Separating from a spiritual teacher

Gregory C. Bogart

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EDITOR’S NOTE  Gregory C. Bogart’s paper opens this Journal issue by examining some of the difficulties that can arise in mentor-apprentice or teacher-disciple relationships. His analysis shows how these personal situations can be understood, mitigated, and favorably affected by paying more attention to the dynamics of the relationship. In a paper of related interest, David Lukoff, Robert Turner and Francis Lu describe their efforts to develop a diagnostic category for psychoreligious or psychospiritual problems. Their literature review is the first of a three-part survey.

Meditation, often the primary teaching method in spiritual practice, is attempted by innumerable students. It is generally believed, however, that it is most meaningful when pursued as a long-term practice. To investigate this assumption, Deane Shapiro, Jr. found and studied twenty-seven meditators with over four years average meditation experience. His research shows significant shifts along a continuum measuring the meditator’s reports of self-regulation, self-exploration and self-liberation. Psychological research on any transpersonal topic can present methodological challenges—and opportunities. As Patrick McNamara argues in his article, perhaps even one of psychology’s oldest mysteries, memory, can be studied productively if new research incorporates a transpersonal approach.

Next year, the twenty-fifth volume year of the Journal, will be the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of transpersonal psychology as an organized field. Over the years it has expanded substantially, and its basic concepts and theories are being continually refined and clarified. This is amply illustrated in Lajoie and Shapiro’s systematic survey of definitions of transpersonal psychology from the late 1960s through 1991. As indicated in the concluding brief article, defining this culturally rich, technically complex, and philosophically profound area is necessarily an evolving, open-ended and ongoing process.
SEPARATING FROM A SPIRITUAL TEACHER

Gregory C. Bogart

Berkeley, California

In many contemplative traditions it is readily acknowledged that association with an enlightened teacher is one of the most important and effective means of advancement on a spiritual path. In India, for example, it is fairly common for an aspirant to seek a guru at a young age and to remain devoted to that teacher for many years (Vigne, 1991). Many great spiritual teachers—especially those from Hindu, Sufi, Zen, and Tibetan Buddhist lineages—have maintained a life-long connection with their own teachers, and have spoken of the guru-disciple relationship as essential to the alchemy of spiritual transformation. Although it is common in some contemporary Western intellectual circles to ridicule gurus and to view those who associate with them as naive and immature, many people continue to pursue the age-old tradition of spiritual apprenticeship. Despite the decline of many other culturally sanctioned rites of passage, discipleship under a spiritual guide can often still be a powerful initiatory experience.

This essay is not intended to cast any doubt on the validity, value, or importance of the guru-disciple relationship, nor will I try to explain the “meeting of minds” through which a spiritual teacher transmits his or her awakened state of consciousness to the student. Here my task is to explore the question of why, for many people today, a period of relationship with a spiritual teacher frequently proves to be a problematic affair, and, in particular, why the process of separation from such a relationship can be treacherous.

This discussion will examine general features of discipleship as well as some of its inherent tensions and paradoxes. I am particularly interested here not only in those instances where the teacher’s gross misconduct precipitates the student’s departure, but also in cases where the student, in a gradual, healthy, and almost inevitable
process, feels a need to leave the teacher—whether this means a total severance of the relationship or simply a removal from the teacher’s immediate physical presence. My purpose is to deepen our understanding of the sources of disturbances and unforeseen difficulties that can often arise in contemporary discipleship. To explore these issues, I will draw on case material from my therapeutic work with individuals striving to clarify their relationships with spiritual teachers, a pertinent historical example, theories of adult development, and psychoanalytic and Jungian perspectives.

DISCIPLESHIP

The relationship between spiritual teacher and aspirant is founded on the recognition of a need to associate with a person who has fully engaged the process of inner transformation, who has achieved some degree of illumination (if not complete enlightenment), and who has the skill and interest to guide disciples on the path. Many spiritual seekers spend much time and effort seeking instruction, and feel quite fortunate if they are able to establish an association with a spiritual teacher. As the traditional saying goes, “When the disciple is ready, the guru appears.”

In some cases recorded historically (e.g., Kabir; see Lorenzen, 1991), a single encounter with an enlightened being has led to awakening of the student. In other cases (e.g., Milarepa; see Lhalungpa, 1978), an extended period of study and service to the teacher may be pursued. In most instances, however, the relationship is one that is consciously chosen by the student as an outgrowth of a desire to become enlightened, to know “the Truth,” to experience God-consciousness, to wake up from the sleep of ignorance. This goal may become so compelling, so central to the person that other concerns, such as the pursuit of riches, love, power or fame, may pale into insignificance. In some cases, the relationship with a teacher who can provide the guidance needed to reach the goal of enlightenment becomes all-important, the fulcrum around which the student’s entire life is balanced.

For some, discipleship may mean performing direct service to the guru or living in his or her *ashram* or community. For others it may mean practicing techniques, following certain vows, precepts, or doctrines, or carrying the spirit of the guru’s teachings into daily life. Discipleship may be a total commitment, or it may take its place next to other pursuits such as family life, professional responsibilities, or artistic activities. Nevertheless, in either case, the student willingly embraces a reverent or devotional relationship with a spiritual teacher who is seen as a guiding influence. For the purposes of this discussion, I feel it is justified to assume that the major
issues involved in resolving such relationships will be virtually the same for various levels of discipleship—although a disciple in direct service to a teacher may be more likely to have intense personal interactions with the teacher than a devotee who lives at a distance and sees the guru less frequently.

In some cases, the guru-disciple relationship unfolds productively, serves the disciple’s spiritual progress, and fosters the growth of an abiding devotion, faith, and love between master and disciple. The teacher’s personal example and direct energetic transmission may have such a profound impact that the student feels a natural and enduring gratitude and willingly submits to the teacher’s discipline, will, and authority. To illustrate, Clare, a client in my therapy practice, and a student of a Zen teacher for over twelve years, says,

> His sanity and clarity of mind are a beacon for me. He teaches me how to live with dignity, simplicity, and humor. I will always honor him for that.

Jim, a student of kundalini yoga, describes his first meeting with his spiritual teacher in 1978:

> The moment I saw him I felt an electric shock go through my body, and the whole room seemed to be illuminated. Listening to his lecture, my heart opened and I was filled with an overflowing love, an ecstasy. His presence is always with me no matter how far away I am from him physically. My devotion to him will never end, and I hope it will always continue to grow.

And Beth, Jim’s wife and a student of the same teacher, says.

> My guru has shown me my own divine essence. He has led me to God. For me, the guru is the final destination. He is my Krishna, my deity, my Beloved. There is nothing else to accomplish beyond this relationship. I have left my personal concerns at his feet because I feel most fulfilled just being his devotee.

Statements such as these demonstrate that some individuals are able to organize their lives to a large extent around discipleship. For some, this is a life-long commitment, and they are able to follow the guru’s teachings toward the final goal of enlightenment without ever experiencing a significant disturbance in the relationship.

It should be noted that discipleship is typically understood to be a difficult process in which the guru tests the student’s character, obedience, intelligence, and level of realization. It is sometimes characterized as a fire of purification, difficult to endure, to which the disciple is asked to surrender. From the perspective of many spiritual teachings, any effort to depart from the teacher is viewed as a protection of the ego, a sign of an inability to bear the intensity...
of spiritual discipline and of the guru’s exposure of the disciple’s masks and games. In many yogic traditions, for example, one is exhorted to hold onto the guru’s feet (figuratively speaking) and submit to the guru’s testing, no matter how difficult this may be.

A student whose desire for enlightenment, God-realization, or self-transcendence is powerful enough may remain with the teacher steadfastly despite the considerable inner tensions that are often generated. However, equally common, in my view, are instances where the relationship runs astray, often resulting in great confusion, bitterness, or despair for the disciple. Many disciples, having attempted surrender and devotion to their teachers, eventually experience an overriding need to leave their teachers. As I will try to show, this seems to be true for many disciples who have had a positive experience with their teachers, as well as for those who leave feeling that the guru has disappointed, injured, or betrayed them in some way.

In my view, many difficulties in student-teacher relationships arise, or become evident, at that moment when the student attempts to individuate (Jung, 1953), to leave the teacher’s immediate circle or company, and set forth to pursue his or her own life project. While a more or less protracted period of association with a spiritual teacher is often recommended, there usually does come a time when the student has assimilated from the teacher all that he or she can for the time being, has other affairs or interests to attend to, and begins to feel the need to be on his or her own, or has become disillusioned with the teacher. Of course, the student may leave feeling the blessing, love, and continuing internal influence of the guru. In such instances their separation, whether permanent or temporary, can be undertaken with mutual good will, affection, and respect between mentor and novice, guru and disciple. I have observed, however, that it is also common for the exhilaration, gratitude, and joy that the student may have felt during the early stages of discipleship to turn sour, leaving a lasting residue of rage or bitterness.

Such was the case with Robert, a young man who had spent eight years as a disciple of a teacher who emphasized surrender and obedience. After some time he had become one of the guru’s attendants. During this time he loved the teacher very much and felt privileged to serve him, feeling that he was being transformed by his close proximity with such a highly evolved being. His departure from the teacher’s spiritual community came in the aftermath of allegations of financial and sexual misconduct. In an earlier paper (Bogart, 1992a), I described some of Robert’s process of exploring through psychotherapy his anger and sense of betrayal, and the existential crisis he faced in readjusting to life outside this commu-
nity. However, there were aspects of discipleship that had been distressing to Robert long before the events that hastened his departure. In fact, after the first two or three years of discipleship, Robert had considered leaving his guru to pursue what he felt to be his calling as a novelist—a pursuit which he had largely abandoned during the period of his discipleship, and which had always met with the guru’s derision as a narcissistic strategy of seeking egoic gratification. Nevertheless, he had suppressed his creative urge and remained a loyal devotee. Now, in the aftermath of his departure, Robert alternated between angry defiance toward his teacher and a determination to succeed on his own, and paralyzing feelings of fear, worthlessness, and guilt. Robert’s case, to which we will return later, illustrates the dilemma that disciples can face in leaving the guru and re-establishing an independent life.

DISCIPLESHIP IN ADULT DEVELOPMENT

It may be useful at this point to draw some parallels between guru-disciple relationships and mentoring relationships more generally. Mentoring relationships in the general sense tend to be focused on acquisition of particular kinds of skills and expertise, especially those required to learn a trade such as plumbing, carpentry, Tibetan thanka painting, or the practice of homeopathic medicine. The explicit purpose of the relationship is for the student to become a master of this skill or body of knowledge in his or her own right, and eventually leave the teacher in order to practice this skill, art, or discipline independently.

However, in a specifically spiritual apprenticeship, such as that pursued in the context of discipleship under a spiritual teacher, matters can become somewhat more complex. The purpose of such a relationship is for the student’s very consciousness and being to undergo a profound change. This may require challenging the student to overcome personal limitations or fears. The methods may be unorthodox, even shocking, such as those used by crazy-wisdom teachers (Feuerstein, 1991). Further complicating matters, discipleship inherently involves a certain degree of deliberate psychic merger or union with the teacher. One may be encouraged to give oneself over to the guru in body, heart, mind, and speech, to meditate on the guru, to become one with the guru. Such a practice may make separation from the teacher more complex to navigate than in forms of apprenticeship in which the boundaries between student and teacher are drawn more clearly.

Despite these very real differences, both guru-disciple and student-mentor relationships have much in common. Both types of relationships involve a collaboration for the purpose of fostering the
student’s learning and growth. Both involve some form of instruction given by the teacher, and some form of service, as well as effort toward task mastery on the student’s part—whether this means learning to hit a target with an arrow, or focus the mind in meditation. Most relationships of both types also involve some degree of devotion of student and teacher to one another. Finally, all types of guru-disciple, teacher-apprenticeship, or mentor-student relationships seem to carry certain kinds of inherent tensions and difficulties.

Levinson (1978) views the relationship between a mentor and novice as inherently conflictual, because the novice is subject simultaneously to feelings of admiration and respect, and feelings of resentment, inferiority, and envy towards the mentor. Levinson believes that a mentor serves many functions: He acts as a teacher to enhance the novice’s skills and intellectual development, as a sponsor who uses his or her influence to facilitate the apprentice’s social or professional advancement, as a counselor, and as an exemplar the apprentice can admire and emulate. Most importantly the mentor fosters the novice’s development by believing in him or her and supporting the realization of the latter’s own aspirations. All of these characteristics of mentoring relationships also apply to the specific case of guru-disciple relationships.

In Levinson’s view, mentor-student relationships often end with conflict and bitterness because of the inherently ambiguous role of the mentor, who is a transitional figure—both parent and peer—who must eventually be left behind by the novice in order to fulfill the developmental task of “becoming one’s own man [sic]” (p. 101). Levinson writes that often,

The mentor who only yesterday was regarded as an enabling teacher and friend has become a tyrannical father or smothering mother. The mentor, for his part, finds the young [person] inexplicably touchy, unreceptive to even the best counsel, irrationally rebellious and ungrateful (p. 147).

The disciple or apprentice is especially prone to inner tension at this stage, for, on the one hand, he or she yearns for the good father or mother who will make him or her feel special; while on the other hand he or she may begin to perceive the mentor as a bad parental figure, dictatorial, and manipulative. This tendency for the apprentice to split his or her perception of the mentor is, I believe, a central factor in the conflict experienced when the time arrives for separation from the teacher. Levinson’s analysis also suggests the essentially paradoxical nature of such relationships, which involve a temporary dependence of the novice upon the teacher. This dependence, however, is undertaken to allow the novice to ultimately emerge transformed and independent. A similar insight was ex-
pressed by Wilber (1987) in the context of a discussion of relationships with spiritual teachers:

Virtually all authentic Eastern or mystical traditions maintain that the guru is representative of one’s own highest nature, and once that nature is realized, the guru’s formal authority and function is ended.... Thus, once the student awakens to his or her own equally higher status as Buddha-Brahman, the function of the guru is ended and the authority of the guru evaporates. In Zen, for instance, once a person achieves major Satori (causal insight), the relationship between roshi and disciple changes from master and student to brother and brother (or sister-brother, or sister-sister)—and this is explicitly so stated. The guru, as authority, is phase temporary (pp. 257, 249).

While it is easy to understand that discipleship is phase-temporary, a developmental stage to be passed through, it is quite another, more difficult matter, to actually go through the process of separation from a teacher, or to assume the stance toward the teacher of an equal.

THE CASE OF OTTO RANK

A relevant historical example of these dynamics is Otto Rank’s relationship with Sigmund Freud, which led to a predicament that Progoff (1956) describes as “a disciple’s dilemma.” Freud had put Rank through college and graduate school, introduced Rank into the circle of his closest associates, and helped establish him in the psychoanalytic profession. Now, however, after years of receiving encouragement, guidance, praise, financial assistance, and professional favors from Freud, and after making many important contributions to the field. Rank began to feel a need to differentiate and distance himself from his mentor. Matters came to a head in 1924 when Rank published The Trauma of Birth, where he first set forth his own psychological theory. I will quote liberally from Progoff’s account:

Increasingly Rank found that it was his intellectual rather than his artistic energies that were being called into play, and a major part of his personality was thus left unfulfilled.... Nonetheless, his strong personal attachment to Freud—an attachment verging on dependence—and his sense of gratitude for favors received in the past prevented his breaking his connection in a deliberate or abrupt way.... But... the net effect of the book [The Trauma of Birth], and perhaps its unconscious intention, was to precipitate his separation from Freud.... Rank [later] made the acute observation that one of the aftermaths of a creative act is an attack of guilt feelings, remorse, and anxiety.... In making this point, Rank may well have been describing his own experience, for we know that when The Trauma of Birth drew strong attacks from the Freudian circle Rank was on the verge of retracting his views. The thought of being cut off from Freud became exceedingly...
painful for him, for he feared the isolation and ostracism it might bring.... [The result of publishing this book] was to upset his accustomed position as the loyal disciple of a revered master.... Rank had much for which to be grateful, and his attachment to Freud was deep indeed. But how could he develop the artist in himself and fulfill his own need for creativity while remaining a loyal disciple? ... His devotion to Freud ... conflicted with the necessary unfoldment of his own individuality, and his act of self-liberation in writing *The Trauma of Birth* was followed by a sense of remorse that took many forms over the years and from which Rank never fully recovered.... [Although Rank moved away from Freud’s circle in Vienna] it was much easier to separate himself from Freud geographically than psychologically. The man and his teachings remained at the center of a continuous struggle in which Rank was forced to engage within himself.... Freud who had been his protector was now his psychic adversary (pp. 188 ff.).

Here we see the depths of the conflict one may face when standing at the crossroads between continuing allegiance to a mentor, and the need to set forth on one’s own. This passage accurately describes issues that are also pertinent to many guru-disciple relationships. Progoff also makes the significant observation that not only did Rank have an extremely strong personal attachment to Freud, but Freud was also extremely attached to Rank and was eager to avoid defection by such a close and devoted disciple. This point suggests that to understand the problems of discipleship we must consider how the same dynamics of transference and countertransference that operate in the context of psychotherapy may also operate in student-mentor or guru-disciple relationships.

**INDIVIDUATION, PATHOLOGIZING, DEVELOPMENTAL READINESS FOR DISCIPLESHIP, AND THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL FACTORS**

The passage cited above described the student’s conflict between feeling unfulfilled as a disciple and feelings of gratitude, attachment, and dependency toward the mentor. Progoff also noted the fear of ostracism by the circle and his or her circle of followers and the feelings of guilt and remorse that are precipitated by the disciple’s impulse to separate or express his or her individuality. In addition, there are several other basic psychological and cultural issues that have a bearing on “the disciple’s dilemma.” First, there is the role played by unresolved childhood issues a particular person may have regarding individuation and separation from parental figures. In the dance of discipleship, the guru comes to play many roles for the student: mentor, friend, trickster, and, most notably, parent. Not surprisingly, some students play out old parent-child scripts with their gurus just as many clients do with their psychotherapists. Thus, a student’s need to revolt against the guru’s authority may be acting out an unresolved adolescent issue. Simi-
larly, a student who has never adequately resolved issues of separation or differentiation may hang onto the guru’s feet long past the time when discipleship has actually served his or her development.

However, such parallels need not imply a reductionistic interpretation of the nature of discipleship. People become involved in mentoring relationships at different stages of their lives and for different purposes. While some may become disciples of spiritual teachers in an attempt to avoid the developmental tasks of individuation and adulthood (Engler, 1986), for others discipleship is an appropriate, even a necessary, step in maturation. To try to reduce discipleship simply to psychodynamics, unhealthy dependency, family of origin issues, and internal deficits would, in my view, be a quintessential example of Wilber’s (1980) “pre-trans fallacy,” the confusing of pre-egoic issues and stages of consciousness with trans-egoic, transpersonal stages of development, due to the fact that both share some structural similarities. Clearly, as Engler (1986) has shown, the guru-disciple relationship, which is intended to lead the student toward trans-egoic, transpersonal stages of evolution, may become complicated by unresolved egoic, or even pre-egoic, issues and concerns. But this should not allow us to negate the fact that countless spiritual seekers throughout history have pursued the path of spiritual apprenticeship and attested to its efficacy. In short, it would be inaccurate to reductionistically pathologize discipleship.

At the same time, it seems reasonable to suggest that discipleship to a spiritual master could best be pursued by a person who has already successfully traversed the egoic stages of human development (as outlined, for example, by Wilber, 1980) and achieved a certain degree of adult maturity and strength as an individual. Such a person can seek a spiritual master as an outgrowth of a genuine longing for freedom from the limitations of ego-centered awareness and for evolution into transpersonal stages of consciousness. Without prior resolution of developmental tasks related to social adjustment (work), individuation (identity), and relationships (love), such concerns may begin to override the deeper purpose of spiritual discipleship, which is to lead the seeker beyond egoic consciousness into transegoic realms, the experience of enlightenment. The need to resolve such “unfinished business” is one primary reason why many students feel they must separate from their spiritual teachers.

This is not to imply that there are, or should be, strict developmental prerequisites for discipleship. Discipleship and spiritual practices do not have in many respects the same goals, methods, or outcomes as psychotherapy (Needleman, 1976; Welwood, 1980, 1983, 1986; Kornfield, 1989; Bogart, 1991). However, nearly everyone who approaches a spiritual teacher probably has unresolved
egoic concerns that need attention, and such concerns might better be addressed in psychotherapy than through discipleship.

There are two major implications of the confusion of psychotherapy with discipleship under a spiritual teacher. First, many students of spiritual teachers have the hope or expectation that their gurus will fulfill the role of psychotherapist. This obscures the fact that a guru's concern is generally not with strengthening a student's ego-construct, improving his or her skills in relationships, or working through difficult emotions—the traditional province of a therapist. Rather, it is to reveal the reality (e.g., Atman, sunyata, God, pure consciousness) beyond, or prior to, the disciple's identity structure and thought forms. Therefore, those who approach spiritual teachers looking for the kind of care and support a therapist might offer are setting themselves up for disappointment, and misunderstanding the purpose of discipleship and the role of the guru.

The second implication of the contemporary interface of therapist-client and guru-disciple relationships relates to the impact of therapeutic models on our conceptions of guru-disciple interactions. The growth of Western psychotherapy has included the evolution and widespread adoption of codes of ethical standards for therapists' behavior toward clients that have begun to impact how we believe spiritual teachers should treat their students. Indeed, many contemporary Western students of spiritual teachers have come to expect gurus to abide by standards of ethics and behavior similar to those of other contemporary professionals such as doctors, psychologists, and counselors.

These issues have been raised by numerous recent instances in which students have confronted their gurus with purported abuses of their position as spiritual leaders. Some gurus faced with such situations have denied the charges outright, justified their actions as "crazy wisdom" teachings, or contended that their students were enacting adolescent forms of rebellion against a parental surrogate. Others might defend themselves on the grounds that the students were failing to properly understand and honor the sanctity of the spiritual teacher's position in traditional spiritual lineages, where trust in the teacher's methods and fundamental intention are assumed, and in which the teacher's actions, motivations, or apparent abuses of power are rarely, if ever, questioned. Nevertheless, while equality and a cooperative spirit were not prevalent features of traditional discipleship, contemporary students of spiritual lineages and practices increasingly may demand that their teachers treat them as equal partners in a democratic process of spiritual training or community living.
The question of whether Westerners inheriting a tradition of democracy and individualism can hope to achieve spiritual illumination through non-democratic forms of traditional discipleship demanding obedience and surrender without considerable discomfort is still unanswered. An equally important question is whether the tradition of spiritual apprenticeship could be strengthened in Western culture by teachers who treat students with non-possessive warmth, respect their independence and judgment, show a willingness to scrutinize and, in some cases, correct their own behavior, and relinquish their demand for absolute surrender of the student.

Having briefly described the influence of unresolved developmental issues, fundamental cultural assumptions regarding the authority of spiritual teachers, and the blurring of the distinction between discipleship and psychotherapy, the following sections will examine the influence of basic transferential dynamics that often cloud the perceptions and experience of both guru and disciple.

MIRRORING AND DISCIPLESHIP

Transference phenomena seem to be a part of all close human relationships and, according to Kohut and Wolf (1978), are of two main types: mirroring and idealizing (see also Jacoby, 1984). Kohut and Wolf (1978) have also described a third kind of transference characterized by a desire to feel a sense of “twinship” or alikeness with another person. This “alter-ego” transference may be very significant in those cases where discipleship proceeds smoothly and the student comes to feel an identification with the teacher. I will focus on the mirroring and idealization types of transference, however, since they more commonly lead to the kind of complications in discipleship discussed here.

In the mirroring transference we seek “empathic resonance” from another and thus learn to recognize ourselves, feel real, accepted, and valuable to others, and thus, in turn, to ourselves. In a mirroring relationship we do not perceive the other in his or her actuality and otherness (in a mature I-Thou relationship), but rather as what Kohut calls a “self-object,” an extension of the self which is used to foster our own self-esteem and sense of specialness. Both guru and disciple mirror one another. The apprentice often receives mirroring from the teacher if, as in Rank’s case, he becomes important and valuable to the teacher, and receives the latter’s affirmation, attention, and praise. Similarly, although presumably there are gurus who have transcended such needs, the Guru may strongly experience a mirroring counter-transference with the disciple, basking in the novice’s admiration, devotion, and love.
According to Jacoby, the person who serves as the mirroring self-object can be either undervalued or over-valued. When the disciple receives extensive mirroring, he or she may over-value the Guru, who becomes essential to the student’s internal equilibrium and self-esteem, and without whom he or she may feel empty, depleted, lost, or depressed. Thus, my client Robert, whom I described earlier, felt confused, disoriented, and worthless after leaving his teacher. In a sense, Robert had been over-valuing the “guru self-object.” Conversely, as he realized that the teacher had seemed to favor other disciples and that he did not enjoy the teacher’s exclusive love, Robert became enraged and began to angrily devalue the guru.

But these dynamics can be transposed, however. For the teacher, too, may be subject to over-valuing, feeling that the student’s love and attention are essential to his or her own well-being. Similarly, the teacher may become jealous or enraged and devalue the student if the latter shows signs of competing allegiances to other teachers or loved ones. Thus transference needs may account for the rigidity with which some gurus demand exclusive devotion. Thus, it is important to consider the extent to which the teacher receives narcissistic gratification from a relationship with a student. In some respects a student may be psychologically more mature than the teacher, which could influence a student-teacher association, or even cause it to end negatively.

Discipleship, in my view, is a two-way relationship, in which both partners must act responsibly and consciously. Some contemporary psychotherapists have recognized the need to receive training in meditative disciplines to increase their compassion and their stillness of mind in order to best facilitate healing for their clients. Similarly, perhaps more spiritual teachers would benefit from an examination of their own personal needs for mirroring and admiration from students. This might even one day be considered part of the necessary training for those performing the role of guru.

IDEALIZATION AND THE SHADOW IN DISCIPLESHIP

In idealization transferences, according to Jacoby (1984) (summarizing the views of Kohut), one person projects archetypal images of perfection, omnipotence, and omniscience upon the other, whose perfection is equated with one’s own perfection through a process of fusion. This idealization is seen as a necessary precursor to the eventual development of one’s own goals and ambitions. Thus, the disciple’s deep devotion to the guru and tendency to view him or her as perfect and all-knowing may in part be founded upon such an idealization. Kohut and Wolf (1978) write,
Ideal-hungry personalities are forever in search of others whom they can admire for their prestige, power, beauty, intelligence or moral stature. They can experience themselves as worthwhile only so long as they can relate to selfobjects to whom they can look up.... In most cases ... the inner void cannot forever be filled by these means. The ideal-hungry feels the persistence of the structural deficit and ... begins to look for—and of course he inevitably finds—some realistic defects in his God. The search for new idealizable selfobjects is then continued, always with the hope that the next great figure to whom the ideal-hungry attaches himself will not disappoint him (p. 421).

Through gradual disappointments—similar to those by which a child’s idealization of a parental figure is modified—the disciple learns to modify distorted perceptions of the teacher, and to perceive him or her more realistically—i.e., as a person possessing a mixture of both good and bad qualities, rather than as being all-good or all-bad. According to Kohut’s theory, only when such idealizing perceptions of others are gradually modified can one begin to modify one’s own grandiosity and arrive at a more realistic assessment of one’s ambitions, talents, and value.

Unfortunately, this developmental process frequently does not unfold in such an optimal manner. In such cases a very different scenario may ensue, in which the disciple may begin to negatively idealize the teacher, viewing him or her as the embodiment of absolute Evil. Sandner (1987) discusses this phenomenon in his essay on “The Split Shadow and The Father-Son Relationship,” observing the tendency to project both the positive and negative characteristics of one’s own bi-polar shadow. The unconscious, un-integrated, positive characteristics of the self “tend to be represented by superior, noble, heroic, spiritual or religious figures” (p. 180). Conversely, the negative pole of the shadow complex (containing culturally undesirable qualities that have been repressed) tends to be projected in such a way that one perceives others as aggressive, lustful, hateful, menacing, envious, or sinister.

This perspective may help us understand why Robert’s positive idealization of his spiritual teacher had turned into a negative, devaluing attitude toward a figure whom he now perceived as cruel, greedy, dishonest, authoritarian, and manipulative. Similarly, this may help clarify Rank’s sense that “Freud, who had been his protector, was now his psychic adversary.” Thus, while very real perceptions of the teacher’s actual shortcomings may, to some extent, be involved, the reversal of the disciple’s affection may partially be the result of projecting the positive and then the negative facets of his or her own shadow upon the teacher.
Another perspective on discipleship can be derived from Hillman’s (1979) comments about the Senex and the Puer. Hillman notes the co-existence and inter-relationships between the archetypes of Youth and Maturity, Puer and Senex. More specifically, the Messiah aspect of the Puer (the aspect of the self that is filled with a sense of infinite possibilities and personal mission and is subject to psychic inflation) constellates the complementary figure of the Wise Old Man (symbol of perfection, psychic wholeness, and the internal guiding function of the Self) from whom the Puer-Messiah derives a sense of stability, power, and recognition. In the course of maturation, the Puer-Messiah must be transformed through the emergence of the Puer-Hero—the archetype of youth heroically actualizing the Puer-Messiah’s visions, goals, and sense of mission. However, the Puer-Hero corresponds internally not to the beneficent Wise Old Man—who came forth to guide and befriend the Puer-Messiah—but rather to the Old King Of Power—symbol of power and authority. In Hillman’s view, The Old King of Power is a psychic image of the external and internalized social forces obstructing the Puer-Hero’s growth, which, in fact, are perceived as intending to thwart the Puer’s ambitions. Thus the Puer-Hero must overcome the figure of the Old King in order to emerge as a man or woman of power and achievement in his or her own right.

Here we observe the essential paradox in the internal world of the Puer-disciple. The individual derives inspiration, strength, and comfort by associating with the Senex-Mentor when the latter is perceived as a beneficent, facilitative, wise figure. But the Puer-novice’s attempts to actualize the dreams and possibilities envisioned with the Old Wise Person’s help also constellates a perception of the teacher-guide as a representative of all those inertial social values, expectations, and institutional structures that appear to obstruct the novice’s self-actualization, and against which he or she must therefore struggle.

In Rank’s case, these dynamics were evident in his increasing boredom in his position as Freud’s follower (as Progoff put it, “A major part of his personality was thus left unfulfilled”) and his yearning for new freedom and new channels of self-expression. Something within the disciple knows that it may not be possible to fully accomplish his or her own goals while remaining in a position of inferiority, deference, or servitude with respect to the mentor or spiritual guide. In many cases the student’s individuation will eventually force a separation from the teacher, and relinquishment of the role of the loyal disciple. Of course, this process is considerably easier if the teacher is able to tolerate, encourage, and respect the autonomous development and individuation of the student, allow the articulation of an independent point of view, and the
accomplishment of the tasks of the student’s own life project (Bogart, 1992b).

SEPARATION, GUILT, AND SELF-APPOINTMENT

The disciple may feel a profound identity crisis and sense of loss looming when contemplating separation from the teacher. The need to let go of an accustomed identity as the loyal follower of a great teacher may produce profound uncertainty and anxiety. Although the period of discipleship is often a period of “liminality” (i.e., transitional suspension between worlds, social roles, or periods of life; see Turner, 1969), ending of an apprenticeship or relationship with a spiritual teacher may induce a frightening sense of being “betwixt and between.” This possibility is more likely when the novice is not separating with a clear sense of an individual purpose or destiny that necessitates the separation, but rather out of an angry, negative, projective reaction to the mentor. However, even in cases where the novice knows that the time has come to stand independently and to forge an independent pathway, considerable guilt, anxiety, and remorse may be experienced regarding the separation.

Rank noted that the impulse to separate, to individuate, and to create is always attended by feelings of guilt—which often derive from fear of injuring or destroying a parental figure (Menaker, 1982, p. 36). Recall how Ranks’ feelings of gratitude toward Freud and his fear of ostracism and isolation caused him to attempt to remain in his discipleship role. Nevertheless, the heroic personality—exemplified in Rank’s writings by the artist—struggles against this guilt and wills himself or herself into existence as a creative individual. And just as modern artists have had to appoint themselves artists in the face of social disapproval or ridicule, so, too, the growth of the creative personality requires severing symbiotic ties in an act of “self-appointment” (Menaker, p. 35). Similarly, the disciple may need to overcome the guilt of separation arising from the separation, and learn to feel worthy of becoming an independent person, even if he or she continues to acknowledge and respect the teacher’s influence and authority.

It is important to recognize the extent to which the teacher may exacerbate feelings of guilt by his or her actions or statements. For his own conscious or unconscious reasons, the teacher may seek to keep the novice within the fold of close devotees. Discipleship, like psychotherapy, involves a very human kind of relationship—notwithstanding beliefs that a true Guru is more-then-merely-human; therefore, the motivations of the teacher as well as the student need to be considered to fully understand the dynamics of such relationships. As we saw earlier, mentors have their own needs for admira-
tion, fellowship, mirroring, as well as financial and organizational needs, which may become motivating factors in their efforts to prevent “defection” by their students. While some teachers may be free of such motivations, we should not assume that all are. Most apprenticeships are with teachers who combine both altruistic-beneficent and selfish-narcissistic motivations. A wise teacher will recognize these tendencies within himself or herself and will attempt to prevent them from contaminating the guidance of students.

DISTORTIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP

According to Sandner (1987), discipleship or apprenticeship is potentially a process of initiation into a new state of individuated existence through the process of submission, fusion, and re-emergence (p. 184). The student submits to the teacher’s authority and fuses internally with the mentor in order to derive strength, clarity, and an internal image of perfection around which his or her own ego-ideals can begin to solidify. The completion of the relationship, in his view, should witness the reemergence of the disciple or initiate as an independent man or woman. However, major distortions in this process can occur. If the disciple remains unconsciously bound to the position of submission to the Father-Master-Mentor, Sandner suggests that the mentoring relationship can devolve into a spiralling sequence of compulsive sado-masochistic acts from which the student can in some cases derive either pleasure or a sense of security (pp. 182,184). My own observations are that in such cases, the student may adopt a deliberate posture of humiliation, one that can be instilled and reinforced by experiences of being physically bound or injured, psychically immobilized, severely criticized, or publicly denounced by the teacher.

In Robert’s case, this process was enacted quite dramatically. Long before his departure, the guru had frequently embarrassed Robert publicly, humiliating him in front of large classes, castigating him for incompetence, and, on several occasions in private, beating him. Robert’s response had not been to rebel, but to internalize his teacher’s criticisms and to come back for more. He had held out the hope that by continuing to remain under the teacher’s guidance he might yet win some great praise, confirmation, or sponsorship from his “mentor” that would enable him to advance spiritually. In the course of therapy, Robert began slowly and painfully to recognize how the abusiveness of this relationship was virtually a replica of his relationship with his father—an angry alcoholic who had humiliated and physically injured Robert, and whose approval Robert had always doggedly and unsuccessfully sought. This story grimly illustrates both the potential influence of the student’s developmen-
tal issues, and the exaggerated form that the relationship between
guru and disciple can take in some unfortunate instances.

HEALING THE WOUND OF SEPARATION

Robert suffered significant emotional turmoil as a result of his
discipleship, and he has still not yet fully worked through his anger
and resentment toward his teacher or his feelings of remorse over
unfulfilled promises and expectations. What has been helpful to
him in the therapeutic process is to write about his experiences and
thereby to begin to discover his own thoughts, feelings, and story.
He is currently working on a novel about a spiritual community led
by a charismatic teacher.

The student may take a significant step along the road to healing the
wound of separation with the realization that, despite the gratitude
he or she may feel toward the teacher, the guru’s teachings are
nevertheless inadequate in certain respects; or that some of the
guru’s actions are wrong, destructive, or indefensible. This requires
a recognition that although the teacher may have taught the disciple
much about spirituality, love, or meditation, the guru is not neces­
sarily the final authority in all matters. For example, the guru’s
 teachings may not adequately illuminate other important aspects of
the disciple’s life such as sexuality and relationships, the need to
find fulfilling labor and pursue other forms of education, or the
anger and despair so often felt today about ecological destruction
and social injustice. An important stage in the resolution of dis­
cipleship is reached when the disciple recognizes and accepts that
he or she will have to look outside the guru’s teaching for guidance
in these areas.

In other cases, resolution of the relationship with a spiritual teacher
may be facilitated through the activity of the unconscious. A client
of mine who had spent years in an ashram in which many disciples
had taken monastic vows of celibacy and poverty and who was now
grappling with issues of separation from the teacher and his desire
for marriage, had the following two dreams: In the first, he was
walking through the ashram and noticed several of the swamis
lifting weights, while another, a usually austere and very dry monk,
was walking hand-in-hand with a woman and wearing an expensive
tennis outfit. His guru stood on the roof of the ashram spraying
everyone with a hose. In the second dream, he walked into a large
meditation hall in which hundreds of seats were arranged facing
away from the guru’s seat at the front of the room. The first dream
seemed to say that the dryness of his inner life was ready to receive
the waters of life; clearly the tendency here was for the swamis to
embrace the life of the body, sexuality, and the company of women.

Separating from a Spiritual Teacher

looking outside
the
guru’s
teaching

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The second dream vividly portrayed his readiness to remain in reverential relationship with this spiritual teacher, but now with his attention more directed away from the guru and out into the world.

Another client in my practice was also aided in addressing these issues by two remarkable dreams. Chris was twenty-nine years old and had long been an ardent spiritual seeker, with a particular interest in Hatha Yoga. Chris had studied with numerous teachers, but had always been in some way disappointed. Two of his teachers died without bestowing on him the enlightenment, approval, or recognition of his high level of spiritual development that he had sought from them. He was crushed to discover that a third teacher was sleeping with several students. The instruction of yet another teacher had contributed to a serious arm injury which Chris had incurred, an injury from which he was suffering acutely when I first saw him. To make things worse, this teacher had denied any responsibility in the matter. Chris was full of bitterness, cynicism, and disappointment. During this period he had the following dream:

A small baby boy with a very large Buddha head is lying on the ground. He appears to be on the verge of an epileptic seizure, trembling and thrashing about spasmodically, but his parents are nowhere to be found. I try to hold him down while [one of the teachers who had disappointed him] sprinkled water on his third eye. says to me, “No, you’re not doing it right,” and he insisted that he should hold the boy down while I sprinkle the water on him. The boy’s convulsions become intense and he thrashes around uncontrollably. As he does so I hear the boy’s voice angrily exclaiming “You f a, you’re supposed to be helping me but you can’t even prevent this from happening to me!” He begins smashing every bone in his body on the ground, and twists his head so much that his neck breaks and his head falls off. Finally all that remains of his body is one arm bone.

The baby with a Buddha’s head seemed to be an image of the enlightenment that Chris had pursued since his youth but that had thus far eluded him. The dream portrayed his disappointment and anger at the inability of his teachers to help him, and his feeling of being blamed for his injury (“You’re not doing it right”). The dream also suggests that his potential for achieving an enlightened state of consciousness (the Buddha’s head) was being destroyed by the anger, rage, and bitterness toward all the teachers whom he felt had failed to initiate and sponsor him properly. In this sense, the statement “You’re not doing it right” is directed at the gurus who had disappointed him. In addition, the imagery of bodily dismemberment in the dream evoked themes of shamanic initiation. Thus, Chris felt that this dream also carried the message that he should view his injury (the arm bone in the dream) as a shamanic wound suffered in the course of initiation by an elder—an initiation that,
while it had torn him apart physically and emotionally, could indeed lead to his eventual reintegration.

After several months of reflection on this dream and efforts to release his negative feelings toward his teachers, Chris had another dream:

I am in a lush green meadow, standing near a large, very ancient and beautiful tree. I am observing a vigil here for my dead teacher and father, who is buried underneath this tree. It is a very solemn moment, yet I feel very much at peace.

Chris felt that the burial of his dead teacher and father signified the death of the need for an external spiritual guide and heralded the emergence of his capacity to become his own source of wisdom, vision, and authority. And the appearance of the tree, perennial symbol of growth, maturation, and rebirth, seemed to suggest that Chris was close indeed to resolution of his issues with spiritual teachers. He told me, “Now, with these men fertilizing my roots, I can become my own father.”

CONCLUSION

The guru-disciple relationship is not an end in itself, although it may remain a continuing source of inspiration and joy. Instead, as both Levinson and Wilber have suggested, it is a transitional relationship that is intended to lead beyond itself. Kegan (1982) has characterized human development as a passage through a series of “cultures of embeddedness,” or holding environments—such as the symbiotic tie with the mother, the structure of the family, educational institutions, and interpersonal relationships—that nurture and support us, and that let go of us when we are ready to differentiate from them. For Kegan, growth means the emergence from “embeddedness cultures” and the subsequent re-appropriation of the objects of that culture. These objects, which were formerly part of the self, are now recognized to be other, apart from the self, yet also an environment with which the differentiated self can be in relationship. Nevertheless, the tendency is for a person to repudiate a culture of embeddedness, such as the family, in the process of separating from it. Kegan notes that

Growth itself is not alone a matter of separation and repudiation, of killing off the past. This is more a matter of transition. Growth involves as well the reconciliation, the recovery, the recognition of that which before was confused with the self (p. 129).

A disciple or apprentice is sustained and nourished by a mentoring relationship but must ultimately emerge from that culture of
embeddedness into his or her enlightenment and/or independent functioning in the world. For Rank, the emergence from Freud’s circle was the source of a wound that never healed completely. We have also seen the difficulties Robert has faced in completing this process. But such an outcome is not inevitable. Ideally, separating from a spiritual teacher does not require that the guru be completely repudiated but rather allows the teacher to be maintained as a valued inner part of the student’s emergent self. Assuming the mentor or guru is willing and able to relinquish his role of control and authority, and accept the student’s independent selfhood, a mature relationship between the two can develop. As I tried to suggest with the case of Chris, this also seems to necessitate that the student recognize that the love, power, wisdom, and other spiritual qualities that were once thought to be embodied only by the teacher can now be internalized. In such a case, the transformational relationship has achieved its purpose, and the two participants can take their leave of one another with mutual affection and gratitude, free to walk their respective paths without regret. When the disciple is ready, the guru disappears.

NOTES

1 The terms teacher, spiritual teacher, guru, and spiritual guide are used interchangeably. Similarly, “student,” “initiate,” and “disciple” are intended to be similar for purposes of this discussion.

2 Client names have been changed to provide anonymity.

3 It should be noted, however, that Sandner’s remarks were made in the context of a discussion of male-male initiation. It is quite possible that the dynamics of female-female initiation or female-male initiation may be considerably different.

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A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF LONG-TERM MEDITATORS: GOALS, EFFECTS, RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION, COGNITIONS

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Depending upon the psychotherapist's orientation and the client's goals, meditation has been used as a clinical intervention for self-regulation, self-exploration, and/or self-liberation. Most of meditation research to date, examining its self-regulation and self-exploration effects, has been based on an examination of short-term meditators (six to eight weeks, twenty to forty minutes a day). However, recently, there has been a call to examine longer term meditators as one way to assess more carefully whether some of the primary and original goals of meditation—self-liberation and compassionate service—were being attained (Shapiro & Walsh, 1984; Goleman, 1988; West, 1987; Murphy & Donovan, 1988; Kwee, 1990).

The majority of clinical interest in meditation has focused on its effects as a self-regulation strategy in addressing stress and pain management and enhancing relaxation and physical health (cf. Benson, 1975; Shapiro & Zifferblatt, 1976; Shapiro & Giber, 1978; Kabat-Zinn et al., 1982, 1985, 1986; Orme-Johnson, 1987). By operationalizing the content and components of meditation, and divorcing it from its spiritual context, meditation could be viewed as a self-regulation strategy (cf. Ellis, 1984) and compared to other cognitive focusing, relaxation, and self-control strategies: e.g., guided imagery, hetero-hypnosis, self-hypnosis, biofeedback, progressive relaxation, autogenic training (Shapiro, 1982, 1985; Holmes, 1984; Dillbeck & Orme-Johnson, 1987).

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There has also been an interest in examining meditation as a possible adjunct to psychotherapy (Goleman, 1981). The non-reactive, detailed, systematic, and impartial observation of one’s own cognitions and emotions through the technique of meditation can be a source of personal insight and self-understanding. For example, Kutz, Borysenko, and Benson (1985, p. 5) noted that even among patients with little psychological mindedness, approximately 20% “with a wide range of psychophysiological disorders, who joined stress reduction and relaxation programs involving mindfulness meditation, became interested in psychotherapy for further expansion of self-understanding.” Within this framework, they refer to meditation as a “psychobiological form of introspection.” Psychodynamic therapists have used meditation for controlled regression in the service of the ego and as a means to allow repressed material to come forth from the unconscious (Carrington & Ephron, 1975; Shafii, 1973); humanistic psychologists have used it to help individuals gain a sense of self-responsibility and inner directedness (e.g., Keefe, 1975; Schuster, 1979; Lesh. 1970): behaviorists have used it for stress management and self-regulation (e.g., Stroebel & Glueck, 1977; Shapiro. 1985a: Woolfolk & Franks, 1984).

The above research has emphasized the self-regulation and self-exploration aspects of meditation, and has intentionally divorced the content of the meditation technique from its original spiritual context. However, recently it has been argued that the topic of religion and values, in general, is one which cannot and should not be ignored by therapists. For example, Bergin (1991, p. 401), summarizing a decade of research on values and religious issues in psychotherapy and mental health, asserted that “there is a spiritual dimension of human experience with which the field of psychology must come to terms more assiduously.” Part of this spiritual perspective involves an understanding of one’s relationship not only with oneself, but what may be called our deepest belief and experience about the nature of ultimate reality, and the values that may grow from that belief.

Historically, meditation has been an essential element in nearly all contemplative religious and spiritual traditions. This includes not only the Eastern Hindu/Vedic and Buddhist traditions, upon which most of the meditation research has been carried out, but also Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (cf. Goleman, 1988). The goal has been liberation from the egoic self (Walsh & Vaughan. 1980); developing a sense of harmony with the universe; and the ability to increase one’s compassion, sensitivity, and service to others. Therefore, more recent work on meditation has suggested the importance of re-introducing this self-liberation/compassionate service aspect of meditation back into Western research (Shapiro &
The current study, which was a preliminary investigation of long-term meditators, sought to address the following primary hypotheses: 1) goals and expectations regarding meditation shift along a self-regulation, self-exploration, self-liberation continuum (SR-SE-SL) in relation to length of practice; 2) effects of meditation practice will be related to goals and expectations (i.e., what you get is related to what you want).

Hypothesis one is assessed by comparing retrospective reports of initial reasons for learning meditation to current goals (assessed prior to beginning a meditation retreat). Hypothesis two is assessed in two ways: a) retrospectively by comparing initial reasons for learning meditation with subjective reports of effects; and b) prospectively, by comparing goals for the retreat with subjective reports of effects at one month and six months following the retreat.

An exploratory part of this investigation also examined the following three secondary hypotheses: 3) religious orientation will be significantly related to length of practice; 4) cognitions made when a subject does not practice will be significantly related to length of practice; and 5) cognitions before beginning practice will be significantly related to adverse effects.

Additional information from this study, including self-control and mode of control profile, and detailed information on adverse effects, is cited elsewhere (Shapiro, 1992c, d).

METHODOLOGY

Subjects and Setting

Overall Subject Demographics. Subjects were twenty-seven individuals, mean age of 35.6 (sd 13.2) years, who had signed up for either a three-month or two-week intensive Vipassana meditation retreat at the Insight Meditation Center, in Barre, Massachusetts. The average length of meditation experience was 4.27 (sd 3.32) years. Twenty-two (81.5%) meditated regularly, from forty-five minutes to an hour a day.

Two-thirds had previously practiced Vipassana, and the remaining 33.3% practiced a variety of different techniques: mantra, silence, mindfulness, Soto Zen, breathing concentration, yoga, and visualization.
Seventeen (62.9%) of the group were men; a little less than one-fourth of the group were married; over 50% were in professional careers, and over 70% had completed college.

Religious Orientation. Twenty-six of the twenty-seven people described their religious orientation as follows: ten (38.4%) said none, atheistic or agnostic; nine (34.6%) said they were Buddhists or wrote in Buddhist-plus (i.e., Buddhist/Christian; Buddhist/Protestant; Buddhist/Hindu); five (19.2%) listed a specific monotheistic religion; and two (7.7%) wrote in “all.”

Nature of the Meditation Retreat. The meditative technique and tradition used on both retreats was Vipassana, part of the Theravada Buddhist tradition. Vipassana meditation is a quieting technique designed to observe the mind and develop concentration. It is a combined concentrative and opening up practice, with the breath as the anchor (Goldstein, 1976). Meditation at the retreats occurred up to sixteen hours a day, including both sitting and walking meditation. Silence by meditators was observed throughout retreats except for sessions with teachers.

Grouping by Length of Practice. For some of the analyses, the meditators were divided into three groupings based on length of practice. Group one (n=10) had practiced two years or less. Test Time One average was 16.7 months practice, approximately forty-five minutes a day, 80% regular meditators. Group two had practiced from over two years to less than seven years. Test Time One average was 47.1 months, approximately forty-five minutes a day, 88.8% regular meditators. Group three (N=8) had practiced seven years or more. Test Time One average was 105 months; 75% were regular meditators over an hour a day.

Measure

The Motivation, Expectation, Adherence (MEA) instrument is an open-ended paper and pencil form, detailed elsewhere (Shapiro, 1980), addressing the following issues:

Adherence. Relevant questions included: how long has the person meditated; how frequently per day; what type of meditation; have they changed practices and, if so, why? Have they ever stopped meditating and, if so, for how long? Finally, what reasons, excuses, justifications and/or explanations do they use when they do not meditate. In response to the question, “What do you say to yourself when you do not meditate on a given day?” Five types of cognitions were given. The first was “no time,” “too high stress or pain in my life.” The second was self-critical involving anger, guilt, should (e.g., “scold self,” “blew it,” “lazy,” “cop out,” “dummy”).
The third was resolve (e.g., “make sure I do it tomorrow,” “do more the next day”). The fourth was acceptance (“it’s ok; sometimes it does not fit”; “feel no guilt”; “I’m feeling too rigid in my practice; I want to break the rules”). And the fifth was awareness (“try to become aware why not,” “observe the source of the resistance”).

**Expectations, Goals.** Questions addressing this topic included: 1) Why had the individual started meditation? 2) What did they perceive to be the qualities of a gifted meditator (also considered demand characteristics because done at a meditation retreat)? and 3) what specifically did they hope to get from the current retreat? It should be noted that throughout the paper the term “expectations” is used as a synonym for “goals,” and both are used with specificity to mean either initial reasons for learning meditation, or hopes for the retreat.

**Cognitions Prior to Meditation.** Cognitions were coded in three categories: positive/self-instructional (I’m glad to be doing this; keep yourself focused; this should be fun); negative (“I’m scared of pain”; “I’m not looking forward to this”); or “varies, do not know.”

**Effects.** Subjects were then provided space to list (in an open-ended format) the effects of meditation on their life under three categories: 1) positive influences, 2) adverse influences, and 3) general influences. The open-ended format, rather than codable items, was used so that there would be no present cues under the three categories of effects. This allowed individuals to write (or not write) whatever they felt appropriate and salient.

**Data Collection, Coding and Analysis**

**Collection.** Testing was done at the start of each retreat (Time One), one month after the end of each retreat (Time Two), and six months after the end of each retreat (Time Three). Each individual who did not respond to the one-month or six-month follow-up within two weeks was sent a second form requesting compliance.

**Coding.** A coding table was devised based on the categories of 1) self-regulation, 2) self-exploration, and 3) self-liberation/compassionate service. These categories can be used to code both goals/expectations/hopes for meditation, and positive effects of meditation. The following are examples of statements coded as goals. Self-regulation goals included items such as “learn to control my stress better”; “become more relaxed”; “learn to stop my negative thoughts”; “be able to deal with all situations calmly.” Self-exploration goals included statements such as “want to learn more about myself”; “want to see how my mind works”; “want to understand whether this relationship (job) is right for me.” Self-liberation/
compassionate service goals were included as one category, and included statements such as “want to place myself in God’s presence”; “want to deepen my compassion for all living creatures”; “want to feel the sacred unity of the universe”; “want to go beyond my narrow ego.”

For purposes of coding, a hierarchy was assumed based on previous literature (cf. Wilber, 1977,1980; Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986; Shapiro & Walsh, 1984). When more than one response was given, the highest response was coded (e.g., if a person wanted to meditate to learn to relax (1) and to be of service to others (3), this was coded as self-liberation. If a person wanted to remove pain (1) and learn more about themselves (2), this was coded as self-exploration. If a person wanted only self-regulation, this was coded as 1.

All material was coded blind to group, sex, and length of meditation. Rater reliability (between author and a non-meditating graduate student) was 92.7% for the self-regulation, self-exploration, self-liberation categories; 88.7% for the adherence cognitions; and 100% for the cognitions prior to meditation.

**Data Analysis.** Simple descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data from the MEA. Cross-tabulations were formed to examine the topics of the investigation. These pairs of variables were explored using the following tests (selected based on whether the variables investigated were ordinal or nominal): 1) initial reason for learning meditation, hopes for the retreat (Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test); 2) goals (initial reasons, hopes for the retreat), and effects (at Time One and Time Two/Three): did you get what you want? (Pearson chi-square); 3-4) religious orientation, and length of practice; and cognitions and adverse effects; cognitions when individual does not meditate (Kendall’s Tau-c).

**RESULTS**

**Hypothesis One**

Goals and expectations regarding meditation shift along an SR-SE-SL continuum in relation to length of practice. As can be seen from Table 1, seventy-five percent of those in group 3 (105 months practice) have self-liberation hopes; and none have only self-regulation hopes; whereas 30% in group 1 (average 16.7 months practice) have self-liberation hopes and 50% have self-regulation only hopes. These results are significant (Kendall Tau-c value=.426; t=2.573; p=.05).
Visual inspection of Figure 1 shows that for eleven individuals (gray shaded area) the initial reasons for learning meditation were the same as current hopes for the retreat. For eleven other individuals (area to the right of the gray shaded area), expectations had moved upward along the SR-SE-SL continuum. For five individuals (areas to the left of the gray shaded area), expectations had decreased. Overall, self-regulation hopes decreased from 37% to 29.6%, and self-liberation hopes increased from 33.3% to 40.7%. These results are in the expected direction, and approached significance ($z=-.653$ one tailed $p=.096$). Therefore, hypothesis one is partially confirmed: expectations do shift along the SR-SE-SL continuum as a function of length of practice.

**Hypothesis Two**

Effects of meditation practice will be related to goals and expectations (i.e., what you get is related to what you want). Eighteen of the twenty-seven people (66.7%) stated positive effects which were
congruent with their reasons for beginning: i.e., a self-regulation reason for beginning to meditate produced a positive self-regulation effect: five individuals (18.5%) reported more beneficial results than their original expectations; and four (14.8%) individuals obtained less or different effects. In terms of why a person learned to meditate and positive effects at Time One, the finding was significant (Pearson chi-square = 24.51; df = 6; p = .00042). In terms of hopes for the retreat and positive effects at time 2/3, the results approach significance (Pearson chi-square = 11.24; df = 6; p = .081). Therefore, hypothesis two is partially confirmed.

**Hypothesis Three**

Religious orientation will be significantly related to length of practice. As can be seen from Table 2, the relationship between length of practice and religious orientation is significant (Kendall Tau-c value .342; t = 2.214; p = <.05). Visual inspection of Table 2, a cross tabulation between length of practice and religious orientation, shows that the percentage of "None" (atheist, agnostic, secular humanist) goes down from 60% of group one to 25% of group three; and the number of “all” (a write-in category) increases from 0% in group one to 25% in group three. The percentage of “monotheistic” is lowest in group three of all groups. Therefore, hypothesis three is confirmed.

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LENGTH OF PRACTICE</th>
<th>RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>MONO THEISTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group One N=10</td>
<td>6 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Two N=8</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Three N=8</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis Four**

Cognitions made when a subject does not practice will be significantly related to length of practice. When adherence responses were coded by length of practice, there is a significant difference between groups in terms of the type of cognition made when the individual does not meditate (Kendall Tau-c value = .502; t-value = 3.907; p<.001). As can be seen from visual inspection of Table 3, 80% of group one's and 66.6% of group two's cognitions involved
blaming the external (no time, high stress) or blaming the self (anger, should); versus only 12.5% of group three’s. Further, the highest percentage of “awareness”—i.e, using non-meditating as something to learn from—was in group three. Therefore, hypothesis four is confirmed.

TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COGNITIONS WHEN DO NOT MEDITATE ON A GIVEN DAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BY LENGTH OF PRACTICE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LENGTH OF PRACTICE</th>
<th>NO TIME HIGH STRESS</th>
<th>ANGER SHOULD</th>
<th>RESOLVE ONLY</th>
<th>ACCEPT</th>
<th>AWARENESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group One N=10</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Two N=9</td>
<td>2 (22.2%)</td>
<td>4 (44.4%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
<td>1 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Three N=8</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*"p<.001

Hypothesis Five

Cognitions made before beginning practice will be significantly related to adverse effects. This finding is significant, both retrospectively (Pearson chi square = 9.53; df = 2; p = .009) and prospectively (Pearson chi square = 7.55; df = 2; p = .023). Cross tabulating of pre-meditation cognitions at Time One with adverse effects at Time One and Time Two/Three are shown in Table 4. Visual inspection shows that adverse influences at both Time One and Time Two/Three are reported least by those with positive cognitions, followed by those who did not know or reported “high variation,” and are reported most frequently by those who had all negative or mixed positive/negative cognitions. Therefore, hypothesis five is confirmed.

The majority of subjects 55.6% (15 of 27) reported they made positive self-cognitions before beginning their meditation practice. These included self-reinforcement (e.g., “glad I’m sitting”; “pleased with myself”); self-regulation/relaxation (e.g., “now is a time for inner stillness”; “let go”, “a chance to strengthen my discipline”); self-liberation/compassionate service (e.g., “wish for love for all”; “desire to come into God’s presence”). Seven individuals said they did not know what they said right before meditating, or that there was high variation; and five listed either all negative (“apprehension”; “fear more than I can handle”) or mixed positive/negative (“fear of pain, hope for joy, peace”; “wanting to trust and learn, yet scariness of surrender”; “I hope this is fun; I hope there is no pain; I hope I don’t mind the pain; hope I can concentrate; good, here is another sitting”).
TABLE 4

COGNITIONS BEFORE MEDITATING BY ADVERSE EFFECTS AT TIME ONE AND TIME TWO/THREE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COGNITIONS</th>
<th>TIME ONE RETROSPECTIVE</th>
<th>TIME TWO/THREE PROSPECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>4 of 15 (26.7%)</td>
<td>0 of 10 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varies/Don’t Know</td>
<td>5 of 7 (71.4%)</td>
<td>1 of 2 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neg or Mixed +/-</td>
<td>5 of 5 (100%)</td>
<td>3 of 5 (60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<.05
p<.01

DISCUSSION

This investigation illustrates the importance of studying long-term meditators. The discussion highlights three areas: a) the relevance and implications of the SR-SE-SL continuum for therapy in terms of the use of meditation, and the goal of positive health; b) the relationship between religious orientation and length of practice in terms of the “universal context/particular expression” issue; and c) the importance of the study of cognitions in meditation, both as a potential dependent variable indicating healthy change and as a potential mechanism mediating adverse effects.

SR-SE-SL as Goal and Effect

There are demand characteristics in any psychological orientation. In psychotherapy they involve understanding the therapist’s beliefs about the qualities of the psychologically healthy individual. In this study, the issue of demand characteristics was addressed by asking individuals what they believed were the “qualities of a truly gifted meditator.”

Of the twenty-three individuals who responded, more than one quality was often listed, as follows: 73.9% listed a self-regulation quality (“discipline”; “ability to persist despite doubt, fear, boredom”; “ability to face any situation with equanimity”); 21.7% put self-exploration (“self-knowing”; “wise”; “totally honest with him/her self”; “moment to moment awareness”); and 65.2% put down self-liberation/compassionate service (“love for all beings”; “ego-less”; “belief in basic harmony of the universe”).

How do these goals “fit” in terms of psychotherapy? Most therapists, even from widely differing orientations, would probably have little theoretical difficulty using meditation as a self-regulation and/or self-exploration technique: e.g., to teach a person skills...
to relax and to be able to face stressors with equanimity; to teach individuals to learn more about their thoughts, behaviors, self. Certainly the results of this study indicate meditation’s potential utility in those areas. Subjects reported self-regulation effects of “greater ability to cope with life situations; increased equanimity; sense of inner peacefulness and perspective which I am able to carry everywhere with me.” Subjects also reported self-exploration effects; “recognizes how much I’m run by my thoughts”; “greater understanding of my own self-images, opinions, values, feelings and emotions.”

But how well would the self-liberation/compassionate service aspect of meditation “fit” with most therapeutic approaches? This study raises the question, is stress management an end in itself? Is self-exploration an end in itself? Certainly for some therapeutic approaches and clients, they are. The goals of psychotherapy have traditionally been personal/social adjustment. But should they be? This directly raises the question of values in therapy (Campbell, 1975; Kanfer, 1979; Frank, 1977, 1987), and raises the question of what might be a vision of positive, or exceptional psychological health (Walsh & Shapiro, 1983).

As the anecdotal evidence below shows, self-regulation/stress management can be an end in itself, or it can point the way to something more. For individuals who continue to meditate, expectations and effects shift overall along a self-regulation, self-exploration, self-liberation/compassionate service continuum. Both retrospectively and prospectively, positive self-liberation effects increased in relation to practice. For example, one person stated that his initial reasons for learning meditation were “stress management for better public speaking and in sexual situations.” His reported effects from meditation were both self-regulation and a desire to help contribute something of service to the world. Another noted: “Stillness of my mind makes the heart more apparent.” In other words, the self-regulation/stress management effect from meditation was not an end in itself, but a step toward developing greater compassion.

The study shows that shifts in expectations and goals of meditators along a SR-SE-SL continuum are related to length of practice, and that individuals “want what they get” from meditation. The highest frequency of subjects, 37%, began meditation for its self-regulation effects. Twenty-two percent began it for its potential self-exploration effects, a figure similar to the 20% cited by Kutz et al. (1985). And one-third of this group began meditation for its spiritual/self-liberation effect. Further, the majority of individuals (63.9% prospectively to 93.4% retrospectively) receive positive effects along the SR-SE-SL continuum from the practice of meditation which are congruent with or exceed their expectations and hopes.
Most meditation applications have been within clinical and health care situations, as self-regulation techniques primarily, and to a lesser extent as self-exploration techniques. In these settings they have been utilized as secular techniques devoid of religious and philosophical context. Further, even the Transcendental Meditation organization, when it has taught its technique in schools and prisons, portrays meditation as a non-religious technique.

The generic, secular approach to meditation as a technique devoid of context may be effective (and even appropriate) in certain settings and for certain short-term meditators. It appears, however, that when meditation is practiced as a long-term strategy, the variable of religious orientation and context—the particularism of community, language, tradition—becomes increasingly important. This study suggests that the longer one meditates within a particular tradition, the more difficult it is to keep from identifying oneself as part of that tradition, a finding similar to that of Compton (1991). As was seen in Table 2, the longer a person has meditated, the less likely were they to define their religious orientation as none, or monotheistic, and the more likely as “Buddhist” and “All.” Since these individuals were attending a Buddhist retreat, this finding suggests that congruence between the meditative technique and the religious orientation becomes increasingly important.

Further support for this observation is given by examining those who identified themselves as belonging to a specific monotheistic religion. For example, 80% of individuals who identified themselves as belonging to a monotheistic religion began the practice of meditation for self-regulation reasons, and in terms of hopes for retreat, they were still the group with the highest percentage (60%) with self-regulation only hopes. This would involve a minimum of religious (contextual) conflict.

Mathematics and science are based on the idea of universals. Psychology, in general, and psychotherapy specifically, may also be seen as seeking universal truths and techniques. However, just because a technique can be expressed in universal, context-free language does not necessarily mean attention to its particular expression is not also important, at least for some people. What are the implications of this? Does it mean that Buddhists should only learn meditation from other Buddhist teachers, secularists only learn generic meditation from secular teachers? The very notion seems to lead to a potentially dangerous regression of specificity: e.g., should we, under certain circumstances, match client and therapist by gender, age, and religious orientation? This study certainly does not answer such a question, but it does raise its relevance for further investigation, particularly regarding the vari-
able of religious orientation (cf. Shapiro, 1992 for further discussion).

Cognitions

The role of cognitions in emotions and behavior change is a central issue of discussion within and between differing therapeutic approaches. In this study, two sets of cognitions were examined: 1) what a person said on days when they did not meditate, and 2) what a person said right before they began to meditate. The first has relevance for understanding issues of adherence and compliance and as a potential variable for psychological health; the second as one possible mechanism mediating meditation’s effects.

Adherence and compliance is a major issue in all self-regulation strategies. Meditation is no exception. What is interesting in these results, however, as highlighted in Table 4, is that it appears that the longer the individual meditates, the more likely they are to use non-compliance in an educational and learning way, rather than with self-blame and other-blame. This has clear relevance to therapy, where a major step in learning to overcome resistance is to help individuals become aware of why the resistance exists, and what they can learn from it. It appears that the non-reactive type of attentional training involved in meditation may help facilitate this type of awareness.

Meditation has been previously defined as “a family of techniques which have in common a conscious attempt to focus attention in a nonanalytical way and an attempt not to dwell on discursive, ruminating thought” (Shapiro, 1982, p. 268). However, although the goal may be to not dwell on discursive thought, this definition states that meditation is a process—“an attempt”—and therefore allows for the exploration of the cognitions that occur prior to meditation, as well as when the person does not meditate. Although only a correlation, this study did show, as noted in Table 4, that adverse effects reported by subjects were correlated with the nature of cognitions made before beginning meditation practice. This is certainly a topic worthy of further investigation.

Final Comments

In many ways this study can be seen as a heuristic effort to examine the potential importance of an SR-SE-SL continuum with long-term meditators. These results must be interpreted with caution, both because results are correlational, not causal, based on a cross-sectional design, and because of the small sample pool. Part of the problem with sample size is an inherent difficulty with this type of...
research because of the still small pool of long-term meditating subjects. However, as the number of Western meditators increases, that obstacle should become easier to overcome, and the importance of obtaining data from long-term meditators, particularly when looking at the “upper end” of the continuum, cannot be overemphasized. Future research also needs to refine more carefully, through long-term prospective studies, whether and to what extent there is a developmental progression in the SR-SE-SL continuum, and how discrete the categories are over time. Meditation may be seen as merely a technique, and it may be used by different people for different reasons, or by the same person at different times in their lives for different reasons (cf. Lazarus, 1984; Shapiro, 1990).

Additional research should prospectively investigate to what degree long-term meditators represent a self-selected group. Short-term adherence and compliance is a problem with meditation (as well as with all other self-regulation techniques). As certain goals of short-term meditation are (or are not) fulfilled, which individuals drop out, and which continue?

The study of long-term meditators, however, can be helpful if it forces us to focus on issues of both content and context. In so doing, it may challenge therapists to recognize, or at least confront the often unexamined contextual biases within which specific techniques are used (cf. Weisz, Rothbaum. Blackburn, 1984; Shapiro 1991, 1992a, b). Further, the technique of meditation is unique in many ways in providing a bridge between self-regulation, stress management, and mind/body issues on the one hand, and religion and values on the other.

NOTES

1Of the twenty-seven individuals who filled out questionnaires at Time One, twelve filled out follow-up questionnaires at Time Three (six month follow-up); and five filled out follow-up questionnaires at Time Two (one month follow-up) but not Time Three. Therefore, follow-up prospective data at Time 2/3 are based on these seventeen.

2These figures are conservative for three reasons. First, they are based on context free coding. If a person said they wanted discipline, that was coded as self-regulation, even if it could be self-regulation within the context of a spiritual perspective. Second, there may be a retrospective memory distortion such that those who have practiced longer “remember” their initial reasons differently in light of current practice. For example, 75% of Group Three remember their reasons for starting as self-liberation versus 20% of those in group one and 11.1% of group two. Third, even if Group Three members did in fact begin for spiritual reasons, this creates a ceiling effect such that there is no place for Group Three to go upward along the continuum.

3Four individuals said they were not able to say, the most clever answer of these being “Loud snoring during a meditation session is probably a contra-indication.”
Although the data is too small for statistical comparison, it should be noted that of the six individuals in the two-week retreat, three (50%) reported SR effects, and three (50%) SE effects. Of the eleven individuals in the three-month retreat, four (36.3%) noted self-regulation effects, two (18.2%) self-exploration effects, and three (27.3%) self-liberation effects.

REFERENCES


Requests for reprints to: Deane H. Shapiro, Jr., Dept. of Psychiatry & Human Behavior, California College of Medicine, University of California, Irvine, Irvine, California 92717.
I submit that we fear and hate wholly healthy holy experience.... We are afraid of our souls becoming alive.

R. D. Laing (1987)

To the psychologist, the religious propensities of man [woman] must be at least as interesting as any other of the facts pertaining to his [her] mental constitution.

William James (1961)

Historically, mental health professionals have tended to either ignore or pathologize the religious and spiritual dimensions of life. Freud (1966), the founder of psychoanalysis, saw religion as a, “A system of wishful illusions together with a disavowal of reality, such as we find ... nowhere else ... but in a state of blissful hallucinatory confusion” and a “universal obsessional neurosis.” Skinnerian behaviorism ignored religious experience to focus exclusively on observable behavior. Albert Ellis, the originator of rational emotive (cognitive) therapy, promoted a highly critical view of religion, viewing it as equivalent to irrational thinking and emotional disturbance: “The elegant therapeutic solution to emo-
tional problems is quite unreligious.... The less religious they [clients] are, the more emotionally healthy they will tend to be (Ellis, 1980, p. 637). Thus, at the roots of three major schools of psychology, religion is denigrated (Bergin, 1983, although some contemporary theorists are revising these views, e.g., Laor, 1989).

Individuals who bring religious and spiritual problems into their treatment are often viewed as showing signs of mental illness (Lukoff & Everest, 1985). Grof (1985) has pointed out that even within the religious community, there is a lack of comprehension of the dynamics and intensity of religious experiences: “If a member of a typical congregation were to have a profound religious experience, its minister would very likely send him or her to a psychiatrist for medical treatment” (p. 335).

William James (1961), considered by many the father of the psychology of religion, did have an open-minded, even positive view of religious experience; however, he did not address the role of religion in psychotherapy. Carl Jung must be given credit for providing the first extensive examination of the role of religion in clinical practice. He saw the development of the client’s religious attitudes as central to therapy. For Jung (1972), religion is “an attitude peculiar to a consciousness which has been altered by the experience of the numinous” (p. 6). Numinous he defined as a transformative experience that grips the psyche, thereby providing life with a new sense of orientation and purpose. He saw a major part of Jungian analysis as directed toward facilitating numinous experiences in the client, and thus as having religious overtones.

Unfortunately, Jung’s views have not yet had much impact on the practices of mainstream psychiatry and psychology. However, during the last three decades, other attempts have been made to integrate the religious and spiritual dimensions of human existence into theory, research, and practice. Humanistic (third force) and transpersonal (fourth force) psychology, while representing a “minority view” within the mental health disciplines, have provided an enormous stimulus for exploration and research into the realms of religious and spiritual experience.

The authors believe that the scope and volume of theoretical, clinical, and research knowledge concerning religious issues in psychology is now sufficient to influence the practices of mainstream mental health professionals. In addition to Jung’s pioneering work, the foundations for such an effort have been laid by: 1) the field of pastoral counseling during the past fifty years (Wicks, Parsons & Capps, 1985); and more recently 2) the spiritual emergency movement (Bragdon, 1988; Grof & Grof, 1989); and 3) the attempts to link transpersonal psychology to the DSM-III-R.

In a 1985 *JTP* article, Lukoff proposed a diagnostic category, Mystical Experience with Psychotic Features (MEPF), to identify intense religious experiences that present as psychotic-like episodes. This category built upon the spiritual emergency literature, but was written in the style of *DSM-III* with operational criteria. In a subsequent 1988 article, Lukoff made an analogy between MEPF and the *DSM-III-R* category of Uncomplicated Bereavement. They noted that even when the period of bereavement following a significant loss meets the diagnostic criteria for Major Depression, this diagnosis is not given. Rather a V Code, which is a condition not attributable to a mental disorder, should be assigned. As stated in the *DSM-III-R*, a diagnosis of Uncomplicated Bereavement is appropriate because the symptoms result from “a normal reaction to the death of a loved one” (p. 361). Similarly, Lukoff (1988) argued that individuals in the midst of a tumultuous mystical experience may appear to have a mental disorder if viewed out of context, but are actually undergoing a “normal reaction” which warrants a non-pathological diagnosis (i.e., a V Code).

In early 1991, the authors of this research review embarked on the formidable task of developing a new V Code to be submitted to the American Psychiatric Association’s Task Force on *DSM-IV* (to be published in 1993). Our initial formulation of “Psychospiritual Conflict” was expanded to include the religious domain. This prompted the need to distinguish between religion and spirituality. While there is no consensus about the boundaries between religiosity and spirituality, a frequently drawn distinction in the literature, which we adopted, utilizes the term religiosity to refer to “adherence to the beliefs and practices of an organized church or religious institution” (Shafranske & Maloney, 1990, p. 72). Spirituality is used to describe the transcendental relationship between the person and a Higher Being, a quality that goes beyond a specific religious affiliation (Peterson & Nelson, 1987).

Then, having clarified the distinction between psychoreligious and psychospiritual, we substituted “problem” for “conflict” to be more in line with the terminology employed in the V Code section of *DSM-III-R* (e.g., Parent-Child Problem, Phase of Life Problem). In May 1991, we sent a letter informing the Task Force of our intention to submit a V Code Proposal for Psychoreligious or Psychospiritual Problem, and included a definition and examples. In subsequently discussing our plans with several colleagues, Stanley Krippner observed that we had incorporated examples falling outside both the religious and spiritual categories (e.g., out-of-body experiences and various parapsychological experiences).
Hence, we temporarily considered adding a third category entitled “experienced anomalous problem” to encompass such phenomena. However, we later dropped this third category from our proposal, feeling that it warranted separate evaluation as an independent V Code. This process enhanced the conceptual clarity and definitional boundaries of the two remaining categories: psychoreligious and psychospiritual problems.

Recognizing that any proposal to the DSM-IV Task Force needed to be research-based, we then conducted a literature search of Medline, PsycINFO, and the Religion Index. This review established the most prevalent and clinically significant problems within each category, enabling us to arrive at the following working definition for our proposed V Code (to be renamed Z Code in DSM-IV):

**Psychoreligious problems** are experiences that a person finds troubling or distressing and that involve the beliefs and practices of an organized church or religious institution. Examples include loss or questioning of a firmly held faith, change in denominational membership, conversion to a new faith, and intensification of adherence to religious practices and orthodoxy. **Psychospiritual problems** are experiences that a person finds troubling or distressing and that involve that person’s relationship with a transcendent being or force. These problems are not necessarily related to the beliefs and practices of an organized church or religious institution. Examples include near-death experience and mystical experience. This Z Code category can be used when the focus of treatment or diagnosis is a psychoreligious or psychospiritual problem that is not attributable to a mental disorder.

Over the next several months, we explored the incidence, assessment, treatment, differential diagnosis, training, and cultural sensitivity implications for each of the two categories. Finally, in December 1991, the proposal was formally submitted to the Task Force on DSM-IV. The literature review in its entirety appears in Lukoff, Lu, and Turner (in press).

We felt that all three categories that arose in the course of developing our proposal (i.e., psychoreligious, psychospiritual and anomalous) warranted attention in the Research Review section of JTP. In this article, we limit our focus to the psychoreligious category, with future articles planned for the psychospiritual and anomalous categories. In contrast to the fairly limited focus of the V Code proposal, here we are considering the broader range of issues concerning psychoreligious aspects of clinical practice. Thus, in addition to sections included in the proposal on: 1) religiosity in the general public and mental health professions, 2) training, 3) religion and mental health, and 4) treatment, this review also includes sections on: 5) addiction, and 6) ethnic perspectives.
During our computerized search of the literature contained in Medline, PsychlNFO, and the Religion Index, we were struck by how few serious scientific investigations have addressed the religious dimensions of human problems and their healing. In the psychiatric and psychological literature, when religion is not being cast in a negative light, the topic is generally ignored. A study of religious variables in articles published in four psychiatric journals during a recent five-year period showed that only 2.5% (59 of 2348) included religious variables, and these were mainly psycho-pathological uses of religion by patients (Larson, Pattison, Blazer, Omran & Kaplan, 1986). Below are the abstracts of the most compelling studies, uncovered in our search, that address the psychoreligious dimensions of healing.

STUDIES ADDRESSING THE PSYCHORELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALING

Religiosity of the General Public and Mental Health Professionals

In the past three decades, surveys conducted in the United States have consistently indicated that religious beliefs and practices are considered highly important by the general public. Unfortunately, published surveys from other societies were not located in the databases searched. In Gallup polls, 89% of adult Americans report that they pray to God, and 69% are affiliated with religious institutions. Between 95-99% claim a belief in God, and 69% believe that God has guided them in making decisions (Gallup, 1985). Similarly, surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center reveal that 80% of adult Americans feel at least “somewhat close” to God most of the time. These results parallel those found by surveys of patient populations.


Method: The authors studied the religious beliefs, practices, and experiences of 52 psychiatric inpatients. The patients completed a Beck Depression Inventory at the time of the interview. Religious attitudes and involvement were measured by using a questionnaire of religious beliefs, practices, and personal experiences. Findings: Results indicated that religious beliefs and practices assumed an important and often central place in the lives of many patients. In accord with national and local public poll results, some 95% professed a belief in...
God, and 75% reported the belief that the Bible refers to daily events. Almost two thirds were church members, and over half attended church weekly. The authors concluded that “belief in God, and in the teachings of the Bible, the sense of an afterlife, and involvement with a church community are relevant dimensions of our patients’ lives that certainly deserve more consideration than the psychiatric profession has customarily provided.”

In contrast, studies have consistently shown that mental health professionals place far less importance on religion than the general public and patient populations. In a 1975 survey conducted by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) Task Force on Religion and Psychiatry, about half of the psychiatrists surveyed described themselves as agnostics or atheists. A study of psychologists found that only 43% of the sample stated a belief in a transcendent deity (Ragan, Maloney, & Beit-Hallahmi, 1980). Furthermore, studies have found that both psychiatrists and psychologists are relatively uninvolved in organized religion. Over half of psychiatrists (APA, 1975) and psychologists (Ragan et al., 1980) reported that they attended church “rarely” or “never.” In marked contrast, Gallup (1985) found that one third of the population consider religion to be the most important dimension of their life, and another third consider it very important.


Method: A sample of 1000 clinical psychologists was randomly selected from the American Psychological Association Division of Clinical Psychology and sent a 65-item questionnaire; 41% responded. Findings: Only 18% of psychologists agreed that organized religion was the primary source of their spirituality, and 59% reported very little or no involvement with organized religion. However, 52% of psychologists reported spirituality as relevant to their professional life and that 60% of their clients often expressed their personal experiences in religious language. Yet 85% reported the frequency of discussions of these topics during their training to be rare or never.


Method: A survey of 425 therapists representing 59% of a national sampling of clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, clinical social workers, and marriage and family therapists was conducted. Median length of professional experience was 16 years. Findings: To the item, “My whole approach to life is based on my religion,” psychologists showed the least agreement (33%) versus 51% for the other mental health professionals and 72% in the general population. Although religious involvement among therapists was below the levels of the general public, 68% of all therapists in this study endorsed the item, “Seek a spiritual understanding of the universe and one’s place in it.”
authors concluded that: “Thus there appears to be a significant degree of unrecognized religiousness among therapists.”

Clinical Training: Psychoreligious Issues

Despite the importance that religion plays in most patients’ lives, neither psychologists nor psychiatrists are given adequate training to prepare them to deal with issues that arise in this realm. In a survey of members of the American Psychological Association, 83% reported that discussions of religion in training occurred rarely or never (Shafranske & Maloney, 1990). Only one-third felt competent to address religious and spiritual concerns in therapy, and they reported basing their clinical interventions on personal conviction rather than professional training experiences. Anderson, a clinically trained chaplain, and Young, a psychiatrist, both of whom work at an acute psychiatric day hospital, observed that “All clinicians inevitably face the challenge of treating patients with religious troubles and preoccupations” (Anderson & Young, 1988, p. 532). Yet, Post (1990) noted that “Few psychiatrists are trained to understand religion, much less treat it sympathetically” (p. 813). Several recent articles have highlighted the inadequate training given to mental health professionals in the area of religious experience and problems.


**Method:** 125 training directors of the Association of Psychology Internship Centers (APIC) responded to a 6-page questionnaire concerning the policies, procedures, and practices of their training sites regarding religious and spiritual issues, as well as their personal background and views in this area. **Findings:** 100% indicated they had received no education or training in religious or spiritual issues during their formal internship. Yet 72% reported that they had addressed those issues, at least occasionally, in clinical practice. This survey also revealed that most of the training directors did not read professional literature addressing religious and spiritual issues in treatment, and that little was being done at their internship sites to address these issues in clinical training.


**Method:** The authors designed a nationwide survey to assess the role of religion in psychiatric education. The questionnaire was distributed to the 1988 membership of the American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training (AADPRT). Of the 348 AADPRT members, 276 responded for a response rate of 79%. **Findings:** Results indicated that psychiatric educators do not emphasize religion in academic work: “Residents are rarely, if ever exposed to didactic course work on any aspect of religion, including the use of religion as an
intrapsychic or interpersonal defense.” Whatever limited attention there was to religious experiences was largely confined to psychotherapy supervision. The authors concluded that, “An academic approach to the role of religion in psychiatry warrants consideration.”

Suggested topics included: 1) religious experience on a continuum from unhealthy to healthy; 2) psychopathology expressed through religious content; 3) religion as a psychological defense; and 4) the role of religion in meeting psychological needs.

Thus psychologists and psychiatrists are often operating outside the boundaries of their professional competence, which raises ethical and educational concerns. Bamhouse has pointed out that, “Sex and religion are, in some form, universal components of human experience. ... Psychiatrists who know very little about religion would do well to study it” (Bamhouse. 1986, p. 103).

Despite these documented deficiencies in training regarding religious issues, considerable material on assessment techniques is available. The area of assessment is particularly critical for mental health professionals who must distinguish appropriate from pathological uses of religion. Bamhouse (1986) has pointed out that the pathological significance of religious language can seldom be determined by the immediate context alone. Knowledge of specific features of religious and spiritual belief systems is often essential in clinical decision-making, e.g., to assess assertions such as, “God spoke to me.” This may, but does not necessarily, indicate the presence of a hallucination and/or a delusion: “If the patient is a lifelong member of a primitive fundamentalist sect, in the absence of other signs, it is safe to assume, at least provisionally, that he or she is not psychotic. Should a patient who is Roman Catholic ... report symptoms the same way, the index of suspicion of psychosis would be much higher” (Bamhouse, 1986, p. 100, emphasis in original). Lovinger (1984) has written about the profound differences in beliefs and practices among even the various denominations of Protestantism, and how understanding these differences leads to better assessment and treatment.

Bamhouse (1986) suggests that a religious history be part of the standard evaluation, covering: 1) religion of family of origin; 2) how religion was practiced in the home; 3) if they have changed from their religion of childhood, abandoned religion altogether or taken it up for the first time; 4) how often they attend services; 5) do they find religion supportive, or frightening; 6) did they consult their pastor or rabbi about their problem and what he or she said; and 7) their idea of God. Salzman (1986) has also proposed assessment guidelines that can be used to evaluate the quality of the patient’s relation to his or her religion. In addition, Pruysier (1984) has described eight religious pathological syndromes including demonic possession, scrupulosity, repetitive denominational shifting, and sudden conversion. Thus, despite the paucity of research,
clinical literature is available which contains guidelines for assessing religious issues.

**Religion and Mental Health**

In *DSM-III-R*, religion is consistently negatively portrayed. All the references to religion are in the context of psychopathology (Post, 1990). As noted earlier, when it is not being cast in a negative light, the topic of religion is generally ignored in psychiatric literature (Larson et al., 1986). In an invited address to the APA in 1986, the renowned theologian Hans Kung (1990) spoke about the “repression of religion” in psychiatric practice. This negative view of religion is not warranted based on some recent research. Many studies evaluating the relation between religiosity and mental health have yielded a significant and positive relationship between religiosity and psychological well-being.

**Method:** The author presents a meta-analysis of religiosity and mental health that challenges a widely held view in clinical professions that “religiosity is antithetical to emotional health and rationality.” He examined 24 studies (1951-1979) with at least one religiosity measure and one clinical pathology measure. **Findings:** Of the 30 effects tabulated, only 23% showed a negative correlation between religion and mental health. In contrast, 47% showed a positive correlation and 30% no significant correlation. Thus 77% of the results were contrary to the postulated negative effect of religion. In addition, the author compares the ambiguous findings to those formerly characterizing psychotherapy research, and suggests that better specification of concepts and methods of measuring religiosity could alleviate these problems.


**Method:** In an effort to explore the relation between religion and subjective well-being in adulthood, the authors perform a quantitative research synthesis (meta-analysis) of U.S. research literature estimating the strength of the religion/subjective well-being relationship. **Findings:** Results indicate that religion is significantly and positively related to subjective well-being. The authors conclude that “religion should not, as has often occurred, be ignored in testing causal models of subjective well-being in adulthood.”


**Method:** Using data from the 1983 and 1984 General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, the author uses
Regression analysis to examine the extent to which relationships with “divine others” affect psychological well-being (e.g., general well-being, general happiness, marital happiness, life excitement, and life satisfaction). Findings: Regression analysis (controlling for sociodemographic background variables and church attendance) revealed that relationships with “divine others” have a significant effect on several measures of well-being. In fact, participation in a divine relation was “the strongest correlate in three of four measures of well-being, surpassing in strength such usually potent predictors as race, sex, income, age, marital status, and church attendance.”

In addition, studies have shown that while religiosity is associated with psychopathology among the clinical population, it is not among the nonclinical population.


Method: The relationship between religiosity and the incidence of schizotypal thinking was investigated in a normal sample and in acute and chronic schizophrenic samples. The Rust Inventory of Schizotypal Cognitions (measuring schizotypal thinking) was administered, along with two measures of religiosity. Findings: Religiosity had a significantly negative correlation with schizotypal thinking in normal subjects, while in schizophrenic patients the correlation was positive and significantly different. The authors suggest that “the process of existential growth of awareness in the normal development of religious belief, which is thought to be associated with schizotypal thinking, may proceed differently in persons suffering from schizophrenia.”

In summary, available research has established religion’s potential to foster positive mental health. However, its potential for preventing mental illness can only be inferred at this point. Longitudinal studies exploring the long-term effects of healthy religious development have yet to be conducted (Payne, Bergin, Bielema & Jenkins, 1991).

Treatment of Psychoreligious Problems

Religious issues are receiving more attention in the treatment literature, which documents that there is often therapeutic value in addressing a person’s religious ideation (e.g., Bradford, 1985; Lovinger, 1984). A recent book on AIDS-Related Psychotherapy (Winiarski, 1991) devoted an entire chapter to the role of religion and spirituality in treatment. In that chapter, the author noted: “Facing the mystery and suffering of HIV illness, both client and therapist may turn to religion, spirituality, and concepts of God in their efforts to find solace, understanding, and emotional healing” (p. 183). Although the role of religion in therapy has been acknowledged since Jung, little is known of the dynamics and effective
components involved. One behavioral therapist, discussing a documented case of a transsexual who showed a dramatic and complete reversal after only two sessions of faith healing (versus the generally poor results of behavior therapy with such cases), observed that:

The speed and durability of these faithhealing cures leaves behavioral and other forms of psychotherapy far behind in terms of cost-effectiveness. The problem is repeatability ... When it works, faithhealing has a power far surpassing existing psychotherapy technology. The order of magnitude of this difference is like that between nuclear and more conventional explosives. But we have not yet harnessed nuclear power satisfactorily, and our understanding of faith and religious processes is far more primitive than our knowledge of subatomic particles (Issac Marks, cited in Tan. 1990, p. 60).

Below are abstracts of research articles which address the role of religion in treatment.


Method: This study, which is frequently cited by Bernie Siegel, M.D., evaluated the effects of intercessory prayer (IP) in a coronary care unit using a prospective randomized double-blind protocol. Over a 10-month period, 393 patients admitted to the CCU at San Francisco General Hospital were randomly assigned (after giving informed consent) to an IP group or a control group. The IP group received IP by participating Christians praying outside the hospital; the control group did not. Findings: “The IP group subsequently had a significantly lower severity score based on the hospital course after entry (p<.01).... The control patients required ventilatory assistance, antibiotics, and diuretics more frequently than patients in the IP group. These data suggest that Intercessory prayer to the Judaeo-Christian God has a beneficial therapeutic effect in patients admitted to a CCU.”


Method: This study compared the relative therapeutic efficacy of a religious and a nonreligious imagery modification, a self-monitoring, and a self-monitoring plus therapist contact program for university students who scored high on the Beck Depression Inventory and a scale of religiosity. The religious imagery used to modify depressive images included self-statements such as: “I can visualize Christ going with me into that difficult situation in the future as I try to cope.” Findings: “The nonreligious imagery treatment showed no effects beyond those of the self-monitoring treatment or the minimal treatment condition. The religious imagery treatment, however, showed significantly more treatment gains than the self-monitoring or nonreligious imagery treatments.”

**Method:** The authors, a psychiatrist and a chaplain at a Veteran’s Administration medical center, report on a program which adapted the A A Twelve Step program for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They incorporated AA principles including depending on a Higher Power, viewing recovery as a process rather than a cure, and the interdependency of group members. However, the principles were adapted for veterans coping with guilt and other problems related to combat survivors. Thus Principle 9 read: “We reveal to someone we trust and a ‘Good Higher Power’ all suicidal plans and wishes and seek, with help, to replace them with a commitment to life.”

**Findings:** The authors report that participants were able to reduce their violent urges, their self-destructive behaviors, and their guilt, while enhancing the positive aspects of their self-identities. Krippner and Welch (1992) cites a personal communication indicating that the Veteran’s Administration terminated the program because of their incorporation of a spiritual focus in the treatment, despite the positive effects being obtained.


**Method:** The empirical research on religious counseling from 1974-1984 was reviewed by examining the table of contents of twenty journals which publish on this topic. Research was scattered throughout the psychology, psychiatric, pastoral counseling and religious journals. Although an effort was made to examine published research on religious counseling in all religions, most research used Christian counselors or clients. **Findings:** “Clergy do most of the religious counseling,” and “Clergy counsel people with the full range of psychological difficulties.” Problems concerned specifically with religion, such as loss of faith, were encountered relatively infrequently in comparison with family problems. Clients who seek help from clergy are not more disturbed than those who seek out mental health professionals, but “expressed concern that their Christian faith would be misunderstood, unappreciated, or perhaps even ridiculed or eroded by an agnostic or atheistic counselor.”


**Method:** 1045 research articles published in major pastoral counseling journals were compared with research articles in four major psychiatric journals and three geriatric journals. The degree of internal and external validity was assessed by examining their design, sampling, measures and statistical procedures according to operational criteria. **Findings:** In comparison with studies reported in psychiatry, geriatric and nursing journals, “pastoral counseling research is less likely to
state hypotheses, to use control groups, to state a sampling method, to report a response rate, to evaluate more than a simple point in time, or to discuss limitations of the findings.” The authors maintain that, given these factors, pastoral counseling has failed to develop adequately as a behavioral science. One respondent argued that pastoral psychology is an interdisciplinary field, and quantitative methods are not the best suited to explore this area: “If our efforts in pastoral psychology and its clinical application are understood as a hermeneutical science, then we are freer to explore different research methodologies which may more clearly address the research needs of this discipline within its own parameters.”


Method: The authors sent a survey to 260 psychiatrists who were members of the Christian Medical and Dental Society. One hundred ninety-three usable responses were received. Members of this group must sign a statement acknowledging “the final authority of the Bible as the word of God.” Findings: The items adapted from Gallup surveys revealed that these psychiatrists were a little more religious than the general population, and considerably more religious than most psychiatrists. Ninety-eight percent said they believe in the Devil (vs. 70% of the general population), and 96% said they had been born again (vs. 40% of the general population). Christian psychiatrists stated that they varied their treatment depending on whether the client was committed to Christian beliefs: 1/2 would use prayer with committed clients and only 1/5 with noncommitted. For acute schizophrenic and manic episodes, medication was reported the intervention of choice, but for suicidal intent, grief reaction, sociopathy, and alcoholism, the Bible and prayer scored as the most effective modality.

STUDIES OF THE PSYCHORELIGIOUS/PSYCHOSPiritual DIMENSIONS OF HEALING

The topics of addiction, ethnic perspectives, terminal illness, and mystical experience straddle the religious and spiritual arenas. In some cases, the problems and the treatments associated with these phenomena are clearly associated with religious beliefs and organizations. In others, the focus is spiritual: “state of awareness or devotion to a higher being or life philosophy” (Walker, 1991), and not related to conventional religious beliefs. We have included the areas of addiction and ethnic perspectives in this review because the bulk of the addiction research articles uncovered in our search focused more on the psychoreligious aspects of healing. In contrast, the research articles on terminal illness and mystical experience were more spiritually oriented, and thus will be included in the next planned review on the psychospiritual dimensions of healing. However, since the topics of addiction and ethnic perspectives inherently involve psychospiritual dimensions as well as psychoreligious, the term spiritual is often used by the original authors in
the text below. Although our focus here on the research literature oriented us toward religious issues, the clinical literature includes a growing emphasis on the spiritual dimensions of the assessment and treatment of addictions. Of particular note is the Spiritual Emergence movement within transpersonal psychology, which has approached addictions as spiritual crises (Small, 1991).

**Addiction**

Numerous studies have found that alcohol and drug abuse are negatively related to religiosity. In particular, substance abuse is associated with the absence of religion in a person’s life (for a review of this literature, see Payne, Bergin, Bieleta & Jenkins, 1991). It is therefore not surprising that many of the treatment programs have characteristics of religious groups. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), the most popular self-help group for alcoholics, has been described as a pseudo-religion, mystical religion, self-help group, minority movement, Messianic movement, and/or crisis curing cult (Bufo, 1991; Madsen, 1974). Estimates of membership in AA range from 750,000 to 2,000,000 spread over a hundred countries, and offshoots of AA have been developed for other addictive behaviors, including Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous and Marijuana Anonymous (Bufo, 1991). Twelve Step Programs purport not to have a religious, but rather a spiritual orientation. In the AA program, one step mentions “A Power greater than ourselves” and the final step mentions a “spiritual awakening.” However, five of the Twelve Steps make a specific reference to God, and the phrase “as we understand Him” appears twice. The founders of AA did not ponder whether religious and spiritual factors are important in recovery, but rather if it is possible for alcoholics to recover without the help of a higher power (Miller, 1990).

Researchers have been reluctant to study AA itself, possibly because of its reliance on religion and spirituality, its voluntary nature (making it impossible to randomly assign subjects), as well as AA’s own resistance to exposing its members to scrutiny due to the possible loss of anonymity. Twelve Step programs are widely, although not universally (Ellis & Schoenfeld, 1990), regarded as the most effective approach to the treatment of addictions. While the research on its effectiveness, as reviewed below, is equivocal, surveys of drinking histories of members, case studies, and AA’s many adherents are all highly suggestive that at least some people benefit from this approach.

**Method:** The author reviews empirical, historical, clinical, legal, and other literature to present a perspective largely critical of AA. **Findings:** AA's founders were active members of the evangelical Christian Oxford groups in the 1930s, and the profound similarities between AA and these religious groups are documented. Hence, the author argues that AA is “unequivocally” religious in nature. Bufe also systematically considers the question of whether AA is a cult, concluding that it is not: “AA has neither a charismatic leader nor an authoritarian hierarchy. It doesn’t exploit its members. It doesn’t employ mind-control techniques... It doesn’t use deceptive recruiting techniques.” However, he argues that “it does have some dangerous cult-like tendencies.” With regard to its effectiveness, the author concludes that, based on the available outcome studies, it is an appropriate treatment method for some, but “clearly AA is neither a suitable nor an effective form of treatment for the vast majority of alcohol abusers.”


**Method:** The author reviewed all published studies from 1976-1986 of the characteristics of alcohol dependent individuals who affiliate with AA. **Findings:** Research failed to isolate an “AA personality,” with studies finding no or inconsistent differences between AA and non-AA members. Most studies (54%) have found that attending AA before, during or after treatment was positively related to treatment outcome. Two studies have found that membership in AA was the most powerful predictor of positive outcome, although 36% found no relationship between AA membership and outcome. A large percentage (35-68%) drop out of AA, although 40-50% become long-term active members. Sixty-eight percent of active members drink less or not at all during AA participation. The author concludes that: “AA is helpful for some individuals, but treaters are on unethical ground when they insist rigidly on exposing every patient to large ‘doses’ of AA.”


**Method:** The author conducted a literature review of published research on addiction. He uses “spiritual” to encompass both religious and spiritual variables. **Findings:** “Spiritual aspects of addiction and recovery remain virtually unstudied, despite the fact that spirituality is given central importance in Alcoholics Anonymous and in the lives of many individuals. .. . Consequently an entire class of potentially important variables is being overlooked.” The use of dependent (e.g., measures of perceived purpose or meaning in life, changes in values and beliefs, shifts in religious practices), moderator (e.g., relationship of clients’ religious value systems and acceptance of particular treatment goals and strategies), and independent spiritual variables (e.g., the impact of spiritually-oriented interventions on treatment outcome) in research “may improve our understanding of the addictive behaviors, and our ability to prevent and treat these enduring problems.”

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contemporary biopsychosocial perspective of psychology and psychiatry needs to be expanded to include the transcendent dimensions of experience.

**Ethnic Perspectives**

The need for “cultural sensitivity” in mental health practice has been a topic of much debate in the recent psychiatric literature (Fabrega, 1992; Kirmayer, 1991; Kleinman, 1988; Mezzich, Fabrega & Kleinman, 1992). The religious and spiritual dimensions of culture are among the most important factors which structure human experience, beliefs, values, and behavior, as well as illness patterns (Browning, Gobe & Evison, 1990; James, 1961; Krippner & Welch, 1992). The abstracts below illustrate that cultural sensitivity requires attending both to ethnic as well as religious dimensions of clients’ problems. While this First abstract involves the treatment of addiction, it emphasizes an ethnic perspective, so it was placed in this section.


**Method:** The Indian Shaker Church is a century-old inter-tribal religious movement and curing cult. To study its function as a culture-based alcoholism intervention, the authors conducted interviews in New Mexico, Arizona, and northern California with 14 traditional religious healers and 57 alcohol treatment personnel, as well as taking drinking histories from 53 area Indians and 87 northern California Shakers. Participant observation of Shaker work included one author becoming a member of a Shaker curing team. **Findings:** The authors found that many socio-cultural elements are held in common by AA and the Shaker Church: “These parallels include an antecedent period of social upheaval, the visionary impetus of the conversion of a focal charismatic leader, the primacy of the conversion experience, cult institutionalization through formulation of charter myths, codified doctrines, sacred texts, standardized rituals and paraphernalia, and ongoing membership in social support networks.” In addition to these shared elements, a number of culture-specific indigenous curing procedures distinguish the Shaker Church from AA and other conventional alcohol recovery programs: 1) the belief that alcoholism can be a product of sorcery or demonic activity; 2) and the focus on diagnosing the problem through seeing of colors and auras.


**Method:** Members of a West Indian Christian sect called the Spiritual Baptists participate in a “mourning” ritual that is characterized by praying, fasting, and the experiencing of dreams and visions while in
isolation for seven days. Sixteen individuals who underwent mourning were evaluated with the SCL-90 (a well-known self-report questionnaire) before and after the ritual, in order to document changes in psychological symptoms related to this mourning ritual. **Findings:** While there was no significant change on the somatization dimension, the participants scored significantly lower on obsessive-compulsive symptoms, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism. There were significant reductions in the global severity index and the positive symptom total. The authors concluded that “the results of this study raise for the first time the intriguing possibility that such religious practices have an effect that can be characterized psychometrically. This possibility merits the replication of this work with a larger group of subjects together with investigation of the notion that these practices may have long-term effects.”


**Method:** The author based his conclusions on clinical work as well as research interviews with Cambodian refugees. **Findings:** Cambodian refugees often show signs of distress which are not related to acculturation difficulties, but reflect an understandable response to the catastrophic loss of their culture: “the person continues to live in the past, is visited by supernatural forces while asleep or awake, suffers feelings of guilt...yearns to complete obligations to the dead, and feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life.” Given their experience of being uprooted under such violent circumstances, these reactions "may be a normal, even constructive, existential response, rather than a psychiatric illness." Eisenbruch argues that adding cultural bereavement to the nosology would refine the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder and would allow for greater recognition of the refugee's existential predicament. Western medical intervention may only compound the refugee’s distress and inhibit healthy aspects of the cultural bereavement process. However, intervention by a Buddhist monk or traditional healer may successfully restore the patient’s link with the past and help reintegration into the community.

This last abstract illustrates the role which the organized religion of Buddhism sometimes plays in treatment of Asian clients.

**CONCLUSION**

As with the topics covered in previous Research Reviews (i.e., mystical experiences [Lukoff & Lu, 1988] and psychoactive substance-induced experiences [Lukoff, Zanger & Lu, 1990]), psychoreligious problems are difficult to research within the standard experimental scientific paradigm. But, as Walsh (1982) has pointed out:
It is the responsibility of science to confront all areas of knowledge irrespective of the difficulty involved, and not to shirk investigation because the areas in question do not lend themselves to the best-honed experimental tools presently at hand (p. 165).

Similarly, on the clinical level, it is often hard to differentiate religious experiences from episodes of mental disorder (Lukoff, 1985). Yet, as Gabbard, Twemlow & Jones (1982) have pointed out, mental health professionals are often entrusted with the responsibility of differentiating unusual from psychopathological experiences:

It is incumbent upon us as psychiatrists to be thoroughly familiar with the range and breadth of human experience, whether pathological or healthy. We must respect and differentiate unusual but integrating experiences from those which are distressing and disorganizing (p. 368).

The authors believe that greater attention to the psychoreligious dimensions of healing would improve clinical practice by: 1) encouraging research on religious issues in psychotherapy; 2) increasing the accuracy of diagnostic assessments when religious issues are involved; 3) reducing the occurrence of iatrogenic harm from misdiagnosis of psychoreligious problems; 4) improving treatment methods for such problems by stimulating clinical research; and 5) encouraging clinical training centers to address the religious dimensions of human experience. Similar advantages would accrue when the psychospiritual dimensions of healing are explored. This will be the topic of our next Research Review.

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A TRANSPERSONAL APPROACH TO MEMORY

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The seed of truth lies hidden deep within, and teaching fans the spark to take new life; Why else unaided can man answer true. Unless deep in the heart the touchwood burns? And if the muse of Plato speaks the truth, Man but recalls what he knew and lost.

Boethius (1969)

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I contrast two approaches to problems of memory. One modern, one ancient. My purpose in doing so is to revive an ancient, Platonic approach to problems of memory. The Platonic tradition of memory study was “transpersonal” in that it focused on the study of recollective experience. Recollection was considered a spiritual process which could lead to a recovery of one’s innate knowledge of the “eternal ideas” (Coomaraswamy, 1977). Writers in this tradition always distinguished between memory as retention on the one hand and memory as recollection on the other. According to Aristotle, for example, memory was passive, merely retentive and in service to recollection, while recollection was active, creative and the basis for self-awareness.

Recollection, for Aristotle, and others influenced by Plato’s theory of Anamnesis, was the act which made memory possible. Having a memory followed the subjective experience of, or effort at, remembering.

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The modern experimental tradition of memory study, on the other hand, has ignored recollective experience and attempted to model memory without it. Though the experimental tradition is generally considered to have begun with Ebbinghaus’s work on forgetting, in the nineteenth century, the tradition’s philosophical roots extend back into Cartesian rationalism and British empiricism. While the rationalists and empiricists disagree on most issues concerning mind and soul, both schools of thought took retention or the persistence of the past into the present as the essence of memory (Kreli, 1990). If the ancients are correct, however, in asserting that recollection is what makes “retention” possible, then no theory of memory will work without including an account of recollective experience.

In what follows I try to construct the outlines of a description of recollective experience. In order to describe the processes which occur during recollective experience I have allowed myself to use whatever data sources were available since very little experimental work has been done in the area. I occasionally borrow from non-traditional sources such as philosophical analysis and accounts of recollective experience given by spiritual-mystical writers. I have also used accounts of disorders of recollective experience seen in the neuropsychology clinic.

Neuropsychologists are forced by their patient’s distress to take a larger view of memory than the experimentalists apparently take. Experimentalists must rely on their ingenuity in order to ask non-trivial questions of nature. Human ingenuity is, of course, fallible and constrained by existing paradigms in a field of study. The questions the neuropsychologist asks of memory, on the other hand, are prompted by the clinical picture presented to him or her in the person of the patient. These clinical experiments of nature guarantee a certain amount of ecologic validity—that the phenomena that are investigated (e.g. the patient’s experience or behaviors) are real and not mere artifacts of some experimental manipulation. Thus, data from the neuropsychology laboratory may be particularly instructive for a theory of recollection.

I begin with a summary of the theoretical limitations of modern accounts of memory as retention. I then attempt to show why any adequate theory of memory must be transpersonal in nature. I argue that at a minimum, the theory must assume a non-empiricist’s model of mind in order to account for memory phenomena. I then provide a sketch of the elements of a transpersonal approach to memory and conclude with a description of recollective experience.
The Modern Tradition Ignores Recollective Experience

Modern experimental science has studied retention or the persistence of the past, and appears to have forgotten that such a thing as anamnesis or recollection even exists. The old tradition, centered around the study of recollective experience, if acknowledged at all, has been considered obscure, unscientific and mystical by modern students of memory. This lowly assessment of the old tradition in the study of memory is still held by many scientific psychologists despite the fact that the experience of recollection is no more obscure and mystical than the belief that the “past” is retained in memory. Nevertheless, the assessment is widespread enough that recollection has not, until recently, been seriously studied by anyone in experimental science since the rise of scientific psychology in the late nineteenth century.

There are signs, however, that recollective experience is making a comeback. Tulving (1983), for example, has decried the neglect of recollective experience in the modern study of memory and has called for a new approach in the study of episodic memory (memory for personally experienced events). The new approach advocated by Tulving would make recollective experience the central object of study:

In theories of episodic memory, recollective experience should be the ultimate object of interest, the central aspect of remembering that is to be explained and understood. Yet psychologists have successfully evaded problems entailed in recollective experience, and have gone about studying memory without mentioning it. If you wanted to find out what contemporary students of memory have to say about recollective experience, under what term would you try to locate the relevant material through the subject indexes of books, or what key words would you look for in the titles and abstracts of papers? You would find many references to recall, recognition, judgments of recency and frequency, and, of course, retrieval, but these terms refer to overt behavior of the rememberer, characterize different memory tasks, or represent hypothetical theories of memory and memory processing. You might think that recollective experience is related to, say, recall recognition or retrieval and no one would dispute such a claim, but the fact remains that theories of retrieval are silent on recollective experience (Tulving, 1983, p. 181).

Tulving goes on to point out that we may need to understand recollection if we are ever to fully understand recognition, retrieval, or any other element of memory. We need to have a grasp of recollective experience as the central object of study.
the big picture if we are to avoid mistakes concerning the basic elements of memory processing. Unfortunately, Tulving’s call for a return to recollective experience has largely gone unheeded. Most laboratory studies of memory reported in the experimental journals since Tulving published his call do not mention recollective experience.

Modern accounts of memory ignore recollective experience at their own peril. In a well-known critique of laboratory research on memory Neisser (1981) summarized results of this research in the following way:

The results of a hundred years of the psychological study of memory are somewhat discouraging. We have established firm empirical generalizations, but most of them are so obvious that every ten-year-old knows them anyway. We have made discoveries, but they are only marginally about memory: in many cases we don’t know what to do with them, and wear them out with endless experimental variations. We have an intellectually impressive group of theories, but history offers little confidence that they will provide any meaningful insight into natural behavior (Neisser, 1981, pp. 11-12).

Shallice (1988) refers to Neisser’s critique and adds the following observations on the traditional experimental approach to memory:

Empirical phenomena in the corresponding study of normal processes—human experimental psychology—are very slippery things. Many factors affect any experimental procedure. Make a slight change in one aspect—rate of presentation, stimulus material, recall delay, amount of practice, and so on—and the effect disappears or reappears, although according to theory, it should not. Thus even if a phenomena is narrowly robust, the experimental result provides only the most insecure platform for theoretical inferences (Shallice, 1988, p. 5).

In other words, results in the experimental study of memory have tended to be unreliable, and when they were not unreliable (or when they were “narrowly robust” as Shallice put it), they tended to be trivial (“so obvious that every ten-year-old knows them anyway” as Neisser put it). One reason for the variability (and unreliability) in experimental results could be that the focus or object of experimental study is ephemeral and ill-defined (e.g. retention), or when it is well defined, it is trivial (e.g. repetition improves retention). Traditional definitions of memory as retention or as the influence of the past on the present are not well defined because “retention” and “pastness” are not well defined (see section below). Experimental results of studies of retention risk trivializing memory phenomena because retention involves only a minor aspect of the recollection process.
The Modern Tradition Illogically Defines Memory as the
Persistence of the Past into the Present

Although remembering certainly involved the persistence of “past” events into the present, it cannot be reduced to persistence or retention of external sensory impressions. Even if we adopt the empiricist paradigm and focus on processing of sensory impressions, it is not clear that what occurs in a memory experience is simple retention of those sensory impressions. Subjectively, we always experience a memory as a memory for us. Experiential or episodic memories are rarely, if ever, neutral with respect to the experiencer. We know, for example, that a tremendous amount of reconstruction of memory representations occurs during a remembering experience (Bartlett, 1932). The reconstructive process transforms memories in such a way as to be relevant to the rememberer—to the rememberer’s history. So much reconstruction occurs, in fact, that the veridicality of what is retained is suspect. It therefore seems odd to speak of retention when very little or nothing of the original event or its representation remains after the reconstructive process does its work.

If we take “pastness” as crucial for the memory experience, we find that the relation between inferences to the “past” and remembering are tenuous. Even when the source of a piece of information is judged to be the past, conscious recollection may still not emerge. I can, for example, realize that I am being influenced by the past but still not experience remembering. Amnesics can refer to the past but cannot recollect the past. We can speak about the past with no accompanying remembering experience. If asked if I ever went to school, for example, I simply say yes. I do not need to make an inference to the past to recollect the fact that I went to school. In the neurology clinic one sees the opposite case also—a patient who believes he is remembering something when he is not—as in confabulation (Damasio, et al., 1985). The experience in these cases cannot have been based on an inference to the past since no such past ever existed. We are forced to conclude that the experience of remembering is not about the past—whatever that is.

Treating memory as the persistence of the past into the present, or as an image, copy, trace, imprint or representation of an external event, furthermore, creates intolerable logical paradoxes. If the past is past, then it is absent—it is not present. But if it is not present, what is it we remember? If what we remember is an image or copy of the original event, why do we not take the copy for the original? If the copy is not really a copy of the original event, then the veridicality of memory needs to be explained. If it is true that we, in fact, remember via an image or copy/representation of the original
event, then what we remember is, in fact, not absent or past (since the image is present in our consciousness) so we really are not remembering at all—nothing from the past is in consciousness. Aristotle (in “On Memory and Reminiscence”) put it this way:

But if memory really occurs in this way, does one remember the image or that from which the image came to be? For if the former, we would be remembering nothing absent (past); if the latter, how can we, while perceiving this, remember the absent thing, which we are not perceiving? If the image is like an imprint or trace in us, why should the perception of this very thing be the memory of something else and not simply of itself? For in exercising memory one contemplates the image and this is what one perceives. How then does one remember what is not present? For this would imply that one could also see and hear what is not present (quoted in Krell, 1990, p. 17).

Sartre put the problem in the context of the issue of the experience of temporality in general:

All theory of memory implies presuppositions concerning the being of the past. These presuppositions, which have never been elucidated, have obscured the problem of memory and that of temporality in general.... We say that the past is no longer. From this point of view it seems that one would want to attribute being to the present alone. This ontological presupposition has engendered the famous theory of cerebral traces: since the past no longer is, since it has foundered in nothingness, the continued existence of our memory depends on the present modification of our being; it will depend, for example, on an imprint presently marked on a group of brain cells.... Yet if all is present, how explain the pastness of remembering; that is to say, the fact that in its intention a consciousness that reminisces transcends the present in order to aim at the event back there where it was (Sartre, 1956, pp. 107-8).

Modem ideologies of memory privilege the present over the past and assign no ontological status to the past except insofar as the past influences the present. Thus memory theorists in the experimental tradition have asserted the existence of traces which represent the past in the present.

When Bergson (1908) confronted the paradox of the persistence of the past into the present, he concluded that the “past” was actually contemporaneous with the present—that the present is only a densely contracted portion of the past. In other words, Bergson privileged the past over the present. According to Bergson, if memory concerns the persistence of the past into the present, as the modern tradition asserts, then one needs to assume that time is linear and flows from past to present to future. The present needs to continually become past. But the present cannot become the past unless the past exists, i.e. has some ontological status. Each current present must be capable of “pastness.” For the present to pass, to
flow, the past must be part of, or available to, the present. Thus all accounts of memory which reduce memory to pastness or persistence end in paradox.

Even if we ignore the paradoxical implications of modern accounts of memory which invoke pastness or imprints of sensory impressions as paradigmatic of memory, the accounts still may not work since, as Plotinus pointed out,

... if memory were a matter of seal-impressions retained, the multiplicity of objects would have no weakening effect on the memory. Further, on the same hypothesis, we would have no need of thinking back to revive remembrance; nor would we be subject to forgetting and recalling; all would lie engraved within (quoted in Hermann & Chaffin, 1988).

In order to account for the selectivity of memory as well as the transformations of imprints or traces over time, representaionally-based theories of memory need to postulate rich internal structures of memory which explain innate memory preferences and which do the work of transformation of representations. But once internal structure is assumed, we are no longer holding to the major empiricist assumptions of the modern experimental tradition.

_The Modern Tradition Assumes an Empiricist Model of Mind_

Empiricist accounts of memory assume that memory is a passive, initially blank and unstructured slate upon which imprints leave traces or copies of external sensory impressions. Memory, in short, is treated as a neutral recording device designed to process or store external sensory impressions.

Underlying the empiricist position is a view of memory as an all-purpose learning device which allows human beings to “maximize fitness” or to adapt to, or learn virtually any set of environmental contingencies they encounter. According to current evolutionary psychology, however (Tooby & Cosmides, 1989), human beings possess no general learning capacities. Rather we possess complex and specialized psychological mechanisms which directly regulate and support individual behavior and maturation. Memory cannot be construed as a type of fitness-maximizing, general purpose learning device, because human beings do not appear to have psychological mechanisms which are non-specialized domain-general cognitive capacities. Domain-general cognitive capacities are faculties of the mind which are not pre-attuned to process specialized types of information. Most of the faculties of the mind which have received any serious study are quite specialized in their processing preferences and routines. The language processor, for
example, is “good” only with bits of language (Fodor, 1983). It cannot handle—it doesn’t even see—the complex visual configurations of a human face. A separate processing system (in a different area of the brain, in fact) is dedicated to processing faces (Geschwind, 1979).

The number of these specialized, automatic processing systems is probably quite large since most of human behavior is routine, habitual and automatic. They accomplish such tasks as language comprehension, personality assessment, detecting emotion in another person, rapid assessment of risk in any given situation, monitoring codes of social exchange, sexual behavior, parent-child attachment and so on. These systems do most of the day-to-day work of the mind/brain, are largely automatized “devices” and are pre-attuned to selectively pick-up, process and store very restricted domains of environmental stimuli or information. They, therefore, cannot have been designed to maximize reproductive fitness.

What constitutes fitness, especially reproductive fitness, moreover, varies across sex, age and adaptive domains and it cannot be assessed/perceived within a single individual’s lifetime. It is impossible for humans, therefore, to maximize fitness in a domain-general way. Memory cannot be a domain-general or neutral recording device in the mind because there are no such devices in the mind.

There are many other possible objections (besides the major ones listed above) to empiricist theories of memory. First, contrary to the blank slate view, memory appears to be structured and very rigidly organized. Studies of memory disorders (especially in brain-damaged populations) have forced investigators to conclude that memory is very richly structured (Cermak, 1988). There are patients, for example, who lose their episodic memories but not their semantic memories and vice versa. Similarly, procedural memories may be impaired in Parkinson’s disease but not declarative memories, while the opposite is the case for patients with Korsakoff’s syndrome (Oscar-Berman, McNamara & Freedman, 1991). Second, the development of various memory structures appears to follow a predetermined biological plan in that major spurts in episodic memory reports take place at roughly the same ages and in roughly the same sequence in children (Tulving, 1983). Development of memory, therefore, is not tied to quantity or quality of sensory impressions available to the child. Third, what any given child remembers is always more than (if the child remembers anything at all), and better organized than, what the child was initially exposed to. The child’s memory is creative. Fourth, memory is selective—we remember some things better than others suggesting that our memories exhibit preferences and are pre-attuned to certain types of information (Houston, 1991). Finally,
memory is hard-wired into the brain. If you damage selective areas of the brain (particularly medial-temporal and frontal structures) you will invariably observe profound and selective memory disorders (Squire, 1987). For all these reasons memory cannot be a neutral information processing system designed to promote the persistence of past sensory impressions.

WHY ANY THEORY OF MEMORY MUST BE TRANSPERSONAL IN PERSPECTIVE

Modem accounts of memory labor under three major shortcomings: 1) They ignore recollective experience—a process central to the subjective experience of remembering; 2) they attempt to understand all memory phenomena as the persistence of the past into the present; and 3) they assume empiricist models of mind.

The greatest flaw, however, in modem accounts of memory is that they ignore transpersonal memory (recollective experience) and unnecessarily confine themselves to study of personal memories only (whether of the episodic or semantic varieties). They leave out the memories we all share by virtue of being human beings. The focus on personal memories encourages empiricist approaches to mind since the task is to explain how the individual acquires his or her knowledge and behaviors. A research strategy which focuses on individual differences before outlining general aspects of the phenomenon under study will inevitably founder.

ELEMENTS OF TRANSPERSONAL MEMORY

The defining characteristic of a transpersonal approach to memory is the assumption that memory itself is transpersonal. To say that memory is transpersonal carries with it two theoretical presuppositions. First, that transpersonal memory is a species power—a power or competence which all human beings inherit by virtue of their humanity. Second, like any other inherited competence, transpersonal memory is structured and exhibits special characteristics and contents (or outputs). According to writers in the Platonic tradition, the contents of transpersonal memory may be the source for much of the spiritual experiences of humankind. Plato, for example, suggested that the contents of transpersonal memories are the eternal ideas like beauty, truth, justice and so on. Jung suggested that species memories were characterized by the archetypes of divine personages such as the contrasexual figures: anima and animus (Jung, 1959). For the ancients, however, access to the contents of transpersonal memory was possible only through recollective experience. This position concerning the contents of transpersonal memory is called the doctrine of recollection.
**Doctrine of Recollection**

The doctrine asserts that what we call learning is really a remembering and that our knowledge is by participation in the Omniscience of an immanent spiritual principle. (Coomaraswamy, 1977, p. 49). This immanent spiritual principle is very often experienced as a divine witness or recorder of all events—a memory or a providential self.

For Socrates recollective experience was direct experience of this providential self or soul and the soul’s knowledge.

The soul, then, as being immortal and having been born again many times, and having seen all things that exist, whether in this world or in the world below, has knowledge of them all; and it is no wonder that she should be able to call to remembrance all that she ever knew about virtue, and about everything; for as all nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things there is no difficulty in a man eliciting out of a single recollection all the rest—the process generally called learning—if he is strenuous and does not faint; for all learning and all inquiry is but recollection” (Meno, 81c-82a).

As to the objects of recollective experience Plato has this to say in the *Phaedo* (74-76e):

And if we acquired this knowledge before we were born, and were born having the use of it, then we also knew before we were born and at the instant of birth not only the equal or the greater or the less, but all other such ideas; for we are not speaking only of equality, but of beauty, goodness, justice, holiness, and of all which we stamp with the name of absolute being in the dialectical process...

For the mystic and Trappist monk, Thomas Merton (1955):

Recollection is a change of spiritual focus and an attuning of our whole soul to what is beyond and above ourselves. It is a conversion or a turning of our being to spiritual things and to God. And because spiritual things are simple, recollection is also at the same time a simplification of our state of mind and of our spiritual activity...[recollection] purifies our intention (Merton, 1955, p. 217).

**Initiation of Recollection**

According to Merton, recollection entails a direction of attention or libido away from the things of the world to things of the spirit. It is as if withdrawing our libido from the world allows us to entertain a simplified set of intentions—even a single intention.

In Merton’s account, only individuals attached to the world require recollection since recollection is by definition withdrawal from the
world. As Plotinus once said, “Memory is for those who have forgotten” (*Enneads*, IV). To recollect is to take a step back from the world. Now, since the ego must relinquish its attachments, it grieves its losses and mourns its defeat by an agency more powerful than it. It is interesting that some authors have traced memory’s roots to the Indo-European root: *(s)mer*—to mourn and to the Greek: *merimma*—care, sorrow (Casey, 1987). Suffering, it seems can trigger recollective experience.

According to Plato most of the men in this world have lost their memories and therefore they suffer:

But all souls do not easily recall the things of the other world; they may have seen them for a short time only, or they may have been unfortunate in their earthly lot, and, having had their hearts turned to unrighteousness through some corrupting influence, they may have lost the memory of the holy things which once they saw. Few only retain an adequate remembrance of them: and they, when they behold here any image of that other world, are rapt in amazement; but they are ignorant of what this rapture means, because they do not clearly perceive. For there is no radiance in our earthly copies of justice or temperance of those other things which are precious to souls: they are seen through a glass dimly; and they are few who, going to the images, behold in them the realities, and these only with difficulty ...” (*Phaedrus* 249c).

While loss of memory is the soul’s true malady, recollection’s ability to lead the soul back to its true nature or homeland constitutes a healing journey for the soul:

Now I know the other cause, or rather the major cause of your illness: you have forgotten your true nature. And so I have found out in full the reason for your sickness and the way to approach the task of restoring your health” (Boethius, 1969, p. 51)

Recollection allows the soul to return to God—the stillpoint of the turning world—and thus allows the soul to avoid becoming disturbed by the ups and downs of the wheel of fortune.

... to the extent that we are able to identify ourselves with the Providential self itself ... we rise above the sequences of Fate, becoming their spectator rather than their victim. Thus the doctrine that all knowledge is by participation is inseparably connected with the possibility of Liberation ...” (Coomaraswamy, 1977, p. 50).

The higher, Providential self is memory; it sees all, records all, witnesses all. “Memory is from the Self or Spirit (*atmaiah smar-ah*)” (Coomaraswamy, 1977, p. 51). For the self knows everything.

That which remembers, or that which is aware of all things, must be a principle always present to (*anubhu*) all things, and therefore unaf-
fected by the duration in which these events succeed one another. We are thus reduced to a Providence (prajna) or Providential self or spirit (prajnattman) as the ultimate source on which all memory draws, and with which whoever attains to the same uninterrupted omniscience must be identified as in *Prasna Upanishad* IV. 10” (Coomaraswamy, 1977, p. 58).

Recollection’s ultimate goal is transpersonal: to put us in touch with that Providential self. That is the solution to suffering.

Suffering, however, is not the only potent trigger of recollective experience. Merton’s analysis suggests that recollection can be initiated by the subject as a spiritual discipline. But we have just seen that the ego must relinquish its attachments to the world in order to undergo recollection, therefore recollection is probably not initiated by the ego. We must ask: if the ego does not initiate recollection, what agency does? The superego is an unlikely candidate since it is concerned only with mores and vaguely ethical/behavioral issues. The id. of course, cannot initiate any actions at all. Who then is the agency of recollection?

One candidate might be the will. Assagioli (1973) has said that

> The will has a directive and regulatory function, it balances and constructively utilizes all the other activities and energies of the human being without repressing any of them” (Assagioli, 1973, p. 10).

He goes on to quote Calo:

> The will is just this activity of the I which is a unity which stands above the multiplicity of its contents, and which replaces the previous impulsive fractional centrifugal actions of these contents” (Assagioli, 1973, p. 12).

The will has energy, mastery, concentration, determination, persistence, initiative, organization. Another will identified by Assagioli, the transpersonal will, is especially interesting from the point of view of recollective experience because it seems to be equivalent to Jung’s idea of a transcendent function (Jung, 1960) which unifies all psychic polarities (e.g. remembering/forgetting; good/evil; male/female). Unfortunately, virtually nothing is known of these matters.

Finally, Plotinus (204-270 A.D.) suggested that beauty could trigger a recollective experience:

> Now if the sight of beauty excellently reproduced upon a face hurries the mind to that other sphere, surely no one seeing the loveliness lavish in the world of sense—this vast orderliness, the forms which the stars even in their remoteness display—no one could be so dull-witted, so immovable, as not to be carried by all this to recollection, and gripped...
by reverent awe in the thought of all this, so great, sprung from that greatness” (Enneads II, 9,16).

EFFECTS OF RECOLLECTION

Once recollection has been triggered and a subject undergoes a recollective experience, what are its effects?

True recollection is known by its effects: peace, interior silence, tranquility of heart. The spirit that is recollected is quiet and detached, at least in its depths. It is undisturbed because the passions are momentarily at rest. At most they are allowed to trouble only the surface of the recollected soul” (Merton, 1957, 217-18).

Autonomy

Recollective experience frees us from undue dependence on the external world; it temporarily severs the intense attachment to the external environment or “world.” Without the ability to periodically withdraw from the world and its attachments, the external environment would pretty much constitute the primary determinant of human behavior... it would excessively control our behavioral options.

A most striking example of the power of the external environment to “excessively” control an individual’s behavior due to a loss of memory comes from the realm of neuropsychology. One neuropsychological syndrome which implicates personal autonomy in a very direct way is the “environmental dependency syndrome” described by the neurologist, Lhermitte (1986). This neuropsychological syndrome occurs in patients who have suffered damage to their frontal lobes. The frontal lobes are believed to specialize in the monitoring of internal and intrapsychic events and in promoting distance from the environment. The frontal lobes function in opposition to the parietal lobes which are sensitive to events in the external surround and which foster approach to the environment (Mesulam, 1986). The optimal functioning of these two cerebral regions involves a state of reciprocal inhibition such that the individual is never unduly influenced by one pole of the inner-outer polarity.

Patients with bilateral frontal lobe damage display a pattern of behavior which reflects the now unopposed activity of the parietal lobes. Their behavior comes under the influence of the “approach tendencies” of the parietal lobes. These patients are excessively influenced by the external environment. They are stimulus bound, concrete, socially inappropriate, and display a remarkable inability to grasp context. Lhermitte also demonstrated that these patients
exhibit a tendency to imitate the examiner’s behaviors and gestures even when this behavior entails considerable social embarrass-
ment. The mere sight of an object may elicit the compulsion to use it. In a very literal sense, then, the immediate external environment
controls these patient’s behaviors. It is unclear which elements in
the repertoire of frontal functions are crucial in “opposing” the
approach tendencies of parietal functioning, but memory is likely
to be the most crucial. There is a lot of evidence, for example, that
memory depends on the frontal lobes and fronto-temporo interactions (Oscar-Berman, McNamara & Freedman, 1991).

The environmental dependency syndrome constitutes an extreme
example of loss of personal autonomy when influences of the
stimulus environment go unopposed by recollection. Recollective
experience allows us to avoid losing ourselves in the world. It does
so by a process Heidegger called “in-gathering” (Casey, 1987).

"Gathering-up and In-gathering"

When I am not present to myself, then I am only aware of that half of
me, that mode of my being which turns outward to created things. And
then it is possible for me to lose myself among them. Then I no longer
feel the deep secret pull of (the gravitation of love which draws my
inward self toward God. My will and my intelligence lose their com-
mand of the other faculties. My senses, my imagination, my emotions,
scatter to pursue their various quarries all over the face of the earth.
Recollection brings them home (Merton, 1955, p. 221-22).

It is impossible to have a sense of one’s self if one’s self is nowhere
to be found!

The philosopher Casey (1987) seems to have a similar idea in mind
when he writes:

If it is now evident that personal identity is dependent upon the free
activity of remembering, we still do not know how this activity actually
works. A clue is contained in a statement of Heidegger’s: “Memory is
the gathering of thought” (M. Heidegger, What is called thinking? 1968). In its free action, memory [as recollection] gathers much else
besides thought; it also gathers emotions, perceptions, bits of dis-
course—ultimately all the parts of our life history.... Gathering
connotes assembling, drawing together of items into a provisional
unity. ... It is striking that the word “recollection,” understood in
terms of its origins rather than in terms of the use to which it has been
put in Western thought, captures these same two aspects of memorial
gathering. “Collection” derives from the Latin collecta, a “gathering
together” and, still more primordially, from colligere, literally a “bind-
ing together” (as is signified in the English verb “to colligate”);
whereas “re” signified “back” or “again.” In a primary act of recollec-

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tion, I bind things together, keep them in a gathered unity, so that I can return to them again and again (Casey, 1987, pp. 292-93).

**Presenting**

Casey goes on to point out that the gathering action of recollection is a gathering-in.

Within what? Within the remembering subject... As Plato himself put it, remembering of the most significant sort—and this means recollection of forms, *anamnesis*—takes place “within oneself” (*ex haulou*) (Casey, 1987, p. 293).

Following Heidegger, I call processes related to in-gathering, *presenting*. What is occurring during these varied recollective states is nothing less than the coming to presence of a self.

There are three important processes related to recollection’s support of presencing. One process concerns our most primitive sense of place. Place is where presencing happens. A second process linked to the phenomenon of presencing and the sense of place is the experience of personal boundaries each one of us carries about our persons. Boundaries may be an effect of the “gathering-in” process which occurs during recollection. Boundaries and the sense of place are undoubtedly linked. The third process related to recollection’s presencing powers is the emergence of a sense of self or identity.

This process of an emergence of a sense of a unique self or identity is, of course, crucial for clinical work and may be important in the etiology of various dissociative disorders of memory such as Multiple Personality Disorder and Fugue states. In these disorders the recollective process proceeds without the establishment of boundaries so that selves are created instead of a single self.

Critchley has discussed the neurology of the experience of a presence (1979). The cases he discusses demonstrate that the experience of presence is related to identity, personhood and recollection:

The identity of the visitant or “presence” is but rarely established . . . though realization of the fallaciousness of the belief may engender its own emotions of awe, wonder, bewilderment, or fear (Critchley, 1979, p. 1).

Intentional actions may sometimes be ascribed to the visitant:

A boy of fifteen was taking coffee in an open-air cafe. He suddenly imagined he saw something glistening far over to his right. His mind
immediately leapt to the conclusion that someone was standing behind him and to the right, trying to hypnotize him by shining a light into his eyes. In alarm he turned his head and eyes to the right, and then lost consciousness (Critchley, 1979, p. 3).

In all of these cases the presence is not yet localized to a place *ex houtou*—within the remembering subject. Rather, “it” is displaced to a point outside the subject.

There are cases where localization of the presence fluctuates (within—without), or is in the process of being localized within the subject:

... a patient who showed a left-sided hemiparesis and a hemianopia. The patient declared that the left half of the body did not belong to him. Sometimes while walking he got the notion that behind him and to his left he was being followed by someone, namely his double. Whenever this idea developed he would lose the feeling of strangeness which affected the left half of his body (Critchley, 1979, p. 4).

When the presence was “in” his body, the patient felt strange, as if the left half of the body belonged to the presence and not to the patient. Whereas, if the presence was localized to a place outside of the patient, the patient no longer felt “strange.”

Then there are cases where the presence is well-constructed enough to carry an identity and to be localized within the subject and yet still not be identified as self:

A well known poet told me that during a childhood illness he developed a curious feeling as if someone had entered his body. Thus he became a composite being with this other person sharing his pains and discomforts (Critchley, 1979, p. 4).

Sometimes in cases like this the subject is just on the verge of realizing that the visitant is self:

... a case of a woman with biparietal atrophy who, among other numerous symptoms, would often wake in the night with a trenchant feeling that someone was in the room—a person whom she knew very well indeed. Sometimes it would dawn on her that this visitant was none other than herself (Critchley, 1979, p. 5).

Finally, it should not be hard to imagine other phenomena like possession states as aberrations of the recollective process. Here the visitant is localized within and is identified as malevolent. Out-of-body experiences (OBEs) might also be understood in the context of recollection’s presencing function. In non-pathological cases the subject voluntarily dissociates presence and body. Consciousness is experienced as localized to the presence outside the
body. Voluntary OBEs may be a by-product of recollection—available to some individuals and not others.

The ability to manipulate aspects of recollective experience (especially the experience of presencing/embodiment) might confer special advantages on some individuals. Once an individual could manipulate his own experience, he might then be able to do so to or for others. These “magical” abilities would mark the individual as special. Tribal healers or shamans apparently used OBEs in their healing rituals for millennia. The shaman would leave his or her body in order to contact the spirit world where the necessary healing powers could be obtained (Eliade, 1964).

It appears, then, that recollection is initiated by the will for reasons we cannot know apriori. Besides allowing us to experience ourselves as unique embodied persons influenced by a unique history, recollection may also allow us to access transpersonal memories in such a way as to be enriched by the infusion of their transpersonal energies. Whatever else they are, these archetypal energies must be the common inheritance of the species. In recollection it is as if the individual is taken out of the world of mundane things and concerns and delivered into the realm of species concerns. He begins to deal with the life-force as embodied in the human species. But these tremendous transpersonal energies are put in the service of a single unique self—a presencing self.

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DEFINITIONS OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY: THE FIRST TWENTY-THREE YEARS

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Recent criticisms of transpersonal psychology resulting from the attempt to make the area an APA division have highlighted the need for a clear, precise, and current definition of transpersonal psychology (Letters, 1986; May, 1986; Vich, 1986), but the difficulties in defining transpersonal psychology have existed since the beginning of the transpersonal psychology movement in the late 1960s (Lajoie, 1991; Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992). By now, however, a rich volume of literature has accumulated, including a substantial number of contributions which contain a variety of definitions of transpersonal psychology. We felt that a systematic survey of these definitions would provide a greater understanding of the field and help to generate a precise, contemporary definition of transpersonal psychology.

To arrive at such a definition, we began by studying the literature defining or characterizing transpersonal psychology cited in a comprehensive bibliography on the subject (Shapiro & Lajoie, in press). The 202 citations in this bibliography were primarily from books, chapters in books, articles in journals, and newsletters. The bibliography included only English language references, primarily from publications in the United States and Australia—where most of the transpersonal psychology literature has originated. Excluded were works not focused on characterizing transpersonal psychology per se, such as works on transpersonal education, transpersonal...
therapies and pathologies, the transpersonal self, and critiques of transpersonal psychology.

All the entries in the bibliography were studied to identify any passages containing definitions of transpersonal psychology. To qualify as a definition, one of the following criteria had to be met: (a) the citation contained one or more statements which singly or collectively offered a precise definition of the field of transpersonal psychology as a whole; or, (b) the citation contained a comprehensive characterization of the field of transpersonal psychology as a whole that could be construed as a definition. We also found five citations in the bibliography that contained material that did not straightforwardly conform to the criteria, but did qualify as a comprehensive characterization when we integrated a series of statements within the citation into a collective statement. A more detailed description of the development and application of the criteria is reported in Lajoie’s (1991) work.

A chronological list of the citations we judged to contain a definition of transpersonal psychology appears in the Appendix. There were forty such citations among the 202 sources studied. Three of the definitions (Nos. 2, 3, and 16) are variants of Sutich’s original definition (No. 1). A majority (21) of the definitions originated in professional journals or newsletters of professional organizations. The remaining definitions appeared in books (12), brochures (5), an encyclopedia of religion (1), and a conference abstract (1).

The actual definitions contained in the citations listed in the Appendix are presented below, with the five integrated definitions identified by an asterisk:

DEFINITIONS OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

1. Transpersonal (or Fourth Force) Psychology is the title given to an emerging force in the psychology field by a group of psychologists and professional men and women from other fields who are interested in those ultimate human capacities and potentialities that have no systematic place in either “First Force” (positivistic or behavioristic theory), “Second Force” (classical psychoanalytical theory), or “Third Force” (humanistic) psychology. The emerging “Fourth Force” (Transpersonal Psychology) is concerned specifically with the scientific study and responsible implementation of becoming, individual and species-wide meta-needs, ultimate values, unitive consciousness, peak experiences, B values, ecstasy, mystical experience, awe, being, self-actualization, essence, bliss, wonder, ultimate meaning, transcendence of the self, spirit, oneness, cosmic awareness, individual and species-wide synergy, maximal interpersonal encounter, sacralization of everyday life, transcendental phenomena; cosmic self-humor and playfulness; maximal sensory aware-
ness, responsiveness and expression; and related concepts, experiences and activities (Sutich, 1968, pp. 77-78).  

2. Transpersonal (or “fourth force”) Psychology is the title given to an emerging force in the psychology field by a group of psychologists and professional men and women from other fields who are interested in those ultimate human capacities and potentialities that have no systematic place in positivistic or behavioristic (“first force”), classical psychoanalytic theory (“second force”), or humanistic psychology (“third force”). The emerging Transpersonal Psychology (“fourth force”) is concerned specifically with the empirical, scientific study of, and responsible implementation of the findings relevant to. becoming, individual and species-wide meta-needs, ultimate values, unitive consciousness, peak experience, B-values, ecstasy, mystical experience, awe, being, self-actualization, essence, bliss, wonder, ultimate meaning, transcendence of the self, spirit, oneness, cosmic awareness, individual and species wide synergy, maximal interpersonal encounter, sacralization of everyday life, transcendental phenomena, cosmic self-humor and playfulness, maximal sensory awareness, responsiveness and expression; and related concepts, experiences and activities. As a definition, this formulation is to be understood as subject to optional individual or group interpretations, either wholly or in part, with regard to the acceptance of its content as essentially naturalistic, theistic, supernaturalistic, of any other designated classification (Sutich, 1969, pp. 15-16).

3. The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology is concerned with the publication of theoretical and applied research, original contributions. empirical papers, articles and studies in meta-needs, ultimate values, unitive consciousness, peak experience, ecstasy, mystical experience, B-values, essence, bliss, awe, wonder, self-actualization, ultimate meaning, transcendence of the self, spirit, sacralization of everyday life, oneness, cosmic awareness, cosmic play, individual and species-wide synergy, maximal interpersonal encounter, transcendental phenomena: maximal sensory awareness, responsiveness and expression; and related concepts, experiences and activities. As a statement of purpose, this formulation is to be understood as subject to optional individual or group interpretations, either wholly or in part, with regard to the acceptance of its content as essentially naturalistic, theistic, supernaturalistic, or any other designated classification (Sutich, 1969, p. 16).

4. Transpersonal psychology might be defined therefore as the psychology of ultimate or highest meanings and values, and psychologists who explore in this area must be prepared to examine all institutions and activities from the point of view of such meanings and values (Green & Green, 1971, p. 42).

5. Transpersonal psychologists are exploring a variety of human behavior and trying to bring these topics within the realm of systematic study. The topics are widely diverse but intersect in several ways. These include the following, but are not limited to them: 1) a new
image of man, 2) a synthesis of widely separated fields, 3) our impulse toward self-transcendence and spiritual growth, 4) altered states of consciousness, 5) parapsychology and psychic phenomena, 6) other cultures and their psychologies, 7) a new form of energy, 8) subjective, inner states, and 9) recent psychological discoveries (Roberts, 1975, p. 398).

6. Transpersonal psychology, therefore, is that orientation within the field of psychology which is concerned with those behaviors and experiences which are perceived to be beyond the personal concerns of social roles, identity, or individual history. The focus of transpersonal psychology attempts to study those experiences which seem to be more than just of the self, those perceptions of life and the universe which are basic to sentient beings, those feelings which express a profound commonality with all that is, and those thoughts and ideas which transcend ego considerations. It could be argued that transpersonal psychology endeavors to discover directly those basic inherent processes and to find out what experience is, what consciousness is, what energy is, etc. (Hensley, 1977, p. 3).

7. Transpersonal psychology (TP), still in its infancy, is a less systematic, pioneering approach [than humanistic psychology] exploring spiritual and somatic experiences to enhance universal awareness and inner serenity (Ryback, 1978, p. 12).

8. What is transpersonal psychology?

1. Spiritual psychology: the field of psychology concerned with mysticism and spiritual growth.

2. A non-reductionistic look at higher realms of human potential.

3. The scientific/academic study of human potential and higher states.


5. Transpersonal psychology as in a sense that it is not the content that is transpersonal but the context (Frager, 1979, p. 6).

9. The transpersonal psychology paradigm says that there are experiences, states and actions that go beyond the usual boundaries of the ego personality—these include other states of consciousness such as transcendence and ecstacy, motives and altruism, love and compassion; psychic experiences that transcend space and time, spiritual experiences of enlightenment, deep self awareness, mysticism, for these are real, not pathological, and can be studied scientifically (Hastings, 1979-1980, p. 4).

10. Transpersonal psychology ...

can also be viewed as a psychology of transcendence.
studies various states of consciousness and transcendent experiences and how these lead to a balanced individual, integrated in mind, body, and spirit.

is concerned with experiences that go beyond the personal—experiences that will expand personal boundaries and allow one to become aware of, develop, and integrate more of one’s potentials.

studies the whole person, emphasizing a balanced integration of the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual nature of man.

centers its attention on intrapersonal experiences and the inner self of the person.

imparts a more evolved, holistic view of human possibilities, and predicts a new level of human consciousness and a “higher” human being.

chief concerns have been with studying and understanding Altered States of Consciousness (ASCs).

attempts to be a holistic, integrative approach to well being—a synthesis of mind, body and spirit (Williams, 1980, pp. 14, 18, 53, 54, 89, 90, and 116).

11. Transpersonal psychology is concerned with the study of optimum psychological health and well-being. It recognizes the potential for experiencing a broad range of states of consciousness, in some of which identity may extend beyond the usual limits of ego and personality (Walsh & Vaughan, 1980, p. 16).

12. Transpersonal psychology is really transformational psychology (Surrenda, 1980, p. 4).

13. "Transpersonal" means “beyond the ego,” so transpersonal psychology is the exploration of the unconscious to find a higher self. “Unconscious” includes both the personal and collective unconscious (Guest, 1980, p. 4).

14. Transpersonal psychology is concerned with better understanding and studying those “fully human” individuals, who operate beyond purely personal or egotistical realms. Equally important points of inquiry, however, are transpersonal moments or aspects in the lives of all people, and the development and understanding of methods and pathways for nurturing "healthy" growth in that direction. Although definitions are continually in process, transpersonal is understood by the writer to mean that domain of human functioning and motivation which extends beyond the purely personal, individual “I” or “me,” which has been the primary domain of Western psychology. This “I” or “me,” known as the ego self (using ego in its broadest sense) includes the roles, relationships, etc. from which we derive identity, either in an idiosyncratic sense, or as a member of a social or collective group. Extending beyond the ego self, however, is what we might call the Transpersonal Self, known as that center of pure awareness that both observes and transcends ego conflict, being both independent of and unaffected by, fluctuations in feelings and thoughts. As a result, this concept often leads transpersonal psychologists to
study areas beyond personal waking consciousness and subconsciousness (Boucouvalas, 1981, p. 136).

Many definitions of transpersonal psychology exist. Some common features in them include the following ideas: that a transcendent reality underlies and binds together all phenomena, that individuals can experience directly this reality related to the spiritual dimension of human life, that doing so involves expansion of consciousness beyond ordinary conceptual boundaries and ego awareness, that such experiences have usually been defined in biased language by various religions and theologies, and that a major task of transpersonal psychology is to bring these ideas into psychological language and a scientific framework (Transpersonal Psychology Interest Group. 1982, p.1).

The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology is concerned with the publication of theoretical and applied research, empirical papers, articles and studies in transpersonal process, values and states, unitive consciousness, meta-needs, peak experiences, ecstasy, mystical experience, being, essence, bliss, awe, wonder, transcendence of self, spirit, sacralization of everyday life, oneness, cosmic awareness, cosmic play, individual and species-wide synergy, the theories and practices of meditation, spiritual paths, compassion, transpersonal cooperation, transpersonal realization and actualization; and related concepts, experiences and activities (Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 1983, p. i).²

Essentially, transpersonal psychology encompasses an approach to psychology in which a person is viewed as a complex being rather than merely an animal, a complicated machine, or a conscious ego riding herd on an irrational unconscious. The main features of the transpersonal approach include: a focus on the whole person, including body, intellect, emotions and spirit; an interest in states of consciousness, including an assumption that waking consciousness is not the highest or most satisfying state; an interest in ultimate values and principles; a philosophic approach that includes not only traditional logical positivism but also phenomenology and other alternatives; an open-ended approach to human potential, with particular interest in optimal health, creativity, transformation and transcendence; and the application of these ideas to scientific research, education, business, psychotherapy, spiritual disciplines, and spiritual growth (Frager, 1983, p. 2).

Transpersonal psychology is concerned, directly or indirectly, with the recognition, understanding, and realization of nonordinary, mystical, or “transpersonal” states of consciousness, and with the psychological conditions that represent barriers to such transpersonal realizations (Capra, 1983, p. 367).

*19. Transpersonal psychology ... suggests at once a new and an ancient vision of reality.

is a psychology that honors all the world’s great spiritual traditions.
and their mythic portrayal and appreciation of the divinity of each human being—the inner Self, extends our sense of human development to include intuitions of our essential nature and its realization, is a psychology that comprehends the figural events of our individual lives by remembering, as context, the very ground of existence, explores how the wholeness of humanity, past and present, affects us and how an unchanging reality, the absolute, manifests in our thoughts and actions, calls our attention to a state of consciousness that enables some human beings to experience reality in ways that transcend our ordinary "personal" perspectives, acknowledges the possibility of going beyond the limited outlook of everyday awareness, learns from those individuals capable of sharing their evolved state and teaches others how to launch forth on the transformative journey (Mann. 1984. pp. viii-ix).

20. What truly defines the transpersonal orientation is a model of the human psyche that recognizes the importance of the spiritual or cosmic dimensions and the potential for consciousness evolution (Grof, 1985, p. 197).

21. All of these disciplines (and those like them) reflect themes and variations on what has come to be called the “perennial philosophy.” And, as such, they typically include the following premises, premises that can be thought of as defining any psychology or philosophy as transpersonal: 1) that a transcendent, transconceptual reality or Unity binds together all apparently separate phenomena whether these phenomena be physical, mental, or spiritual; 2) that the ego or individualized self is not the ground of human awareness but rather, only one relative reflection or manifestation of a greater transpersonal (as “beyond the personal”) Self or One (i.e., pure Consciousness without any object); 3) that each individual directly experiences this higher order reality which is related to the intuitive and spiritual dimensions of human life; 4) that this experience represents a qualitative shift in one’s mode of experiencing and involves the expansion of one’s mind and sense of self beyond ordinary conceptual thinking and ego awareness (i.e., mind is not Consciousness); and 5) that this experience is self-validating (Valle & Harari, 1985, p. 11).

22. Transpersonal psychology defined ... we seek to investigate reports and conduct studies of certain perceptual/experiential phenomena that include the full spectrum of states of consciousness and reports of transcendental experiences and the exploration of the assumption that these experiences are a function of a potential for human development which encompasses and extends the ordinary limits of the ego and personality.

Transpersonal psychologists seek to develop theoretical models that might contribute to an understanding of the phenomena in question and, at a deeper level of analysis and reflection, to explore the
philosophical implications of such phenomena. We wish to study states of optimal psychological health and well being and to apply the findings to psychotherapy, healing and education as well as other emerging fields (Harari, et al., 1986, p. 1).

23. One approach is to define transpersonal psychology as the scientific study of behavior and experience within the framework of an assumed intelligent entity beyond the human species or other life forms.

Another definition would state that transpersonal psychology is the scientific study of reports of transcendent experience. One can define transcendence as moving beyond one’s ordinary constructs of ego identity or as psychological functioning that goes beyond ordinary levels of experience.

A third approach is to define the field in operational terms. Transpersonal psychology is the scientific study of highly valued reports of mental imagery and attentional self-regulation, their physiological correlates, and their applications to education, counseling, and psychotherapy (Krippner, 1987, pp. 4-5).

24. Transpersonal psychology emerged as a movement devoted in part to the study of alternative states of consciousness. Though by no means representative of the mainstream of psychological research in the West, transpersonal psychologists are intrigued by the possibility that human beings possess transcendent powers of consciousness. Some speculate about the mind’s untapped potential for awareness and hold a view of the universe as conscious and purposive. They are convinced that we can be motivated by broader and less selfish impulses than physiological needs and egoistic emotions. For these psychologists, our most important motivations spring from selflessness that revolves around the pondering of ultimate questions—questions about the meaning, purpose, and value of human life. Often influenced by the recent influx of Eastern psychologies into the West, transpersonal psychology seeks to reverse what it considers the disproportionate attention given to man’s psychological afflictions at the expense of his great potentialities. This movement may be understood as an attempt to reconnect the science of psychology with the perennial metaphysical teachings of spiritual traditions (Needleman & Eisenberg, 1987, p. 57).

25. Transpersonal psychology investigates the evolution of consciousness and experiences which lie beyond the personal, including the highest visions, goals and aspirations of human beings. This discipline integrates knowledge and insights from Western as well as Eastern psychological and spiritual approaches. It recognizes and studies the place of unity at the core of every spiritual tradition and seeks to apply these insights to gain new perspectives in fostering human growth and creativity and in dealing effectively with the challenges of today (Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, received 1987, unpaginated).
Transpersonal psychology is the psychology of health and human potential which defines the individual as being in a process of development toward full humanity as exampled by great men and women, the psychology that does not see the human personality as an end in itself; personal history and resulting conditioning are seen as the crust of a skin covering our transpersonal essence, a psychology of human development, extending object relations by pointing to the next stages of human development wherein there is dis-identification from one’s personality or personal identity and recognition of object impermanence or transiency, an approach to the whole person.

is a psychology that goes through the personal to the transpersonal, a process of working through our humanity in an inclusive way to reach the recognition of the divinity within, the future norm in psychology as yet unrecognized by the mainstream, inclusive and building upon the first three forces in psychology.

is a psychology that recognizes and studies the different states and stations of consciousness, the simplest definition of transpersonal psychology is spiritual psychology; it recognizes that humanity has both drives towards sex and aggression and drives toward wholeness, toward connecting with and experiencing the divine (Hutchins, 1987, pp. 9, 12).

Transpersonal psychology is the study of human nature and development that proceeds on the assumption that human beings possess potentialities that surpass the limits of the normally developed ego. It is an inquiry that presupposes that the ego, as ordinarily constituted, can be transcended and that a higher, transegoic plane or stage of life is possible (Washburn, 1988, p. v).

Transpersonal psychology: an approach founded and introduced within humanistic psychology by Abraham Maslow in the 1960s, which seeks to incorporate human spirituality into a comprehensive model of human nature and its potential. Also known as the Fourth Force (Hoffman, 1988, p. 342).

Transpersonal psychology represents the application of psychological principles to the traditional subject matter of the spiritual and religious disciplines (Davis, 1988, p. 6).

Recognizing various modes of knowing, the transpersonal perspective is concerned with full human awareness, the integration of psychological and spiritual experience, and the transcendence of self (Association for Transpersonal Psychology, undated, received 1988, page facing p. 1).

Transpersonal psychology is the branch of psychology that studies...
spiritual, peak, and transcendent experiences and their relationship to the whole human being ... it maintains that the scientific study of the “ultimate” dimensions of humanity provides the most comprehensive means of understanding human nature (Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, 1989, p. 2).

32. Transpersonal psychology is concerned primarily with those aspects of human experience and behavior that lie beyond the personal, interpersonal, and social aspects studied in other psychological schools. I see the study of consciousness and its transformations as the central content area for transpersonal psychology (Metzner, 1989, p. 329).

33. This survey of transpersonal psychology focuses on three major domains—the psychology of personal development, the psychology of consciousness, and spiritual psychology. These three main areas overlap to form the field of transpersonal psychology (Frager, 1989, p. 289).

34. Transpersonal psychology has emerged in the past twenty years as the extension of psychological studies into consciousness, spiritual growth, body-mind relationships, and personal transformation. The field draws on a rich diversity of scholars in psychology and spirituality ... it assumes that spiritual levels and awareness are genuine, and if nurtured and developed, can transform an individual's life, leading to deeper self-understanding and greater health of body and mind (Institute of Transpersonal Psychology brochure, received May, 1990, unpaginated).

35. The transpersonal orientation was characterized as representing the “farther reaches of human nature.” Dealing with what are referred to as higher levels of consciousness, this perspective draws on ancient and modern philosophies. East and West, and emphasizes the role of spirit in human development and behavior as a crucial third element added to mind and body. It has been characterized as dealing with phenomena that transcend the ordinary limits of ego, time and space (Harari, 1990, unpaginated).

36. Transpersonal psychology: loose comprehensive term for various approaches to self-actualization that direct the individual to the “deep self,” stressing universal concerns and the exploration of inner creative potential (Lash, 1990, p. 390).

37. Transpersonal psychology builds on the Western psychologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, integrating insights and wisdom from the major spiritual traditions. Transpersonal psychology maintains that the scientific study of the “ultimate” dimensions of human experience provides the most comprehensive means for both understanding human nature and for helping people develop their full potential (Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, received April, 1991, unpaginated).

38. The emerging field of transpersonal psychology refers to both a content area and an approach to the study of psychology. Many
transpersonal psychologists believe that the ego or self is a useful fiction. For these psychologists, ego formation is an important stage in development, but in later developmental stages this illusion of separateness can be transcended, and more globally encompassing modes of consciousness are possible. It is in such “trans-personal” states, some suggest, that our “moments of excellence” are achieved; these are states that many great religious and artistic figures have been familiar with. Most transpersonal psychologists find their philosophical roots in three sources: existential-phenomenological psychology; quantum, relativistic, and holonomic paradigms emerging from physics; and, the psychology and philosophy of traditions from Asian, African, and Native American cultures.

Transpersonal psychologists attempt to understand the full range of human functioning by studying experiences which are not normally studied by non-transpersonal psychologists, including reports of near-death experiences, past life regressions, psi phenomena, and altered states of consciousness such as meditative, trance, or mystical experiences. In addition, they conduct research and write regarding content areas which are more "typical" for psychology, such as human development, stress, addictions, family systems, psychopathology, etc. (Editor, 1991, p.7).

The published literature, my own thinking, and a number of discussion groups lead me to suggest the following as core characteristics of the field:

constructed consciousness
valid alternate states of consciousness
superiority of some alternate states
de-automatizing for consciousness change
consciousness disciplines in religions
genetic motive for consciousness growth
cosmic unity
cosmic flow
interdisciplinary study of personality
(Tisdale, 1991, p.5).

The aim of transpersonal psychology, then, is to give a psychological presentation of the perennial philosophy and the Great Chain of Being, fully updated and grounded in modern research and scientific developments. It fully acknowledges and incorporates the findings of modern psychiatry, behaviorism, and developmental psychology, and then adds, where necessary, the further insights and experiences of the existential and spiritual dimensions of the human being (Wilber, 1991, p. xi).

ANALYSIS OF THE DEFINITIONS

The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology Statement of Purpose and definition, No. 3, and its variants was the most frequently cited or quoted definition in the bibliographic database (e.g., Allan, 1985;
The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 1992, Vol. 24, No. 1

Editor, 1990; Harari, 1981; May, 1986; Mintz, 1983; Roberts, 1986; Shapiro, 1982; Sundberg & Keutzer, 1984; Tageson, 1982; Tart, 1988; Toomin, 1972; Valle, 1989; Vich, 1983; Walsh & Vaughan, 1980; Williams, 1980). Even after 1983, when the Journal ceased to publish the Statement of Purpose and definition, it continued to be quoted or cited (e.g., Editor, 1990; May, 1986; Roberts, 1986; Tart, 1988; Valle, 1989). In addition, various words or phrases from the Journal definition appear in other definitions as well.

The most frequently found themes, occurring fifteen or more times in the different definitions of transpersonal psychology (N = 37), were:

1. States of consciousness.
2. Highest or ultimate potential.
3. Beyond ego or personal self.
4. Transcendence.
5. Spiritual.

These themes in the definitions of transpersonal psychology collectively provide a comprehensive overview of the field of transpersonal psychology as a whole, and were useful in our synthesizing a new definition of transpersonal psychology.

The following group of themes occurred less frequently in the definitions, but at least five times: transpersonal experience; cross-cultural (Asian, East/West); inner states; unitive consciousness; holistic; transformation; mystical, mysticism. Among this group of themes, we felt that “unitive consciousness” should be included in our new definition because this general theme was also implicit in many other definitions.

Finally, a wide variety of themes occurred infrequently or only once: for example, religion; new image of man; synthesis of fields of study; parapsychology; psychic; energy, force; deep self; universal awareness; ecstasy; compassion; openness; intuition; ground of being; expanded awareness; perennial philosophy or psychology; Divinity, God; metaphysical; meditation; and “farther reaches of human nature.”

A DEFINITION OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Based upon studying all the 202 original citations, and the compilation and analysis of the corpus of previous definitions, we offer the following statement as a precise and contemporary definition of transpersonal psychology:
Transpersonal psychology is concerned with the study of humanity's highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realization" of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness.7

The proposed definition is also a succinct integration of the major themes that have characterized the field of transpersonal psychology.

The present study was a retrospective, analytical approach to defining transpersonal psychology based upon a large corpus of existing transpersonal literature. We hope that reflecting upon both the proposed definition and the compilation of previous definitions, will contribute to creating a clearer and more consensual understanding of transpersonal psychology.

APPENDIX
A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF THE CITATIONS
WITH DEFINITIONS OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

1968-1972


1973-1977


1983-1987


*1988-1991*


Note. The page numbers cited in this Appendix refer to the actual page(s) where the definition appeared. An asterisk precedes the five integrated definitions. The chronological divisions in the table are arbitrary insertions to help legibility.

**NOTES**

1 Six additional citations appeared in the published version.

2 Generally, variants of a given definition are not included. However, because of their historical importance, and for purposes of comparison, we include four important variations, namely, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 16. Differences among the four
versions of the definition of transpersonal psychology are described in Lajoie (1991, see Chapter 3).

3 We have only listed the core characteristics here; each is discussed in more detail by the author.

4 Only definition No. 2 was included in this analysis and not its variants (Nos. 1, 3, and 16) so that the analysis of the frequencies would not be distorted.

5 A phrase that originated with Maslow (1969).

6 The phrase “recognition, understanding, and realization” comes from the definition by Capra, No. 18, (1983).

7 Although the concept of “beyond ego or personal self” was among the most frequently found themes in the definitions, we did not include it as an explicit phrase in our definition because the concept can be encompassed within the phrase “transcendent states of consciousness” (e.g., see Krippner’s definition, No. 23), and because the meaning of “beyond ego” has been interpreted in different ways both within classical spiritual traditions and within modern transpersonal psychology.

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CHANGING DEFINITIONS OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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In a prior *Journal* issue Lajoie, Shapiro and Roberts (1991) provided a historical analysis of a Statement of Purpose that appeared in this *Journal* during the years 1969-1983. As they indicate, the *Journal* Statement of Purpose included a definition of transpersonal psychology that changed from time to time. Their analysis of these changes led them to conclude, “Overall, the changes that occurred in the Statement of Purpose illustrate how the intention to keep the definition of transpersonal psychology open to change (Sutich, 1968, 1969, 1975) indeed became a reality.”

With the addition of Lajoie and Shapiro’s systematic survey of definitions of transpersonal psychology (1992), an increasingly clear picture of the range of such statements has emerged. Their survey lists forty definitions published in the *Journal*, and elsewhere, between 1968 and 1991. It encompasses a diverse collection of statements and the authors found that the themes in the definitions .. collectively provide a comprehensive overview of the field of transpersonal psychology as a whole, and were useful in our synthesizing a new definition of transpersonal psychology.” They conclude by offering a proposed definition of the field, based on a compilation and analysis of the many statements they studied.

In addition to the analyses and conclusions Lajoie and Shapiro have provided, their survey may be taken to illustrate the evolutionary nature of the development of transpersonal psychology. The field was initially conceptualized and given structure in a spirit that recognizes the principle of continuous change (Sutich, 1976). Since then, it has retained and built upon its early foundations. It has grown substantially, with “process” as a guiding principle in the formulation and reformulation of its definitions (Sutich, 1975).
Today, transpersonal psychology has an identity and visibility advanced well beyond its beginnings nearly twenty-five years ago. It has a substantive literature, supporting educational institutions (Listing of Schools and Programs, 1992), and significant professional involvement (Listing of Professional Members, 1991). It now contributes to, and is shaped by, the changing historical (Vich, 1988), cultural and international context (Staff, 1991). Thus, it can be anticipated that transpersonal psychology, and its definition, will continue to change and evolve, necessitating an ongoing and informed discussion of its origins, contributions and possibilities.

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There is a wide agreement that consciousness is central to transpersonal psychology even though the topic has long been somewhat of an anathema in mainstream psychology. Yet even here the study of consciousness is beginning to make a comeback and has almost attained a kind of respectability. In fact significant numbers of books have been published in the last few years and a number of institutes created to study it.

Yet though there may be renewed interest in consciousness, there is very little agreement on what it is. This is hardly surprising since historically there has been an enormous range of ideas and definitions. At one extreme consciousness has been dismissed as a “fictitious ... nonentity” (William James) and at the other extreme lauded as the fundamental substrate of reality (absolute idealism). Then, too, consciousness has been looked down upon as a suffering-producing disease of life (Nietzsche) and looked up to as infinite being-bliss: Sat-chit-ananda (being-consciousness-bliss) Vedanta. If research on this crucial topic is to make progress then it will be essential to either come to some common notion and definition (an unlikely possibility at the moment) or come up with some typology of notions and definitions (more likely). In this book the author has begun this latter task.

After surveying the varieties of definitions of consciousness, Baruss describes a study he performed in which he sent a questionnaire concerning the nature of consciousness to academics and professionals, primarily mental health professionals, academics, and some religious studies instructors.

Factor analyses of the results indicated three major groups of beliefs, each of which determined a particular view of consciousness. The materialist position held that consciousness is part of, and created by, the physical world. The position that Baruss labels “conservative transcendence” holds that there is more to life than the physical aspect and that knowledge can be gained through means other than the scientific method and that consciousness gives meaning to reality and evidence of spirituality.

A third position Baruss called “extraordinary transcendence.” This is a position of metaphysical idealism. Here the physical is believed to be derivative of the mental, “extraordinary” means of attaining knowledge are believed to operate, and consciousness is believed to be intimately linked to self-transformative growth processes. Interestingly enough there was a strong correlation.
between the holding of this last view and having had “extraordinary experiences.” The holding of this idealist and transpersonal view of consciousness seemed in other words to be associated with a history of having had transpersonal experiences.

This trilogy of views regarding consciousness is, as the author points out, reminiscent of Willis Harman’s division of metaphysical stances into materialistic monism, dualism, and transcendental monism, the latter being the position in which “the ultimate stuff of the universe is consciousness.”

Baruss’ study has obvious theoretical and research implications. It suggests that there is likely to be very little agreement or cohesion in the field of consciousness studies until we have some sort of workable typology of notions and definitions since at present there is a wide range of apparently irreconcilable positions. Moreover, for transpersonal psychology it suggests the important implication that a transpersonal view of consciousness may partly depend on, or at least be fostered by, transpersonal experiences. This book suffers from imprecise use of terms and a lack of philosophical sophistication. However, it does make a valuable first contribution to the important project of empirically establishing a typology of views of consciousness.

$9.95, 399 pp.

ELIADE, M. & COULIANO, I. *The Eliade guide to world religions.*

Together, these two books comprise a comprehensive introduction and overview of the major religious traditions of the world, and is essential reading for any student of transpersonal psychology or religion. Smith’s book in particular deserves special note because it represents a substantial revision of his 1958 classic, *The Religions of Man.* As might be inferred by the title, Smith has replaced the gender-biased language of the original. The effect of this change is extraordinary, making its reading far more personal and inclusive. Throughout the book, other subtle changes substantially affect the contextual frameworks of the various religious philosophies he explores. Additional sections have been added to nearly every chapter, and a new chapter called “The Primal Religions” includes the oral and tribal traditions found throughout the world.

From a psychological perspective, Smith briefly introduces the notion of a transpersonal God, which, for example, in certain branches of Hinduism, is envisioned as “an infinite sea of being underlying the waves of our finite selves” or “the all-pervading
Self, which is as much within us as without” (p. 33), whereas the non-transpersonal God remains a separate and distinct entity, as in mainstream Christianity. This rather intriguing use of the term “transpersonal” demonstrates the various ways transpersonal perspectives are being integrated into other fields.

Throughout his investigation of the eight major world religions—Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Taoism, and the primal religions—Smith indirectly addresses the various ways in which religion can be defined: in terms of ritual, mysticism, prophesy, or ethics, culminating in religion as culture and civilization itself. In this respect, Smith’s book can help therapists and spiritual practitioners to better understand the differing orientations that are at the heart of these major religious philosophies. It is a book that is simultaneously informative, informal, and inspirational.

In contrast. *The Eliade Guide to World Religions* is a macro-dictionary of thirty-three religious traditions covering African, Australian, Buddhist, Canaanite, Celtic, Central American, Christian, Confucian, Dualistic, Egyptian, Germanic, Greek, Hellenistic, Hindu, Hittite, Indo-European, Islamic, Janie, Judaic, Mesopotamian, Mystery, North American, Oceanic, Prehistoric, Roman, Shamanic, Shinto, Slavic and Baltic, South American, Taoistic, Thracian, Tibetan, and Zoroastrian religions. This work is, in effect, a distillation of Eliade’s three-volume *History of Religious Ideas* and the sixteen-volume *Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Eliade. A 42-page index includes brief descriptions of key religious figures, sacred books, and spiritual themes. Although such a volume can offer only brief descriptions, it does give the reader a sense of the complexity and diversity of historical and contemporary religious practices and beliefs. Each section includes a comprehensive bibliography for further information and research.


Piero Ferrucci was Roberto Assagioli’s student and is the author of *What We May Be: Techniques for Psychological and Spiritual Growth Through Psychosynthesis*. Before his death in 1974, Assagioli had begun writing a book about the transpersonal self, transpersonal experiences and ways of approaching the self. Ferrucci has developed these topics in this book by examining archival material and describing and analyzing relevant experiences from the lives of more than 500 exceptionally competent or creative women and men. He has explicitly situated his work within the context of transpersonal psychology even though he...
does not cite the writings of transpersonal psychologists in the
text.

Ferrucci's treatment of transpersonal experiences is universal in
scope. He has identified seven "ways," for each of which he has
further considered a number of different elements. He has dis-
cussed, for example, the way of illumination, the way of dance
and ritual, and the way of science. The chapter concerning the
way of will includes sections titled, "The Will," "Risk," "The
Unknown," "The Voice," "Sacrifice" and "Death." Each chap-
ter includes theoretical exposition, numerous examples from
people’s lives and a short discussion of dangers associated with
the specific way. The material is well organized and carefully
written.

I used this book as one of a number of textbooks for an under-
graduate humanistic psychology course during the past academic
year. Student reaction was mixed but generally favorable. Stu-
dents appreciated the discussion and examples of the nature and
variety of transpersonal experiences. In some cases they felt a
deep affinity for some of the ideas expressed by Ferrucci. This
book is inspirational and provides a great deal of material to think
about with regard to one’s spiritual aspiration.

There are also a number of problems with the book. First, Ferrucci
has made numerous questionable general statements as though
they were statements of fact. For example, he has said that the
way of devotion is the most direct way to the transpersonal self,
but has not explicitly offered evidence to support that contention.
In reading the book, I accepted the use of such statements as a
stylistic device. However, many of my students read these as
statements of fact. Associated with this first problem is that of
Ferrucci’s selective use of information from people’s lives. For
example, not only can we be amazed by Nikola Tesla’s ability to
visualize electrical machinery as described by Ferrucci, but sad-
dened by his inability to resolve his emotional needs, something
that Ferrucci did not address. A number of my students would
have liked to have seen the examples of transpersonal experiences
embedded in the context of people’s lives so that these people are
not simply portrayed as paragons of virtue.

The third problem with the book is just a statement of my reaction
to it. I find it somewhat contrived. Somehow, the numerous
questionable general statements, idealization of people’s lives,
and apparently extensive editing and rewriting seem to have,
ironically, dissipated the “soul” of this book. While I find
Ferrucci’s book too tidy for my taste, there is no question that it is
a well-written, inspirational introduction to transpersonal experi-
ences.


BOOKS OUR EDITORS ARE READING


... Marcie Boucouvalas


... James F. T. Bugental


NYDAHL, O. Riding the tiger: Twenty years on the road, the risks and joys of bringing Tibetan Buddhism to the West. Nevada City, CA: Blue Dolphin, 1992.

... Paul M. Clemens


... David Lukoff


... Huston Smith


... Frances Vaughan


... Thomas N. Weide
Gregory C. Bogart, Ph.D., is a psychotherapist and licensed marriage, family and child counselor in private practice in Berkeley, and is also employed in family services in Pleasant Hill, California. He is an instructor at the Yoga School of San Francisco, and director of The Heart Center, which offers non-sectarian training in Yoga, meditation, dreamwork, and other contemplative practices.

Denise H. Lajoie, M.A., prepared her article from research she conducted at the University of Hawai‘i for her thesis, Defining Transpersonal Psychology: The First Twenty-Three Years. She is a doctoral candidate and is currently doing research on transpersonal psychology in Russia.

Francis G. Lu, M.D., is co-editor of the JIP Research Review section. He teaches in the Department of Psychiatry, University of California, San Francisco, and is Chair, American Psychiatric Association Committee of Asian-American Psychiatrists. His many publications include two JTP articles in 1987. and three Research Review articles since 1988.

David Lukoff, Ph.D., is co-editor of the JTP Research Review section. He teaches at Saybrook Institute, San Francisco, and is a clinical psychologist at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in San Francisco. He has authored four JTP articles, and the three Research Review articles.

Patrick McNamara, Ph.D., is Research Associate, Department of Neurology, Boston Veterans’ Administration Medical Center, and teaches in the Department of Psychology, Keene State College, Keene, New Hampshire. His research interests include a focus on neuropsychology and memory.

Deane II. Shapiro, Jr., Ph.D., is on the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, in the College of Medicine, University of California at Irvine. He is the author/editor of Meditation: Self-Regulation Strategy and Altered States of Consciousness, and co-editor (with Roger Walsh) of Beyond Health and Normality: Explorations of Exceptional Psychological Well-being, and Meditation: Contemporary and Classic Perspectives.

S.I. Shapiro, Ph.D., is Professor of Psychology at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, in Honolulu. He has taught many courses on topics related to East-West psychology, and holds seminars in transpersonal psychology and transpersonal psychotherapy.

Robert Turner, M.D., is attending psychiatrist at San Francisco General Hospital and on the clinical teaching faculty at University of California San Francisco. His training includes an emphasis in Jungian, humanistic and transpersonal psychology. He is particularly interested in the relationship of esoteric, transpersonal and “spiritual” psychology.

Miles A. Vich, M.A., D.H.L. (Hon.), is Editor of The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Executive Director of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology, and has served in various editorial and organizational capacities in the transpersonal and humanistic psychology fields since 1962.
REVIEWERS

_Imams Baruss_ teaches in the Department of Psychology at King’s College, London, Ontario, Canada.

_Mark Waldman_ is a ministerial counselor, Editor of *Special reports: Transpersonal perspectives in psychology*, and chair, Los Angeles Transpersonal Interest Group.

_Roger Walsh, M.D._, teaches in the Department of Psychiatry, University of California, Irvine, and is the author of many articles and books on transpersonal topics.
Bogart, Gregory C. Separating from a spiritual teacher.—Drawing on clinical experience with clients and others, the author discusses why separating from a spiritual teacher is often difficult, and how this process might be resolved harmoniously. Attention is given to transferential dimensions of discipleship such as mirroring and idealization, the developmental paradox of all mentoring relationships, and the archetypal background of the struggle between student and spiritual guide. Otto Rank’s relationship with Freud, and several case examples illustrate some of the issues that may arise in the course of separation from a teacher. The power of dream symbols as mediators of healing and resolution of concerns stemming from guru-disciple relationships is also discussed. Discipleship is portrayed as an “embeddedness culture” which may support individual growth, but from which one must ultimately differentiate.

Lajoie, Denise H. & Shapiro, S. I. Definitions of transpersonal psychology: The first twenty-three years.—A variety of definitions of transpersonal psychology have appeared since the beginning of the transpersonal psychology movement in the late 1960s. However, the need to articulate more clearly a contemporary definition of transpersonal psychology still exists. The present study attempted to clarify the meaning of transpersonal psychology by providing a compilation of all the definitions of transpersonal psychology that have appeared during the past twenty-three years, and by generating a precise, contemporary definition of transpersonal psychology. A definition is proposed which is a succinct integration of the major themes that have characterized the field.

Lukoff, David, Turner, Robert & Lu, Francis. Transpersonal psychology research review: Psychoreligious dimensions of healing.—After extensive literature review related to developing a diagnostic category, “Psychoreligious or Psychospiritual Problem” for the forthcoming DSM-IV, the authors offer a three-part report based on their review. The first part, reported here, focuses on psychoreligious research, with psychospiritual and anomalous research topics planned for future research reviews. Psychoreligious is defined as experiences that a person finds troubling or distressing and that involve the beliefs and practices of an organized church or religious institution. Twenty-one research studies are abstracted and discussed, categorized as, 1) religiosity in the general public and mental health professions, 2) training, 3) religion and mental health, 4) treatment, 5) addiction, 6) ethnic perspectives. The authors conclude that greater attention to psychoreligious dimensions of psychological healing would improve clinical practice in areas involving research, diagnostic assessment, iatrogenesis, treatment and training.

McNamara, Patrick. A transpersonal approach to memory.—Modern accounts of memory assume empiricist models of Mind and so reduce memory to retention of sensory impressions. The largest portion of memory—transpersonal memory—is ignored by most memory researchers. Transpersonal memory is that set of memories which all human beings inherit by virtue of their humanity. According to the ancient Platonist doctrine of recollection, the spiritual roots of human behaviors are linked to the contents of transpersonal memory. Recollec-
tion promotes access to transpersonal memories, involves a turning inward, a withdrawal of attachments to the external world, and “a gathering-in” or coming to presence of the Self. These recollective experiences may underlie the sense of place, of boundaries, personal identity and human autonomy.

Shapiro, Deane H., Jr. A preliminary study of long-term meditators: Goals, effects, religious orientation, cognitions.—Twenty-seven long-term meditators (average 4.27 years) were divided into three groups based on length of practices, ranging from 1.4 years to 8.7 years. This preliminary investigation examined whether there was a shift in goals for and effects of meditation along a SR (self-regulation), SE (self-exploration), SL (self-liberation/compassionate service) continuum as a function of length of practice. Results showed that reasons for continuing meditation shifted overall along an SR-SE-SL continuum as a function of time, that for the majority of meditators, effects equaled or exceeded goals, and that the effects meditators received from the practice were significantly related to what they wanted. Further, length of practice was also significantly associated with religious orientation and with the nature of cognitions made when a subject did not practice. Finally, there was also a significant correlation between the nature of cognitions made before practicing meditation and adverse effects. The discussion section highlights the importance of studying long-term meditators, notes the limitations of the current study, and offers guidelines and suggestions for future research.

Vich, Miles A. Changing definitions of transpersonal psychology.—Two current scholarly studies, one analyzing historical changes in a Statement of Purpose published in the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, and the other surveying definitions of transpersonal psychology generally, are noted for their contribution to understanding the field. The evolution of transpersonal psychology, and its definitions, is recognized as a process necessitating ongoing and informed discussion.
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