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## Introduction to The Potential Role of Fractals for Modeling Transpersonal Phenomena

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# Introduction to the Potential Role of Fractals for Modeling Transpersonal Phenomena

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We introduce Terry Marks-Tarlow's target paper, "A Fractal Epistemology for Transpersonal Psychology" and accompanying set of commentaries with background on how this special issue came about. Harris Friedman, senior editor of this journal, first met Terry at a workshop she presented on the importance of clinical intuition, including its nonlinear dynamics, at Goddard College in the Spring of 2017. During this presentation, Terry made a number of provocative claims about the implications of fractals for transpersonal psychology. Consequently, Harris suggested she submit a paper to the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* on the topic.

Because fractal geometry is a branch of mathematics whose applications span widely across the physical and social sciences, we have solicited a range of commentaries from experts in diverse fields. Some of the commentaries support Terry's position; others take issue. Some address the paper directly; others use the target article to springboard into applications of fractals within their particular areas of expertise. While assembling this issue, we began with what Harris dubbed an "adversarial collaboration," and sparks flew back and forth. As we continued, sparks of contention morphed into sparks of inspiration, as the significance of the epistemology became clearer to us all.

We decided to compile an edited volume, *A Fractal Epistemology for a Transpersonal Psychology: Bridging the Personal with the Transpersonal*, which Cambridge Scholars was eager to publish. The book is currently available in hardback and paperback format under the editorial direction of Terry Marks-Tarlow, Yakov

Shapiro, Katthe Wolf, and Harris Friedman. It contains expanded chapters by many authors in this issue plus a variety of others for a whopping total of over 500 pages!

We hope you will find the result of our initial collaboration to be a rich collection of material related to many tantalizing issues. If you find the ideas expressed in this issue intriguing, Cambridge Scholars is extending a special 25% discount to journal readers. Use this link: <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/a-fractal-epistemology-for-a-scientific-psychology> with this discount code: PROMO25.

## References

- Marks-Tarlow, T. (2020). A fractal epistemology for transpersonal psychology. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 39(1–2), 55–71 (this issue). <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2020.39.1-2.55>
- Marks-Tarlow, T., Shapiro, Y., Wolf, K. T., & Friedman, H. (2020). *A fractal epistemology for a scientific psychology: Bridging the personal with the transpersonal*. Cambridge Scholars.

## About the Authors

**Terry Marks-Tarlow, PhD**, is a Clinical Psychologist in private practice in Santa Monica, California. She is also an Adjunct Professor at Pacifica Graduate Institute, Santa Barbara, and Core Faculty at the Insight Center, Los Angeles. She has authored and edited several books, including *Play & Creativity in Psychotherapy*, *Clinical Intuition in Psychotherapy*, *Awakening Clinical Intuition*, and *Psyche's Veil*, all of which she illustrated herself. Along with clinical

practice, writing, and family life, she happily immerses herself in the arts, including dance, yoga, and writing opera librettos, one of which premiered at Lincoln Center.

**Harris L. Friedman, PhD**, is retired Research Professor of Psychology at University of Florida, Distinguished Consulting Professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies, and Visiting Scholar (2019-2020) at Harvard University. He also practices clinical and organizational psychology, and has written extensively on transpersonal psychology, cultural change, and research methods. He is Associate Editor of both *The Humanistic Psychologist* and the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, as well as Senior Editor of the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*.

**Katthe P. Wolf, MA**, earned her AB degree in Anthropology summa cum laude from Princeton University in 1984. She won the departmental senior thesis prize that year for an ethnography of feminist witchcraft in the San Francisco Bay Area. Post university, she embarked on a 30+ year career in human services (family support, child abuse prevention) culminating in her current role as CEO of Be Strong Families. Wolf returned to academics in 2012 and earned her M.A. in Women's Spirituality from Sofia University in 2015. She joined the inaugural cohort of the Integral and Transpersonal Psychology Program at CIIS in Fall 2016 and is currently writing her doctoral dissertation on the implications of a fractal epistemology for scientific psychological research.

### **About the Journal**

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