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# Parapsychology and Transpersonal Psychology in Dialogue: Could These Two Movements Be Brought into Better Alignment?

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Parapsychology and transpersonal psychology were founded independently and have evolved separately as two distinct movements, although there is considerable overlap in both their content and in the interests of a number of scholars who are active in both areas. Harris Friedman, Co-President of the Association of Transpersonal Psychology, and Dean Radin, President of the Parapsychological Association, engaged in an informal discussion on the salient commonalities and differences between the two movements, focusing on exploring ways that the two could be brought into better alignment, such as including more transpersonal approaches within parapsychological studies and vice versa. Stanley Krippner, whose seminal work straddles both areas, chaired the panel, introducing and serving as a discussant for Friedman's and Radin's views, as well as in presenting his own views on the relationship between parapsychology and transpersonal psychology.

**Keywords:** *parapsychology, transcendence, Daryl Bem, Etzel Cardeña, transpersonal psychology, transcend*

**Stanley Krippner:** Welcome everybody! This is going to be a special treat for all of you. I'm going to be introducing the folks who are on the panel very, very briefly, so we have plenty of time for interchange and discussion. You all know who Dean Radin is. What you might not know is that he has a new book out, *Real Magic* (Radin, 2018), which I highly recommend. You may not know Harris Friedman, but you might know of the two books that he co-edited with me, both on parapsychology. Number one is *Mysterious Minds* (Krippner & Friedman, 2009), and number two is *Debating Psychic Experiences* (Krippner & Friedman, 2010). Some of you even contributed to both of those books. Now you see the real Harris Friedman and you know he's not just a ghostwriter.

**Dean Radin:** So to speak.

**Stanley:** I'm going to not assume that you all know what we mean by the terminology we will use. Transpersonal psychology has many definitions. I will

give you mine. Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and experience. Transpersonal psychology covers everything that mainstream psychology does but it focuses on behaviors and experiences, which seem to transcend an individual's, or group's, sense of identity, with special attention to how those behaviors and experiences can be transformative in some way or another. I would define parapsychology as the scientific study of behaviors and experiences that seem to transcend mainstream science's explanation and understanding of time, space, and energy. Now, you note the similar words, "transcend" and "transcendence," that provides us with a semantic link. We're going to find out if there were other links and we're going to find out why the fields don't interact more frequently. I'm a charter member of both the Parapsychological Association and the Association of Transpersonal Psychology, and transpersonal psychology has a very nice journal. The editors of the journal early on made the statement, we're not going to have

articles about parapsychology in the journal unless they're really breakthrough articles. Well, those breakthrough articles have never appeared, so this is one of the questions. Why not, why have not the two fields interacted? Or maybe on the other hand, maybe they shouldn't interact. These are some of the questions we will delve into. Our first speaker is Dean Radin.

**Dean:** Thank you. I was at the International Transpersonal Conference in Prague last October. There were maybe 2,000 people there. At this (Parapsychological Association) conference we have roughly 130 people. So, what's wrong with this picture? The meeting in Prague reminded me that the degree of overlap between parapsychology and transpersonal psychology is so large that it doesn't make any sense that we're not part of the same organization, because within parapsychology there are plenty of people who are interested in the transformative and phenomenological aspects of transpersonal experiences. The primary difference, as I see it, is that parapsychology tends to be quantitative whereas transpersonal psychology tends to be qualitative in terms of their basic methods. That's the split. Those of you who are anthropologists here generally don't use quantitative methods. Then why are you here and not in the transpersonal camp? Maybe you are in both. By contrast, experimentalists, like myself, don't tend to think very much about transpersonal qualities. It's not that I don't *value* the transpersonal, but rather I just don't think about it much. But perhaps I should. I would suggest then that our two organizations should be part of an umbrella organization in which the experimentalists are one sub-group, and the transpersonal psychologists are another sub-group, but it's still all part of one big organization. That's what I would look forward to.

**Harris Friedman:** When I was a graduate student, I happened to notice a journal in the graduate student lounge at my university. It was an early issue of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. As I looked at it, I said, "Aha—that's the type of psychology I want to do!" With that said, as Stan mentioned, there are many definitions of transpersonal psychology and we

can't agree among ourselves on any one. I recently co-edited the *Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Transpersonal Psychology* (Friedman & Hartelius, 2015/2013), and it consists of 50-plus chapters of different opinions regarding what's important in transpersonal psychology. When people ask me to define the field, I often like to say, "Well, look at the handbook." I also like to mention that there's much in the handbook I don't agree with. But to recognize the different voices in the field, the handbook provides an overview.

Dean, at the beginning of this conference, mentioned the struggle with the name "parapsychology," which covers a lot of baggage that can be problematic for people, particularly folks seeking mainstream recognition. I'm hoping things get better. I'm so pleased that Etzel Cardena's (2018) important article came out recently in the *American Psychologist*. That's a very political coup, and I'm sure there's going to be a lot of pushback—as there was to Daryl Bem's (2011) influential article in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

I might mention that transpersonal psychology is subject to a lot of the same stigma and prejudice, but it's not quite as bad as what parapsychology gets. I recently was writing a paper for the *Archives of Scientific Psychology* (Friedman, 2018), the new online journal of the American Psychological Association, on transpersonal psychology. I mentioned some of the connections of transpersonal psychology to parapsychology, and the editor very kindly nudged me into not mentioning that, as transpersonal psychology was seen as questionable enough, so that to link it to parapsychology would be beyond problematic—and I sensed that my paper on transpersonal psychology probably would not get published if I also insisted it addressed parapsychology.

In terms of looking at the differences between these two fields, I think what Dean just mentioned regarding the qualitative-quantitative divide is very real, although I might mention I'm one of the few transpersonal psychologists who does mostly quantitative work, so maybe I should defect and be part of this group. But I think there are a lot of other cultural differences between the two movements that keep us apart and maybe they should be reconsidered.

Transpersonal psychology has been looking at its name, for example. A lot of folks are arguing we should change the title to “spiritual psychologies.” In reflecting on that, Charlie Tart (personal communication, June, 2014) a number of years ago mentioned to me that, when he published his well-known volume on transpersonal psychologies, he had originally wanted to title it using spiritual psychologies, but he couldn’t get that name to fly, because spirituality was taboo at that time, so he settled for the term transpersonal. With that said, the term transpersonal today has become associated with the New Age excesses of early transpersonal conferences where people would take psychedelic drugs and run naked through the lobbies of hotels, and all sorts of similar things that some people still remember from previous conferences.

It’s really interesting that spirituality has now become mainstream. The division of the American Psychological Association that used to be called “Psychology of Religion” has now retitled itself as “Religion and Spirituality.” A number of journals have also come out in the mainstream with spirituality associated with psychology, so spirituality is now accepted, while the term transpersonal psychology—which has compromised to get its foot in the door—now still has this stigma.

In terms of changing the name of transpersonal psychology to spiritual psychology, one of the problems is the spiritual psychology folks tend to be dominated by those with a Judeo-Christian background. If you look at a lot of the spirituality measures they use, if not explicitly, they implicitly point to notions of God and other Judeo-Christian notions that don’t really fly so well with some people, say those from a Buddhist background or other non-theistic traditions. There’s an attempt in the psychology of spirituality and religion to be more open to other traditions but, clearly if you look at how they’re thinking as reflected in their articles, it’s very Judeo-Christian.

On the other hand, the roots of transpersonal psychology come mainly from both the psychedelic innovations in our culture, where people started having firsthand experiences of transcendence or similar experiences, and also from the encounters with the Eastern traditions, such as Hinduism,

Buddhism, and other Eastern traditions, as well as many indigenous traditions. One of the cultural divides between the psychology of religion and spirituality with transpersonal psychology is the implicit assumption of adhering to more of an Eastern or indigenous viewpoint versus an Abrahamic type of tradition.

With that said, Dean also mentioned the large size of the conference on transpersonal studies in Prague that Dean and I both attended. By contrast to that well-attended conference, in America the Association for Transpersonal Psychology is really languishing. This year, I’m co-President of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology, and we currently have only about 200 members. If you go back to the glory days in the 60s and 70s of the transpersonal movement, at its heyday the transpersonal movement had over 3,000 members. Worldwide, transpersonal psychology is flourishing. It’s doing really well in Europe, and it’s doing really well in a Brazilian-Portuguese association. In fact, I went to a conference in Brazil last year, and there were over a thousand attendees. There’s also a new Ibero-American Association for Spanish-speaking members in Central and South America, and that’s doing very well. There is even a movement to have a Chinese transpersonal association movement, for an Indian transpersonal association, as well as a lot of interest in South Africa, but here in America, where the transpersonal movement started, there’s not a lot of interest.

One of the things that I am very focused on is trying to revive interest in transpersonal psychology, and I think it has some things to offer that the psychology of religion and spirituality don’t have to offer, but in thinking about its relationship to parapsychology, I never heard that the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* discouraged parapsychological publications. I know Charlie Tart has published at least one article in that journal regarding the relationship between the two (Tart, 2004), but it wasn’t an empirical article, as it was more like an editorial article. I know that the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, of which I am Senior Editor, publishes parapsychological studies. For example, Tobacyk’s (2004) revised paranormal measure was published in our journal. We’re very open to

parapsychological stuff, but again the cultural divide, the quantitative-qualitative being one example, and I think there's also a divide in terms of morality, or different beliefs about what is good or not so good.

For example, in the transpersonal area doing research with the military would probably be frowned upon. The transpersonal people seem to buy in more in terms of a culture of peace and even passivity, and likewise looking at the parapsychology movement there seems to be a real fascination with powers, with the existence of these "supernatural" abilities. Many of the traditional religions say, "Yeah, you'll get these types of powers if you do meditation and other spiritual practices, but don't get caught up in them, as they're not so good. In fact, if you're not spiritually mature enough, they can corrupt you, and you'll misuse them." And clearly in the transpersonal field there's no shortage of guru abuse and other sorts of problems.

I'm very excited to have this dialogue between parapsychology and transpersonal psychology, and maybe there should be more than a dialogue, some merger or cooperation, such as shared conferences. I think there's a lot of things that are interesting that could come out of this. One thing I want to mention: I am now editing a book on the relationship between parapsychology and transpersonal psychology, so I encourage anybody who would be interested in writing on that topic, who shares interest in both areas, to get in contact with me, and maybe offer to write a chapter.

**Stanley:** Okay. I want to make another semantic distinction. Transpersonal studies is an overall term. Transpersonal psychology is an example of transpersonal studies, but we also have transpersonal anthropology. The excellent journal over which Harris assumed a leading role is the *International Journal for Transpersonal Studies*. Yes, they are much more open to having parapsychological content in that particular journal. Also, I should mention that the word "transpersonal" goes back, would you believe it, to William James, but Carl Jung also used the word transpersonal, Gardner Murphy used the word transpersonal, and so the word has been around a long time. Stanislav Grof was probably the first to use the term transpersonal psychotherapy because of his

work with psychedelics in Prague, and then later, with Grof's development of holotropic breathing.

Transpersonal psychotherapy is more popular in some places than in others. At the upcoming American Psychological Association convention, I'm actually chairing a session on psychedelic psychotherapy. And so, when people ask whether the word transpersonal should be used or not, it certainly has some distinguished roots, including what Grof was doing under the rubric of transpersonal psychotherapy. On his very first visit to the United States, I had an interview with him and he said, "I have to use the word transpersonal to get away with it and not get into trouble with the communists." Again, there are political aspects to all of this, as Harris pointed out. Of course, nothing occurs in a vacuum and with both transpersonal psychology and parapsychology, for better or for worse, there is a political matrix that helps or hinders their development.

**Dean:** I wonder if there's another difference between transpersonal psychology and parapsychology. In parapsychology, the claim is made that the phenomena we study are actually real. That claim is not necessary in transpersonal psychology. Just as in psychology, I can write a paper about beliefs in these kinds of phenomena and get it published without question. I can maybe get such an article into *Science* or *Nature*. But you can't publish it if you add to the end of the paper that the beliefs seem to be based in reality. By comparison, in transpersonal psychology it is more about the psychological aspect of the experience without having to say whether it's actually real.

In the same way we find that, in anthropology, it is fine to talk about the primitive beliefs of people living in the outback, but it's not okay to suggest that their psychic beliefs are actually based on the real thing. It's the reality of these phenomena that some regard as scary, and that's why parapsychology tends to be marginalized, I think, even more than transpersonal psychology. In addition, I have also noticed that basically everywhere else in the world except the United States, these topics are openly acknowledged at the very highest levels. I've been invited to many



countries outside the United States to talk to top-tier scientific, educational, government, and business audiences and, while they're skeptical, they are properly so and respectful, and the venues are often standing room only. Within the U.S., I am rarely invited to speak to mainstream academic audiences unless the venues are strictly private.

One of the reasons I think this is the case is that the United States is an extremely religious country. For example, a 2017 article in the *New York Times* (Bromwich, 2017) reported that 91% of members of Congress identified as Christian. Why is that? Because it helps them to get elected, which in turn means it's reflective of the people who are voting for them. Within traditional religions, the realities of psychic phenomena are fully accepted, but the topic carries a "thou shalt not" red flag warning, because to be too interested in these topics either means you're questioning God or attracting demonic forces. Because our society is permeated with very strongly held religious beliefs, this is probably why it is easier to talk and write about transpersonal psychology rather than parapsychological topics.

**Stanley:** I should mention that I am not in favor of renaming this group "spiritual psychology." Why? Because I think that there are spiritual experiences that are transpersonal, but there are secular experiences that are transpersonal as well. Secular experiences have little to do with spiritually, at least as narrowly defined. Atheists have transpersonal experiences. Agnostics have transpersonal experiences. So, I'm one of the ones who would advise us to keep spiritual in the picture, but not as the title.

**Harris:** I agree also. I think spiritual psychology would be a very poor choice of names and would exclude a lot of things that transpersonal can offer. I'd like to respond to Dean's comment regarding the reality of the phenomena that we both deal with in parapsychology and transpersonal psychology. I do think that parapsychology is more devoted to, dare I say this, a positivistic tradition that wants to affirm an external reality somehow as given that we can discover through our scientific methods—and somehow prove as real. Whereas, I think

transpersonal psychology might be more interested in a post-modern, post-conventional notion that all reality is a social construct mediated by language and culture. There really is no independent reality from this vantage, as there's only a co-participative reality.

I'm thinking in terms of my own transpersonal work. Mostly, I've done a lot of work with psychometric measures looking at transpersonal self-concept (e.g., Friedman, 1983). Basically, I'm looking at people's self-reports of their own understanding or construal of whom they are in some experiential narrative. I may be organizing this in a coherent way by looking at issues like reliability and validity in factorial structures, and all of the mathematical nuances, but basically I'm dealing with people's self-reports. I never make any claims about this being real or not real, just interesting variables in terms of how people might differentially think about themselves.

This ontological divide I think is a very important issue in terms of our two communities. I'm thinking just of the tenor of this group. I've been participating, and I've been interested, in parapsychology for many years. I did work with J. B. Rhine back in the 70s and I actually had a research study that I wanted to publish, but my major professor said, while I was finishing up my doctorate, "Don't you dare publish that study, or you'll never get a job in academia" (personal communication, Earl Brown, circa late 1970s). I put it in the file drawer, and recently I wrote a short article about the "reverse" file-drawer problem to help folks talk about not only all the failed experiments being put in the file drawer, but successful ones also being buried due to stigma (Friedman, 2010). I said to my professor, "OK, although I have very powerful supporting evidence." But I buried it in the file drawer because I was in my mid-20s and wanted to be employable.

With that said, back to the ontological divide. I don't know if that can be dealt with, but I do notice that the people in this conference tend to be a more serious lot, more interested in the statistics and the numbers and having some consensual basis for what they're doing. The people in the transpersonal area tend to be, I think, more accepting that everything is true if you believe it to be true, and just more easy-going in that way, but

also not as grounded. I think those are some of the cultural differences.

**Dean:** Harris is correct that we tend to be more sober and serious because of the nature of the work. Dealing with statistics will do that to you. And also, in the transpersonal conference in Prague, which by the way was the only one I've attended actually so far, I saw lots of young people. The average age there was probably 30, whereas the average age here is more than 30 and quickly getting older. So there's something about that transpersonal psychology that is attracting a younger crowd.

**Harris:** I have one question for you, Dean. I'm curious regarding the issue of power and fascination with power, and how you might react to that in terms of the fear I might say that some of the transpersonal people have about authority and guru abuse. Basically, if you think about showing these powers exist, that the conventional paradigm doesn't limit us and we can do remote viewing anywhere in time and space, that really opens up a lot of scary possibilities in terms of authoritarian governments. I'm curious about your reaction to that.

**Dean:** We're concerned about power because statisticians keep telling us we have to be. (That's a joke only statisticians would love.) But seriously, if you're interested in ontology, as many of us are, then we should be allowed to study anything. If a person has an unusual experience, and that experience turns out to challenge the existing scientific paradigm, then we want to know why. What has science overlooked?

Of course, curiosity is not without risk. Marie Curie was deeply interested in radium, but she didn't realize that it would eventually kill her, or that a better understanding of radioactivity would lead to atomic bombs. In our case, could a better understanding of psychic phenomena lead to the use or abuse of some incredible power? Yes, the risk is certainly there. But does that mean we shouldn't study it? No. I don't think any topic should be off the table. The moment we start to restrict what we should be able to know, that's a slippery slope that can easily lead to a resurrection of medieval dogma.

**Stanley:** This brings up another interesting point for me because I often use the term "transpersonal psychologies" (plural) because in transpersonal psychology there are some pretty heated arguments. Stanislav Grof doesn't agree with Ken Wilber, for example. Ken doesn't always agree with Stanislav. There is also an ongoing debate between Steve Taylor and Glenn Hartelius. Harris knows of some of the other debates going on. Transpersonal psychology is not a unified field. There are several internal divisions and debates. The same can be said in parapsychology, as many of the people in this room well know.

**Harris:** Okay. I'm aware that we want to have some interaction with the group so maybe this is a good time to entertain questions.

**Audience 1:** I'd like to say a word about personal freedom suggested by parapsychological research. Parapsychological research suggests that you can see into the future, or see at a distance. This has been the Buddhist ontology for 2,000 years. In the year 800, Padmasambhava, a great teacher wrote a book that sounds like contemporary parapsychology. The book was called, "Self Liberation Through Seeing With Naked Awareness." Four hundred years later, Longchenpa wrote a book called, "The Basic Space Phenomena," explaining that, if your consciousness is basically outside of space and time, then your consciousness is free of cause and effect, and you'll be able to experience the future and the past. Both of those lead to a sense of personal freedom and spaciousness. There's nothing constrained or journalistic about it at all.

**Audience 2:** First, I'd like to talk about the intersections in parapsychology, transpersonal psychology, and clinical or interdisciplinary psychology, and where this would all come together. These fields are looking at and crossing-over information from many, many different disciplines. Perhaps we can look at how it is that they come together, not just how they are ontologically separate. This next thing that I want to say is that I always keep seeing that human nature is about bringing together three strands. One is our personal history, conditions, conditioning culture,

background. Another is this transcendent aspect. The third is how information is communicated between these dimensions, which would potentially be a psychic dimension that we all contain within us. Psychic means processing information, whether it's out of time and space or interpersonally. We receive input from the outside world and input from inner experience. Those three are braided together in what I consider in my own work to be clinical parapsychology or transpersonal psychology; it doesn't matter what we call it.

What I see the next step for the field is how do we create a way that we can be in dialogue about the whole picture, not just separate parts. I see parapsychology as offering not so much the issue of power, but answering that question of, so how is this happening in terms of our understanding of our physiology, our universe, of the quantum universe. But it's not really addressing other issues which are especially important, such as what is it to be human. and do these elements and aspects take all of humanity forward, and not just individuals.

**Audience 3:** I just wanted to ask Harris if you think that the self-expansiveness measure that you made a few years ago shows a relationship with transliminality or thin boundaries, because I've not seen the measure make an appearance in parapsychological individual differences studies. I think it's a pretty good measure, a self-qualitative measure to check your expansiveness over your consciousness.

**Harris:** Thank you for that question. As a matter of fact, I have a paper coming out on that with Adam Rock, a parapsychologist from Australia. Some of you might know of his work. I use the two measures together, the transliminality scale and my measure of expansive self-concept. They correlate pretty strongly, but in terms of predicting how people will respond to things like the Tobacyk Revised Paranormal Scale, the self-expansiveness measure actually is more robust in predicting parapsychological beliefs. We're now looking at the actual data.

**Audience 4:** I'm interested in this dialogue because I'm currently writing a paper arguing, if you look at all the world's religions, you see that they all

began with one individual having a non-local consciousness experience. Those people who are charismatic enough to attract people to listen to them have to be resonant with the community to whom they are speaking, because religions arise not from an individual only, but from the collective assent that they're saying something useful.

If you think about religious ceremonies, they all have the same components when you strip the dogma away. That is, there is a place that you gather that becomes the sacred place. and we know from the research that when people hold collective intention in a particular locale that something happens to the locale that is objectively measurable, that there is a statement of affirmation whatever your affirmation is, and then there's a period of dancing, chanting, drumming, singing, whatever, a whole area of neuroscience of neuro-theology that Andrew Newberg and others are doing.

In that process of chanting, dancing, singing, whatever, there is a period where some but not all of the population have the potential to have a non-local consciousness experience witnessed, including speaking in tongues, being possessed by the voodoo God, whatever. When you think of it that way, then religions actually become empirical sciences that develop over time. It all begins with one person having a non-local consciousness experience. I'm curious how you would see transpersonal psychology address that idea.

**Harris:** First, I wouldn't agree totally that all religions have the same aims.

**Audience 4:** I didn't say they have the same aims.

**Harris:** There's something called the perennial philosophy that's very controversial in the transpersonal field. There're folks like Ken Wilber, who no longer affiliates with transpersonal psychology but is still very influential in the movement, who's argued for a framework that he thinks includes all the different religious structures. And then there are other people who are more interested in honoring diversity among the different religions, so to what extent they are similar or dissimilar can be argued. I'm sorry if I misunderstood you, but I heard you



were arguing for some commonalities that I think were a little bit stronger than the differences. I'm not taking a position myself here, as I'm just saying that that this is an ongoing argument. With that stated, I do strongly agree that religious systems have developed that are not necessarily empirical, but rather sociocultural technologies for achieving certain types of experiences or for achieving various purposes. I'm thinking, particularly, of some of the meditation systems that have evolved over millennia that have things very well mapped out. They may differ across systems, but within their own cultural milieu, they're very coherent and scientific, almost like what psychology tried to do in its early days with the "introspectionists" like Titchener, but taken to a much more extreme perspective. Looking at generations of meditators refining their experiences and seeing similarities between that and what we would call modern scientific empiricism, yes I think there are a lot of valid comparisons.

**Audience 5:** I'd like to address ethical concerns I have. Jacques Vallee said last night, "We look back 50 years into the past to see 10 years into the future." What if we looked only 100 years into the past? What I would like to propose is that we imagine seven generations or more into the future so that we don't end up destroying ourselves. Related to power, I truly believe that exploring and examining power is an awesome thing, but that we have to be careful that we are not powering over but powering with each other in our world, and using our creative energetics in addition to walk forward with that power.

**Stanley:** Thank you. As some of you know, many Native American tribes say that we need to consider how our actions will influence seven future generations.

**Audience 6:** One observation as far as the conflict between parapsychology and our culture or country, and how it also might affect transpersonal psychology, is that what I see is that often the "celebrity scientists" who are very influential, all seem to have a kind of very easy way of casually dismissing psi in a way that they are never really even engaging with the evidence or acknowledging

it. This seems like a very important source of how it's very difficult to get parapsychology serious attention. I wonder also if this also feeds into issues for transpersonal psychology in the sense that if you're denying, let's say, a foundation or an ontology that might support transcendent realities, then this might cause people to turn away from science. And that could foster a political climate where people are not supporting a lot of the policies or concerns about the planet warming. They then elect politicians who don't seem to be grounded in science very well. It's something that I'm very concerned about – how influential scientists are turning their back on certain things that imply a transcendent reality.

**Dean:** Do you have examples of who those scientists are?

**Audience 6:** I would just say off the top my head Neil deGrasse Tyson, Richard Dawkins, Lawrence Krauss, Steven Pinker, they're all influential "celebrity" scientists. I would be very shocked if they had anything other than a "psi is bunk, religion is ignorance" stance, and I could go on, but those are the ones that mainly come to mind. Sean Carroll is another one.

**Dean:** Do you have an opinion about that, Stanley? Why do mainstream spokespeople for science almost uniformly deny psi?

**Stanley:** Yes, I can give you an example, because I've heard most of these people speak either on television or in person. They are very articulate and they're very, very bright and – as a result -- they make news. The people like Pinker and Dawkins and Tyson are celebrities, and their celebrity status gives what they say a great deal of gravitas. Unfortunately, their gravitas is not in our direction.

**Dean:** But why?

**Stanley:** Who do we have in the field who is as charismatic and as articulate, and as media savvy as Steven Pinker? I think the closest we have is Dean. He speaks very well, and gets a great deal of media attention.

**Audience 7:** One observation. If you actually look at people who make the breakthroughs, whether it's in spiritual epiphanies, whether it is in acts of genius, or whether it is in acts of creativity or psychic functioning, you will see that every one of these people begins with a non-local consciousness experience. Descartes had three dreams. Poincaré had a mathematical insight while riding in a carriage. Tesla visualized the electric motor as he was walking across Central Park. Einstein had the breakthrough of relativity while he was whiling away an afternoon. I could go on and on. When you get down to the log of people who actually made substantive changes in science, every time when you get down to the short strokes, what you find out is that they got this insight through a non-local consciousness experience. I can give you hundreds of examples.

**Dean:** That doesn't explain Richard Dawkins.

**Audience 7:** No, he is very charismatic, but that doesn't mean that he is terribly insightful.

**Dean:** Right, but the celebrity scientists are only celebrities because the media are paying attention to them.

**Audience 7:** No, I'm not arguing that. I'm just saying that we need to differentiate between charismatic individuals who command media attention and the people who make the real breakthrough insights that changed the course of history.

**Audience 8:** Thank you for this panel. In the 1990s, I was involved in transpersonal psychology, and attended their conferences (not the naked ones). But more recently, I've been involved with the energy psychology folks and ACEP, which is the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology. Dean has presented at a few of their conferences. I see a lot of similarities and overlap, and since you are all interested in increasing numbers and exposure, I wonder how you would feel about opening the dialogue to include the energy psych folks. A lot of people associate energy psychology with just the tapping or EFT, and that is not the case. It's a much broader focus.

**Dean:** Within energy psychology, most of the practitioners I've talked to admit in private that it works just as well at a distance as it does close-up, in which case it's clearly a parapsychological phenomenon. My dream is a kind of Congress of at least eight or nine different groups, all of which are in the same space. I'm also thinking of psychotronics. In psychotronics, they're dealing with techniques like radionics, pyramid power, and all sorts of strange things. Many of them have already gone to the point where they say, "We don't care about the existential debates, we're accepting that there are strange things that really do happen. We're using methods to try to understand them in a practical way."

If I survey the parapsychological community, a lot of people might say they're crazy, but every group points to other groups and says we don't want to have anything to do with them. This is even true for groups interested in UFOs and other kinds of contact experiences. The raw experience that people report is, in many cases, very, very similar. But there's social pressure to carve out our little spaces where we can feel comfortable. There are people in mainstream neuroscience who will point fingers at people in an adjacent academic field and say, "Well, those people are nuts. We're using the EEG in the right way and they're using it in the wrong way. They have crazy red colored electrodes and we have the proper blue electrodes." It's simply human nature to find people who think exactly like you do, and form support groups. I don't know how to fix that problem, but I tend to be more inclusive, and I'd rather be under a big umbrella with lots of people with different ideas.

**Stanley:** I should mention that what you're suggesting is something we've already done. For one example, Harris and I are co-editors of the *Advances in Parapsychological Research*, volume 9 (Krippner, Rock, Beischell, Friedman, & Fracasso, 2013), and there is a chapter on energy medicine by David Feinstein. So we *have* reached out to that community.

**Harris:** I also want to mention that a lot of the divisions come merely from history. Movements arise from grassroots and now, as they're maturing,

maybe we can look outside of our little silos and say, "Hey! We really are doing almost the same thing as that other group in a different silo. How can we organize for mutual betterment?" But it would take energy and people with commitment to bridge those divides, and also how broadly would we cast the net? I'm sure there are people who would say, "Oh! That group is has too many cranks or is too much airy fairy." I think we would be a more powerful social movement if we could somehow grow in ways like that.

**Audience 9:** I just had a personal reflection about parapsychology. I was very much a materialist physicist and, in midlife, I started to come to parapsychology. I always say to myself, "Wow, that was a journey." There is this aspect that's really particular to parapsychology—if you get into it you're going to get into the washing machine and then the spin cycle goes pretty fast. That's because I'm very interested in talking with people who've been through this wash before, who are in a similar situation where they had an established view, and then there's some curiosity, and then there's a question as to whether you're going to get into this journey or not. It's a long process. It's a kind of thing that I would talk to somebody privately at some point, and certainly not right off the bat.

But there's something in parapsychology that's transformative if you come into it. Quantum mechanics is the same way if people really get into it. Something inside has to break in order to say, "Okay! That's the way it is." These great stories about Heisenberg and Bohr having conversations late at night, and Heisenberg is the young guy but he's the guy who is figuring it out. At some point, he just breaks down crying, not because he's being badgered by Bohr but because just everything is just falling apart and becoming clear at the same time. It's just a big personal thing that happens to us.

**Audience 10:** I think Harris asked why is there so much rejection of psychic phenomena by mainstream science, and the answer is that psi disagrees with quantum mechanics. So standard science is violated by psi, and this causes people to fight back. I think it's pretty simple, and all that's really needed is for

this community to welcome folks like me to come and test these ideas. We should work together and not think of it as mainstream science rejecting psi, but let's work together to figure out. I think that's the reason why there is this conflict.

**Harris:** I'd like to respond to that by saying I think the implications for the conflict are a lot more profound. The sorts of things that this group is discovering, uncovering, and constructing is very threatening. I think that has to be recognized, and its implications are revolutionary. I think the moral aspect of it has to be taken into consideration, and not to suppress new knowledge acquisition, but to realize the power that's in this stuff.

**Audience 11:** Who do you think it's threatening to? You said a number of times we're interested in power, constraining people or threatening them. Who's being threatened?

**Audience 12:** The quantum physicists are being threatened because psi violates quantum physics. Psi violates quantum mechanics, so we've got a controversy and we should work together to get it straightened out.

**Harris:** I agree with that, but I think that that's a very small community. I think the fundamentalist religious community is extremely threatened, and they control the politics of our country right now. Beyond that, just the whole social order is based on certain assumptions about reality. If these assumptions shift in a widespread way, the implications are profound, and they won't necessarily lead to good outcomes, in my opinion. One of my interests in this area is for us to see ourselves in larger, more expansive ways, and to be able to evolve to what I think are higher capacities. But I also think it's putting us in jeopardy in a lot of ways as well, so it has to be done very thoughtfully.

**Dean:** Okay, last comment.

**Audience 13:** Thank you. I am a medium and I came to this gathering because I've been receiving, what I think, is scientific information. I've listened

and I've learned a great deal, but you guys seem to be missing the fun part. I think that's why you need the transpersonal. One piece of advice I would give is that there are a lot of people out there who are really interested in these abilities. I've done readings professionally for 40 years. I never had to advertise, I never had to do anything because even the skeptics having a reading, or a husband coming to one of my talks because he was made to show up by their wives, suddenly has a new path for themselves that they hoped was there, something that gave them guidance and hope. If I were to only rely on numbers for them, they probably would walk away and think I was crazy, but it's the opposite.

There are a lot of people in the United States who are interested in this issue from a spiritual point of view, and that happens because, if you are dealing with what is beyond us, you will follow that path. The power that a lot of people worry about is like, "Oh! What if this gets into the wrong hands." Well, we all have the ability, but what we do with it, of course, is important. The spirituality, if you're going that path as well, gives you a lot of moral guidance. You can't miss it as you move along that. I cannot do this work if I can't trust what I'm getting, and I cannot help anyone if I was afraid of what would happen.

I think the thing you need to work on is you've got to put transpersonal and spirituality and mysticism together with your facts and figures. The other thing I've seen is great difficulty that you're having is narrowing down such a big area of humanity. Our humanness is equipped with this ability or these abilities. To try to make these abilities perform for you, I'm sorry but it was a little bit of trying to put something in too small of a container. I think you need to allow yourselves to get your information to the public, and I don't think a journal is enough, because that stays within your realm.

**Stanley:** I think we're going to have each of our panelists, make a final statement.

**Dean:** Final statement.

**Stanley:** Well, I'll end on a little note of humor and irony. The American Psychological Association (APA)

meets in just a few days in San Francisco. As you may know, Etzel Cardena's (2018) marvelous article on parapsychology was featured in the *American Psychologist*. It was hard getting it accepted, but it made it—and it is excellent. Also, one of the APA journals, *Psychology of Consciousness* has a special issue on precognition, and the *Skeptical Inquirer* wrote an editorial saying, in effect, isn't it a shame how APA has deteriorated. They're publishing the book *Transcendent Mind* (Barušs & Mossbridge, 2017). They're letting these parapsychological articles into their journals. They went on to say that psychology's only hope now is the Association for Psychological Science (APS). Our hope now is with APS, not APA. Well, I hate to tell them this, but some years ago I chaired a session on parapsychology at APS. Stephan Schwartz was there, and several other parapsychologists were there. We got no critical comments and we had standing room only. So the skeptics won't like it, but even APS may be going down the drain. Thank you all for coming. Thank you for your participation.

**Harris:** [Silent gesture as his final "non-word" to end the panel]

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#### Author Note

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