

WHEN THE WORLD CHANGES - One Humanistic Perspective of Transpersonal Psychotherapy

by Courtenay Young

Alongside, or perhaps even as part of, the realm of Humanistic Psychology, there is another mainstream branch of psychology or psychotherapy called "Transpersonal Psychology" and there is a considerable overlap between these two branches. Transpersonal Psychology was a later development to attempt to integrate *"ideas about identity previously embodied in religious practice which had been ignored in the prevailing theories of psychoanalysis and behaviourism. The idea of the self as an entity which develops through a journey and which is grounded in something bigger"* is a key part of this innovation. *"Maslow's ideas about self-actualization, Jung's ideas about archetypes and the collective unconscious are all important in Transpersonal Psychology. Guided fantasy and other methods, especially ones involving symbols, are used to explore them."*¹

But I feel that this does not give a proper and full description of the reality of transpersonal psychology, as I experience it as a practitioner in the field. So I want to approach this field from the other end of a spectrum which has a slightly more personal spiritual perspective, and which is also very experiential. I call it, "When the World Changes." This end of the field can be extreme and dramatic. This perspective is also quite pragmatic because these aspects are often what I actually work with. This end of the spectrum considers an essential part of humanistic psychology and psychotherapy to be concerned with a human being's actual spiritual growth and transformation, and this is not just a inclusion of the realm of the spirit (along with the mind and body), but is based on actual experiences. This process carries its own unique set of rules.

The death of what is commonly called "the ego" is often necessary before spirit can fully emerge into the human psyche. And it can seem as if parts of us, sometimes the older familial 'stuff' or even karmic patterns, have to be left behind, to die, or even to be destroyed (depending on how deeply we identify with our egos or our histories) before we can more fully live, according to our human potential. This is almost inevitably a very painful process: and it can also be terrifying, if we do not happen to realise what is happening to us. Spiritual growth does not happen just from wish fulfilment. Many of us are searching for something better, for something beyond that which we can see, touch or feel in our everyday lives. We often use phrases like, "I am looking for some meaning to my life." "I want to develop my sense of Self." Many of us, to begin with, do not know what that 'something' is. We may use the word "Spirit" in this context. This word however is often used without really knowing what it means, or what it contains. It also seems that this form of spiritual development is beginning to happen more spontaneously in people as well, as a phenomenon, and not as a result of their searching. And this is where my work comes in.

I am becoming aware of an increasingly general and widespread awakening of Spirit. Not only do people want to connect their personal process with their transpersonal, or find different & better ways of doing what they do already but with more meaning, more essence, and more spirit - and the joy and grace that comes with spirit - but also people are beginning to find, quite suddenly and

¹ Innovative Therapy: A Handbook; Jones, David (ed.), Open University Press 1994: p.231

sometimes quite frighteningly, that they are having spontaneous spiritual or transpersonal experiences. I call these types of experience this because (a) there is no other appropriate description and (b) that is what I think they are.

Let me use an analogy of a society which does not recognise puberty as a healthy stage of human development. The dramatic changes in female body shape in the early teenage years are thus distortions. The growth of hair on the face, under the arms and in the pubic area are also aberrations and considered disgusting. There is something wrong with the change in a man's voice. And so they have discovered these surgical techniques and pharmaceutical remedies to correct these deformations. Adolescent spots mean a skin disease; we have these lotions. "Puppy-fat" is corrected by rigid dieting. Some people reject adolescence 'naturally' and become anorexic - which is seen as a good thing, rather than an illness. The symptoms of spiritual puberty and adolescence become so condemned and vilified that people experiencing these feel shameful and the person ends up being rejected by society.

I suggest that this is what we do with the 'normal' human spiritual developmental processes which should happen as 'naturally' and 'easily' as a healthy adolescence. This spiritual emergence process tends to happen in a person's more mature years, often somewhere between 30-40. Our investments then of staying as we are and not developing differently are much more rigid than: we have jobs, mortgages, families, a 'position' in life, etc. - as if spirit cared! So these experiences and the symptoms that attach themselves to such emerging experiences are thus often misunderstood. Not everybody is aware of spiritual dimensions or open to seeing psychological and transpersonal processes in this light. Quite frequently the actual manifestations of spiritual awakening are and have been mistaken for symptoms of psychosis, or insanity, or witchcraft, or demonic possession, or illness.

Let me give an example: an elderly lady in Texas rang up a referral service some years ago and said, *"Can you help me? Last Christmas God came and sat on my head."* When asked what she meant by that, she said, *"I seem to know things that are going to happen before they happen and I get messages telling me what to do and what is happening with other people. I know what people are thinking."* Then she went on to say: *Now, my Minister says that I am of the Devil and my women's group say that I am a witch, and my husband, well, he just doesn't what to know anything about this at all, so can you help me?"* Her problem was not her process (it was like God coming and sitting in her head) nor did she feel alienated to the various psychic abilities she experienced, but she needed help with the reactions of the people around her.

The results of what seem like a spiritual journey or process are sometimes as devastating to the person involved, or to those around them, as a serious illness can be or the death of that person would be. In some cases they are more devastating. The transformational processes are not considered as part of normal reality, and the "loved one" therefore becomes abnormal. So when someone gets involved in such a process, nobody around them knows how to handle it: there isn't a language, a road map, a set of concepts: there is just an aberration.

I mentioned the concept of the death of the ego and leaving behind some of the personal processes being a necessary part of spiritual maturation. This, in one form or another, is acknowledged by nearly every religion, including the 20th century western religion of psychology. Sometimes it is expressed as a surrender; sometimes as an initiation; sometimes as a purging of the old; sometimes as a taking on of the new - like a marriage. It is nearly always described as a major

transformation of and for that individual. It is sometimes taken seriously - within a religious context. But if it transgresses the bounds of that religion or if the symptoms don't fit with the practices of that religion or the person becomes scared and irrational then that person is often abandoned. Nobody wants to know. And this makes the situation worse. These people become the "lepers" of the society or exorcism (nowadays called "Spiritual Deliverance") is called for.

If a society does not facilitate this maturational spiritual transformation with some rite of passage, or acknowledge it with respect, or plan for it, or expect it, or welcome it in any way whatsoever, the individual is then not only struggling with their own personal process in realms they are often unfamiliar with, but they are also struggling with the (active) resistance of the conservative collective process. That response may be to incarcerate people in mental asylums because (for example) they think they are hearing the voice of God, or whatever. This has happened frequently over the years, and is still happening though usually for shorter periods of time. Psychotropic medication is often used extensively as well. I do not believe that people are becoming psychotic in these processes, though this can happen briefly; however they may be becoming increasingly psychic, and the significant point is that the manifestations are often quite similar. Furthermore the family of the individual often feel that this loved person has become strange, alien or remote. That person is much less concerned with what has been the medium by which the family has bound itself together. They no longer do that which is expected. The person, the "loved one", has changed. There is a sort of betrayal here. Love is supposed to be "happily ever after" - at least we are told so often enough. It is a short step from this change in love, to that person being alienated from their close family and thus the support that they may need in order to go through this change. In some cases the alienation is total and it is as if the person has indeed died.

The person's actual experience can be very, very different: totally 'off beam'. It can feel as if they, for the first time, are truly alive. They see more; understand more; are intensely aware of everything around them. It can be, often is, euphoric. This is the fantastic part; at last I have "made it"; "I truly understand". But if you can't make others understand; if they don't want to know what you have become aware of, or are experiencing; if your experience is outside of *their* limitations or constructs; then the pleasure soon turns to pain, the elation to terror, and the euphoria to despair, and the transpersonal episode can easily become a psychotic one.

One aspect of the spiritual journey or quest towards finding out something important about ourselves is the telling, and retelling, of it; the accounting for it; the accepting of this story by others; we find this in every society. Joseph Campbell² says that these 'stories' are, in fact, road maps for our psychic or spiritual development. Maybe he is right: they are mythic and have such a universal appeal. This 'story-telling' is often a necessary part of the integration process. We really do need a vocabulary or a language and a medium of expression in which to frame some of this material. Our present day-to-day language is not sufficient, reflecting more the norms of society; specialised languages exist in science; but the specialised language for these experiences is much more esoteric.

We also need an atmosphere that supports such a telling, for this telling has an important aspect; it is a release and an integration; it is a grounding and

² Campbell, Joseph: The Masks of God: Vols I-IV. (Penguin) 1976

a completion. Available therapists and psychotherapists, our modern-day listeners, familiar with these processes are sometimes hard to find, and also have to be paid. Without this 'grounding', the incredible energy of this process can get bottled up inside. It can start to ferment. One becomes further and further removed from those around you; and then there is an impossibility of communication: the distance is too great.

Thus 'not-telling' is a sort of poison and can make us sick. What one often discovers in people whose journey has gone wrong (and who may have picked up a label like "psychotic" in the process) is that they have not been able to talk about these things properly or to tell what has been happening with them. This 'not-telling' might actually have been one of the factors that made their transformational journey go wrong. So it is important to listen to their stories, especially if you are in the listening profession, or work in this area. Just as it is important to bring this area more and more into the open and into a much more general level of acceptance.

In "*The Myths of Mental Illness*", an article in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology (USA)* ³, David Lukoff suggests that when we take this journey, we begin to experience the world from a different perspective; that of a more archetypal mode. Our world begins to get 'peopled' with Gods and Demons, Myths and Legends, Dreams and Nightmares, Wondrous Beings or Monsters. We may see ourselves in these shapes and we may see others like this. Actions take on a deeper significance similar to that which they often carry in myths: forgetting to change the old dark sails to new white ones can mean the death of your father or a chance encountered object (like a ring) means the possibility to defeat the Enemy. If this world of myths is not understood, it can bring a lot of fear with it, instead of bringing a lot of beauty. Normal rational thought plays little part in these realms. For example I remember that, during such a period in my own life, after reading D.M. Thomas's '*The White Hotel*' ⁴, not only did I seem to start to be surrounded with the most incredible eroticism emerging from mundane objects, but also I became terrified of the tunnels that link the London Underground platforms, for it seemed as if all these crowds of people (and myself) were being funnelled to some horrific end like that of Babi Ya, described vividly in the book. Paranoia and psychosis indeed perhaps! Well, that is the issue. There is the archetypal story of a madman, recently released out of an asylum, who met a guru sitting naked under a tree. The madman said, "*When I did that they locked me up. What is the difference between us that the people are revering and listening to you.*" The guru said, "*It all depends on who you speak to.*" This harks back to an earlier point about social acceptance, but telling the story is also important.

So it feels important to emphasise that I am not talking about spiritual emergence in terms of the growth movement interest in spirit - Mind, Body, Spirit Festival type of stuff - with astrological tellers, crystals and flower essences; nice as many of these are. I am talking about an incredibly powerful energy beginning to flow through us, individually and collectively, that can sweep one off one's firmly planted two feet; which can blast through some of our pretty philosophising or theorising about the nature of the universe: or which can

³ Lukoff, D. & Everest, H.C. : The myths of mental illness. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* Vol 17: 2: 1985

⁴ Thomas, D.M., *The White Hotel* () 198-

confound our attempts to rationalise everything, by a wild myriad of seemingly unrelated and extra-ordinary experiences. It is not just "Ordinary Ecstasy"⁵.

We are at a time when we are just into the first few years of a new millennium. There is quite a widespread collective subliminal belief in the West that something will happen at the turn of a millennium. At the end of the first millennium (1000 AD), there was also a similar belief. At that time they thought the world was going to end. Don't laugh! As a practicality, about half to two-thirds of Western Europe did not plant any crops that year - why bother? The result was, of course, widespread death from starvation, wars, famine and plague (Does that sound familiar - apocalyptic?) and thus for many people the world did end that year. I don't think we have changed very much in 1000 years. I think we expect, or expected on a mythical level, something to happen - some spiritual salvation whereby the slate will be wiped clean and we can make a fresh start. The hype about the Age of Aquarius and the New Age is/was perhaps part of this; and I think that this is also in part an actual reality. There is definitely something new and powerful happening. Since nothing much happened with Y2K and the computer millennium bug (mainly because we got the year wrong), maybe some of the reactions to September 11 - just 9 months after the real millennium - feed into this collective process. Maybe the threatened forthcoming war with Iraq (and possibly others) is part of this Armageddon.

I am not demeaning any of this, or making fun of it. Neither am I buying into the symptoms or outward manifestations. I live and work in a New Age spiritual community where I meet many people who are on such a transformative path or life-quest. These are people in transition: people searching for something new in their lives. They have left homes, families, partners, jobs. They have sold houses, cars, washing machines and videos in the hope of finding something better. Some of them are having a very hard time. It can be very difficult and frightening. It is sometimes, or often, lonely - even amongst beautiful, friendly people. How much more so is it, alone in a suburb, or a city, with no supporting frameworks? Alienation is another form of death.

I think we will see a much greater incidence of people experiencing kundalini-type energy flows, psychic experiences, visions, revelations, channelling, mystic and mythic events and the like, because that is what is in this particular Pandora's box which is now opening collectively. So you may view this as horrific and it might be so. The dark side of the spiritual salvation and the slate being wiped clean is our capacity to destroy ourselves and this planet in either a phallic explosion or a poisoning of the very earth that nurtures us. It was Caroline Myss, a medical clairvoyant, who, in a talk at the Findhorn Foundation, drew the parallel between the American archetypal myth of the Space Shuttle and the (Mother) Russian archetype of essential power for the people both going horribly wrong almost simultaneously in the summer of 1986. There is also, as ever, even at the very bottom of Pandora's box, still that little thing called Hope.

What I am particularly interested in, is the area where a person undergoing these type of perceptions or experiences finds an overlap with what is labelled as "psychotic" symptoms. How do we react to someone who is very disturbingly within one archetype "going crazy", and within another "becoming enlightened". I would suggest the key lies in the phrase "very disturbingly" for if we can suspend

⁵ Rowan, John: Ordinary Ecstasy: Humanistic Psychology in Action (Routledge) 1988

judgment for a while and try to understand what experiences this person is actually having and what is happening in their lives, then I think this can actually and fundamentally help the person with their transformative process. But we have to be open to this ourselves.

We help people with their dying processes, so cannot we also help them with their emerging process - their living process. Modern westernised society removes us from much of our myths and archetypes, unlike with our forebears who lived within a medium which included them. So-called psychotic individuals thus can offer an opportunity for us to visit with persons who are still experiencing the world in an ancient mythic mode of consciousness. Joseph Campbell suggests that the only difference between the mystic and the psychotic is that the mystic learns to swim in this type of modality and the schizophrenic has fallen in unexpectedly and is drowning. Again, he may sometimes be right. This is some of the thinking around the Spiritual Emergence Network that was started originally by Stan & Christina Grof. I support this theoretical approach wholeheartedly, even though I have some reservations about their particular practice of Holotropic Breathwork. Most of us have not only had some spiritual experiences but would consider ourselves as on a spiritual path of sorts and have probably experienced aspects of the emergence of our spirit and some of the incredible energy that is involved in this process, even though we might not have recognised it as such at the time. Thus we can, I hope, empathise more with those who are not so successful at breaking out of the chrysalis. For these people, it is more a process that has become a spiritual emergency.

Nicola Kester, a coordinator of SEN, differentiates between an emergence and an emergency like this: *"The difference also in the spiritual emergence experience is that, ideally, it leads to increased creativity, feelings of peace, an expanded sense of compassion, and I would say, healing and compassionate action in the world. Spiritual Emergency, as defined by (Emma) Bragdon, is "disorientation and instability that result from intense spiritual experiences which overwhelm the individual's ego functioning and for which there is no social or cultural support."*

In pre-1954 Tibet, a person going through intense spiritual experiences, for example, tremors and powerful rushes of energy in the body (sometimes referred to as Kundalini) or overwhelming visions of powerful demonic or heavenly beings, would be treated with respect and probably be trained as a lama. The North American Indian, who heard voices or had visions and acted on them in a way that fitted into that shamanic-type of culture (which might mean going on a journey, refusing to speak or eat for many days or asking the whole tribe to not only listen to but to act out his dream) would get made into the "medicine man" with a very high status, and probably the ability to heal using plants and rituals. Some of the mystical experiences of people in mediaeval society led to them becoming the early Saints of the Catholic Church. In some societies, people use drugs, plants or intensified states actually in order to get such effects in public ceremonies based deep within the culture and fabric of that society. In our society, however: *"We know that persons openly undergoing such experiences in our culture are more likely to be locked up in a 72-hour ward, given powerful mind-altering medications, and possibly diagnosed as mentally ill for life. Their visions and voices are not seen"* as productive to the society or important for the individual. We actually bring about alienation and a type of spirit or soul death by this lack of recognition. And we do this every day, not just when we demonize

and enemy and then declare war on another country because we want their oil, or whatever.

It is very interesting that more modern (and increasingly numerous) accounts of near-death experiences are perhaps the most convincing of all in establishing the existence of a spiritual life outside of the normal three-dimensional. One of the most consistent reports from people who have experienced a near-death is that many of them also significantly change their life pattern after such an experience; they serve or help others more; they dedicate themselves to collecting for charity; they change their belief systems; they lead (perhaps) a more spiritual life. They often also report a reluctance to talk about their experiences, which is hardly surprising.

There are other types of experiences that fall into the pattern of a possible spiritual emergence, which have also been described as 'peak experiences' (Maslow), 'religious' experiences (James), 'conversion' experiences (Armstrong), 'paranormal' experiences (Greer), 'conversion' experiences (Allison) or 'ecstatic states' (Eliade). J. Perry in a 1986 article in *ReVision* says: "*(spirit) ... is constantly striving for release from its entrapment in routine or conventional mental structures ... if this work of releasing spirit becomes imperative but is not undertaken voluntarily with knowledge of the goal and with considerable effort, then the psyche is apt to take over and overwhelm the conscious personality with its own powerful processes.*"

This we can define as a spiritual emergency for sure. It may be your own psyche, but it has blown your routine little mental and social structures to smithereens. When the (what should be natural) struggle of transition and emergence goes pear-shaped, we have a spiritual emergency.

So I want to define the word "psyche" as that part of our spirit that is more in contact with our emotions and which covers the realm of psychic experiences, and I would like to use the word "Spirit" for that which is more transpersonal and is connected to the soul. This new language is difficult sometimes, for it is early days yet. The mediaevalists were a bit better at it than we are. If you don't believe me, read some of the writings of Hildegard of Bingen, whose work, incidentally, has had a marvellous modern revival: a sign of the times, perhaps? So we have few points of reference and we all struggle on, usually alone. In this struggle, there is a natural tendency to revert to role models and the many reference points we do have which occur in our myths and archetypes.

Stan & Christina Grof⁶ have identified various forms of spiritual emergency. *Awakening of the Kundalini (Serpent Power)* is where there is a radical transformation of the person's relationship with their biology. There are often powerful physical sensations: heat, streaming energy, tremors, violent shaking, spasms, violent twistings. Extreme illnesses and sometimes childbirth can bring on such experiences, or are a result of it. The symptoms can also be mistaken for epilepsy. A *Shamanic Journey* is often accompanied by a dramatic episode involving an altered state of consciousness. There is an emphasis on physical suffering and encounter with death followed by rebirth and elements of ascent. A *Psychological Renewal through Activation of a Central Archetype* is where the person perceives themselves in some form or other as being in the middle of a world process and again there are elements of death, afterlife and return to the beginnings. The form of the experience lends itself to interpretation

⁶ Grof, Stanislav & Grof, Christina : *The Stormy Search for Self: Understanding & living with spiritual emergency* (Thorsons) 1991

of a Central Archetype experience. A *Psychic Opening* is an episode characterised by striking instances of extrasensory perception (ESP) and other para-psychological manifestations - like the little lady in Texas. An *Emergence of a Karmic Pattern* is where the individual might experience dramatic events that seem to be connected to a past lifetime or birth and where there is a flavour of a different time or spatial context. *Possession* is where the person might take on facial characteristics, gestures and attitudes of something typically diabolic in nature. This does not mean that they are actually possessed by an outside agency that is evil but that the pattern of spirit emerging through them in a disturbed way (possibly distorted by the history or belief systems) seems to take on this form. There seems little doubt that such experiences occur.

There are many other types of transformative spiritual experience: Christina Grof states that alcoholism is often a distorted search for the wrong sort of 'spirit'. Major illnesses, including a genuine psychotic episode, and major traumas or accidents are also often significant triggers for people to go into a radical process of spiritual change. Some people experience a sudden conversion to an established religion. There are cultural and social forces at work, driving people towards or away from their spiritual lives; some of these seem to be fundamentalist, others have more equanimity. Some cultures have ritual initiations that provide the (necessary ?) shock to start a person's psyche growing and working. For others, it is moving to a new culture and having many of one's old assumptions disturbed as you come into contact with the new and different values and moralities. Burn-out, experienced when you have done all that you physically and emotionally can and it is still not enough, can be a gateway for some to the new set of resources, hidden deep within and contactable only in desperation when all else has failed. For some, it is a contact with nature or aspects of our natural environment that trigger this greater and deeper awareness. Finally, our very human capacity to create wars, survive major disasters, experience earthquakes and the like, can also create the conditions to bring out the best in those around us in such events. These people are not untouched by their heroism: it is their unsought gateway to a new and richer life. What, I believe, is necessary is to validate all these different forms of spiritual experiences, more and more often. DSM IV, the diagnostic manual for psychiatrists, now mentions a Spiritual Crisis its categories. This is just one brick in the wall.

Piero Ferrucci, in his book *Inevitable Grace*, studied the recorded lives of 500 great men and women: "*My purpose was to identify their moments and periods of greatest happiness - the states of grace they felt to be supremely significant and beautiful. I made some very encouraging findings. The attitudes and techniques adopted ... have an identical form in different ages and civilisations. This means that ... they transcend the confines of history and diversity of cultures. These ... are simple and natural ways of being. We see them at work in ourselves, too, and in the people around us. We all have them, although in an embryonic, dormant, or repressed form and it is quite likely that we could all develop them.*"⁷ This is such a part of our human potential, and, I believe, the reason why these people were considered 'great' was that they allowed themselves to explore their naturally occurring transcendence, and this gave them the

⁷ Introduction to *Inevitable Grace- Breakthroughs in the Lives of Great Men and Women: Guides to your Self-Realization*, by Piero Ferrucci (Tarcher)

additional qualities that they needed to make a success of their lives. Maybe we can all become great.

Ask any 14 year-old to do a very heavy physical task and they would probably exhaust themselves and then believe the task is impossible: they have not yet come into their full strength. To ask people to cope with the complexities of life, and to learn how to grow from them, demands a spiritual maturity - which is part of our human birthright - and many people feel you are asking them to do the impossible: they are unprepared and society discriminates against those not firmly and irrevocably fixed on the material path. This is what needs to change. We need to re-establish basic spiritual educational principles, as much as we need to teach our children how to cross the road safely and how to swim. We need to incorporate mid-life career changes; early 'retirement'; spiritual retreats; days of 'service'; tithing; and all the other aspects of the "package" that would help incorporate these transpersonal aspects into our everyday lives.

Caroline Myss once said to me personally: *"Never doubt that you have a personal Guardian Angel. It is part of the package of being Human."* So is the possibility of a rich spiritual life; and we need culturally to reclaim this part of the package and start to live our lives more fully.

Transpersonal Psychology is just another set of tools and concepts to help people handle this human life: as monasteries are impractical and austere nowadays and the mystery schools are long gone. The ordinary person in the street, experiencing some of the richness and weirdness of their Inner Life needs to be able to talk to people about it: people who are well grounded in some of the dynamics of a spiritual life. Gurus and Transcendental Masters still exist, and they are also human; open to temptation; and their way is not necessarily yours. What many people need is a Guide who guides from behind; a transpersonal psychotherapist should be able to do this. This way of working emerged out of Humanistic Psychology and its client-centred, process-oriented ways of working, but with this extra in-depth perspective or focus on our Inner Life.

If, as I believe, there is a new pattern or phase of human growth happening, which is that of a spiritual nature, then we, as a race or a global culture, need to recognise and prepare for it. In exactly the same way that we create rites of passage or initiations for adulthood, marriage and to some extent death, we also need to begin to develop these for spiritual growth or emergence. This awakening, perhaps more than any other factor, carries with it the hope that we will not obliterate ourselves as a species and a planet with either a bang or a whimper; that there is something greater than ourselves and that we are an intrinsic part of - you may call this God if you wish - and that, however frightening or disturbing these processes may seem, they are part of a healthy growth and need to be recognised as such.

Some of the main modalities or types of Transpersonal Psychotherapy that can be found in existence today are various types of Psychosynthesis (Assagioli), Core Process Psychotherapy (Karuna, UK), Core Energetics (Pierrakos), and Transpersonal Psychotherapy (Gordon-Brown & Somers, UK); and the Institute of Transpersonal Psychotherapy, [Menlo Park, CA, USA]). Transpersonally psychotherapeutic teachings and growth work based on Hindu, Zen or Buddhist philosophies (Ram Das, Da Free John, Bagwan, Sai Baba, Deepak Chopra, Thich Naht Hahn, etc.); the work of Ken Wilber; some of the psychotherapy workshops found at places like Esalen, The Open Centre and the Omega Institute (in and near New York), and the Findhorn Foundation in Scotland, are amongst many others. Recent developments in Arnie Mindel's Process Oriented Psychotherapy;

Stanislav Grof's methods of Holotropic Breathwork; aspects of Ron Kurtz's work in Hakomi; much of Bob Moore's work; some aspects of Primal Integration (especially when combined with Frank Lake's work on Clinical Theology); Astrological Counselling; some Shamanistic or some Native American therapies; Soul Retrieval therapy, and those using concepts from Paganism or Wicca, also overlap considerably into this field of thought and practice called collectively Transpersonal Psychology or Psychotherapy. But all this tells us nothing about the actual content of transpersonal psychotherapy.

Transpersonal Psychology, to my view, is relatively empty and meaningless without some of the richness of these emergences, and emergencies. Many of the founders of branches of transpersonal psychology, mentioned earlier, have had such experiences. In trying to understand these for themselves, perhaps they have given us forms, concepts and structures that help us move in similar directions; and perhaps they have softened out some of the bumps in the road. And again, these are just modern-day road maps: the actual territory is different. What seems to be happening is something much more basic; something that comes from or relates to the very core of our humanity, our spirits, our souls. Maybe it is this which makes us different from other animals; I don't know: they don't seem to have such a struggle; and such a perspective could also be a form of anthropomorphic fascism. But if we do have spirits; if the movement of energy within our souls is to mature during our human existence; then when does this happen; how does this happen; and how can we help it to happen. As humanistic psychotherapists, we need more answers and, I firmly believe, that some of the answers lie within this particular perspective.

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