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Editors' Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

This volume of the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* presents an eclectic group of writings from a variety of areas within transpersonal studies. Ranging from poetry and innovative prose style used to freely express transpersonal experience perhaps too resistant for the confines of logical-rational discourse, to qualitative and quantitative approaches used to empirically explore transpersonal issues, to a widely diverse collection of thoughtful topical articles, this issue highlights the breadth and depth of transpersonal studies.

The regular articles in this edition commence with Charles Laughlin's "Art and Spirit: The Artistic Brain, the Navajo Concept of Hozho and Kandinsky's 'Inner Necessity.'" Laughlin examines art as an expression of culture's spiritual dimension and also as a powerful driver for individuals' spiritual experiences. He analyzes and operationalizes concepts that enable art to be more available for cross-cultural transpersonal research, such as a model of representational-associational abstraction, and richly exemplifies his views with ethnographic discussions of Navajo art.

This is followed by Ervin Laszlo's "Cosmic Connectivity: Toward a Scientific Foundation for Transpersonal Consciousness," which reviews empirical data suggesting that consciousness' interconnections extend beyond mainstream understandings, drawing specifically on recent developments in physics. Laszlo speculates on the importance of these powerful findings as a way to tie what is often dismissed as mere anomaly into a basic paradigm shift that reframes knowledge in a way that can impact conceptual analysis, experimental testing, and theory-formulation.

Next, Axel Randrup, in "Animal Mind as Approached by the Transpersonal: Notion of Collective Conscious Experience," discusses animal mind based on an idealist philosophy of collective conscious experience. In advocating that both animals and humans can be seen as experiencing collective consciousness, he provides for the possibility of studying "other minds," including animal minds, in a way that avoids the solipsistic traps often associated with other idealist approaches.

Then Stanley Krippner, in "All Mind? No Matter: The Self-Regulation Paradigm" contrasts the materialistic and transcendental paradigms, rejecting both in favor of an approach grounded in complex systems theory that is nonreductive and inclusive. He concludes by speculating that this holistic paradigm offers an avenue that may not only reconcile the other two competing paradigms but perhaps also facilitate humanity's survival in currently precarious times.

In the next article, "Transpersonal Functions of Masks in NohKiDo," Sirkku M. Sky Hiltunen discusses the role of masks in psychodrama and art therapy with specific focus on her own work adapting Japanese Noh theatre techniques to the Western context. In her article, she emphasizes the transpersonal aspects of masking, providing fascinating insights on how this can profoundly alter the consciousness of both the performers and the audiences.

Then David Kowalewski, in "Metaphysical Tracking: The Oldest Ecopsychology," takes us on a trek into skills that at one time may have been crucial for humankind's survival and now, similarly, may be just as needed in order to reconnect us with the earth to facilitate our continued survival. Filled with speculation about mystical phenomena associated with both ancient and modern trackers, he ferrets out their possible root commonalities in various proposed parapsychological phenomena and discusses their implications both for psychospiritual growth and for research.

Next, Burton Daniels, in the "The Trans/Trans Fallacy and the Dichotomy Debate," takes on one of the stickiest disagreements in transpersonal studies, namely whether transpersonal development is best seen as cumulative and linear, per Ken Wilber's widely acclaimed hierarchical theory, or more spirally ascending and descending, as Stan Grof and Michael Washburn assert in their persuasive writings. Daniels deconstructs both of these views, clearly showing their limitations, and proposes an alternative integration of this crucial aspect of transpersonal theory based on Adi Da's spiritual revelation.

Then Jorge Ferrer, in "A Secret Poem for You," shares an intensely personal piece based on a poem written by his father. To preserve the original meaning,

the poem is presented in its original language, Spanish, as well as translated into English.

Following this, Jerome Tobacyk, in “A Revised Paranormal Belief Scale,” publishes a significantly improved version of his widely used scale, including data supporting its enhanced utility. This measure should prove useful to researchers interested in paranormal beliefs, as well as to general readers who want to understand both the domain included in this measure and the empirical underpinnings that place such a measure firmly within the conventions of contemporary science. Through focusing on an area mostly marginalized by mainstream science, he clearly demonstrates how quantitative research can benefit transpersonal studies.

As the last regular article, Don Diespecker provides an entertaining and illuminating illustration of an alternative form of transpersonal expression in his piece “Lightly Swimming,” using an approach he identifies as “free indirect style.” Bearing resemblance to stream of consciousness writing, this expressive mode speaks to the experiential lived elements of the transpersonal. Perhaps rational discourse can take us only so far in communion with others, and delightful, communicative play, such as through free indirect style, may push the so-called river further—and possibly without as much effort.

It is often stated that transpersonal psychology should be relevant to needed change in the world, but seldom is anything written on actually applying transpersonal approaches outside of the clinical arena. Consequently, this volume’s special topics section, “Transpersonal Studies Applied to Organizational/Cultural Change,” focuses on how a transpersonal perspective can be applied to issues of social relevance at local, national, and even global levels of human organization. Mary Ann Hazen and Jo Anne Isbey, in “Images of the Intrapersonal Organization: Soul Making at Work,” discuss the postmodern organization from an archetypal perspective, exploring the reciprocal relationship between organizational and personal growth. Using qualitative methods grounded in constructivist thought, they explore the transpersonal interplay in three employment settings in North America through imaginal and other Jungian

approaches. Daniel Holland’s article, “Integral Psychology and Foreign Policy: Lessons From the Fulbright Scholars Program,” explores the need for new interdisciplinary perspectives to address U.S. national policy issues and emphasizes the moral obligation of transpersonal scholars to engage in promoting quality of life across many realms and levels. He exemplifies this through discussion of the transpersonal values held in the Fulbright Scholars Program, a U.S. effort to promote multinational cooperation. As the last of our special section articles, one of us (Harris Friedman), in “Reframing the Conflict in Fiji: Economic and Transpersonal Frameworks for Peace,” addresses how narrowly defined identifications can lead to unfortunate national and global conflicts, illustrated through a case study of Fiji, where national problems are commonly attributed to ethnic, racial, and religious divides. He shows how these problems can be reframed as due to competing economic models, an alternative interpretation perhaps more likely to lead to peaceful reconciliation. In addition, he proposes a transpersonal model for fostering global peace, particularly when conflicts are fueled by religious divisiveness.

Finally, we are pleased to offer several readers’ comments. In “Surfing the Absolute: Comments on Volume 22 of the IJTS,” Don Diespecker, the founding editor of IJTS (although at the time of his tenure it was called *The Australian Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*), provides his perceptions and criticisms of the last edition of the journal. In general, he argues that the volume is excessively academic in tone and content and chastises both editors and contributing authors for placing emphasis on scholarly writing and accomplishments over nonconventional modes of expression. While we do not agree with his perceptions and generally do not share his opinions, we believe that his commentary brings to the fore some core issues around how we are to best approach and study the transpersonal. At the same time, we are delighted that Diespecker has sufficient fire in the belly to write passionately about the content and direction of the journal. We hope that readers find this short piece stimulating and thought provoking. Richard Tarnas, professor of philosophy and psychology at the California

Institute of Integral Studies and author of the best-selling book *The Passion of the Western Mind*, shares his comment, “Two Suitors: A Parable,” on the wisdom of approaching knowledge as one would a lover. If approached with the rough hands and direct touch of so-called objective science, he asks, would a sentient world be as likely to reveal its deepest and most intimate secrets as freely as if it were invited warmly with gentle caresses and shared subjectivity? Kidder Smith and Susan Burggraf, in their comment, “Natural Crazy Wisdom,” extol the virtues of various forms of craziness, portraying these as states that many spiritually inclined individuals may be seeking and may already have attained—if only they knew. They further speculate that more recognition should inure to the spiritual possibilities in those often dismissed as merely crazy but who may, despite being stigmatized by formal diagnoses, be much more—or paradoxically less—than crazy. Lastly, in the final comment, “Toward a Participative Integral Philosophy,” Daryl Paulson expresses his views on developing a living philosophy based on integral principals. We hope these reader comments provide a lively forum for expression of diverse opinions relevant to transpersonal studies, and we encourage our readers to actively engage in expressing their perspectives, especially when germane to articles recently published in the journal.

As the second volume of the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* under our editorship and Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center’s sponsorship goes to press, we want to welcome our new editorial board members. We also thank both our departing editorial board members for all of their help, and all the reviewers who have diligently worked on this issue.

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