *reductionist* world the transpersonal is seen as something to be cast aside.
- ✓ The social degradation of the transpersonal due to the hodgepodge and the anxiousness for an end to the anguish of today’s human being, in the midst of the reigning information overload. There is a high demand and as a consequence an offer—to a large extent opportunist—is made. Once again I have to go back to my experience. For years I have heard through emails or in-person opinions about the degradation of the transpersonal that certain people perceive via internet or at any social event. However, this negative appraisal stops at the moment when they have read something with foundation. Of course the seeds of suspicion have irremisibly been sown.
- ✓ The problems that exist between those who only value theory and those who only value practice. To make a statement in support of theory and defend oneself with it is as preposterous as doing the same based on an apology of experience. On the one hand it is easy to observe an apology of a fine and dazzling but not very daring intellectual taste on entering the territory. Its defenders end up becoming an *elite*. Here we would have the transpersonal intellectuals who devalue experience and can reduce it to the magic-mythic-symbolic and prerational. Thus we succumb to *theorism*. On the other hand we can encounter representatives who only value practice and boast of experience; this is *experientialism*. This often occurs in conjunction with the proclamation that everything has been said and that “I am enlightened! I alone; the others are not!” And although up to a certain point the essential in the transpersonal has already been said and that we are messing about it is convenient to untangle concepts adequate for our cultural moment. It seems that a good bridge and agreement between those two ways of understanding the process is decisive.

- ✓ *The anti-trans fallacy.* Language. This point is well worth considering. Languages are instruments created by nature for the essential communication between human beings, and also for transpersonals. The problem that we have lies in the fact that one can be transpersonal but not “trans-English.” In other words, *what is not in English does not exist*. This is the problem that reduces the quality of communication and furthermore determines the preponderance of a language, of its contents and its context. Starting from the establishment of this preponderance as valid, it is determined along which lines thoughts and ideas will flow—I am especially referring to editorial lines. From here it is easy to fall into the trap of imposing a tendency of thought, a style in the literal sense—that of its context—and with that lens devalue other tendencies of thought and realities because they form part of another experiential moment or cultural perspective. This is a war that can be won by quantity and not by quality. The *cognocentric* and the *ethnocentric* are once again being debated, a dualism I prefer to call *egocentric* (not pejoratively) and *omnicentric*. And I understand that a publication has to submit to certain strategic interests as a question of survival, but it has to try to get beyond this. It is evident that the North American (and perhaps this can be extended to include Anglo-Saxon) style of editing is different from that of a non-Anglo-Saxon European. In order not to fall into the *anti-trans fallacy* we should be *trans-language*, which implies respect for all of them.

#### **Treatment of the patient:**

- ✓ I believe it is crucial for the defining paths concerning what Transpersonal Psychology is to be based in theory and in practice
- ✓ It is necessary to establish empirical correspondences between consciousness and matter, not only for their intrinsic value but also in order to exorcise the transpersonal from fantasy, unbearable opportunism and a generalized lack of rigor.
- ✓ It is therefore also essential in practice to know how to establish the relationship between the universal and the particular, and vice-versa. In other words, we cannot today be subject to the Anglo-Saxon transpersonal world because it would represent a poverty of such a nature that we would all end up losing.
- ✓ It is often said that the roots of the transpersonal are European. How, then, can we forget them? In other words, Hungarians, Germans, Spaniards, etc., each country, each culture, has to start from its own transpersonal legacy throughout its history. It has to research and recognize its own legacy, and only then can one understand and share the different legacies that range from the *particular* to the *universal* without subjugation. If one does not know how to appreciate his own legacy it is easy to fall into the blindness of propaganda and under the commercial sway of the powerful. An example: “We have everything,” answered an American publisher when various European publishers communicated that we were publishing important ideas here in the transpersonal field. Communication is impossible.

In Europe we cannot forget certain transpersonal features that appear in the works of writers such as Dostoyevsky, Gogol in Russia—in addition to the genuine Nalimov within the current transpersonal movement, who we met thanks to the IJTS; our very own Quijote in Spain according to some Kabbalistic readings, and of course the mystics, not only of Spain, but of Europe, as M.A. Descamps established in the book *Transpersonal Consciousness*. In classic authors such as Goethe one can also perceive transpersonal overtones, and especially and directly in the transpersonal we have K.G. Dürckheim in Germany, and the unforgettable works of Gödel, R. Guénon and T. Brosse in France, etc. Throughout the history of each country we can find personages who have dealt with *the truth* without using the word transpersonal, although they have been so in their content. Here I take for granted the legacy of Jüng and Assagioli, but I was surprised to find when reading Doctor Juan Rof Carballo that he already established the need for a transpersonal psychology in 1952. He became the *pioneer* echoing everything in the nineties, putting forward

the human process based on previously generating the *personal constitutive scheme* in order to later arrive at the *cosmic scheme*. We should also not forget J.L. Pinillos, who speaks of the loss of the universals as the cause of the materialistic appropriation of reality, nor the contribution of Nobel Prize winner I. Prigogine's together with Isabelle Stengers in their proposal of a new enchantment with Nature. S. Pániker's contribution is also important, not solely epistemologically but also, due to his pioneering publishers, as a bridge for all Hispanic readers—something that can be extended today to include C. Naranjo's work. We can also not leave out the recently deceased Luis Cencillo, a silent researcher whose work will be recognized years after his death—what a sad country this is.

There are many more. The transpersonal can be traced prolifically throughout European thought.

- ✓ We need to be trans-language, and therefore trans-English. Languages are bridges that Nature traces, but if one succumbs to the preponderance of a culture, the bridge becomes a barrier. It is obvious that not everyone needs to speak Catalan, Castilian, Hungarian, Polish... because that is humanly impossible and it is therefore evident that publications have to exist in their own languages and in English for the rest of the world. But this does not mean that there has to be a subjugation. I therefore consider it convenient for texts and especially abstracts to be published in as many languages as possible and for there to be commissions for work which, like King Alfonso the Wise's—he must have been called this for some reason—Toledo school of translators, would take care of this. Pure communication and approach to the lives of those people through their languages. I sent this proposal to EUROTAS no less than ten years ago and I consider this linguistic respect to be an essential condition.
- ✓ *Possible strategies and examples:*
  - IJTS. The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies. One day in the mid-nineties I received a phone call from the University of Hawaii. San Shapiro, professor of meditation, spoke to me about this journal and that he was going to be travelling through Europe and would visit me in Spain. This occurred, we broke bread together and he shared with me that, decisively, the transpersonal meant interrelationship. I believe that San Shapiro is one of those people who embodies the genuine legacy. The *Journal* that Sam and P.I. Gross got off the ground is today run by Harris Friedman and Glenn Hartelius via the internet. I feel that this publication continues to maintain the legacy and could become the best intertranspersonal bridge. It could even be possible for it to be published in different languages.
  - ✓ Universities. It is essential to enter the universities. In order for this to happen consistent work must be generated. This work has yet to take place in Europe on a medium scale. I have been talking for years and continue to discuss this with university representatives, including a Nobel Prize winner. They are open to the idea if rigor is offered. There is no doubt that the best way to move transpersonal psychology forward and differentiate ourselves from magic abuse is to carry out quality work. An association with a strong base cannot have as its headquarters the kitchen of a house shared between occasional buddies. Commitment demands something more.
    - Liverpool John Moores University. Here professors B. Lancaster and M. Daniels are imparting a *masters* that could be the advance party in other places in Europe if they considered it opportune to develop an open line. In Spain we are taking the first steps in this direction despite the setback due to the adjustments of the Bologna process.
    - Oxigeme has transformed itself into an international association of Spanish-speakers and the embryo of a university masters program. The Ibero-American potential that Oxigeme



and Alubrat (Association Luso Brasileira) can give is worthy of consideration. Oxigeme is constituted today by people in Argentina, V. Gadwell; Peru, E. Gastelumendi; Ecuador, R. Midero; Mexico, A.M<sup>a</sup> Gonzalez and R. Aluni; and Spain. It is involved in projects such as the upcoming conference in Monterrey (Mexico).

- In effect there are people with the capacity to organize events and expand what is known as the *horizontal transpersonal*, but it is necessary, given the spiritualist paraphernalia, to also expand the *vertical transpersonal*. And we do have authors and organizers who work as much at the practical level as the theoretical—something attested to by the years dedicated to this end—those such as J. Rowan, M. Daniels, B. Lancaster and the untiring J. Drew, in England, the sweet Tanna in Poland; M.A. Descamps in France; L. Boggio in Italy; W. Bleichner and I. Jahrsetz in Germany; V. Rodrigues in Portugal—the current president of EUROTAS—without forgetting M. Simoes and P. Veigunha with whom we have shared conferences, meetings and some of these criticisms. In this list I would include more people and countries. I count myself among them. Also in the transpersonal sphere in Spain, the following writers, who have an enviable base of work and preparation, should be recognized: C. Aguirre, A. Pacheco, J. Pigem, J. Esteban, V. Merlo, J. L. Romero, O. García, J. Castillo, E. Galán, Albareda and Romero, Raquel—the Wilberian roadrunner—Xavi and his journal of the inner Ulysses, and others whom we will make known shortly. And we must not forget A. Pániker who is also a publisher. (I must apologise: although I would love to mention everyone by name, it's just not possible here). I am referring to writers and to the value of their work that lies in the relevant fact of offering books-ideas that can end up in many hands, which then experience the dignity of passing those books to other hands. In effect among the horizontal transpersonal are the initiatives to generate encounters and journals like that to which this article is directed. Of course it is necessary to know how to do this well, without neuroses, openly and with respect, without opportunism. Just because we are working with an open transpersonal idea that does not mean we should stop being careful and magnanimous but also whole—with integrity. The transpersonal process should not be put into the hands of upstarts who without contributions only try to appear on posters, bandying about events more like a political ego that a servant of the idea. *By their fruits you shall know them* (Matthew 7:16<sup>‡</sup>). As president of ATRE I had no choice but to notice that some who presented themselves as experts in the transpersonal were nothing more than hopefuls who had discovered its existence two months before. This is common currency in the changeable environment of the transpersonal. In fact in Europe I have encountered people who, having formed part of the movement, after a short time forgot about it and admit this with a simple “I am in another business.” The integrity I am speaking of is what moves me to not remain silent as if we constituted a chorus of transpersonal angels with the idle words, “I love you all!” I understand that this can be seen as impudent but I understand even less attitudes anchored in the intangible, lukewarm and comfortable kindness of always smiling until, not being able to do so any more, one pulls the trigger.
- I don't want to carry on criticizing the current *chic transpersonal* in California since the work of a second generation as I like to call it is reaching us, and this is a hardworking generation represented for example by Lukoff, Ferrer, Sovatsky, Schmitz, etc., with whom we can share a unity in the *horizontal transpersonal*.
- It is obvious that not everyone in their search (process) has to pass expressedly through the transpersonal and its books, conferences, etc., since there are people who, simply, have found it in their neighbourhood yoga center. Apostolates are better with valerian.

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<sup>‡</sup> This oft-cited phrase appears in *Count Lucanor* (El Conde Lucanor), the most famous work of Don Juan Manuel (the nephew of Alfonso X el Sabio—the Wise) and one of the earliest works of prose in Castilian Spanish, first published in 1335.

- I feel it is important to know how to establish in addition to a transpersonal psychology, a psychotherapy, and to continue generating a theoretical and practical corpus that works from a holistic and integrative perspective. We have to know how to articulate the numerous technologies in this respect and where possible how to establish the right moment to use them in order to benefit people in the psychotherapeutic process.

When I published the first book entirely about transpersonal psychology, written now sixteen years ago, a person of international stature commented the following to me one day: you are a pioneer, you will have problems. I have come to understand this with time and it is the only explanation I have for certain attitudes of people so unknown to me that I would not recognize them on the street. But this forms part of the human character and it seems to repeat *for ever and ever*. Everything criticized and left to criticism in reality can be summed up quite simply:

- Psychology as a discipline is said to be in its infancy; it is a very young science that has to earn merit in order to be recognized among the great sciences. If psychology is this way, where will transpersonal psychology be? I believe the problems derive from the fact that it is still in its conception phase. And there are too many wet nurses without children. Time will put things in their place.

I would like to ask forgiveness to all those who have felt annoyed by these opinions, which I throw to the wind like Tibetan flags, hoping that if possible they will have some use. Always in my thoughts is the biblical phrase *he who is free of sin should cast the first stone*. This is what I have seen and what I have experienced. Therefore this article is a farewell to those eighteen years in the European transpersonal hustle and bustle, from which I keep the knowledge I have received.

Will transpersonal psychology make it out of this mire? Will the word and the act be saved? Or will all this give rise to another movement?

In this farewell I would like to offer these final words to Rumold Mol with whom I have been in contact from the beginning and who has passed suddenly, despite his impressive spirit. He died among emails of comings and goings, in the midst of his tenacious idea to create a support group in psychotherapy. At conferences he called for the creation of this group and at times we found ourselves alone, hand in hand, settling this issue. At the most we managed to form a group of four. And all because it is practically impossible to offer what one does not have. In order to train in psychotherapy one has to be professionally experienced in it. It is not viable if there is only good faith, some yoga practice or *holotropic breathwork*. Not only because it is insufficient but because students can already find this in their own countries.

The challenge is immense and has yet to be taken up; the road is long.

Manuel Almendro

**\*Manuel Almendro** is PhD in Psychology. Clinical Psychologist. Member of EFPA (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations). He is pioneer and founder of the transpersonal field in Spain. Director of Oxigeme: Centre for a consciousness' psychology.  
Tel. Madrid: +34 91 445 65 65. Tel. Barcelona: +34 679 10 86 14.  
Email: [correo@oxigeme.com](mailto:correo@oxigeme.com) Web: [www.oxigeme.com](http://www.oxigeme.com)

# MANIFIESTO TRANSPERSONAL

## *Haciendo Memoria Haciendo Caminos: Grandezas y miserias. La psicología transpersonal a revisión*

TRANSPERSONAL MANIFESTO  
*Remembering, Retracing paths: Greatness and misery.  
Transpersonal psychology under review.*

**Manuel Almendro\***

Oxigeme: Centro para una psicología de la consciencia  
Madrid, Spain

### **Resumen**

En este escrito se hace balance de una perspectiva de más veintiocho años en el campo de las nuevas psicologías y entre ellas de la psicología transpersonal. Es una reflexión crítica sobre lo que ha pasado en este ámbito, especialmente en Europa y en parte en América. ¿Qué es la Psicología Transpersonal dentro de sus múltiples vaguedades, qué diagnóstico y qué tratamiento podría necesitar, y qué se está haciendo al respecto?. Es por lo tanto una reflexión que plantea la posible muerte de esta psicología, la resurrección del cadáver o tratar de crear un nuevo camino para salir de la fantasía, el oportunismo insoportable y la falta de rigor.

### **Palabras claves:**

ATRE, Ciencia Moderna, Sabiduría Antigua, Rigor, Universalismo Ingenuo

### **Abstract**

This article examines a perspective of more than twenty-eight years in the field of new psychologies including transpersonal psychology. It is a critical reflection of what has happened in this context, especially in Europe and America. What is transpersonal psychology in all its vagueness? What diagnosis and what treatment might be needed? What is being done in this respect?. It is therefore a reflection that raises the issue of the possible death of this psychology, the resurrection of its cadaver, or the attempt to create a new path in order to leave fantasy, unbearable opportunism, and a lack of rigor behind.

### **Key words**

ATRE, Modern Science, Ancient Wisdom, Rigor, Naïve Universalism.

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Es la primera pregunta que te hacen: ¡Y tú! ¿Desde cuándo estás en esto...?

Tal vez uno ha estado siempre en “*esto*”, en lo que genuinamente y confusamente llamamos transpersonal. Como si desde la infancia la flecha marcara el camino, aspecto que podemos apreciar en personas tan distantes como la mística Teresa de Jesús y científicos como David Bohm, Frijtof Capra y muchos otros. Lo expresen ó no. Y esto fue lo que me pareció enormemente significativo: que en estos científicos conocidos y en otros menos conocidos no fue tanto el encontrarse con el fin de la materia o las charlas de Krishnamurti –como es el caso de los nombrados- sino que en todos ellos la vivencia de lo infinito apareció en sus infancias. Lo que vino después fueron detonantes de algo que ya estaba en germen y probablemente en el *sin tiempo*.

Por ello no hay nada mejor que hacer memoria.

Érase una vez... en los comienzos de los años setenta en la facultad de psicología de la universidad de Barcelona que escuchábamos los primeros relatos de lo que sucedía en California. Internet no existía, ni por supuesto capital para trayectos intercontinentales. Eran comentarios rellenos de ilusión. Y fue ya a mediados de los años setenta cuando entré en profundidad en el zen, con maestros como Deshimaru y posteriormente Poep y Seon Sa Nim, Dhiravansa etc., maestros de la tradición oriental. Y como soy un poco tenaz salté el charco al inaugurar la década de los ochenta por una flecha que me llevaba al mundo indígena. De esto he dado cuenta en colaboraciones y especialmente en mi último libro *Chamanismo, la vía de la mente nativa*. Algunos chamanes que conocí cuando aún vivían solitarios hoy ya salen en el cine y por internet. Pero no es esto de lo que aquí quiero hablar.

Efectivamente los años ochenta fueron proclives para saber quiénes eran esos californianos de los que apenas se barruntaban palabras. Apareció el nombre de Stanislav Grof, me apunté a su formación aprovechando mis estancias en Oaxaca y California, por cierto mucho más barata que la que se está dando en Europa. Sumando a todo ello el saber quién era Maslow, Naranjo, Wilber, etc. Y se inició la andadura. Primero la tarea de explicar por aquel entonces qué era la psicología transpersonal. Curiosamente hoy ya hay que explicar lo que no es. De todo ello salió el libro *Psicología y Psicoterapia Transpersonal* escrito en 1992 corregido y entregado a la editorial Kairós en 1993, y que se publica en 1994/1995. Fue importante para mí apercibirme de que la psicología transpersonal no era un bandera seguidista -aunque alguien lo quiera ver así- sino un punto de convergencia en el tiempo de muchas voluntades que tenían “*eso*” entre los dedos y que al final encontró un nombre. Siguiendo el rastro me puse en contacto con la asociación francesa, con Marc Alain Descamps, que participaría en el libro *La Consciencia Transpersonal* y que me dio dos nombres que estaban también interesados: Fernando Rodríguez Bornaetxea que iniciaría posteriormente la primeras clases de psicología transpersonal en la facultad de psicología de San Sebastián y David González Raga traductor de Kairós. Finalmente junto al junguiano Enrique Galán conformamos ATRE, la asociación transpersonal española con varios congresos en Canarias, Madrid y Barcelona. Y ya que estamos en el comienzo de una nueva revista decir que se publicaron varios números a cargo primero de Eduardo Miño y después de Sinesio Madrona de una calidad puesta de manifiesto por muchos lectores.

### **Pero ¿qué es lo transpersonal?**

Durante años los franceses mantienen una revista cuyo título es *Qu'est-ce que le transpersonnel?*. Como ya hemos comprobado lo transpersonal es *lo que no cesa de ser definido*. Ahora bien esta apertura acarrea consecuencias agrídulces en parte porque no se puede poner puertas al campo y en parte por la falta de escrúpulos basado en el *todo sirve*. Lo más grave ha sido las grandes desilusiones que al final han acabado pasando factura a partir de la dispersión y del fraude. Como consecuencia he comprobado que se han perdido personas importantes en el trayecto, personas que habiendo comenzado con buena voluntad han acabado abandonando el proyecto. Por ello antes de entrar en el qué es lo transpersonal creo que es necesario echar un vistazo a *¿cómo está lo transpersonal?*

La decepción no está solo en relación a la problemática ya expuesta por Sam Shapiro de la universidad de Hawaii a partir del abuso del término psicología transpersonal como *un paraguas para todo*. También en Wilber en *the demise of transpersonal psychology* .<sup>§</sup>-sin entrar a valorar a fondo estas opiniones-poniendo de manifiesto el oportunismo espiritualoide que se cuele por no haber entereza y rigor, dejadez que acaba desvirtuando el proyecto, perdiéndose así la oportunidad de la apertura correcta al no regir ese rigor necesario en el aporte tanto a nivel intelectual como vivencial.

Para ir contestando a esta pregunta necesito seguir haciendo memoria. A partir de 1990 ATRE acudió a las primeras reuniones de EUROTAS –LA European Transpersonal Association- participando en sus inicios y fue primero Fernando Rodríguez y después Jaime Llinares, vicepresidente, los encargados de representarnos ya que en septiembre regularmente me encontraba trabajando en América. Al principio siempre ha gobernado en estos caminos de inicio la *fascinación de lo nuevo* y por ello todo marcha sobre ruedas. Recuerdo de aquellos tiempos especialmente mis comunicaciones fluidas y continuas, y algunas visitas, por ejemplo a Ian Gordon Brown a Londres del que guardo un sentimiento entrañable. Gordon Brown fue un estupendo presidente de EUROTAS. Ha sido la única persona que había leído a un autor español: Vicente Beltrán Anglada. Gordon Brown murió prematuramente y dejó las cosas a medias tanto en su escuela en Londres como en EUROTAS. Al poco tiempo y de forma directa empecé a escuchar las primeras disensiones, descalificaciones. Esto se resolvió en principio con la presidencia de Laura Boggio Gilot que a su vez era presidenta de la asociación italiana, mujer que considero bastante capaz y prudente como para llevar los entresijos de una asociación tan compleja. Pero todo acabó en ruptura. Un grupo se quedó con el nombre y el otro grupo creó la ETPA -European Transpersonal Association- con la idea de centrarse más en la psicología. Yo atónito en mi consulta recibía faxes y llamadas que discurrían a *gogo* sobre acusaciones y contestaciones. Como podemos comprobar puro yoga; es decir unión mística, pura consciencia sin fronteras (Es una ironía). Está claro que hubo pugna transpersonal ...muy poco transpersonal.

¿Qué quiero decir recordando todo esto? Primero, que el mundo transpersonal es muy dado a esconder el pecado; que jamás se ha hablado de esto siendo considerado como tabú, cuando es ahí en donde está la espina. Así que tenemos que aceptar que las asociaciones transpersonales de Europa manejan la misma relación que las asociaciones de fútbol. Quizás estaría bien reconocerlo y bajarnos del pedestal de los elegidos.

Si las cosas están así en Europa bien está echar un vistazo a lo que sucede en Estados Unidos. Me quito el sombrero hacia aquellos pioneros representantes de lo transpersonal, especialmente en California. Al movimiento que da comienzo Anthony Sutich, Maslow, Bateson, y posteriormente nombres como Grof, Walsh, Vaughan, Wilber, Tart, Naranjo, Krippner, Shapiro etc. sobre los que siento una gran admiración y respeto y a los que denomino cariñosamente como *los legendarios*. Varios de ellos leen en español. Creo que aunque fue un grupo un poco cerrado -según algunas filtraciones- fueron capaces de generar unas bases sobre las cuales crecimos los demás y entre estos me cuento. Fundaron al final de los años sesenta la primera asociación internacional ITA –Internacional Transpersonal Association- . Los americanos son muy dados a nombrar lo internacional en sus organizaciones aunque después no lo practiquen demasiado. Se comienzan las primeras publicaciones como *ReVision*, el *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* y son los que inician el movimiento con un éxito merecido. Editoriales como Shamballa, academias de estudio como California Institute of Integral Studies, Say Brook, *International Transpersonal Psychology* son representantes de esa creoda transpersonal en estos momentos en California.

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<sup>§</sup> Shapiro, S. Legitimization and the transpersonal vision. *Australian Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* Vol.8, 68-72, 1989.

\*Wilber, K. *On critics integral institute. A shamballa interview with Ken Wilber*. Shamballa publications. Ca. 2000

Ahora bien, del espíritu innovador de esa época ¿Qué queda? Conocí directamente la California de los años ochenta en adelante y creo que me llegaron restos del ambiente expansivo de los años sesenta y setenta en mis estancias prácticamente ininterrumpidas. Pero no fue hasta el año 2005 que pude por fin liberarme de compromisos de trabajo y emplearlo en vivir California. Decepción es la palabra que resume mi andadura. Lo transpersonal expansivo y creativo se había convertido en lo *transpersonal chic*, una moda para quien pueda pagársela. Entre algunas opiniones privadas de los legendarios estaba la crítica de que estos chicos “no prestan atención al pasado” o simplemente “lo transpersonal sigue el ritmo decadente de nuestros días” con el ejemplo gráfico de que “cualquier americano aquí en San Francisco lo único que le preocupa hoy es no acabar como un *homeless*”, es decir no acabar recogiendo cartones. Otras críticas fueron más duras.

Puestas así las cosas sobre cómo está el paciente podemos pasar a ¿que es lo transpersonal? y si este derrotero existencial esta produciendo desavenencias, creo que al menos en lo teórico sí que podemos acercar posiciones. La puesta en práctica ya es otra cosa, es el más duro de los yogas. Veamos:

Para los que se inician en saber *qué demonios es esto de lo transpersonal* y para los que no están muy al tanto y porque lo creo necesario -dado lo que se está viendo- se estableció que lo transpersonal significa ir más *allá del ego* pero a través de lo personal. No se trata de huir de la responsabilidad de lo personal para cantar como los ángeles en forma de postal.

Y más cosas que resumo:

- ✓ Establecer puentes entre la ciencia y la espiritualidad
- ✓ Síntesis entre *ciencia moderna* y *sabiduría antigua*, lo que conlleva un puente entre oriente y occidente sin olvidarnos de las franjas intermedias
- ✓ Síntesis y encuentro entre los opuestos. Lo que tiene que ver con el significado milenarior de *religare, yogas, sutras*. Tratar de aproximarnos al origen en vocablo de Salvador Pániker.
- ✓ Tratar de enfocar la totalidad sin fronteras y recalco, sin escamotear la responsabilidad de lo personal.
- ✓ Recuperación de la sabiduría milenaria, el legado por ejemplo del misterio y el sentido de la vida puesto de manifiesto en textos tan antiguos como necesarios de relecturas, me refiero al Guilgamesh, en Babilonia, al Tato te King de Lao Tsé (me impresiona el nº xxxviii), Confucio, en la antigua china; los Upanishad en la India, o tratando de acceder al compás del universo como los derviches y ¿por que no? a la sabiduría del cristianismo que siempre despreciamos por tenerlo más a mano.
- ✓ Está bien apercibirnos de que no somos ni los únicos ni los primeros. Que ya en el albor de nuestra civilización Platón, Pitágoras, Plotino, Pseudodionisos de Areopagita etc. y tantos otros entraron en el misterio.

Nada de esto parece tener eco en los congresos transpersonales europeos que he presenciado. Entonces ¿que está pasando?

Necesitamos establecer para aclararnos de un diagnóstico y de un tratamiento. Allá vamos. Parece que desciende la espada de Damocles. Ya la veo...

## Diagnóstico

La patología transpersonal tendría que ver con ciertos presupuestos, muchos de ellos percibidos personalmente o bien a través de espectadores ocasionales, participantes a congresos, simpatizantes o miembros de asociaciones:

- ✓ **Carta al Ser.** Desde principios de los años setenta y por más de veinte años he asistido a congresos nacionales e internacionales, pasando de una asistencia continuada a esporádica y de aquí a alguna asistencia muy especial. Haciendo balance me doy cuenta que en bastantes ponencias y talleres lo que se proporcionaba era un trabajo desde fuera hacia adentro. En otros casos se presentaba algo impactante que con el paso del tiempo comprobaba que se iba diluyendo. Pocas eran las aportaciones dirigidas hacia una transformación estructural, integral y profunda de la persona. Tal vez porque lo que se puede ofrecer es la parte que uno ha podido constatar. Tras veintiocho años en la psicología profesional y pudiendo constatar que los nuevos caminos que se abren en este campo esta formado por gente buscadora pero con muy poca base y de constitución evanescente, con demasiada provisionalidad y facilismo, me da la impresión que quizás sólo un 10% estaría por una transformación integral. Así que la oferta mayoritaria de congresos y jornadas se entienden más como golosinas que como un alimento de base. Un amigo lo explicaba así en un evento de estos “aquí hay demasiada gente en la estación pero muy pocos dispuestos a coger el tren”. Por eso me hago la pregunta ¿por qué la gente que puebla este tipo de grupos –llamémosle espirituales- son tan fácilmente inflamables en el momento y faltos de compromiso en cuanto a sus acciones? o más fuerte *Why Manuel we have a lot of borderline people in the transpersonal?* comentaba medio en broma un amigo californiano. He observado que estos grupos tan volubles en ambientes espirituales o socio espirituales se reducen sin embargo en grupos de meditación como el zen y es porque aquí se demanda una interiorización y muy poca puesta en escena. Observo con respeto movimientos como el de Deepak Chopra en el sentido de expandir una nueva relación humana en el mundo, pero entiendo que si no hay una transformación radical previa, difícil será que el barco llegue a puerto. Transformación es compromiso. Por lo tanto observo muchos de estos mundos importados de Estados Unidos que si bien ofrecen una expansión sin exclusiones – he participado de ellos- adolecen de trivialidad y de mundos evanescentes. ¿Cómo es posible que la mayoría de los participantes a estos eventos desconozcan la profundidad del pensamiento europeo desde Platón, la profundidad del “camino-caduceo Apolo-Dionisos”, R. Lull, hasta Victor Hugo, Huxley, Jünger, Jüng, sin olvidar la mística española y europea? Es insoportable la trivialidad consumista de lo espiritual y asfixia toda vía de transformación. Con cierta dureza una persona me decía hace muy poco “es que quien está en la transformación no va a esos sitios”

Concreto y recalco:

- ✓ Tendencia hacia lo mágico-esotérico con disfraz espiritual. Me refiero a un facilismo, un simplismo de corte emocional fácilmente sugestionable y en según qué casos vendible. Pura New Age. Esto hace que los eventos transpersonales se conviertan en buena parte en proyecciones de la ignorancia que siembran dispersión y entiendo que difícilmente se puede edificar sobre un barrial movedizo. Se tiende a un *bluf* espiritual que niega la sombra, pura nata inconsistente.
- ✓ *Universalismo ingenuo* que nos lleva a ¡*todo vale!* Y como consecuencia se cuele el oportunismo y la carencia de rigor en las exposiciones: ponencias, comunicaciones etc., por evidente carencia de conocimiento, preparación, compromiso y entrega. Hablando esto con personas de confianza los comentarios abundan en que hay un porcentaje elevado de personas que dan ponencias, talleres sin preparación, acuden a alguien preparado para después “vender” e seminario al fin de semana siguiente; también que hay quien se apuntan a los transpersonal por un día y luego desaparecen. Y que han accedido a ello por amiguismo más que por organización. Como consecuencia hay abandonos por parte de gente comprometida. Si además recordamos las disputas por el poder, desavenencias que han generado confusión y separaciones *anti transpersonales* ¿Cómo vamos a

acabar un evento o comunicaciones de eventos con lo de ¡besos y abrazos! ¡os quiero mucho! en medio de un suflé espiritual que rechina. He sido testigo de personas que han abandonado el asiento en frente de mis narices renegando de esta parafernalia y de esta puesta en escena. Es cierto también que personas ajenas al movimiento transpersonal que trabajan con cristales, naipes, rituales de brujería etc., están utilizando el nombre de psicología transpersonal, incluso en programas de radio y TV. Siempre está bien en confiar que el tiempo acabará aclarando el paisaje...esperemos.

- ✓ Esta parafernalia ¿A dónde nos lleva? Pues a olvidarnos de los peligros de las trampas de lo transpersonal que autores tan renombrados como Daniel Goleman, Frances Vaughan, en la arena transpersonal; Thérèse Bosse, Thomas Merton en el campo espiritual, entre otros, han puesto ya de manifiesto. Me refiero a que escritos muy tempranos ya nos avisan de la inflación del ego (a partir e Jung), de la indigestión del proceso, fingidores de realizaciones, del peligro de los egos espirituales, el yo poderoso, el yo melaza, las cestas espirituales en las que todo cabe etc..
- ✓ Universidades. Se han hecho pesquisas para tratar de que la psicología transpersonal pueda entrar en la universidad, superar las resistencias del aparato científico y abrir puertas en ese recinto imprescindible. Dada la situación este panorama no aparece despejado. Pero no es sólo por nuestros errores. Tengamos en cuenta que el materialismo científico desprecia abiertamente todo lo que tenga que ver con una línea abierta hacia la consciencia, puesto que ésta es indefinible y ello devuelve al materialismo científico –que no es la ciencia ¡jojo!- su propia parcialidad y fragmentación. *Una anécdota:* Al comienzo de los años noventa asistí a la formación de S. Grof en California como ya he dicho. Grof es un hombre muy atractivo en sus exposiciones pero algunas me las saltaba para pasear admirando el *Pocket Ranch* al norte de California en el que se impartieron durante algún tiempo estos seminarios. En uno de mis paseos, Barbara Findeisen, la directora me invitó a entrar en su oficina que estaba con las puertas abiertas dado el calor reinante. Y me comunicó que ya en California “si querías conseguir ayudas económicas no podías hablar nada de psicología transpersonal, respiración holotrópica...porque no recibes ni un solo dólar.” Es obvio que esto pone de manifiesto que las cosas en California estaban cambiando y que además en el mundo *reduccionista* se ve a lo transpersonal como algo a desechar.
- ✓ Degradación social de lo transpersonal debido a la mezcolanza y ansiedad por encontrar salidas a la angustia de ser humano de hoy día, en medio de la sobre información reinante. Hay mucha demanda y como consecuencia se produce una oferta en buena medida oportunista. De nuevo tengo que remontarme a mi experiencia. Desde hace años escucho por correos u opiniones en directo sobre la degradación de lo transpersonal que ciertas personas perciben vía internet o en cualquier evento social. Sin embargo esta apreciación tan negativa se para en el momento en que han leído algo con fundamento. Claro que irremisiblemente la sospecha ya está sembrada.
- ✓ Los problemas que existen entre los que solo valoran la teoría y los que sólo valoran la práctica. Hacer una apología de la teoría y resguardarse en ello es tan descabellado como hacer lo mismo a partir de una apología de la experiencia. Por una parte es fácil asistir a una apología de gourmet intelectual muy fina y deslumbrante pero poco arriesgada a entrar en el territorio. Sus defensores acaban convirtiéndose en una *élite*. Aquí tendríamos a intelectuales transpersonales que devalúan la experiencia y que la pueden rebajar a lo mágico-mítico-simbólico y prerracional. Así sucumbimos al *teoricismo*. Por otra parte podemos encontrarnos con representantes que sólo valoran la práctica y se vanaglorian de la experiencia, es el *experientialismo*. Muchas veces bajo la proclama de que todo está dicho y de que ¡soy un iluminado! YO, ¡los demás no! Y aunque hasta cierto punto se puede entender que lo esencial en lo transpersonal ya está dicho y que estamos mareando la perdiz es conveniente ir desmadejando conceptos adecuados a nuestro momento cultural. Parece que un buen puente y acuerdo entre estas dos formas de entender el proceso es decisivo.
- ✓ *La falacia anti-trans*. El Lenguaje. Aquí me tengo que detener. Las lenguas son instrumentos creados por la naturaleza para la comunicación imprescindible de los seres humanos. También



para los transpersonales. El problema que tenemos es que se cae en que se puede ser transpersonal pero no “trans-english”. Es decir *lo que no está en inglés no existe*. Este es un problema que reduce la calidad de la comunicación y además determina la preponderancia de una lengua, de sus contenidos y de su contexto. A partir de establecer esta preponderancia como válida se determinan cuáles son las líneas por dónde ha de discurrir el pensamiento y las ideas – me refiero especialmente a las líneas editoriales-. A partir de aquí es muy posible caer en el error de imponer una tónica de pensamiento, una moda en el sentido literal –la de su contexto- y devaluar con esas gafas de ver esa realidad a otras tónicas de pensamiento y realidades por el hecho de que forman parte de otro momento vivencial o perspectiva cultural. Es una guerra que se puede ganar por la cantidad más no por la calidad. Lo *cognicéntrico* y lo *etnocéntrico* de nuevo a debate, dualismo que yo prefiero llamar *egocéntrico* (no peyorativo) y *omnicéntrico*. Y entiendo que una publicación tenga que someterse a ciertos intereses estratégicos por cuestiones de supervivencia, pero se ha de tratar de ir más allá. Es evidente que la forma de redactar de un norteamericano (quizás extensible a los anglosajones) es diferente a la de un europeo no anglosajón. Para no caer en la *falacia anti-trans* debemos ser *trans-lenguaje*, lo que implica e respeto por todos ellos.

### Tratamiento del paciente:

- ✓ Creo que es decisivo el que se fundamenten en la teoría y en la práctica las vías definitorias sobre qué es la Psicología Transpersonal.
- ✓ Es necesario establecer correspondencias empíricas entre consciencia y materia. No sólo por su valor en sí sino también por exorcizar a lo transpersonal de la fantasía, el oportunismo insoportable y la falta generalizada de rigor.
- ✓ Es imprescindible así mismo y en la práctica saber establecer la relación entre lo universal y lo particular; y viceversa. Es decir no podemos supeditarnos hoy día al mundo transpersonal anglosajón porque ello representaría una pobreza de tal calibre que todos saldríamos perdiendo.
- ✓ Las raíces de lo transpersonal son europeas, se dice a menudo. ¿Cómo, pues, vamos a olvidarlas? Es decir los húngaros, los alemanes, los españoles etc.; es decir cada país, cada cultura, ha de partir de su propio legado transpersonal a lo largo de su historia. Investigar y reconocer el propio legado y sólo así se puede entender y compartir los diferentes legados que irían desde lo *particular* a lo *universal* sin sometimientos. Si no se sabe apreciar el propio legado es muy fácil caer en la ceguera de la propaganda y la fuerza mercantil de los poderosos. Un ejemplo: “we have everything” contestaba un editor americano cuando varios editores europeos le comunicaban que aquí ya se estaban publicando ideas importantes en el ámbito de lo transpersonal. Imposible la comunicación.

En Europa no nos podemos olvidar de ciertos rasgos transpersonales que se perciben en escritores como Dostoievski, Gogol en Rusia –además del genuino Nalimov ya dentro de lo transpersonal actual- que lo hemos conocido gracias al IJTS; el propio Quijote en España según algunos de lectura cabalística y de por supuesto los místicos, no sólo de España sino de Europa, como M.A. Descamps estableció en el libro *La Consciencia Transpersonal*. En autores clásicos como en el caso de Goethe también se perciben tintes transpersonales y especialmente y de lleno en lo transpersonal tenemos a K.G. Dürckheim, en Alemania; Inolvidables son los trabajos de Gödel, R. Guenon, y T. Brosse, en Francia, etc. A lo largo de la historia de cada país encontraremos personajes que han tratado *la verdad* sin haber usado la palabra transpersonal, sin embargo si han estado en el contenido. Doy por sabido el legado de Jung, y Assagioli. Pero la sorpresa me llegó leyendo al Doctor Juan Rof Carballo que ¡ya en 1952! estableció la necesidad de una psicología transpersonal. Él se convierte en *el pionero* haciéndose eco de todo ello en los años noventa planteando el proceso humano a partir de generar primero la *urdimbre constitutiva personal* para llegar posteriormente a la *urdimbre cósmica*. No olvidemos a J.L. Pinillos que habla de la pérdida de los universales como causa de la apropiación materialista de la realidad, o la aportación del

nobel I. Prigogine y de Isabelle Stenger con la propuesta de un nuevo reencanto con la Naturaleza, o la aportación no sólo epistemológica de S. Pániker sino además de puente por su editorial, pionera y notable, para todo los hispano lectores; hecho extensible hoy a Cl. Naranjo. No olvidemos a Luis Cencillo, recientemente desaparecido, un investigador en silencio cuyo trabajo será reconocido años depuse de su muerte..triste país éste.

Hay muchos más. Lo transpersonal se puede rastrear de manera prolífica a lo largo del pensamiento europeo.

- ✓ Necesitamos ser trans-lenguaje y por lo tanto trans-english. Los idiomas son puentes que la Naturaleza traza, pero si se sucumbe a la preponderancia de una cultura el puente se convierte en barrera. Es obvio que no todo el mundo ha de hablar catalán, castellano, húngaro, polaco... porque es humanamente imposible y que es por lo tanto evidente que las publicaciones han de hacerse en los propios idiomas y en inglés para el resto. Pero esto no significa que tenga que haber supeditación. Por ello creo conveniente que los textos y especialmente sus resúmenes pudieran ir en todos los idiomas posibles y que hubiera comisiones de trabajo que como la escuela de traductores de Toledo del rey Alfonso X el sabio –por algo lo sería- se encargara de ello. Pura comunicación y acercamiento a las vidas de esas personas a través de sus idiomas. Esta propuesta ya la envié a EUROTAS hace no menos de diez años. Este respeto lingüístico lo considero condición imprescindible.
- ✓ *posibles estrategias y ejemplos:*
  - IJTS. International Journal of Transpersonal Studies. Un día a mediados de los años noventa recibí una llamada desde la Universidad de Hawaii. San Shapiro profesor de meditación me habló de esta revista y de que iba a hacer un viaje por Europa, que vendría a visitarme a España. Así fue, compartimos mesa y mantel, y me comunicó que lo transpersonal significaba de forma decisiva la interrelación. Creo que San Shapiro es una de las personas que encarna el genuino legado. El *Journal* que tanto Sam como Ph.I. Gross sacaron adelante hoy es dirigido por Harris Friedman y Glenn Hartelius vía internet. Creo que esta publicación sigue manteniendo el legado y podría convertirse en el mejor puente intertranspersonal. Incluso podría ser factible que saliera en varios idiomas.
  - ✓ Universidades. Es imprescindible entrar en las universidades. Para ello se han de generar trabajos consistentes. Este trabajo está por hacer en Europa a escala media. He hablado durante años y sigo hablando sobre ello con representantes universitarios –incluido algún premio nobel-. Hay apertura por parte de ellos si se ofrece rigor. En España ya estamos dando varios pasos a pesar del contratiempo por el ajuste del tratado de Bolonia. No cabe duda que la mejor manera de llevar la psicología transpersonal adelante y diferenciarnos del abuso mágico es realizar un buen trabajo. Una asociación con fundamento no puede tener como sede la cocina de una casa entre amiguetes ocasionales. El compromiso pide algo más.
    - John Moore University en Liverpool. Aquí se esta dando ya por parte de los profesores B. Lancaster y M. Daniels un *master* que podría ser la avanzadilla en otros lugares de Europa en caso de que consideren oportuno desarrollar una línea abierta. En España ya estamos dando varios pasos a pesar del contratiempo por el ajuste del tratado de Bolonia.
    - Oxígeme se ha transformado en asociación internacional de hispano hablantes y embrión de un master universitario. El potencial Ibero americano que Oxigeme y Alubrat (Asociación Luso Brasileira) pueden dar es digno de consideración. Oxigeme esta constituido hoy ya por personas de Argentina V. Gadwell; Peru. E, Gastelumendi;

- Ecuador, R.Midero; México. A, M<sup>a</sup> Gonzalez y R. Aluni y España. Con proyectos como el próximo congreso en Monterrey (México)
- Efectivamente que hay personas con capacidad de organizar eventos y expandir lo que se denomina como lo *transpersonal horizontal* pero es necesario que se expanda también dada la parafernalia espiritualista lo *transpersonal vertical*. Y efectivamente tenemos autores y organizadores que trabajan tanto a niveles prácticos como teóricos –cosa que se demuestra por los años dedicados a ello- como J. Rowan, M. Daniels. B. Lancaster, y el incansable J. Drew, en Inglaterra, la dulce Tanna en Polonia; M.A. Descamps en Francia; L.Boggio, en Italia; W. Bleichner, I. Jahrsetz en Alemania; V. Rodrigues en Portugal –hoy presidente de EUROTAS- sin olvidar a M. Simoes, P.Veigunha con los que hemos compartido congresos, reuniones y algunas de estas críticas; En esta lista involucraría a más personas y países. Entre todo ellos me cuento. También en el ámbito de lo transpersonal en España es justo dar constancia de escritores con una base de trabajo y preparación envidiables como C. Aguirre, A.Pacheco, J. Pigem, J. Esteban, V.Merlo, JL Romero, O. García, J. Castillo, E. Galán, Albareda y Romero, Raquel –la correccaminos wilberiana- el Xavi y su revista de Ulises interiores, etc., y otros que daremos a conocer próximamente. Y sin olvidarnos de A. Pániker que además es editor. (Lo siento, me encantan los nombres de personas pero no puedo poner a todos) Me estoy refiriendo a escritores y al valor de sus trabajos y por el hecho relevante que supone ofrecer libros-ideas que puedan llegar a muchas manos y que esas manos sientan la dignidad de pasar esos libros a otras manos. Efectivamente entre lo transpersonal horizontal están las iniciativas de generar encuentros, revistas como a la que va dirigida este artículo, claro que es necesario saber hacerlo bien, sin neurosis, de forma abierta y respetuosa, sin oportunismos. Ya que por el hecho de que estemos en una idea transpersonal abierta no hay que dejar de ser prudentes y magnánimos pero también enteros –de entereza-. El proceso transpersonal no se debería poner en manos de personas arribistas que sin aportaciones sólo pretendan figurar en los carteles barajando eventos más como un ego político que como un servidor de la idea. *Por sus obras los conoceredes* decía don Juan Manuel allá por el siglo XIII-XIV. Siendo presidente de ATRE no tuve mas remedio que apercibirme de que algunos que se presentaban como expertos en lo transpersonal no eran más que ilusionados que hacía dos meses se habían enterado de su existencia. Esto es moneda común en el ambiente voluble de lo transpersonal. De hecho me he encontrado por Europa a personas que habiendo formado parte del movimiento en poco tiempo se han olvidado y lo admiten con un ¡*I am in another bussines!* La entereza de la que hablo es lo que me mueve a no quedarme callado como si constituyéramos un coro de angelitos transpersonales siempre con el comodón ¡os amo a todos! Entiendo que pueda ser osado pero menos entiendo actitudes ancladas en la bondad incorpórea, tibia y cómoda, de sonreír siempre hasta que no pudiendo más sueltan el escopetazo.
  - No quiero quedarme en la crítica a lo *transpesonal chic* actual de California puesto que nos llegan los trabajos de una segunda generación –me gusta llamarlo así- trabajadora muy bien representada por ejemplo por Lukoff, Ferrer, Sovatsky, Schmitz etc.. con los que podemos compartir el unirnos en lo *transpersonal horizontal*.
  - Es obvio que no todo el mundo que esté en un proceso de búsqueda ha de pasar expresamente por lo transpersonal y sus libros y congresos etc., puesto que hay personas que de forma sencilla ya lo han encontrado en el centro de yoga de su barrio. Los apostolados mejor con valeriana.
  - Creo que es importante saber establecer además de una psicología transpersonal una psicoterapia y continuar generando un corpus teórico y práctico que trabaje desde una perspectiva holista e integrativa. Tendríamos que saber articular las numerosas tecnologías

al respecto y además establecer en lo posible el momento adecuado para usarlas en beneficio de las personas en proceso.

Cuando publiqué el primer libro íntegro sobre Psicología Transpersonal, escrito hace ahora dieciséis años, un personaje de talla internacional me comentó un día: eres un pionero, tendrás problemas. Lo he entendido con el tiempo y es el único elemento de explicación que tengo para determinadas actitudes de personas tan desconocidas que ni siquiera las reconocería por la calle. Pero esto forma parte del signo humano y por lo visto se repite *por los siglos de los siglos*. Pero todo lo criticado y lo dejado por criticar en realidad se resume a algo muy sencillo:

- La Psicología como disciplina se dice que está en mantillas, que es una ciencia muy joven que ha de ganar méritos para ser reconocida entre las grandes ciencias. Si así está la Psicología ¿En dónde estará la psicología transpersonal? Creo que los problemas se derivan de que está aun en la fase de la concepción. Y hay demasiadas nodrizas sin niños. El tiempo pondrá las cosas en su sitio.

Quiero pedir perdón a todos aquellos que se hayan sentido molestos por estas opiniones que las envió al viento como esos banderines tibetanos con el fin de que si es posible sirvan para algo. Tengo muy presente la frase bíblica de que *quien esté limpio de pecado que tire la primera piedra*. Es lo que he visto y lo que he vivido. Por ello también este escrito es una despedida de todos estos dieciocho años en el trasiego transpersonal europeo, de los que me quedo con el conocimiento recibido.

¿Saldrá la psicología transpersonal de todo este atolladero? ¿Se salvará el vocablo y el acto? ¿O todo esto dará lugar a otro movimiento?

En este adiós quiero ofrecer estas últimas palabras a Rumold Mold con el que he estado en contacto desde el principio y que inesperadamente ha muerto a pesar de su brío impactante. Ha muerto entre *emails* de idas y venidas, en medio de su tenaz idea de crear un grupo de ayuda en psicoterapia. Hizo llamados en los congresos para crear este grupo y a veces nos hemos encontrado solos mano a mano dirimiendo este asunto. Como máximo hemos llegado a ser cuatro. Y todo porque es prácticamente imposible que se pueda ofrecer lo que no se tiene. Para formar en psicoterapia se ha de ser profesional experimentado en ello. Es inviable si solo se cuenta con buena voluntad, unas prácticas de yoga o de *respiración holotrópica*. No sólo porque es insuficiente sino porque esto ya lo pueden encontrar los estudiantes en sus propio países.

El reto es grande y está por hacer, largo es el camino.

Manuel Almendro

**Manuel Almendro\*** es doctor en psicología y psicólogo clínico. Miembro de la EFPA (European Federation of Psychology Association). Es pionero y fundador de la psicología transpersonal en España. Director de Oxigeme: Centro para una psicología de la consciencia.  
Telef./ Cont. 34 91 445 65 65 Madrid Telef. 34 679 10 86 14. Barcelona. España.  
Email: [correo@oxigeme.com](mailto:correo@oxigeme.com) Web: [www.oxigeme.com](http://www.oxigeme.com)

## **The International Transpersonal Association Announces the 17<sup>th</sup> International Transpersonal Conference\*\***

La Asociación Transpersonal Internacional  
Anuncia el XVII Congreso Internacional Transpersonal

**Harris Friedman**

University of Florida

Gainesville, Florida, USA

**Glenn Hartelius**

Institute for Transpersonal Psychology

Palo Alto, California, USA

*A reconstituted International Transpersonal Association, currently forming an international board, announces the 17<sup>th</sup> International Conference to be held June 23-27, 2010, in Moscow.*

Shortly after the first transpersonal organization, The Association of Transpersonal Psychology, was formed in the United States, it became evident that interest in the transpersonal movement extended beyond the borders of the US. This resulted in two international transpersonal conferences held in Iceland in 1972 and 1973, followed by a third in Finland in 1976 and fourth in Brazil in 1977. The success of these conferences resulted in a decision to form an international association to continue this tradition. Stan Grof, Michael Murphy, and Richard Price founded the International Transpersonal Association (ITA) “as a scientific and educational corporation whose mission was to promote transpersonal education and scientific research, as well as to guarantee continuation of these international transpersonal conferences into the future” (Grof, Friedman, Lukoff, & Hartelius, 2008, p. 55). Subsequently, ITA offered

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\*\* This article is based on earlier versions of similar papers (i.e., Grof, Friedman, Lukoff, & Hartelius, 2008; Maykov, Friedman, & Hartelius, in press).

International Transpersonal Conferences in the US in 1979, Australia in 1980, India in 1982, Switzerland in 1983, Japan in 1985, the US in 1987 and 1991, Czechoslovakia in 1992, the US in 1994, Ireland in 1995, Brazil in 1996, and the US in 2004.

Following the 2004 International Transpersonal Conference, the ITA ceased as an organization. However, separately both David Lukoff and Harris Friedman were exploring creating an international organization. They met at the World Congress of Spirituality and Psychology in Delhi during 2008 and, along with others, discussed the vision for a new international transpersonal organization. It was decided that the new organization should keep the name ITA in order to continue the rich ITA tradition, especially the continuity of its conferences. Stan Grof blessed that idea and a corporate sponsor, Floragrades Foundation, agreed to provide seed money to reincorporate ITA. Les Lancaster was also able to secure European Union grant money through the International Centre for Digital Content to develop the ITA website, which is under construction. Friedman now serves as its President, Lukoff as its Vice President, and Hartelius as its Secretary-Treasurer.

Currently ITA is involved in two major activities. The first is organizing an international board to represent the global transpersonal community. The second is to hold the 17<sup>th</sup> International Transpersonal Conference, which is planned for June 23-27, 2010 in Moscow, titled *Consciousness Revolution: Transpersonal Discoveries that are Changing the World*. This conference will present experiential and didactic approaches to the transpersonal spanning human history from the first shamans to recent neuroscientific discoveries. Among the expected presenters are Angeles Arrien, Vladimir Baskakov, Eugeny Faidysh, Fritoff Capra, Robert Frager, Harris Friedman, Stanislav and Christina Grof, Michael Harner, Arthur Hastings, Jack Kornfield, Stanley Krippner, Eugeny Krupitsky, Les Lancaster, Ervin Lazslo, David Lukoff, Victor Makarov, Rajiv Malhotra, Vladimir Maykov, Michael Murphy, Arny and Amy Mindell, Silvia Nakkach, Victor Petrenko, Dean Radin, Vitor Rodrigues, Eduard Sagalae, Max and Ellen Schubach, Karan Singh, Stuart Sovatsky, Tav Sparks, Dmitri Spivak, Lama Surya Das, Rick Tarnas, Charles Tart, Frances Vaughan, Bronislav Vinogradsky, and Roger Walsh, as well as many more.

It is anticipated that there will be cultural events, including art, dance, film, music, as well as numerous pre- and post-conference tour opportunities. It is hoped that more than 1000 participants from over 50 countries will attend. Conference sponsors include several prominent Russian groups and individuals, as well as the All-Russian Professional Psychotherapeutic League, Association of Body-Oriented Psychotherapy—Russia, Association of Transpersonal Psychology—US, Association of Transpersonal Psychology and Psychotherapy—Russia, Australian Transpersonal Association, California Institute of Integral Studies—US, Esalen Institute—US, European Transpersonal Association (EUROTAS), Institute of Noetic Sciences—US, John Fetzer Institute—US, John F. Kennedy University—US, Institute of Group and Family Psychotherapy—Russia, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology—US, Japan Transpersonal Psychology Association, Moscow Association of Analytical Psychology, and the World Business Academy—US. We also invite additional sponsors and funding—information on donations (tax-deductable in the US) may be directed to Harris Friedman, President of the International Transpersonal Association, at [harrisfriedman@floraglades.org](mailto:harrisfriedman@floraglades.org) or Glenn Hartelius, Secretary of the International Transpersonal Association, at [payattention1@mac.com](mailto:payattention1@mac.com). Vladimir Maykov, PhD, President of the Russian Association of Transpersonal Psychology and Psychotherapy, heads the organizing committee of the Conference and the Conference website is [ita2010.com](http://ita2010.com) or, for networking/information regarding the Conference, use the following: [itaconference.com](http://itaconference.com).

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