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Transpersonal Psychology: Defining the Past, Divining the Future

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Retrospective analysis of definitions published 35 years suggests the major subject areas of the field can be summed up in three themes: beyond-ego psychology, integrative/holistic psychology, and psychology of transformation. Theme frequency analysis reveals that early emphasis on alternative states of consciousness has moderated into a broader approach to human transcendence, wholeness, and transformation. This expanded definition of transpersonal psychology suggests the field has much in common with integral psychology. As a comprehensive, historically based content summary, this tripartite definition contributes a small but vital piece to the foundation of a transpersonal vision that is spreading across the globe. While transpersonal psychology still needs to embody the inclusiveness and diversity that it represents, its vision is one of great relevance to the contemporary human condition.

Artistic inspiration is best expressed by creating art rather than by making explanations. It is in this sense that transpersonal psychology, with its uplifting vision, has had difficulty defining itself. Yet, just as the soul of an artist's muse can be divined from a body of work, a clearer picture of transpersonal psychology can be drawn from looking at how it has expressed itself through its approximately first 35 years (i.e., all but one of the definitions in the corpus date from the period 1969–2003). We inquire not only into the definition of the field, but also into its character: what are the themes that make it up, how have these themes unfolded, and as we follow its arc through time, what can we imagine for the future of transpersonal psychology? Where is the field spreading? How well does it embody what it represents? This article summarizes the findings from four related studies: a thematic analysis of a corpus of definitions of transpersonal psychology published over a 35-year period, a thematic analysis of relevant portions of Boucouvalas' (1980) in-depth

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analysis of the field, a theme frequency analysis conducted on 10 volumes of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (JTP), and an analysis of the gender distribution of authorship in 25 volumes of JTP.

We began our project in 2002 by asking a number of contemporary scholars for their current definition of the field (Caplan, Hartelius, & Rardin, 2003). Although the authors deliberately sought out diversity for this article, the sampling admittedly favors the West Coast of the United States. Given that transpersonal psychology began in California, that the state contains by far the greatest number of major institutions focused on the transpersonal approach, and that a majority of the field's major theorists cluster around these institutions, such a bias is perhaps unavoidable. There was also some self-selection in the sampling, given that a number of individuals who were invited to contribute chose not to do so. However, the purpose of this article was not so much to gain a representative sample as it was to ferret out current definitions of the field of transpersonal psychology, so as to represent any new or shifted elements of definition. Although we received a familiar range of responses, there was a clear sense that this group of definitions represented an important shift from early collections, suggesting a contemporary evolution in emphasis.

STUDY 1—THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DEFINITIONS OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

What is the subject of transpersonal psychology? The first study involved thematic analysis of a corpus of 160 definitions, combining the 41 definitions we had collected with 119 additional definitions dating from 1968 through 2002 (Table 1). The additional definitions were drawn primarily from two major published collections of definitions (Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992a; Shapiro, Lee, & Gross, 2002).[1]

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[1]The two published collections contain a total of 120 definitions. Four duplicate definitions were eliminated (Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 40; Shapiro, Lee & Gross, 2002, nos. 2, 4 & 31) because they appeared in both collections. One previously unpublished definition was supplied to us in the course of research, appearing here as no. 23. This definition comes from a letter to Stanley Krippner, who kindly provided us with a copy. The letter is dated 8/29/86, written by Leon Pomeroy of New York. His definition is as follows:

> "Transpersonal Psychology" is the scientific study of behavioral phenomena commonly thought to possess the qualities of "awe," the "spiritual" or the "mystical," and of the belief systems and physiological states underlying such behavior.

In addition, two published definitions not included in any collection were added. A copy of the publication in which they appeared was also provided by Krippner. They appear in our corpus as Nos. 38 and 39, respectively:

> "Transpersonal psychology returns the questions of ultimate human value and questions of spiritual or religious experience to the field of psychology." (Judy, 1990, p. 3)

Method

In order to perform a thorough and detailed analysis, the texts of the definitions were treated as if they were transcripts of phenomenological interviews: data were divided into meaning units and coded into related groupings. The initial process of data analysis was performed by the primary author, and began with many readings of the definitions. Out of these readings, meaning units containing specific, discrete elements of definition were identified. These meaning units were compiled into preliminary categories of thematically related elements. Final stabilization of data occurred when continued re-analysis failed to produce further additions to or changes in these categories. In this way, 11 definitional theme strands were identified. The next level of analysis involved reviewing these discrete theme strands for larger categories of relatedness. This process resulted in the identification of the three major definitional themes, each comprised of two or more theme strands.

One challenge with a thematic analysis is that if definitions are classified based on narrow sets of words or phrases, the prominence of larger themes may be overlooked because they have been fragmented into their constituent elements. On the other hand, any effort to define large themes sacrifices a close tie to specific wordings, thus risking vagueness. The two-level thematic structure developed in this study is a hybrid that helps to overcome both difficulties: tightly defined strands woven into broader definitional themes.

At this point the primary author submitted his results to the coauthors, who reviewed them and responded with comments. A few minor changes resulted from this process. Wherever possible, each definition was re-examined in its original published context. Based on this re-examination, 49 meaning units were added back from the original published context to a total of 15 definitions for the purpose of this analysis (Table 1).

Results

The corpus of 160 definitions yielded 1395 meaning units (N = 1395). Of these, 91% (1270) had theme-related content. In these meaning units we identified three major themes defining transpersonal psychology: psychology beyond ego (TP-I), integrative/holistic psychology (psychology of the whole person in an intercon-

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> "As I see it, there are three major assumptions underlying transpersonal psychology (TP): reports of transpersonal experiences and behaviors can be studied scientifically; transpersonal experiences and behaviors reflect concerns that transcend the personal, reflecting a group or even humanity as a whole; these experiences and behaviors are given the highest possible priority or value by those reporting them." (Krippner, 1990, p. 2)

The great majority of definitions were re-examined in their original context. Original sources for four definitions could not be obtained due to their obscure provenance, and are cited from a secondary source.

TABLE 1
160 Definitions

Numbered citations	*Source collection number*	*Added M/U*
1. Sutich, 1968, pp. 77-78	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 1	
2. Sutich, 1969, pp. 15-16	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 2	
3. Sutich, 1969, p. 16	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 3	
4. Green & Green, 1971, p. 42	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 4	
5. Roberts, 1975, p. 398	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 5	
6. Hensley, 1977, p. 3	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 6	
7. Ryback, 1978, p. 12	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 7	
8. Frager, 1979, p. 6	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 8	
9. Hastings, 1979-1980, p. 4	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 9	
10. Williams, 1980, pp. 14, 18, 53, 54, 89, 90, 116	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 10	
11. Walsh & Vaughan, 1980, p. 16	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 11	
12. Surrenda, 1980, p. 4	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 12	
13. Guest, 1980, p. 4	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 13	
14. Boucouvalas, 1980, p. 136	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 14	
15. Transpersonal Psychology Interest Group, 1982, p. 1	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 15	
16. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1983, I	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 16	
17. Frager, 1983, p. 2	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 17	
18. Capra, 1983, p. 367	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 18*	+1
19. Mann, 1984, pp. viii-ix	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 19	
20. Grof, 1985, p. 197	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 20	
21. Valle & Harari, 1985, p. 11	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 21	
22. Harari, *et al*., 1986, p. 1	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 22	
23. Pomeroy, 1986, letter to S. Krippner (See n. 1, above, for text of definition)	Previously unpublished	
24. Krippner, 1987, pp. 4-5	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 23	
25. Needleman & Eisenberg, 1987, Vol. 4, p. 57	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 24	
26. Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, unpaginated (From Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992, pp. 87, 93)	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 25	
27. Hutchins, 1987, pp. 9, 12	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 26	
28. Washburn, 1988, p. v	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 27	
29. Hoffman, 1988, p. 342	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 28	
30. Davis, 1988, p. 6	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 29	
31. Association for Transpersonal Psychology, 1988(?), facing p. 1	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 30	
32. Institute for Transpersonal Psychology, 1989, p. 2	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 31	
33. Metzner, 1989, p. 329	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 32*	+3
34. Frager, 1989, p. 289	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 33*	+7
35. Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, 1990(?), unpaginated (From Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992, pp. 88, 94	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 34	
36. Harari, 1990, unpaginated (From Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992, pp. 88, 94)	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 35	
37. Lash, 1990, p. 390	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 36	
38. Judy, 1990, p. 3 (See n. 1, above, for text of definition)	Previously unpublished in a collection	
39. Krippner, 1990, p. 2 (See n. 1, above, for text of definition)	Previously unpublished in a collection	

(continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Numbered citations	*Source collection number*	*Added M/U*
40. Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, 1991(?), unpaginated (From Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992, pp. 88, 94)	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 37	
41. Editor, 1991, p. 7	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 38	
42. Tisdale, 1991, p. 5	Lajoie & Shapiro, no. 39	
43. Diespecker, 1991, p. 30	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 1	
44. Singer, 1991, pp. 142-143	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 3	
45. Wilber, 1991, p. 4	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 5	
46. Wulff, 1991, p. G-30	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 6	
47. Bynum, 1992, pp. 301-302	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 7	
48. Cordts, 1992, pp. 3-4	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 8*	+4
49. Drury, 1992, p. 301	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 9	
50. Krippner, 1992, p. 308	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 10	
51. Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992, p. 91	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 11	
52. Miller & The Editors of New Age Journal, 1992, p. 92	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 12*	+5
53. Tart, 1992, p. ix	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 13	
54. Grof, 1993, p. 9	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 14*	+2
55. Matos, 1993, p. 3	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 15	
56. Mishlove, 1993, pp. 242-243	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 16	
57. Tart, 1993, p. 124	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 17	
58. Walsh & Vaughan, 1993, pp. 3-4	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 18	
59. Grof & Grof, 1994, unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 19	
60. Walsh & Vaughan, 1994, p. 549	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 20*	+1
61. Wilber, 1994, pp. ix-x	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 21*	+1
62. Achterberg, 1994, p. 98	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 22	
63. Department of Transpersonal Psychology, Graduate School for Holistic Studies, 1995(?), unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 23	
64. Flier, 1995, p. 132	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 24*	+5
65. George, 1995, p. 283	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 25	
66. Kelly, 1995, p. 66	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 26	
67. Tart, 1995, p. 9	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 27	
68. Vaughan, 1995b, p. 21	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 28	
69. Vich, 1995, p. iv	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 29*	+1
70. Brazier, 1995, p. 42	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 30	
71. Vaughan, 1995a, p. 162	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 32	
72. Chinen, 1996, p. 11	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 33	
73. Fontana & Slack, 1996, p. 3	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 34	
74. Grof, 1996, p. 44	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 35	
75. Hanegraaff, 1996, pp. 51, 246	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 36	
76. Nelson, 1996, pp. 137-138	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 37	
77. *The Oxford English reference dictionary*, 1996	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 38	
78. Wilber, 1996	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 39	
79. Hoffman, 1996, p. 14	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 40*	+2
80. Daniels, 1996, unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 71	
81. Cortright, 1997, pp. 8, 10	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 41	
82. Lukoff, 1997, unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 42	
83. Granovsky, 1997, p. 13	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 43	

(continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Numbered citations	*Source collection number*	*AddedM/U*
84. Australian Transpersonal Association 1998(?), unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 44*	+7
85. Braud & Anderson, 1998, pp. xxi, 39	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 45	
86. Department of Transpersonal Psychology, Graduate School for Holistic Studies, 1998, p. 3	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 46	
87. Fontana, 1998, p. 7	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 47	
88. Rothberg, 1998, p. 3	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 48	
89. Wertz, 1998, p. 63	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 49	
90. Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, 1998-1999, p. 4	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 50*	+4
91. Marcandonatou, 1998, p. 310	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 51	
92. *Random House Webster's unabridged dictionary*, 1998	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 52	
93. Singh, 1998, pp. 317-318	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 53	
94. Snelling, 1998, p. 253	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 54	
95. The Annual Council Meeting of EUROTAS, 1999, unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 55	
96. *Chambers 21st century dictionary*, 1999	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 56	
97. European Transpersonal Psychology Association, 1999, unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 57	
98. Krippner, 1999a, p. xii	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 58	
99. Hiltunen, 1999, p. 1	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 59	
100. Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, 1999(?), unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 60	
101. Katra & Targ, 1999, p. 34	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 61	
102. Krippner, 1999b, p. 97	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 62	
103. Hughes, 1999, p. 8	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 63*	+1
104. Taylor, 1999, p. 274	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 64	
105. Hastings, 1999, 197	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 65	
106. Smoley & Kinney, 1999, pp. 299-301	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 67	
107. Davis, 2000, p. 4	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 66	
108. Grof, 2000, p. 217	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 68	
109. Italian Association of Transpersonal Psychology, 2000, unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 69*	+5
110. Valentine, 2000, p. 206	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 70	
111. Transpersonal Counseling Psychology, n.d., unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 72	
112. Faiver, Ingersoll, O'Brien & McNally, 2001, p. 13	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 73	
113. *Merriam Webster's collegiate dictionary*, 2001	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 74	
114. National Association for Transpersonal Psychology, n.d., unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 75	
115. Schneider, Bugental & Pierson, 2001, p. xxiv, n. 1	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 76	
116. Ferrer, 2002, p. 5	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 77	
117. Tarnas, 2002, p. viii	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 78	
118. Association for Transpersonal Psychology, 2002(?), unpaginated	Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 79	
119. Fadiman & Frager, 2002, p. 452Shapiro, Lee & Gross, no. 80		
120. Anderson, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 1	

(continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Numbered citations	*Source collection number*	*AddedM/U*
121. Arrien, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 2	
122. Belschner, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 3	
123. Seymour Boorstein, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 4	
124. Sylvia Boorstein, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 5	
125. Cortright, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 6	
126. Descamps, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 7	
127. Deslauriers, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 8	
128. Epstein, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 9	
129. Esbjorn, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 10	
130. Fadiman, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 11	
131. Ferrer, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 12	
132. Frager, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 13	
133. Gilot, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 14	
134. Greenleaf, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 15	
135. Grof, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 16	
136. Hargens, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 17	
137. Hastings, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 18	
138. Hutton, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 19	
139. Kelly, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 20	
140. Kornfield, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 21	
141. Kripal, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 22	
142. Louchakova, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 23	
143. Metzner, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 24	
144. Naranjo, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 25	
145. Parlee, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 26	
146. Puhakka, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 27	
147. Rodriguez, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 28	
148. Rothberg, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 29	
149. Solimar, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 30	
150. Sommer, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 31	
151. Sovatsky, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 32	
152. Sulmeyer, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 33	
153. Tarnas, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 34	
154. Tart, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 35	
155. Vaughan, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 36	
156. Vich, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 37	
157. Wade, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 38	
158. Welwood, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 39	
159. Caplan, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 40	
160. Boucouvalas, 2003	Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, no. 41	

The 160 definitions analyzed in this study are listed here in a sequence that firstly reflects chronological order, and secondly reflects their sequence in previously-published collections. For easy reference, each citation is also identified by its numeration within the collection where it is published. When an asterisk appears after the source collection number, this indicates that upon re-examination of the definition in its original context, additional meaning units from that context were added to the definition from its immediate context as here analyzed. The third column, "Added M/U," indicates how many meaning units were added in each such case.

nected world) (TP-II), and psychology of transformation (TP-III). Each of the major themes consisted of two or more theme strands (Figure 1).

Of the other 9% of the data (125 meaning units), nearly half (57) dealt with transpersonal psychology as an approach—its identity, history, philosophy, research methods, ways of knowing, and modalities—rather than as a content area. This topic is beyond the scope of the current study (for relevant works see Boucouvalas, 1980; Shapiro, 1990; Shapiro & Lajoie, 1991; Shapiro, 1993). The remaining 68 meaning units consisted of transitional statements and miscellaneous remarks.

Discussion

In its first major definitional theme, beyond-ego psychology, transpersonal psychology picks up where standard psychology leaves off. This gives us two psychologies: one for the ego and its pathologies, one for what lies beyond. From here it is natural to ask; how can one construct a single psychology of the whole person? This is the subject of the second theme—integrative/holistic psychology. With this larger understanding of human development, we can begin to ask the truly compelling questions of the third theme, transformative psychology: how do we become more, bigger, deeper, and greater than the limits of our personal egos? What are the processes of post-conventional development? How can we understand and cultivate growth into our larger potentials, both as individuals and as human communities?

These themes are not merely about the future potential of humanity; they are also about human meaning in the present. States and stages beyond ego are not destinations to which the seeker must journey, but here-and-now homecomings to a deeper self that is always present—though often unnoticed. It is this self that is capable of experiencing a satisfying intimacy with the world, this self that feels itself drawn to the source of being. Transpersonal psychology thus validates the meaningful nature of human experience, affirming that this is not merely an impediment to objective knowledge but a way of knowing oneself, the world, and the mystery of existence from the standpoint of an embodied participant rather than as a disinterested observer.

These three themes interrelate in several ways (Figure 2). Tarnas points out that there are three different meanings of the Latin word *trans*: beyond, pervading, and changing (Caplan, Hartelius & Rardin, 2003; Tarnas, 2001; cf. Cortright, 1997). These three meanings, when applied to the term "transpersonal" correspond to our three themes: *beyond* ego, *pervading* personhood, and *changing* humanity. One can also think of these three themes in terms of the role that the transpersonal plays: in beyond-ego psychology the transpersonal states are the *content*; in integrative psychology the transpersonal provides a widened *context* for studying the

Theme I
Beyond-Ego Psychology (TP-I)

A. States Beyond Ego

An in-the-moment inner experience, awareness or state of consciousness that is unambiguously beyond or outside of "ordinary" states of mind

B. Stages Beyond Ego

The potential for or results of personal development beyond the ego, excluding in-the-moment states

C. Paths Beyond Ego

Meditation, mysticism, mystics, or aspects that are mystical or contemplative

D. Aspirations Beyond Ego

Human potential, optimal human development in any area, or ultimate values, meaning, or purpose

E. Beyond Ego Phenomena Not Otherwise Specified

Non-ordinary perceptual capacities, perceptions gained by non-ordinary means, realities beyond ego, deep psychic structures, states tending toward ego-transcendence, or beyond-ego phenomena not otherwise specified

Theme II
Integrative/Holistic Psychology (TP-II)

A. Embodiment

The physical body as part of the widened context within which the study of psychology takes place

B. Social/Ecological Situation

The social or ecological situation as a relevant part of the context for psychology; multi-cultural or interdisciplinary approach to psychology

C. Transpersonal as Context

Beyond-the-ego experiences and realities as the organizing context for psychology, or the transformative context of psychotherapy

D. More-than-Ego Psychology

Non-ordinary psychology that transcends and includes traditional Western psychology, or to a comprehensive, holistic, multicultural, integrative or integral psychology that includes an extended range of human consciousness, experience and functioning

Theme III
Transformative Psychology (TP-III)

A. Personal Transformation

Transformation, transconventional development, transpersonal self-actualization, psycho-spiritual growth, embodied knowledge, and equivalent formulations

B. Social Transformation

Application of the findings of transpersonal psychology to education, business, therapy, the wider world, ethical thinking, right action, compassionate social action, service to humanity, etc.

FIGURE 1 Themes and theme strands resulting from analysis of transpersonal definitions.

Theme I (TP-I)	Theme II (TP-II)	Theme III (TP-III)
Transpersonal as **Content** of a beyond-ego psychology	Transpersonal as **Context** for integrative psychology of the whole person	Transpersonal as **Catalyst** for human transformation
Beyond Ego	Pervading Personhood	Changing Humanity
Trans = Beyond	Trans = Pervading	Trans = Changing

FIGURE 2 Relationships between the three themes defining transpersonal psychology.

whole of human experience; in transformational psychology the transpersonal is the *catalyst* for human change.

These three roles of the transpersonal fit well with distinctions noted by Vaughan and Walsh between transpersonal content, context, and process (Vaughan, 1979; Walsh and Vaughan, 1980). Yet the categories developed in this analysis are somewhat wider. For example, "transpersonal as content" deals not only with states that are in some measure beyond ego, but also stages of post-conventional development, traits such as compassion and altruism, aspirations for beyond-ego development, and paths such as meditation and mysticism that are designed to cultivate this unfolding. Similarly, "transpersonal as context" covers more than the beliefs, attitudes, and intentions (and, we would add, the somatic presence) of the therapist in relationship to a client. It refers also to the recognition that ego is not separate from its many contexts, that it must be seen within the larger fabric of the embodied mind, the community, the social history, the environment, and the transpersonal ultimate. In addition, Western psychology lives and breathes within a global net of culture-specific psychologies, some of which take forms unfamiliar to this society, but all of which inform an inclusive human psychology. Finally, "transpersonal as catalyst" for transformative process acknowledges not only personal transformation, but also social transformation.

As noted, the three themes identified accounted for 91% of the meaning units in the definitions under study. Given that these themes thus appear to reflect the

content of transpersonal psychology in a fairly comprehensive way, we have assembled them into a summary definition:

> Transpersonal psychology: An approach to psychology that 1) studies phenomena beyond the ego as context for 2) an integrative/holistic psychology; this provides a framework for 3) understanding and cultivating human transformation.

To be even more succinct, we can say that transpersonal psychology studies human transcendence, wholeness, and transformation. (This condensed definition is effective only if these latter terms are carefully defined.)

The three aspects of the field complete rather than compete. As beyond-ego aspects of human experience become understood, a view emerges in which human individuals are integrally interconnected with much larger contexts. This larger vision, in turn, allows glimpses of how to become a greater, deeper humanity. As humanity transforms, individually and collectively, it cultivates more beyond-ego development worthy of study. Together, the three themes of transpersonal psychology form an interdependent, mutually supportive cycle of inquiry.

STUDY 2—TESTING THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

How well do the identified themes and theme strands contain the field? To test this question we applied them to the findings of an in-depth analysis of transpersonal psychology published in 1980 (Boucouvalas, 1980). This study is a "working outline" of the field rather than a definition, and so approaches the subject from a wider perspective. For a content-based analysis, the first three sections are most relevant (entitled, Functions and Goals, Scope and Territory Covered, and Theoretical Emphases, respectively).

Method

The contents of the three selected Boucouvalas article sections were subjected to meaning-unit analysis, and each meaning unit was analyzed for theme-related content. Where theme-related content was present, the meaning unit was coded by theme strand.

Results

Each of the 11 theme strands identified in the definitions were found in the Boucouvalas data, and no evidence suggested the need for additional theme strands. Of 49 meaning units (N = 49), 90% (44) were identified as having theme-related content, and 10% (5) as having no theme-related content. This ratio

of theme-related material compares favorably with the corpus of definitions, in which 91% of meaning units were theme-related.

Discussion

The coherence between our thematic analysis of a large corpus of definitions and the content-related portions of an analysis of the field pursued by a quite different method suggests that these three themes represent a fair summary of transpersonal psychology. It then becomes clear that the field has been defining itself quite cohesively over the last 35 years, though rarely in a succinct and comprehensive form. Far from lacking definition, transpersonal psychology has a rich, vital core that has been difficult to contain in few words. Only with a retrospective of the work of many scholars over several decades does this core to begin to emerge as a cohesive whole.

STUDY 3—THEME FREQUENCY ANALYSIS: ASSESSING SHIFT IN EMPHASIS

When we looked at how often each of these major themes occurred in our set of definitions, it seemed that beyond-ego psychology (TP-I) predominated in earlier definitions, whereas themes relating to integrative/holistic and transformative psychology (TP-II and TP-III) appeared to be more common in contemporary definitions. However, since our sample was not controlled, we could not rely on these observations. To test these hypotheses, we performed a theme frequency analysis on the first 5 years (1969–1973) of JTP, and compared these findings with those from a similar analysis of 5 more recent years (1999–2003). We based this exercise on the assumption that the pages of JTP would reflect contemporaneous conversation in the field with some degree of accuracy.

Method

The analysis protocol was developed by analyzing the full length of each article in seven randomly selected volumes of JTP for material related to the themes and theme strands developed here. Theme-related materials were coded to reflect the article page on which they occurred. These data were analyzed to determine the optimum number of pages per article to be scanned for theme-related materials. Using only the first two pages omitted too much data. Using four pages added significantly more data, but using six pages added nothing further. On this basis, it was determined that the first four pages of each article in the selected volumes would be scanned for theme-related materials.

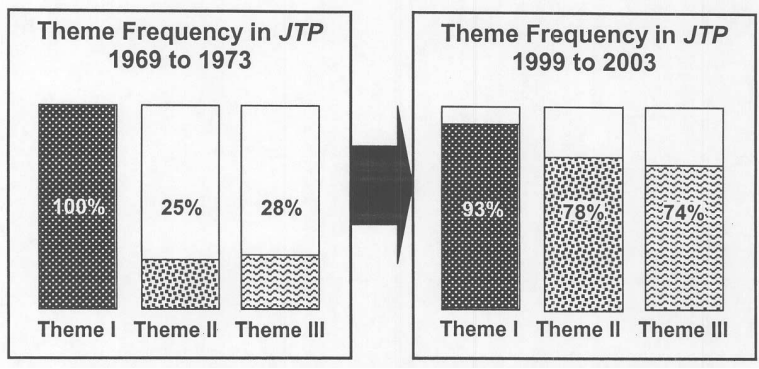


FIGURE 3 Theme frequency analysis of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* shows that beyond-ego psychology dominated the conversation during the first five years of publication. In five recent volumes, the conversation has broadened to include much more emphasis on themes related to integrative/holistic and transformational psychology.

Results and Discussion

We found compelling evidence that beyond-ego psychology predominated during 1969–1973, with much less emphasis on integrative/holistic and transformative psychology themes. In this period, 40 articles were analyzed (N = 40). Of these, 40 contained materials related to Theme I (100%), 10 to Theme II (25%), and 11 to Theme III (28%). Beyond-ego themes were still strong in the years 1999–2003, but were now more balanced by the greatly increased presence of subjects relating to integrative/holistic and transformative psychology. In the 46 articles analyzed from this period (N = 46), 43 contained materials related to Theme I (93%), 36 to Theme II (78%), and 34 to Theme II (74%) (Figure 3).[2] This suggests that conversation in the field has broadened significantly from its early emphasis on alternative states, adding focus on an inclusive psychology that studies and cultivates the transformation of society and the individual in the contexts of physical embodiment, community, ecology, and the transpersonal ultimate.

THE IMPERATIVE FOR A WIDENED DEFINITION OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

At times, TP-I has been conflated with the field of transpersonal psychology as a whole, no doubt arising from the strong early emphasis on beyond-ego psychology.

[2] One article in the target periods was not available in the resources used for this study, and was omitted from the analysis.

This constricted stereotype of the discipline has had not only academic, but also political consequences, demonstrating the importance of developing a historically-based, comprehensive definition of the field.

Distilling a definition of transpersonal psychology has been a problematic task (Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992b). Yet the charge that transpersonal psychology cannot define itself (Wilber, 2000a) is not true, as evidenced by the strong coherence between this study and the analysis by Boucouvalas published in 1980. However, failure to condense the field's complex content area into comprehensible form has left it branded as a vague conglomeration of beyond-ego phenomena—a poorly bounded version of TP-I. Important previous attempts to construct a comprehensive summary illustrate this tendency. For example, Lajoie & Shapiro (1992a) offered the following summary based on a collection of 40 definitions:

> Transpersonal psychology is concerned with the study of humanity's highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness. (p. 91)

Even though the underlying definitions were highly diverse, presenting evidence for each of our 11 theme strands, this early effort summarized the field solely in terms of TP-I.

A subsequent, deeper thematic analysis of 80 definitions also highlighted "going beyond or transcending the personal, ego, or self in some sense" as the most prevalent theme (Shapiro, Lee, & Gross, 2002, p. 30). This study illustrates some of the hazards of thematic analysis. For example, the second most common theme in this study was transpersonal psychology as a spiritual psychology. However, the term "spiritual" serves as little more than a synonym for "transpersonal"; like "transpersonal," "spiritual" can be understood equally well in terms of transcendence, wholeness, and transformation. As a category, "spiritual psychology" is too broad to be informative. Additionally, this study does not make an exhaustive analysis of all meaning units, leading to the exclusion of important definitional elements. When our thematic schema is applied to the theme categories of Shapiro, Lee, and Gross, only 7 of our 11 theme strands are represented, and none of these are connected into larger themes.

This limited conceptualization has not only been ill-fitting, but has also made the field vulnerable to some of its sharpest critics. In the mid 80's May (1986a, 1986b) defined "transpersonal" in the sense of leaping over the personal in order to avoid its difficulties. He criticized the pursuit of transcendental states to evade the struggles of the personal level. In this critique, May showed foresight into a phenomenon that more recent transpersonal writers have referred to as "spiritual bypassing" (Cortright, 1997; Caplan, 1999; Welwood, 2000). At the time, his comments were perceived by some as being directed against the entire field of transpersonal psychology. Whatever his intention, May's caveat cast transpersonal psychology as a TP-I

discipline. A fully developed definition that included human wholeness and transformation might better have deflected some of May's concerns and the political consequences that followed. May's cautious stance toward the pursuit of transcendent states also echoes sentiments by Maslow (Cleary & Shapiro, 1995), Chaudhuri (1975), and others (Shapiro & Castillo, 1986–1987, Shapiro, 1989). In addition, May was concerned that transpersonal psychology dabbled in areas best left to religion—a field from which psychology in general has distanced itself (Shapiro, 1986).

In 1986, transpersonal psychology made its third and final bid, ultimately unsuccessful, to become an independent division in the American Psychological Association (Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992b; Aanstoos, Serlin, & Greening, 2000). It is plausible that May's criticisms, coming at this crucial time, weakened the position of transpersonal psychology in this endeavor. May later stated that his comments were not intended as an attack on the discipline of transpersonal psychology; he also cites a personal altercation with a prominent transpersonalist as a precipitating factor (May, Krippner, & Doyle, 1992).

TRANSPERSONAL AND INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGIES

Wilber, a leading theorist of transpersonal psychology, has shifted to integral psychology. In historical terms, the date of Wilber's resignation from the transpersonal movement remains uncertain. Statements claiming that after 1983 he never used the word transpersonal to describe his work (Wilber, 2000a) must be viewed in light of later publications by Wilber that clearly associate him or his work with transpersonalism (e.g., Wilber, 1989; 1995). He asserts that "many schools of transpersonal psychology focus merely on alternative states of consciousness" (2000b, p. 2), proposing instead that various approaches to psychology, both Eastern and Western, be assembled under one roof so that we might honor every facet of human consciousness. Wilber's analysis defines transpersonal psychology mainly in terms of TP-I, and then places it within the frame of his integral psychology. In this light, he views transpersonal psychology as an anachronism (Wilber, 2000a; 2002). On the other hand, if we place Wilber's integral psychology within the frame of the comprehensive, historically based definition described above, his move from transpersonal to integral can also be seen as a shift of emphasis from TP-I to TP-II (beyond-ego to integrative/holistic). (We do not argue for the pre-eminence of either transpersonal or integral psychology.) From the perspective of transpersonal psychology, Wilber's integral approach serves especially to broaden, deepen, and develop this second, emerging emphasis of the discipline. His move away from the frame of transpersonal psychology can be seen, in part, as a response to an apparent failure of the transpersonal community to articulate and embody the full range of its own vision. At the same time, a

community moves more slowly than an individual. As evidenced by our theme frequency analysis of the JTP, cited previously, transpersonal psychology is slowly expanding into its mission. Wilber's work continues to serve this end, even when pursued within a different frame of reference.

The expanded definition also helps give context to what Wilber (2002) sees as a self-destructive factionalization within transpersonal psychology. Applying our thematic schema to what Wilber calls the altered states, magic mythic, integral, and post-modern groups, we can see that the first three represent specializations in various content areas of transpersonal psychology (altered states: Theme Ia; magic mythic: Theme Ie; integral: Theme II). The post-modern group represents an element of transpersonal psychology's approach rather than its content, a subject that, as noted above, is beyond the scope of this study. Our thematic schema thus offers an organizing framework within which to understand these various groups as constituent aspects of a maturing transpersonal psychology (Ferrer, 2003).

This broadened view of transpersonal psychology also highlights its fundamental resonances with integral psychology. Prior to Wilber's (1997a, 1997b, 2000) development of his integral approach, several scholars of Aurobindonian orientation referred to an integral psychology (Chaudhuri, 1977; Reddy, 1973; Sen, 1986; these and other early uses cited in Herman (1983), Shirazi (1994). "Integral" is Aurobindo's translation of the Sanskrit term *purna*, meaning holistic, or full (Herman, 1983). The earliest use of this term, then, appears to be an adaptation of the concepts underlying Aurobindo's integral yoga to an East-West psychology (Herman, 1983; Shirazi, 2005). Chaudhuri (1977) outlines three aspects of human personality that, from an integral perspective, are inseparable: individuality (a personal uniqueness that remains even after ego transcendence), relatedness (belongingness to the social organism), and transcendence (union with the ground of existence). These appear to emerge from his earlier (Chaudhuri, 1965) tripartite synopsis of self-integration through integral yoga: psychic integration (harmonious development of personality facilitated by the discovery of a higher self), cosmic integration (integral relatedness to society and environment), and existential integration (spiritual unfoldment toward the integration of psyche and cosmos, time and eternity, nature and spirit).

Though it is based on the viewpoint of a single individual, this Aurobindonian perspective on an integral approach to human psychology has much in common with the three major themes of transpersonal psychology: beyond-ego psychology seeks the ego transcending states and stages that lead to psychic integration, integrative/holistic psychology situates the ego in physiological, social, ecological, and ultimate contexts as well as locates Western psychology within world psychologies, and transformative psychology seeks to understand and promote the process of unification with the very ground of existence. These three divisions can also be mapped as prominent aspects of Wilber's (1997, 2000) all-quadrant, all level (AQAL) schema of integral psychology: psychic integration through ego transcendence is represented by all levels of his upper left quadrant, cosmic integration

through human wholeness is represented by the four quadrants, and the spiritual transformation that leads to existential integration shows up as the totality of the AQAL map: all quadrants, all levels.

While transpersonal psychology and the two variants of integral psychology (Aurobindonian and Wilberian) have histories and communities that are overlapping rather than identical, the wider view of transpersonal psychology evidenced by the studies described above suggests that the paths of these innovative psychologies may be more convergent than divergent.

IS TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY DEAD?

With the development of Wilber's integral psychology, transpersonal psychology was pronounced dead (Wilber, 2000a, 2002). Should this diagnosis prove correct, the presence or absence of a succinct definition for the field would matter little. In fact, the transpersonal vision has spread across the globe. Thirty-five years ago there was only one transpersonal association; today associations are spread out across large parts of the world, many schools offering degree programs in transpersonal studies, many more offering related courses or emphases (Figure 4, Table 2). Clearly, the field is vital and growing.

Yet Wilber's critique of transpersonal psychology is not so much a comment on its popularity as an assessment of its relevance. While it is certainly more than a cultural artifact from the psychedelic sixties, has transpersonal psychology become the truly inclusive human psychology that its definition implies? Much of its growth has been within the First World nations of Europe, the United States, and Japan; representation in the Southern Hemisphere, in Third World countries, and among indigenous populations is scant. There is as yet only minor participation from Asia, Africa, or South America; even when such voices exist, they have at times been overlooked (see, for example, an Afro-centric approach to multicultural psychology: Bame, 1997; Mphande & Myers, 1993; Myers, 1985, 1994, 2005; Myers, Kindaichi, & Moore, 2004, Spight, Myers, Cox, & Highlen, 1991). If transpersonal psychology aspires to be a fully integrative human psychology, a psychology that is not only East-West but also North-South, it will need to invite voices from the rest of the world. It is not enough to live in the West and "honor the traditions" of the East, of Africa, and of indigenous peoples. The West cannot do this for the world; it can only do it with the world.

The growing transpersonal community could benefit greatly from transpersonal associations throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America—not so Westerners might come as missionaries and teach the transpersonal, but because the Western community needs the participation of these communities if there is to be a larger conversation. This means doing more than inviting others to add their voices to an agenda that has been written in the West. Transpersonal psychology itself may grow and shift, perhaps in profound ways, as other members of the human commu-

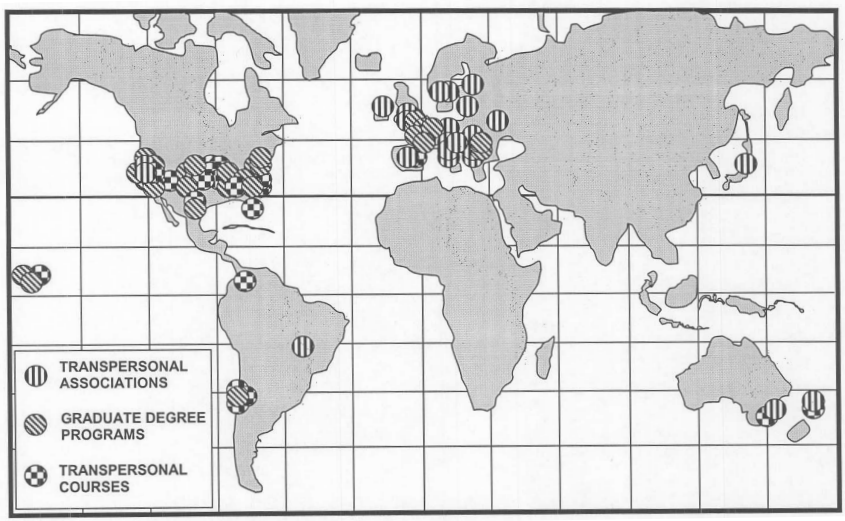


FIGURE 4 A representative sampling of worldwide transpersonal associations, graduate degree programs and courses (see Table 2).

nity bring their gifts and contributions. True to its character, the spread of transpersonalism can be an *integrative* globalization—one that honors diversity as it enhances understanding—as contrasted with the *Westernizing* globalization that is now in process.

STUDY 4—GENDER DIVERSITY IN TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY LITERATURE

A more immediate and apparent step toward embodying the inclusive vision of transpersonal psychology lies closer to home, in the area of gender balance. Evidence from an analysis of JTP suggests that even though the representation of women in publishing is improving, it is still heavily skewed toward men.

Method

For this study, a list of author names was developed for 25 volumes of JTP, and the name of each author coded by gender. Gender was determined in the following ways: 1) familiarity with the author's name and gender, 2) web search for entries referring to the author by personal pronoun, and 3) web search for common gender association of the author's given name. Each article was assigned the value N = 1.

In the case of articles with multiple authors representing both genders, each gender was assigned a proportionate fraction of the value of that article.

Results and Discussion

Of 182 articles examined in volumes 1–20 of JTP (N = 182), 159.9 or 88%, were attributed to male authors, and 22.1 or 12%, were attributed to female authors. Of 33 articles in volumes 30–35 (N = 33), 24.6 or 75%, were attributed to male authors, and 8.4 or 25%, were attributed to female authors. During the first 20 years of publication, females accounted for just 12% of authorship. While this figure has more than doubled in the recent 5-year sample, women writers still represented only 25% of the total. There is no way one can have a fully informed understanding of the feminine that is within and around human culture without the strong participation of women. Nor can Western society represent human psychology without joining forces with the rest of the world. If transpersonal psychology is to stand for human wholeness and transformation, it needs to embody what it teaches: there can be no lasting human transformation without inclusiveness, nor holism without diversity.

FUTURE VISION

Transpersonal psychology speaks to a primary crisis of this era: the task of living peaceably as divergent religious and cultural traditions share space in a crowded world where nations that were once distant from each other face off frequently, often dangerously. To oppose this dynamic transpersonal psychology seeks not merely a better intellectual understanding of the human mind, but emancipation from outmoded psychological models that conceal the seeds of violence. The transpersonal approach is not only about new knowledge, but about new contexts for knowledge and new ways of knowing.

Beliefs about human psychology hold great potential for either liberation or oppression. Scientific theories have at times been conscripted to argue for the intellectual inferiority of various races, genders, and social classes, often to justify gross inequities of power (Belkhir & Duyme, 1998), thus contributing to the precarious polarization of today's world. Transpersonal psychology, by contrast, offers the vision of a truly inclusive psychology that spans the many forms of human diversity—a psychology that opposes specious justifications for the oppression of any person or group. It challenges the egoic view that truth is possessed by the society most effective at disposing of its rivals. Instead, it offers a holistic and transformative vision in which authentic meaning can be shared by all of humanity.

In this vital but arduous task, transpersonal psychology does not have all of the answers. For this reason, it cannot work in isolation. Its lens of inclusiveness effectively welcomes the complementary strengths of humanistic and integral psychologies, as well as other similarly oriented disciplines, to the shared task of reshaping psychology and reconstructing the vision of what it is to be human.[3]

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