

Interview with Stanley Krippner

Investigator of Personal Mythology

Indigenous Spirituality

Intersubjectivity

Home Office-Temple

REVIEWS

Jesus and Sustainability

Exploring Spiritual Paths for Therapists

Eastern Light in Western Eyes

Alchemy of Light



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April / May 2009

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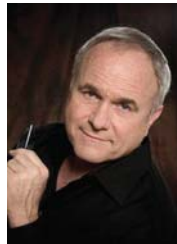
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a.m. to 6 p.m.

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http://www.transformativegroups.com/career_change.htm

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Contact Susan Burns at info@transitiontools.com

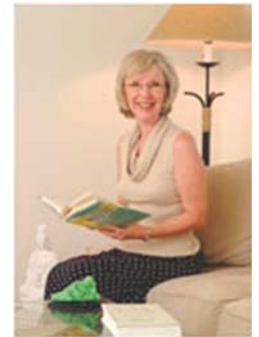


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Proposal Deadline August 31, 2009; www.atp.org

Journal of Humanistic Psychology

Vol. 49, No. 2, Spring 2009

— Kirk J. Schneider



KIRK SCHNEIDER

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- Constructing Client Agency in Psychotherapy Research Thomas Mackrill
- The Significance of Therapist Genuineness from the Client's Perspective
 Jutta Schnellbacher, Mia Leijssen
- The Impact of a Mind-Body Medicine Class on Counselor Training:
 A Personal Journey Judy Maris
- Qigong as a Mindfulness Practice for Counseling Students: A Qualitative Study
 Jennifer A. Chrisman, John Chambers Christopher, Sarah J. Lichtenstein

EDITOR'S COMMENTARY

The question as to what constitutes the self, how this self is shaped by past and present influences, and what conception of self is best suited to the emerging era, is one of the fundamental inquiries of psychology, as well as humanism; and yet few scholars tackle the question head on. In "Toward a Sustainable Myth of Self," Hoffman et al. do just that, and in the process provide us with one of the most provocative reflections on human identity that we have published. This article, which began as a presentation at the 2006 convention of the American Psychological Association, confronted me with an unusual editorial challenge: its advocacy, to a considerable extent, of my own perspective. Given that, I took pains to vet the article

through a sizable number of peer reviewers, and the result, I think, speaks for itself. I don't believe it's hyperbole to suggest that "Toward a Sustainable Myth of Self" is a groundbreaking contribution to the existential and postmodern inquiry into identity.

In our next article, a researcher and veteran of serious challenges to the self, Petra Kottsieper, graces us with her own inside story. Kottsieper is one of a unique cadre of mental health professionals who has viewed psychosis from both sides—the personal and the academic. In this stimulating narrative, Kottsieper explains how experiential knowledge of mental disorder can contribute to our understanding of both disordered clients and emotionally challenged professionals,

and in the process can reform clinical practice.

In a parallel vein, Thomas Mackrill is interested in the nature and structure of client agency. Client agency, which is at the forefront of recent therapy process and outcome research, signifies the active ability of clients to self-heal. Although investigators such as Bohart and Tallman have shown the value of this dimension, Mackrill finds that it has notable gaps. For example, to what extent is the severity and complexity of a disorder, the length of time a disorder persists, or the placebo effect a product of client agency? Mackrill untangles answers to these questions and as a result helps clarify one of the most useful constructs in the therapeutic literature.

Belgian investigators Jutta Schnellbacher and Mia Leijssen explore the therapist side of the therapeutic equation with their study of therapist genuineness. Although there have been many studies of this integral dimension, few have studied it from the client's point of view. Both qualitative and quantitative methodology were employed for this study, and some of the results are surprising. For example, discover how the way genuineness is communicated and the particular state of the client at the moment it is offered are critical to its evaluation. We close this issue with another astute inquiry into contemplative practices and clinical training. Counseling student Judy Maris introduces this section with a profoundly illuminating personal reflection on a class that is the subject of the subsequent article. This article, by Jennifer Chrisman, John Chambers Christopher, and Sarah J. Lichtenstein, concerns Qigong, which is an increasingly popular Taoist practice. In "Qigong as a Mindfulness Practice for Counseling Students," the authors show that even with comparatively brief exposures, counseling students benefit markedly from consistent cultivation of qigong exercises. Discover how these benefits impacted students' physical, emotional, and cognitive dispositions, and what that impact implies both for students and the profession as a whole.

Finally, it seems that we cannot end an issue without noting a profound loss in our tight-knit humanistic community. Among the most recent losses are Dan Bar-On, an Israeli scholar who has published several trailblazing studies on his dialogue sessions between Holocaust victims and perpetrators in *JHP* (e.g., see January 1996, vol. 36, pp. 55-74; October 1991, vol. 31, pp. 77-95; October 1993, vol. 33, pp. 6-14; October 1989, vol. 29, pp. 424-443). Professor Bar-On, who died September 4th, 2008, was an integral part of the dialogical and conflict mediation communities, and will be sorely missed by many.

On October 28th, 2008, humanistic firebrand and student of Wilhelm Reich, Alexander Lowen died peacefully at his home at age 97. The founder of Bioenergetic Analysis, Lowen was perhaps the foremost spokesperson for somatic therapy following the death of his mentor and early member

of Freud's inner circle, Wilhelm Reich. We hope to feature a biography of this humanistic pioneer in an upcoming issue of *JHP*.

Last but not least, James F. T. Bugental, beloved mentor, writer, editor, teacher, and co-founder, with Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Rollo May, of humanistic psychology, as well as the first President of the Association of Humanistic Psychology, died at age 92 on September 18th, 2008. As many of you know, Jim, along with his remarkable wife Elizabeth, was my own primary mentor in the practice of existential-humanistic therapy, and later, with Rollo May, the chief inspiration for my development of existential-integrative therapy. Fittingly, Jim was also the primary mentor of my predecessor as Editor of this Journal (*JHP*), Tom Greening. In fact, Tom was invited to join Jim's group practice in 1958 in Los Angeles, and has been practicing solo at the same address ever since. There is so much that can and should be said about Jim's legacy (e.g., see *JHP*'s tribute to Jim in the Fall 1996 issue; tributes in the February/March 2009 *American Psychologist*; and the October/November 2008 *AHP Perspective* magazine dedicated to him last fall after his death, and more that will have to wait for a special section in a forthcoming issue of the *JHP*).

For now, I would like to leave you with a testament to a very touching convergence of events—Jim's passing and the just concluded Second Annual Conference of the Existential-Humanistic Institute (a nonprofit therapeutic training center formed under the auspices of Pacific Institute of San Francisco). While these two events may seem disparate, they are intimately linked—Jim was the inspiration for the Institute in 1997 and witnessed its incremental maturation over the years. This year's conference marked a watershed moment, not only for the Institute but for the existential-humanistic field as a whole. There were two basic reasons: the strong student attendance—a majority among 60-70 participants, and the robust national representation, which was highlighted by an array of leading existential-humanistic presenters. And to top it all off, Jim's wife Elizabeth contributed the keynote address.

Somewhere Jim is beaming.

— KIRK SCHNEIDER

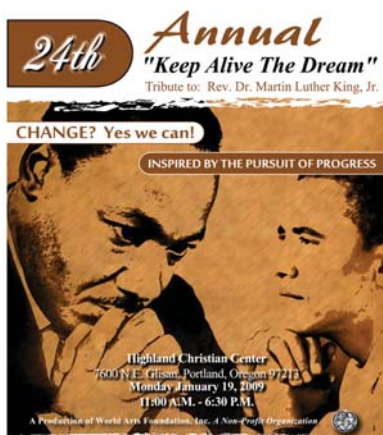


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SHARIF ABDULLAH RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

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in the area of Peace from the World Arts Foundation on January 19 in Portland, Oregon. In December, he received the Vishvamitra (Friend of the Universe) Award from Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka.

WEB RESOURCE ON CONFLICT

Breakthrough Consultancy <http://www.breakthrough.ie> in Ireland has an unusual newsletter, *Healthy Conflict*, with poetry and humor.



If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find in each man's life a sorrow and a suffering enough to disarm all hostility.

— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

11th INTERNATIONAL ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY CONFERENCE

May 28–June 3 in Orlando, Florida, and sponsored by the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology. Speakers include Jean Houston, Lama Surya Das, Larry Dossey, David Feinstein, and Beverly Rubik. **Intention, Transformation, and Change** is the title of the conference.



LETTERS

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First, I would like to thank you for maintaining the resource at http://www.ahpweb.org/aboutahp/hum_edu.html, as it has been of great help to me in my studies. Second, since I noticed that you are interested in suggestions, I know of a really useful resource on psychology, and thought I might pass it on. The website address is <http://www.academicinfo.net/psych.html>, and it's a psychology degree information and resource guide, with links to research tools, writing guides, journals, book lists, etc. I think professionals and students alike might find good use for it. It would be interesting to hear what you think!

— REGARDS, VIN BARKLEY
VINCENT.BARKLEY@DDMAIL.ORG

PERSPECTIVE

... I enjoyed reading the last full-length Newsletter online. I can only

look into this as a window—my profession and place of residence leave me with few options for informed interaction—there is some great information coming from your direction—thanks!

— KUDOS!! JOEL BAECHELE
FOXHILL@AMADORCA.NET

PERSPECTIVE

I'm just receiving this October/November issue of the Newsletter, and want to thank you for your continuing labor of love . . . your many years of service I'm sure is appreciated by many . . . I'm happy to be able to read all the news and reports and I'm glad you've been able to put this online . . . Not a small feat, I'm sure. To show how out of the loop I've become, I had not heard of the death of Jim Bugental. . . . What a wonderful tribute you have presented . . . testimony to his life and his work. It brings back lots of great memories for me. And great to see old familiar names still writing book reviews—Stanley Krippner, Paul Von Ward, David Ryback, and others. This is just a note to say "thank-you". I do hope you know how much you are appreciated.

— LOVE, LIZ CAMPBELL
FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AHP

FROM THE EDITOR

LIVING THE DAY

Green is the topic of two contributions in this issue, both from Deb Oberg: a book review about what Jesus would (and did) say about Sustainability, and in the new column HONORING SERVICE, a lively description of the work of a nonprofit doing intergenerational tree planting.

— KATHLEEN ERICKSON

CHILDREN AND ELDERS FOREST

<http://www.normal.org/Gov/ParksAndRec/Forest/>

In a vast clearing just south of Normal West High School [Illinois], tucked between the monotony of endless rows of corn, rest three acres of young, beautiful trees. Surrounded by unruly, knee-high grass and a few sturdy park benches, the trees create a blissful ambience among the rural terrain. On each tree, (which amount to more than 100), is a small tag displaying the plant's species, as well as the individual or organization that donated the tree. On the other side of the tag is the name of at least one child who is also considered a sponsor, and the year they were born. A growing bur oak just inside the clearing has the name Sandra Bush, as well as the name of her grandchild, Sean Bevins, scrawled on both sides of the tag.

A hickory just a few yards away reads "members of the Bloomington-Normal Junior Women's Club." This is Eagle Grove, and it is not the first of its kind. "The idea was stimulated by visiting my daughter and granddaughter in Germany," said Joe Grabill, founder of the local organization Children and Elders Forest that organized Eagle Grove. "One morning my granddaughter said, 'I want to show you a surprise.' We took our bikes into a little town by Frankfurt, and she said 'Look!' and pointed in the direction of some new trees. Every child in the village had been given the opportunity to plant a tree in this children's forest. I took this idea back here, and someone said, 'let's not just have a children's forest, let's [have] a children and elders forest.'"

In November of 2005, about 500 children and "elders" gathered at Maxwell Park to make Grabill's design a reality. The success of what is now known as Turtle Grove led to the creation of five other groves. Windrow, Eagle, and Winter Hill Groves were planted in the

fall of 2006, and Prairie and Golden Groves will be planted this November.

Grabill said the organization should not be confused as an activity strictly for grandparents and their grandchildren. "Every tree has to be sponsored by one elder and one child, [but] 'elder' is not about age, it is the relationship between generations," Grabill said. "The elder can be a young person."

The next set of trees is scheduled to be planted on the north end of the



Children & Elders Forest

Illinois State University Horticulture Center and will be called Prairie Grove. "I thought this would be a great way to tie in what their organization does [with ours]," Jessica Chambers, director of the Horticulture Center, said. Because there aren't many trees at the Center presently, the students from ISU, Lincoln, and Heartland who visit the 12 acres on Raab Road will also benefit from this project. "It helps on so many different levels," Chambers said. It is a connection between the elder and the child, and all of our students can learn from the trees."

Sandee White also believes the Children and Elders Forest is an undeniably positive program. White, a committee member who has donated trees of her own, joined the organization shortly after losing her husband. "My involvement was an emotional one. It caught my eye as something that would be really fun to get involved in. I wanted to plant a tree in memory of my husband, and it was the first experience of getting involved in something without him," White said. "As a family, we had gone to Funks Grove [in Illinois] every fall, which probably put more interest in me than anything. I thought it would be fantastic to have more groves in Bloomington-Normal," White added.

White has since helped in the development of each grove, and she also takes photos of every planting day for the Children and Elders website. "I have found it to be very satisfying and it's

very helpful for the environment. I feel like we're doing something that generations to come will benefit. I'm hoping that alumni and retired professors would really enjoy having their names on a tree at ISU Horticulture Center."

Although this is the last week to donate a tree for Prairie Grove, those interested have ample time to sign up for next year's planting. There is a \$150 sponsor fee, and the Horticulture Center will be responsible for watering and maintaining the trees. Further information on how to register, ways to volunteer, or how this program benefits both the community and the environment, is at ceforest.org.

"The idea is for people to have a tree that they can go back to and visit forever," Grabill said. "It is a memorial. Some people have said that they would rather have this than a gravestone because it is a living memorial, it gives them a



PLANTING TREES IN TURTLE GROVE IS A COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

connection. People call me and tell me they visit their tree regularly." "One family has a reunion every summer in Maxwell Park [Turtle Grove] where they planted their tree. Indirectly, these trees are accessible to everyone in the community. Anyone can walk among these trees and get a sense of involvement," Grabill said. White agrees in the permanency of planting a tree. "It's not just an activity that is one night, it is going to be there forever," she said. "It provides an activity for the generations to bond by keeping track of this tree. I know it will eventually be a total success."

DEB OBERG is AHP's CEC Coordinator.

Human Dimension of Psychotherapy

July 2008, Toronto

The Living Institute hosted the Human Dimension of Psychotherapy conference at the University of Toronto July 18-20, 2008. Seventy-five people came together, from as far away as Saudi Arabia, to affirm the “gems” of the humanistic traditions within the political “setting” of new legislation for the regulation of psychotherapy in the province of Ontario.

THE CLINICAL GEMS

During the 1970s in Ontario, there was an explosion of humanistic-style psychotherapies, which were all part of the general cultural revolution of that time. Perspectives of holism, individuation, self-actualization, experiential self-development became valued over a more narrow focus on symptom, pathology, and a limited view of “cure”. However, in Ontario, these humanistic therapies only partially made it into the mainstream of the system and have been mostly preserved in freestanding training institutes and in the field of unregulated psychotherapy.

The Human Dimension of Psychotherapy conference explored current attempts to find new cross-disciplinary integration among existential-integrative therapy, the role of spirituality within therapy, the psychodynamics of eros and mystical experience, and how to integrate soma with psyche in this new era. The rich, multifaceted gems of this clinical dialogue situates Ontario within the broad field of international developments in the profession of psychotherapy.

THE POLITICAL SETTING

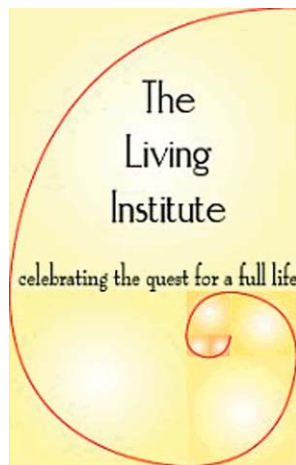
In 2007, The Psychotherapy Act was passed in Ontario, regulating psychotherapy for the first time in the province. A Transitional Council was appointed by the Minister of Health in January 2009 to facilitate the translation of the legislation into actual regulation. This initiates an ongoing dialogue with the government to sort out what the picture for the psychotherapy profession in Ontario will look like for many years to come. A clause in the Psychotherapy Act will allow regulators to prescribe “therapies involving the practice of psychotherapy” and proscribe the use of any therapies that do not make this list. Because of new federal/provincial trade agreements to enhance labour mobility, the Ontario legislation will set the mold for psychotherapy regulation in all other provinces.

The Alliance of Psychotherapy Training Institutions (APTI) is an organization concerned with representing the voice of freestanding psychotherapy training institutions in Ontario. This is vital for the future of the profession, since these institutions have been the main vehicle for training in many specific disciplines, such as gestalt, psychodrama,

relational psychoanalysis, and bioenergetics, as well as Jungian, transpersonal, psychodynamic, existential, and somatic psychotherapies that are not represented in university curricula in Ontario. The Living Institute offered a place at the conference for APTI's founder, Linda Page, Ph.D., to speak about Ontario psychotherapy within the international context.

CONFERENCE THEMES

Caroline Mardon, Director of the Living Institute, spoke of The Culture of Psychotherapy, Psychotherapy for our Culture, situating psychotherapy within a cultural context, which has been a part of the humanistic, psychodynamic, existential, transpersonal, and somatic traditions since their inception. Linda Page, President of the Adler School of Professional Studies, Toronto, gave the keynote address, **How Psychotherapy Develops: Ontario in an International Context**, in which she highlighted how the experience of international associations and practitioners from other countries suggests possible scenarios for the development of psychotherapy in Ontario, drawing particular attention to the need for publishing research. Kirk Schneider, editor of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* and widely active in the field, spoke of **Existential-Integrative Therapy: An Emerging Cross-Disciplinary Paradigm**, in which he noted that mainstream therapeutic approaches are recognizing the value of key existential themes—holism, presence, and the significance of the personal, noting the potential for EI therapy not only to revitalize the profession, but also the culture at large. Rae Johnson, Chair of the Somatic Psychology Department, Santa Barbara Graduate Institute, spoke of **The Embodied Therapist: Somatic Psychology and the Therapeutic Relationship**, highlighting the increasing focus of research into the person of the therapist as an agent of change in the psychotherapeutic process, including understanding the body of the therapist as an extraordinary instrument in perceiving, processing, and transmitting psychological and relational data. David Lukoff, co-president of the Association for Transpersonal



CONFERENCE REVIEW

Psychology and widely active in the mental health field, spoke of **Transpersonal Psychotherapy and the Integration of Spirituality**, showing how transpersonal psychotherapy draws upon both psychology and spiritual traditions to create a bold new vision of a psychologically informed spirituality and a spiritually based psychology. Dan Merkur, psychoanalyst, Ph.D. Comparative Religion, presented **From Eros to Mystical Experience: The Scope of Psychic Integration in Psychoanalysis**, in which he suggests that the personality can achieve an integrity that unites sexuality and self-interest with self-knowledge, conscience, and spirituality, further suggesting that the meditative goal of making unconscious eros self-conscious is both mystical and psychoanalytic.

CULTURAL INNOVATOR AWARD

The Living Institute Cultural Innovator Award for 2008 was presented at the conference to Honorable George Smitherman, former Ontario Minister of Health. This award acknowledges the far-reaching impact of his officially recognizing and integrating new paradigms of health and healing for the citizens of Ontario by passing the Traditional Chinese Medicine Act in 2006, and the Homeopathy Act, Naturopathy Act, and Psychotherapy Act, in 2007. Sophia Ikura-McMillan, Senior Policy Adviser to the Minister, accepted the award on his behalf. She reassuringly spoke of the importance of patient access to diversity in the field, highlighting the focus of the new Minister of Health, Honorable David Caplan, on innovation.

CANADIAN HUMANISTIC AND TRANSPERSONAL ASSOCIATION (CHTA)

The formation of the Canadian Humanistic and Transpersonal Association was announced, inviting all individuals and organizations interested in promoting the integration of spirituality, humanistic values, holistic science, energy medicine, and traditional practices into 21st century personal healing and

cultural transformation. Crystal Hawk (formerly Connie Croll-Young) spoke of the years 1977-1988, when there was an active AHP chapter in Canada with 250 members. The CHTA will be a voice for holistic and integrative perspectives in the political forum, as the recent Ontario legislation allows a window of opportunity to ensure that these values are part of the future of the

new regulated field of psychotherapy. We invite dialogue with our international colleagues as we work to ensure diversity. The first public meeting of CHTA was held at the Living Institute in February 2008. For more information, contact info@livinginstitute.org or 416-515-0404 or visit <http://www.livinginstitute.org>. CHTA will be seeking affiliation with AHP, ATP, and ITA.

Conference Review International Poets Festival Granada

— David Lavra

In this grand experiment we call life, I wonder why I do not usually experience here at the annual International Poets Festival in Granada what I felt at AHP Conferences and the Gathering. What these events, AHP's, and the Poets' Festival have in common includes nurturing our spirit, building community, and opening our hearts. At the Poets' Festival, I hear people expressing passion and hope, exuding life. "La poesía es la esperanza." I have observed poets connecting with their intimate demeanors during these past four years. What I did not experience is the intense connection person to person. I do not feel personally nurtured—not in the way I felt during and after the AHP Gatherings in Seattle.

What I realized at the 2008 festival is that the difference is me. The AHP events are but a laboratory for what is possible in life. The Poets' Festival is an opportunity for me to realize the connection, the spirit, the heart that is expressed by people who come from all over the world in this soup of cultures and languages. And I am in the driver's seat: I can make the difference. I just needed the specific motivation and use of tools I already had, including opening my heart.

At this year's Festival, after two hours of poets back to back, we were treated to high-energy dance: the colors alone were incredible, as were the variety of costumes from folklore to full-dress colonial Spanish to native styles to Carib styles. Dance and music varied from marimba to colonial to African. I was engulfed in the energy of the Nicas (local Nicaraguans) who flooded the dance floor, doing many dances they had learned as children. And I felt as one

with them—and I knew a few of these folks personally. This was the second evening of the ten day event. The first day featured women, and the third day featured the Carib culture. On the third day I presented a poem at the open mic, which was well-received, especially by high school students. I also connected with two poets from northern Nicaragua and a man from Spain. These connections were not "deep"—or perhaps they were, as spoken language is only part of the message.

DAVID LAVRA is a retired social worker who has escaped US institutions to live in America Central. tosh42@yahoo.com



INTERVIEW WITH STANLEY KRIPPNER: *Investigator of Personal Mythology*

— Kathleen E. Erickson

Stan, a little background, who are you and where are you from?

STAN: I am from Wisconsin originally, of Norwegian, Irish, and German descent, and when I had my DNA tested, I found out I'm 2% Asian. I've been a member of AHP for 47 years.

You were interviewed for the *AHP Perspective* in 1982 and talked about personal mythology. In therapy, is working with an individual's personal mythology still valid as much as in 1982?

STAN: I am not a therapist myself but would conjecture that a client's personal mythology is of importance for psychiatric social workers, pastoral and other counselors, and all kinds of psychological therapists. The client's "life story" needs to be understood and revised so that the client can live a happier, more joyous, and more functional life. It is disappointing for me to visit with friends who are in therapy and to hear that spirituality, health, sex, and other mythological topics are ignored. *Worldview* is a word that can be used instead of *mythology*, which can have an undertone of superstition in common parlance.

What are you doing mostly these days? Traveling, writing, teaching, research, workshops?

STAN: I am teaching at Saybrook Graduate School, and that is my only source of steady income. I'm 76 and am still working. I am not too happy about working so hard, but don't complain because at least I am healthy. I do very few workshops [see flier on page 27]. I've written or edited or co-written or co-edited about 2 dozen books, each having sold a few thousand copies. My writing style is quite academic as are the topics I write about. I find it hard to write in a so-called "popular" style because that manner of writing generally ignores the complexities of life. In addition, I simply do not have the writing skills to do this type of writing; many of my friends have mastered this skill and have written best-sellers. Currently, I have half a dozen

books in progress and am completing another half a dozen research projects. And that's it. I am not starting anything new; too many of my friends have died before they finished what could have been their masterpiece.

What is your current research about?

STAN: One of my research studies concerns gender differences in 1,000 dream reports from seven different countries. During my workshops in these countries, I obtained about 500 female dreams and 500 male dreams per country. Data from four of the countries have been published: the USA, the UK, Argentina, and Brazil. The other countries are Japan, Ukraine, and Russia. So far the results show that there are a few gender differences that transcend culture, but that there are many cultural differences as well. In general, male dreams contain more acts of aggression, while female dreams tend to include more helpful actions. Both male and female dreams contain more male figures than female figures. Female dreams around the world contain more children. Brazilian women reported more sexual dreams than women from other countries, but also reported more spiritual dreams. Remember that these are dream reports; perhaps people from other countries were simply less open about dream content than Brazilians. However, the results indicate that dreaming life mirrors waking life.

Another research project involves over 100 female and male mediums in Brazil who took tests that measured their capacities for dissociation and absorption, as well as their sexual preferences. These mediums are members of African-Brazilian religious groups, and practice a living mythology, one that continues to evolve and change, even in the 21st century.

I'd like to hear you tell us more about personal mythology in therapy.

STAN: Most clients go into therapy to change their behavior, their attitudes, and their personal myths. But as my brilliant co-author David Feinstein reminds us, "old myths die hard." One could say that therapy

attempts to engage the client in several dialectics; one between conflicting personal myths, and another between their personal mythologies and their cultural, religious, or ethnic mythologies. Clients soon discover that many of their cherished myths or worldviews are dysfunctional, ineffectual, life-denying, or downright harmful. For example, working with *A Course in Miracles* helped me to exchange my personal myths about resentment for those emphasizing forgiveness.

Is the American Dream a cultural myth? This myth holds that life gets better and better from year to year, and from generation to generation.

STAN: This myth is becoming dysfunctional; millions of Americans will have a less opulent lifestyle than that of their parents. This might not be a misfortune if those same individuals attempt to cultivate inner strengths and lifestyles that emphasize sustainability for themselves and for their planet.

Are there other American cultural myths that are serving no useful purpose, but that Americans have incorporated into their personal mythologies?

STAN: For example, there is the myth that sex is dirty and is a taboo topic. Decades after the Kinsey Report

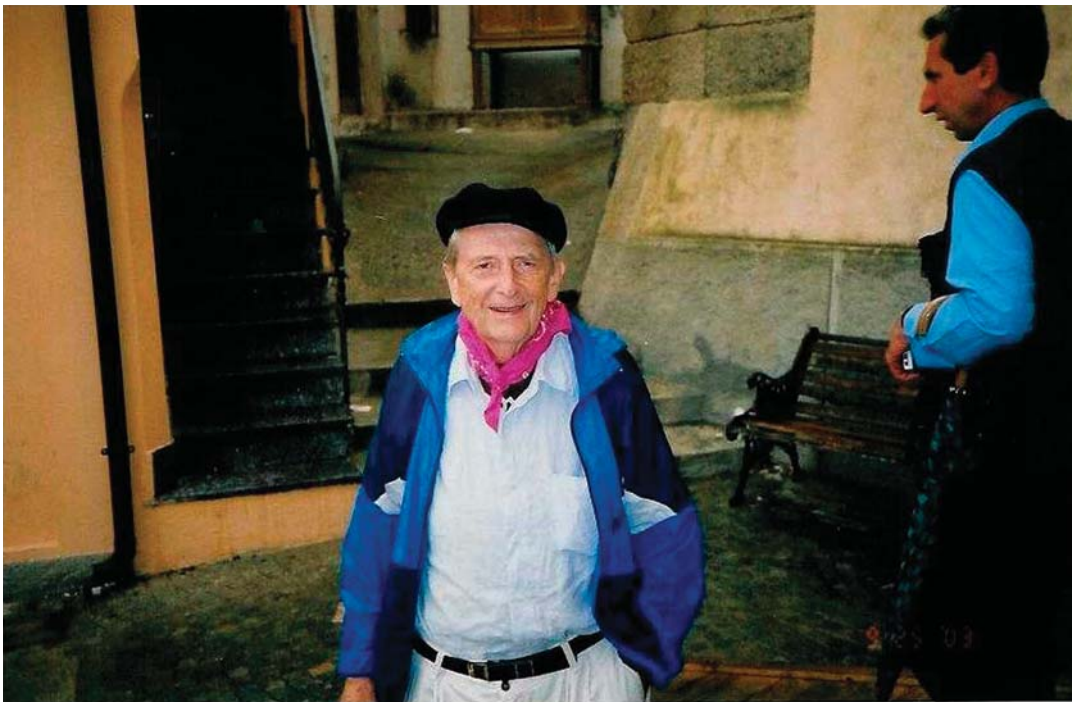
revealed the astonishing variety of American sexual behaviors, it became the official policy of the U.S. government to fund “abstinence-only” sex education programs in the public schools. I have nothing against abstinence, especially when immature people are involved, but many of the graduates of these abstinence-only programs are getting pregnant or are catching sexually transmitted diseases because they never learned how to protect themselves or their partners.

What are some positive American myths?

STAN: Absolutely. Across the political spectrum, great respect is given to the founders of the United States. Such founders of the Republic as Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and John Adams were exceptionally gifted individuals who gave their fellow Americans a grand political and spiritual legacy. My particular favorite is Benjamin Franklin, a patriot, writer, inventor, intellectual, publisher, and diplomat, as well as an early opponent of slavery.

An American Renaissance man. What about organizational or business mythologies?

STAN: An example would be organizations’ mission statements. Whether they know it or not, these statements present a worldview that represents their culture. Mitsubishi, for example, has a beautiful statement of purpose, one not always implemented but one



STAN IN RIACE, ITALY

that stays on the books. But there are many dysfunctional, life-denying organizational mythologies both in business and in religion. For example, many religious mythologies claim to be “divinely inspired,” and members of those who affirm competing myths are excommunicated, at best, and exterminated, at worst. The most recent polls of young people in the United States reveal an increasing number who consider themselves “spiritual” but not “religious”; in other words, they are not members of an organized religious group but, nevertheless, formulate a personal mythology that emphasizes love, compassion, community service, creativity, and an affinity with Nature.

Is there a cultural mythology that helps us make the passage from youth through maturity to old age?

STAN: The United States is paradoxical in that regard; advertisers cater to young people, but their elders often constrain them and mistrust them. At the same time, there is a lack of appreciation for the accumulated wisdom of the elders, especially by young people. In many other mythologies, however, elders are given great honor. For example, in Japan there is the tradition of honoring people who have become “national treasures,” gifted senior citizens who are respected and venerated.

A contribution from your coauthor David Feinstein in the 1982 interview warned about “flesh being disconnected from spirit”. Can spirit disconnected from flesh lead to a harmful or misguided myth?

STAN: Focusing on flesh disconnected from spirit is not life-affirming, nor is spirit disconnected from flesh.

We can understand one’s personal mythology as a product of childhood experiences. But do we want to amend or update or evaporate some of our personal mythology to be able to live today? Myths map the life path, giving a person identity and meaning—for their personal lifestyle, history, and future. In rapid social change, aren’t some of the multiple selves left behind, even if only temporarily? Can one’s personal mythology start to feel alien?

STAN: Just to clarify terminology, “multiple selves” is not the same as “multiple personality” more properly termed “dissociative identity disorder”. Some of the “multiple selves” may have trouble catching up with the other “selves”. For instance, a therapist who evolves in his/her understanding about the psyche and what it is to be human may have the same unchanged, static reli-

gious beliefs from childhood. At some point a conflict may become evident between his/her understanding of clients and what he/she had been taught decades earlier. A therapist may find it difficult to maintain a religious mythology that condemns gays and lesbians, or that opposes birth control and family planning, or that affirms “Intelligent Design” over Darwinian evolutionary theory. Another example would be a therapist who was reared an atheist and who encounters a client who reports visions of saints and angels, but seems to be functioning well in everyday life. What often takes place is a loss of integration of the “multiple selves”, one’s identity as a therapist, as a family member, and as a member of a religious group.

This can occur in areas other than religion. For example, a parent who considers himself/herself “progressive” may suddenly discover that his/her daughter is bringing her boyfriend home from college and plans to sleep with him. Automatically, they declare, “not under my roof you don’t”, echoing a family myth taught in childhood. Other parents give lip service to supporting their children’s choices, but go ballistic when a daughter says she is a lesbian or when a son announces that he has voted Republican.

Once again, old myths die hard. But, with work, they can be revised or revisioned, as long as both their emotional and intellectual aspects are addressed. Killing off a dysfunctional myth is more easily said than done; that old myth may contain something of value that needs to be retained. And there is always the danger of isolating oneself from one’s shadow; an undigested shadow might lurk in the darkness for years before rising up and asserting its power.

Personal mythology is a “dynamic system knitting together current experiences with past experiences and beliefs and teachings together with the ‘mythic core’” (as stated in the 1982 issue). In 2009 are we still “distorting the current incoming information” or “changing the myth” by assimilation (changing the truth of today to fit previous beliefs) or accommodation (changing the basic beliefs to fit the new experience)? Are assimilation and accommodation still valid and necessary (and working)?

STAN: Our lifestyles keep changing, and so our personal mythology must also change. Our “story” needs to be functional and life-affirming if it is to serve us well.

Jean Houston stated in the 1982 issue you edited that “Armor is congealed myth conflict”.

STAN: As usual, Jean articulates deep wisdom better than anyone around. That is a poetic description of the mythic conflicts that David Feinstein and I have

written about for several decades. And that is why we asked Jean to write the introduction to our revision of our book **Personal Mythology**. You could say much of therapy is about the conflict between cultural mythology and individual mythology, or about the conflict between different personal myths. Resolving this conflict helps individuals to lead more enjoyable lives. **I define a myth as a statement or story about important, existential human concerns—stories that have behavioral consequences.** And that definition underscores the role that myth plays in psychodynamic therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, humanistic-existential therapy, and just about every other systematic way that practitioners have developed to help those in distress.

How did you first become interested in personal mythology?

STAN: As a student, I read widely in cultural mythology, especially the work of Joseph Campbell. In the early 1960s I discovered the work of Albert Ellis. I was interested in how general semantics affects human behavior, and found out that Al was also a student of general semantics, which was one of the sources of REBT (rational-emotive behavior therapy). I was teaching at Kent State University when I read Al's books and went to New York City to attend one of his workshops. We corresponded and eventually became good friends, especially after I moved to New York City to conduct dream research at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn. Al and I attended a conference in Europe sponsored by the Association for Humanistic Psychology, and, in 2000, conducted a joint training program for psychotherapists in Juarez, Mexico. I miss his brilliance, his insight, and his sense of humor; but now I have become a close friend of his widow, Debbie, who is also an outstanding psychotherapist.

Do you have a favorite definition of myth?

STAN: My own definition, stated earlier [top of column in red], is psychological in nature. But I like Jean Houston's poetic definition: **A myth is something that never was but always is.**

Could you talk about your own personal mythology?

STAN: As it has evolved over the years, I've given priority to at least three mythic statements: 1) It's important for me to be close to Nature. It nurtures me and I try to nurture it in return; 2) It's important to love, to laugh, and to live; 3) And in the words of Aldous Huxley, "We all need to be more kind to each other."

Over the years, you have written about postmodernism and humanistic psychology. Postmodernism seems to reduce, deconstruct, and bypass universal meaning to emphasize current circumstances and relativity, doesn't it?

STAN: I became interested in postmodern thought because of its relationship to general semantics, which I studied at the University of Wisconsin where I did my undergraduate work. General semantics holds that "the word is not the territory"; postmodern thought deconstructs many venerable myths, pointing out that they are products of time and place. In our own lives, what was functional and life-affirming at one stage of our life might become dysfunctional and life-denying at another stage of our life. Postmodern thought also affirms many "ways of knowing." At Saybrook Graduate School, we teach our students various research methods. There are many "scientific methods," not only the "experimental method" that has been reified in mainstream graduate schools of psychology. Even "aesthetic inquiry" can be a "way of knowing." My old friend Rollo May was fond of pointing out that as much could be learned from art and mythology as from mainstream psychology and psychiatry.

Positive Psychology is very much in the news, and I welcome its contributions to human welfare and human understanding. Its founders don't give proper credit to humanistic psychology, but people are always reinventing the wheel. For all of its contributions, positive psychology has a rather narrow and constricted collection of research methods, but humanistic psychology's collection of ways to study the world is quite expansive, adapting the method to the research question.

Any final thoughts?

STAN: If you are a member of AHP, renew your membership. If you are not a member, sign up. The Association for Humanistic Psychology is now more relevant than ever.



ALBERT HOFFMAN AND STANLEY KRIPPNER IN BASEL, SWITZERLAND, FOR ALBERT'S 100TH BIRTHDAY.

Allen

Preserving Indigenous Spirituality

— David Lukoff

In August of 2008, I taught a seven-day course on transpersonal psychology in Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet bloc republic with a population of 5 million, is landlocked and mountainous. It is bordered by Kazakhstan to the north, Uzbekistan to the west, Tajikistan to the southwest, and China to the east. It was on the original Silk Road and has a multicultural blend of Siberian nomadic tribes,

course on transpersonal psychology. Why invite someone from halfway round the world to teach transpersonal psychology? The Aigine Research Center provided the following rationale to me after convening a working group to explore academic and scientific approaches to preserving their indigenous spirituality:

1) In the Kyrgyz traditional society, there is a strong folk belief that certain people are chosen for

psychology could provide a scientific paradigm to help explain many cases which the Aigine Research Center has been observing in Talas and Issyk-Kol. Especially Stanislav Grof's theory of consciousness may effectively explain phenomena in Kyrgyz culture, such as reciting the Manas epic while in an altered state of consciousness (ASC), *zhaichylyk* (a person's ability to change the weather), and other practices of healers.

2) Traditional Kyrgyz spiritual practices have a great influence in public health: 88% of the patients at the Republic Centre of Mental Health had previously visited traditional healers. Many healthcare specialists are interested in studying transpersonal practices in order to adapt orthodox medical paradigms to the Kyrgyz cultural beliefs and to the Kyrgyz practices.

In *Integrating Spirituality into Multicultural Counseling* (Fukuyama M and Sevig T, 1999, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications), Mary Fukuyama observed that "There is no transpersonal psychology without the multicultural and the spiritual perspectives." The definition of consciousness in Western psychology is restricted to an artificial, cultural-bound concept that dramatically limits the study of the human psyche. Recognizing that perspective, Dr. Fukuyama noted: "Transpersonal psychology opened the door to studying a broader range of human experiences."

The vision of transpersonal psychology includes being a societal force directed at restoring humanity and nature through systematic engagement with spiritual aspects of consciousness in global contexts. This seminar was an opportunity



WORKSHOP GROUP IN KYRGYZSTAN

Chinese and Muslim influences, with the addition of Russians who were systematically relocated to the region following Kyrgyzstan's incorporation into the Soviet Union.

The Aigine Research Center in Bishkek invited me to present a

a spiritual mission like healing, reciting epics, guarding sacred sites, mediating between this world and other worlds. Their health is directly affected by their acceptance or rejection of this spiritual mission. Learning transpersonal

for me to personally explore how well transpersonal psychology actually interfaces with the indigenous form of spirituality in Kyrgyzstan.

The Aigine Cultural Research Center (www.aigine.kg) was founded by Dr. Aitpaeva Gulnara in 2004 with a stated mission to “promote tolerance and mutual understanding among the ethnicities, cultures, religious groups, and generations of Kyrgyzstan.” Prior to my visit, the Aigine Research Center in Kyrgyzstan had convened a roundtable on transpersonal psychology including healthcare professionals, philosophers, anthropologists, historians, and traditional healers. The final report stated: “One of the most important results of the roundtable was a realization that the main concepts of transpersonal psychology can be successfully applied in development of various psychotherapeutic methods.”

A prior publication of the Aigine Research Center was entitled **Transpersonal Psychology in Central Asia: Searching between Spirituality and Science**. “The researchers discovered that the theories and clinical approaches of transpersonal psychology allowed them to present their cultural heritage scientifically, and explain the connections between their national cultural heritage, epic poetry, and cases of healing.”

The Aigine Center invited me to present on three topics: **Basics of Transpersonal Psychology, Culture and Consciousness: Bridging the Traditional and Scientific, and Spirituality and Mental Health**.

The teaching was a collaboration with several of the scholars from the Aigine Center who study Kyrgyz sacred sites, along with local healers, ritual specialists, and clairvoyants. Although I did cover a wide range of topics in transpersonal psychology including the history of the field, Grof’s theories of consciousness, transpersonal

psychotherapy, spiritual emergencies, eco-psychology, and shamanism, the focus was on their relevance to indigenous spirituality.

Because I was presenting basic theory which required adaptation and articulation into the Kyrgyz cultural context, the program became a dialogue with the other presenters and participants. During one of the sessions, a participant demonstrated his use of a whip to chase away evil spirits by dislodging a couple of them from my own personal space (see photo).

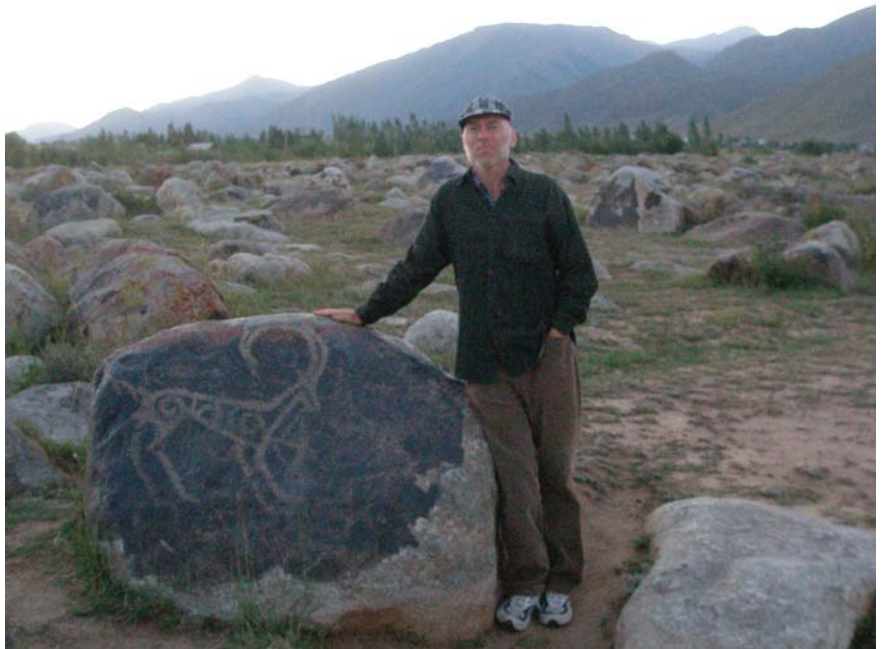
Many of the cultural practitioners described how they were called into their role as healers through a crisis that could be considered a spiritual emergency.

I gave a very media rich set of presentations with segments from Kevin Page’s DVD **Science of the Soul** (a history of transpersonal psychology), a video on spiritism by Emma Bragdon, and one on shamanism and spiritism, and a Powerpoint presentation with photos of rituals, sacred sites, and altars. I



DR. AITPAEVA INTRODUCING DAVID LUKOFF AT THE AIGINE CENTER

also included experiential exercises such as sharing religious/spiritual histories, meditation, drawing one’s spiritual journey, and practicing aikido exercises. It was a rich experience for me to be sharing and genuinely collaborating to explore the intersection of transpersonal psychology with indigenous spirituality and practices. The exchange of knowledge exchange was



David and and 3,000-year-old goat

inspirational in both directions. I can attest to the power of integrating more indigenous practitioners and scholars into collaborations around healthcare, education, and research. After having had lunch or dinner with each of the participants

Zemfira Imogamova

KYRGYZSTAN

individually, I can truly say that I learned as much as I taught.

I hardly consider myself an expert after only nine days in Kyrgyzstan, but I see it as a very multicultural society with many types of interacting mythologies. The Kyrgyz people have shamanic roots in their tribal cultures. There is also the Islamic overlay from Turkish invasions more than 1,000 years ago, as well as the influences from the Silk Road connections between China, the Middle East, and Europe. Kyrgyzstan can be considered an archetype of multiculturalism. In spite of my short-lived exposure to their culture, I was impressed by how open the Kyrgyz people are to this variety of traditions. Of course, that is the mission of the Aigine Research Center: "to document and preserve this unique form of spirituality."

After the week-long seminar, I was taken on a two-day tour of sacred sites.

I stayed with a four-generational family and observed their sustainable lifestyle. In the traditional way, they grow most of their own food; yet, in contrast, they are able to function in today's world, including communicating with their own cell phones.

The World Wide Learning Exchange (WWLE) at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, headed by Dr. Olga Louchakova, cosponsored this program with the Aigine Research Center. Both the WWLE and the ARC create programs that



KYRGYZ HEALER USING A WHIP TO DISLUDGE EVIL SPIRITS

build interdisciplinary bridges between indigenous peoples and scientists to enhance the conservation of bio-cultural diversity and the well-being of the planet.

Photos from this trip are at <http://gallery.me.com/lukoff#100008>

DAVID LUKOFF is Co-President of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology and on the faculty at the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology.

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A Holistic View of Spiritual Unfolding

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Buddha opened the doors for self-awareness and total responsibility when he said: "Believe nothing, no matter where you read it or who has said it, not even if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense".

Ms. Dantes shares her experience of ©Spiritupsychophysicalness (her neologism) in direct teaching dialogues with individuals, opening doors for direct experiences of their true nature. Her approach follows the Buddha's view of the necessity to examine what we have learned and believe, to directly experience our own Spiritual Unfolding. Her approach is educational in a Socratic style of self-inquiry without judging or evaluating.



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"... a skillfully focused wisdom-teacher on the highest level."

- Akasa Levi, Psychotherapist & Former Buddhist Monk

"Ms. Dantes view of life's unfolding of our true nature is graceful, compassionate and effective. Her work has helped me tremendously in my practice."

- Robert Tompkins, Ph.D., MFT

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The Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity: The Difficulty of Applying Quantitative Research to Experience

— Brad Hunter

The difficulty is to realize the groundlessness of our believing.

- Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1949, *On Certainty* (proposition 166) <http://budni.by.ru/oncertainty.html>

Let us begin our search for *knowing* with something that appears to be less problematic than say consciousness or emotional growth and healing. Let's start with that chair in the middle of the floor. How do I *know* that the chair is even a chair? What exactly is 'a chair'? C-H-A-I-R is a construct of language and collective agreement. In English, we all collude to call this entity in the middle of the floor by the sound 'chair', but this designation is merely a symbol for the thing-in-itself. The word is already an abstraction of the Real, a *distancing* from the direct experience of chair-ness. As useful as words, ideas, thoughts and concepts are for pointing to and delineating certain realities, we tend to make the unfortunate mistake of forgetting that these abstractions are a full universe removed from unmediated direct experience. We are so habitually conditioned to making this mistake that we risk living our very lives in the ghostly ivory tower of thought. Which brings us to the problem of quantitative scientific research applied to therapeutic modalities.

The whole universe of science is built upon the world as directly experienced, and if we want to subject science itself to a rigorous scrutiny, and arrive at a precise assessment of its meaning and scope, we must begin by reawakening the basic experience of the world, of which science is the second order expression.

~ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1962, *Phenomenology of Perception*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul

So this fundamental problem of science, this 'reawakening the basic experience of the world'—at least insofar as applying scientific study to intersubjective experience—is an extension of the 'hard problem' of consciousness studies itself. As David J. Chalmers states (1995, "Facing up to the problem of consciousness," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 2(3): 200):

Consciousness poses the most baffling problems in the science of the mind. There is nothing that we know more intimately than conscious experience, but there is nothing that is harder to explain.

Every time I write or say the word *consciousness*, I am tempted to add the suffix *whatever-that-is*, because, although we have consciousness (so-to-speak), and use consciousness (so-to-speak) constantly, I propose that consciousness itself, *whatever-that-is*, remains an ineffable mystery. Even to make the statement "I have consciousness" is existentially problematic: Is there an "I" separate from this "consciousness"? Is it possible to *be* and *not* have consciousness? If consciousness is really contained within this bag of skin and blood and bone—which materialists would propose—then

how do I *know* that the chair is *there* in the middle of the room?

Compared to my direct experience of chair—in the nanosecond



BRAD HUNTER

before the intellect has manifest the conceptual construct of the word 'chair'—all the studies on perception taken together are like a dim candle flame held up against the blazing sun. To paraphrase Wittgenstein, there is nothing in the direct experience of our own field of vision that allows us to conclude that it is seen by an 'eye'. **Our agreed-to conclusion that things are seen by eyes**, is based upon our research, which in itself is rooted in assumptions about the nature of reality, and is a distant abstraction from the pure experiential act of *seeing*.

Every explanation is after all an hypothesis.

~ Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1993, *Philosophical Occasions 1912-1951*, Cambridge, UK, Hackett

Emotional growth and healing, therapeutic shifts in consciousness, take place in the intrapsychic realms of an individual, sometimes facilitated by the intersubjective relationship between client and counselor-therapist. The relationship between client and therapist is one of "I-Thou", as Martin Buber meant by the conjoining of these words (Kenneth Paul Kramer, 2003, *Martin Buber's I and Thou: Practicing Living Dialogue*, New Jersey: Paulist Press). This is a space of relationship that allows for the transcendent, and draws upon depths of

reality beyond "I-it", deeper than the assumed duality of *self* 'over against' *other*.

By its very nature, the therapeutic space is fluid and ungraspable. It can be approached and sacredly 'held' most appropriately through a kind of *gnosis*—an intuitive, experiential, direct contact—and most clumsily, and approximate at best, through purely *rational knowing*. Even the word *space* is an awkward but necessary term for that immaterial and formless place of interaction between two persons engaged in the therapeutic I-Thou relationship. Even the most penetrating insight of an observer cannot enter the subjective felt-sense experience of either the therapist or the client. (Despite the protests of materialists, I propose that consciousness has neither circumference nor specific location.)

At the very least, scientific research that attempts to delve into human healing must take into ac-

count the implications of quantum studies: Even the mere observation of an entity or a process, has an impact on that entity and process.

Is there ever a time when you are conscious and yet not *self-conscious*? Leaving aside for a moment the spiritual question of 'who is conscious of what?' (a spiritual inquiry of the highest order), we must admit that even in our deepest absorption in some task or activity, there is a background awareness of subjectivity *experiencing*. So even a simple formulation of subject facing object is not realistically represented by the following:

Subject — Object

Even the simplest act of perception would be more properly represented as

(S)Subject — Object

where (S) stands for self-awareness. And a more deeply mystical perception of 'other' might be represented as a Gnostic S (S/O) where the subject has entered a state of complete involvement and identification with the object. The Sufi saints behold the Face of the Beloved in the most common objects. Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) said that he could see God in the sunlight in a pewter bowl. Be that as it may, even if we are skeptical about the reality of mystical experience, it would be too simplistic and too much a distortion of immediate experience, to attempt to represent intersubjective relationship simply as

Subject — Subject

A more accurate representation that takes into account self-aware subjectivity would be

(S)Subject — (S)Subject

That is: self-aware person facing self-aware person. And when the *between-ness* of the therapeutic relationship is enlivened with empathy,

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compassion, trust, and mutual positive regard, the intersubjectivity begins to approach something more akin to this

(S-Subject ~ S-Subject)

() stands for the inexhaustible human potential for spiritual and emotional evolution, and these parentheses 'hold' and inform every healing interaction, where cutting edges of *intention* and *attention* meet. '~' represents the ineffable heart-to-heart connection which facilitates any catharsis or positive therapeutic shift in consciousness.

When we add O into this gestalt as an 'objective' observer, (if the term 'objective' can ever be reliably applied to a person-subject), the gestalt itself is changed, and we must sincerely ask what can and cannot be known by this objective observer. Yes, certain things can be measured and quantified, but all of these measurables are, at best, conceptual abstractions *out of and distant from* the intersubjectivity itself, or after-the-fact/event calculations and conclusions based on fragments of information consistent with the criteria of the stated purpose of the research.

Again, if we want to *know* the chair-ness of that thing in the middle of the room, how are we to do that? It would be helpful for my lower back to know that the chair weighs more than I alone should attempt to lift. I like the fact that the legs are made of a hardwood so that the dog's teeth marks hardly show. It is inter-

esting that when I disassembled the chair to study it closer, it immediately ceased to be the very thing I wanted to know! I must admit that I *know* this chair best in two ways: 1) when I behold it directly without even the word 'chair' arising in my mind and 2) when I ease my body into it. Both of these modes of knowing yield an experiential moment of 'aaaahhhhhh.'

Whereof one cannot speak,
thereof one must be silent.

~ Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1922,
Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus
6.522-7, New York, Harcourt Brace,
<http://www.kfs.org/~jonathan/witt/mapen.html>

This person-(me)-whoever-that-is, is not saying that research and study are not vitally important for the positive unfolding of human life. But we should admit that some research reveals much more about *itself* than it does about the very subject that it purports to speak to. Other research can be downright damaging, destructive, and dangerous if taken out of context, without reflecting on the totality or complexity of the subject, or without questioning the assumptions and limitations of the data. Words and ideas, research and concepts, are all helpful and necessary in our human interaction, but we must be careful

not to mistake them for the reality that they represent—no matter how accurate and precise our formulations.

The roadmap represents, *but is not*, the highway. Eating the menu provides little nourishment. Yet both the roadmap and the menu have important roles to play in daily living.

In the end, our deep human hunger for knowledge is ultimately rooted in our spiritual need to know Who we are, and what is our place in the cosmos.

In his Genjokoan, Zen Master Dogen (Kazuaki Tanahashi, editor, 1995, *Moon in a Dewdrop: The Writings of Zen Master Dogen*, New York, North Point, p. 69) offers us the following:

- To know the Self
- Is to study the Self.
- To study the Self
- Is to forget the Self.
- To forget the Self
- Is to be enlightened by the ten thousand things.
- To be enlightened by the ten thousand things is traceless enlightenment,
- And this traceless enlightenment continues endlessly.

May there be timeless moments when we face each other directly, heart-to-heart, and so forgetful and traceless that even I and Thou momentarily drop away.

BRAD HUNTER left the ivory tower of existential philosophy and psychology in the early 1970s for a brief sabbatical. The sabbatical turned into 35 years of working in the area of death, dying, and bereavement while developing his meditation practice. In more recent years, Brad has begun guiding others in meditation at the same time he became certified as a clinical hypnotherapist specializing in anxiety, trauma, grief, and depression. He can be reached at no_manclature@yahoo.com

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Home Office-Temple

— Toni Gilbert

Downsizing pulled the plug on the traditional part of my psychiatric nursing career, which had become task-oriented and barren of quality time with the patients. Fortunately, I had a dual career and could afford to leave nursing behind.

Instead, I put my efforts into the woodworking business that my husband Lewis and I owned.

With my artistic side, I designed the furniture, and he handcrafted the heirloom furnishings. After I quit nursing, we also decided to add a gallery to the business to showcase our own and others' fine woodworking as well as fine arts and quality crafts. More importantly, retirement from nursing afforded me time to go back to school.

In 1991, at 40 years old, I had the freedom to follow my ideals and my heart with my education. I diligently worked toward a bachelor's degree in art and psychology, including graduate classes in art therapy. Near the end of this wonderful experience, I took a

weekend course in guided imagery. After the first demonstration, I was completely smitten with the idea that the dream images of the mind could be used to facilitate healing

after the guided imagery workshop, my teenage daughter was severely injured in a car accident. In the months that followed, I used my new skills to facilitate her healing.

By the end of her convalescence, I was convinced that I wanted to work with this new concept in healing—whatever it was called.

Next, I took a weekend workshop with research psychologist Jeanne Achterberg, whose teachings further cemented my orientation to this path. Later, I found my way to the Institute of

Transpersonal Psychology, where Jeanne and her husband Frank Lawlis taught. While working on a master's of arts degree, I received a certification in Wellness Counseling and Mind Body Consciousness as well as an education in transpersonal studies. Mentored by two transpersonal psychologists, I took courses in religion, psychology, and philosophy. During these two years of Jungian-type therapy with my mentors, I was in heaven.



GARDEN AND OFFICE-TEMPLE

in the body. That fateful weekend I learned about the body-mind, and my career turned toward the healing arts once again.

As fate would have it, two months



GARDEN WALKWAY

HOME OFFICE TEMPLE

After graduation, I took a year-long course called “Imagery in Medicine” with Drs. Achterberg and Lawlis. At the end of the course, Dr.

Achterberg thought that I should return to nursing and suggested that I look into the American Holistic Nurses Association, with which her friend, Barbie Dossey, was affiliated.

About this time, Lewis and I began restoring an historic home with a storefront on the main street of our town. I eventually started my alternative nursing practice in this fully restored building, which I named the Centre of Main St.

One thing led to another, and soon I had other practitioners using the building and renting office space. Five years later and approaching 55, I began to slow down. We sold the house and moved my office to our home in the countryside, where I can relax, work my own hours, and (the best part) not drive to work.

After the move, we soon realized that the house library was barely big enough. Eventually Lewis and I started a new project: building

a small 24' x 24' office building behind our house. The new building serves two purposes: (1) it is where I do my writing, yoga, and other meditational activities, and (2) it is where my clients come that is

also have an organic garden on the east side and flower gardens on the west side. Garden paths and lighting draw it all together to create a monastery-like ambiance that facilitates client healing as well as family harmony.

The best thing about my arrangement is my availability to my family: my most fundamental and important work. I believe that who we are at home affects our family, which in turn affects our community and then our society and eventually the world. Without a doubt, our

conduct and intentions continue to reverberate down through the generations. I have found that my simple private nursing and writing practice at home is a pleasant way to contribute to my world and make a difference.

*TONI GILBERT, RN, MA, HN-BC is a certified holistic nurse, who holds a Master of Arts degree in Transpersonal Studies from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. Toni's online journal, the **Alternative Journal of Nursing**, gives nursing pioneers a*

*forum to discuss their esoteric discoveries. Toni has also released her first book, **Messages from the Archetypes: Using Tarot for Healing and Spiritual Growth**. www.tonigilbert.com*



BILLIE JUDY

TONI AND BUDDHA IN HOME LIVING ROOM

totally separate from the house and its possible intrusions.

My home office-temple offers needed privacy for important work.



TONI INSIDE THE OFFICE

Yet if I want to move sessions outdoors, we have several patios and places to sit and talk surrounded by nature. During the summer, we

EXPLORING THE SPIRITUAL: *Paths for Counsellors and Psychotherapists*

By DAVID R. MATTESON

Routledge, 2008, 486 pp., \$60, ISBN
978-0-7890-3673-5

Reviewed by John Rowan

What a good book this is! Even though it is more about religion than about spirituality, it is very well done and a huge achievement.

Part 1 is about assessing spiritual health and development, and includes such models of development as Fowler, Wilber, and Washburn. It asks pertinent questions such as: "What is useful to counselors in these models?"

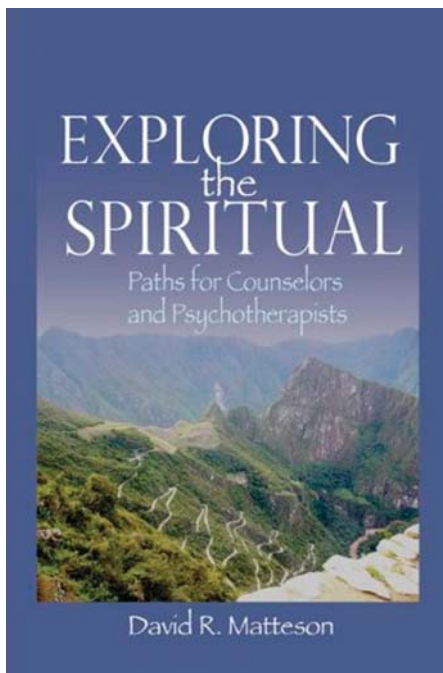
Part 2 is about areas of crisis: the crisis in values; the crisis in belief; the body, passion, and spirituality; spiritual implications of sexual orientation; overcoming barriers, dealing with differences; and why so much suffering? There is some good stuff here. For example, in the section on diversity, the author says: "If we as counselors continue to have gender stereotypes, we may inadvertently shape our clients' expression of emotions. These and other studies show that we can interpret expressions to fit our preconceptions of what is appropriate for each gender. If fathers teach their sons to label their distress as anger, but teach daughters to label it sadness, the parental stereotypes could train the children to accept their own emotions only when they fit the gender stereotype. Unaware counselors might do the same" (p. 60). There is also a deep and extensive discussion of racism, and the many ways in which it can be unwarily expressed in therapy.

One of the strengths of this book is the very thorough discussion of

religion and sexuality. The author has read the research thoroughly, and has excellent arguments to deal with the objections to homosexuality coming from a too-narrow view of religion. This quite extensive section of the book contrasts strikingly with such texts as the one by Aten and Leach (*Spirituality and the Therapeutic Process*, APA, 2008), which are characterised by prejudice and ignorance to an alarming extent.

Part 3 is about helping and healing, and asks questions such as: "What qualities are required of the spiritually sensitive counselor?" It offers twelve gateways that can lead to the sacred.

Part 4 offers practical exercises to be used by counselors in working with clients, and also in their own self-development. These are well chosen and well-described. And there is a very good discussion of different kinds of prayer and meditation.



Although the author is clearly Christian, he is aware of other religions, particularly Buddhism and Paganism, and offers a corrective to all those who only understand a very narrow view of Christianity. He shows that being Christian does

not necessarily mean being insular.

This is a big thick book, and takes some time to read from cover to cover, but it is also a valuable reference book to keep by you in case of difficulties arising in your own practice which have to do with religion. More or less every eventuality is dealt with in this thorough work.

JOHN ROWAN, Ph.D., is the author of *The Transpersonal: Spirituality in Therapy and Counselling*, second edition, Routledge.

ALCHEMY OF LIGHT: *Working With the Primal Energies of Life*

By LEWELLYN VAUGHAN-LEE

The Golden Sufi Center, 2007, 168
pp., \$12, ISBN 978-1-890350-13-0

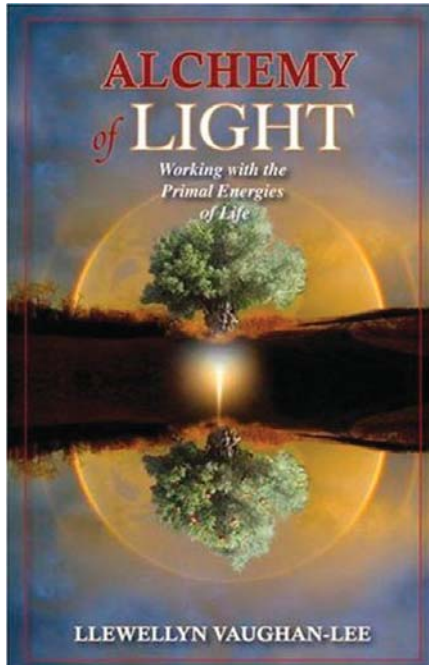
Reviewed by Karen Castle

Will the good prevail? Will enough people turn towards the light? Vaughan-Lee says "We live in a culture that respects little apart from surface glamour, the trappings of worldly power and material possessions." I have to agree with this statement. I find this type of thinking is rampant in our society. In order for us to survive and evolve we must shift our way of thinking. This book is a refreshing look at what our society is capable of. More and more people will catch on to identify with their own inner light. This will require each one of us to stay focused and to maintain a spiritual practice. However, this practice must include more than focusing on light and oneness; it requires taking responsibility for our own inner world. I agree with Vaughan-Lee that by accepting the truth of our inner worlds we will be free of fear and the anxieties that grip us. He says, "We have imposed our beliefs and ideas upon the world for too long. Now we need to work

in relationship with . . . the outer and inner world.” This is the only way to embrace the light. Nature is a great example of accepting and embracing the whole as part of life. One way to approach this concept is simply accepting that darkness is a part of light. Light and darkness can be integrated and balanced and operate as a whole. Once we accept all the parts of our inner Self, we awaken to the truth. Through this awakening, we find compassion for others and accept our family’s, friends’, and loved ones’ inner worlds as well. This domino effect on our society will prevail. However, it is a constant commitment to nurturing our own light within to manifest as a beacon of light for others.

In *Alchemy of Light: Working with the Primal Energies of Life*, we are summoned to take responsibility and continuously cultivate our own light. The light within each of us will unite and become a torch to instill a shift in humankind. With this movement, there will be a shift in the collective consciousness of humanity. This will not be easy and will require letting go of greed and the power hungry ego. Also, we will be required to let go of a surface image based on materiality and success. This will be the most difficult aspect for our society to let go of. However, Vaughan-Lee has a vision. He understands that we are capable of replacing our present materialistic nightmare with the abundance of our family life. He

knows that we are capable of taking responsibility and being in service to humankind. With each individual moving toward the light and accepting responsibility, change will come; change that overturns our unconscious and destructive nature. A new era will emerge that shifts our way of thinking.



There is a good chance this change will involve emphasis on the archetypal world. Vaughan-Lee encourages cultivating a relationship with the archetypes as a doorway for transformation in our individual consciousness. Through acceptance and respect, we are forming an alliance with

the archetypes. He states, “The individual . . . can then make a creative relationship with these forces without being overwhelmed by their raw power, without being sucked into unconsciousness.” Vaughan-Lee explains that archetypes are alive within each of us yet we have lost touch with them. They have been lurking deep within our shadows. My own spiritual practice includes honoring the Goddess Inanna. As early as 2,000 B.C. she was worshipped as Queen of Heaven and Earth in ancient Mesopotamia (now Iraq). Through my relationship with her I understand the deep paradoxical dynamics of my inner being. Inanna is known for her all-embracing acceptance, she is Goddess of Love and War, she is the paradox. Although I intuitively cultivated this relationship with Inanna (she actually identified

herself in my inner psyche through a holotropic session), I was pleased to already be participating in one of Vaughan-Lee’s deeper visions. He is sure that as individuals transform from this awareness so to will the collective conscious.

Alchemy of Light should be required reading for anyone committed to changing the collective consciousness of humanity. Over the past decade, humanity has experienced a realization that we are all interconnected. We must act now as people are waking up to the reality of greed and materiality in our current failing economy. Now is the time to recognize that each one of us can face our inner demons and take responsibility. As we step forward and turn toward the light, we will make a difference. This difference will end up shape-shifting our world. Vaughan-Lee shares with us “we are each being given the opportunity to be present at this moment in time. . . . Life is calling to us and it is for each of us to hear and respond to this call in our own way.” One way might be to read this book in its entirety, to feel the passion of this new way of thinking, and to get a spark of light to cultivate as our own and share with others. The possibilities are endless. We don’t know in this moment if enough people will respond to their own inner light. What we do know is the light exists in each one of us, and through awareness and nurturing, this light will grow.

KAREN CASTLE has an M.A. in Transpersonal Studies and Oriental Medicine. She actively holds workshops as a Certified Holotropic Breathwork Practitioner. Visit her website at www.karencastle.net

GREEN KINGDOM COME! Jesus and a Sustainable Earth Community

By JOE GRABILL
Wheatmark (Tucson), 2009, 284 pp., \$21, ISBN: 978-1-58736-090-9

Reviewed by Deb Oberg

In reading this book I discovered a witty and earthy Jesus brought to life through the engaging words of an environmental community activist and historian. Dr. Grabill made seven research trips to the Galilee in Israel in preparation for this book. *Green Kingdom Come!* presents both an Aramaic-speaking Jesus from the first century and an inclusive, intercultural 21st century Jesus.

Seventy of the sayings of Jesus from the seven most historical gospels are reexamined from an ecological point of view.

One principle—Wildness manifests itself everywhere—comes from the parable that the Kingdom of God (in Aramaic, The Presence of The One) is like the wild and ever-present mustard seed. Today he'd say, like the wild dandelion. Application of this principle includes generating renewable energy from wild sun, wind, and geothermal wells.

Another principle—Earth produces by herself—comes from the parable about a farmer sowing wheat, and the grain growing whether the farmer is awake or asleep. Application includes reduction of eating meat (which requires over 20 times the space and cost of growing fruit and vegetables), thus leaving much more land for Earth to produce by herself whatever eco-diversity she wants.

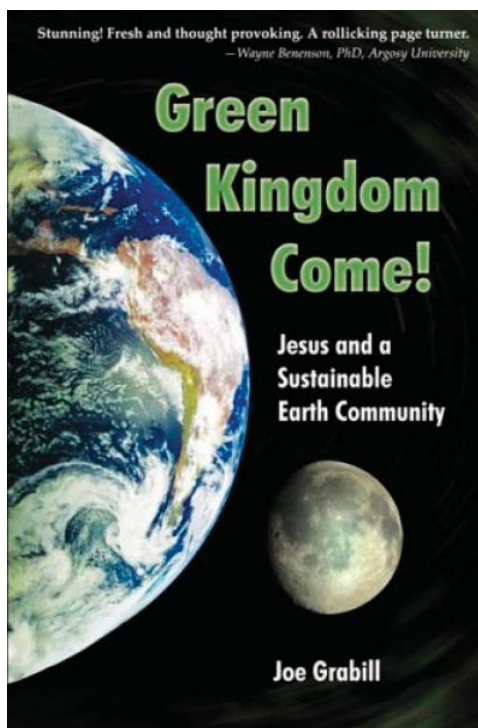
The release of *Green Kingdom Come!* marks one more significant event in a series of unparalleled events within the emerging Green Revolution.

Never until President Barack Obama have we had green themes in a US Inaugural Address. "We will harness the sun and the winds," Obama stated, "and roll back the specter of a warming planet."

Green Kingdom Come! is a book

whose time has come. Until today, when a significant number of people can see with green eyes, it has not been possible for us to see the greenness of Jesus. But this greenness has been hiding in the historical shadows, waiting to be made manifest at the cultural moment when the green Rabbi was ready to be awakened in our awareness. That moment is now.

Knowledge of the Aramaic language of Jesus in Western civilization was quite rudimentary until Neil Douglas-Klotz and others in the 1990s began to unlock its earthiness. The author of *Green Kingdom Come!* has drawn upon this evolving



expertise, through a friendship with Douglas-Klotz, and has demonstrated that the holistic principles of ecology and of the first law of thermodynamics are inferred in the language Jesus spoke.

- *Ar'ah*, typically translated earth or soil, means the entire Earth ecology. When Jesus said, "*Ar'ah* produces by herself" in Mark 4, he implied that Earth Community is in charge of us. We are not in charge of Earth Community.

- *Eshau*, translated Jesus, means

to restore the inclusive sense of *Tahweh*, of Being, in every eco-diverse time and place, not just for elites or selected peoples, species, or locations.

Jesus, growing up, annually experienced festivals set according to the lunar and agricultural cycles. Dances and lyrics for these festivals came from the greenest book in the Bible, the *Song of Solomon*.

Two of the most fascinating parts of Grabill's book are an extended imaginary interview with Jesus and Mary Magdalene and an imaginary walk with Jesus throughout Galilee at the beginning of his public ministry. These parts show dramatically that Jesus grew to man-

hood in the sustainable village of Nazareth (no money economy, for example) and that his itinerant ministry left almost a zero carbon footprint. He owned no mule, walked, and did not own a house.

He taught people to break nearly every purity law in outdoor community potlucks (the feedings of the 4,000 and 5,000), which taught a fair distribution of food for ritually pure and impure. He said, "Consider crows," who don't build barns.

Green Kingdom Come! integrates science and religion, and secular and sacred. The book shows many kinds of people (just as Jesus reached out to prostitutes, rich Pharisees, lepers, a Roman centurion, and beggars) how to end the cultural wars and to transform the terrible war against the Earth into the kind of sustainability that existed before the agricultural and industrial attacks on eco-diversity.

An appendix conveniently lists hundreds of green practices, and there are dozens of green sources in the bibliography.

For more information, including slide shows, see greenkingdomcome.org or e-mail the author at info@greenkingdomcome.com

DEB OBERG is the CEC Coordinator for AHP.

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Dr. Krippner is internationally admired for his scientific investigation of human consciousness from a transpersonal perspective. His work has been endorsed by Joseph Campbell, Jean Houston, June Singer, and other great classic teachers of

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EASTERN LIGHT IN WESTERN EYES: A Portrait of the Practice of Devotion

By MARTY GLASS
Sophia Perennis, 2003, \$22.95, 288 pp., ISBN 0-900588-52-7

Reviewed by Samuel Bendeck Sotillos

What Hinduism [sanatana dharma] offers . . . is the path of bhakti or devotion. The love of God.

The experience of the love of God, the experience of loving God, is a spiritual absolute, an ultimate: there is nothing beyond it: it is supreme, because it is the Oneness: God is Love, and in our love for God, in that experience, we disappear into that Oneness, that infinite Bliss, ananda, which is the Reality.
— Marty Glass

Eastern Light in Western Eyes by Marty Glass offers the Western reader a very unique and insightful portrayal of the Hindu tradition—also known as the sanatana dharma—the primordial and eternal religion which this book without a doubt exemplifies. Noteworthy exponents of the perennialist school have stated that it is via Vedanta in its non-dual (*advaita*) expression, that the most direct formulation of the essential heart of all of the world’s religions becomes explicit. The author develops this work as if he had one foot firmly centered in Hinduism (*sanatana dharma*) and another traversing all of the spiritual traditions, articulating each in their doctrinal purity (orthodoxy) while remaining faithful to his own.

Where I may have fallen short of the mark, I hope the Truth of the Hindu tradition, *sanatana dharma*—and indeed of the Primordial and Universal tradition, *Lex Aeterna*, *Hagia Sophia*, *Sophia Perennis et Universalis*, the Perennial Philoso-

phy—shines through anyway: for *It is the Light of the World.* (p. 47)

This work is informed by three decades of the author’s practicing the Hindu *dharma*, spending ample time engaged in intensive spiritual practice in an old chicken coop that he transformed into a meditation chamber, or what the author refers to as “Marty’s Cell”. In conjunction with the author’s modus operandi, this book affirms that spiritual practice is in—THIS—HERE—NOW—in this very moment, not limited to the set times devoted to meditation or spiritual practice (*sadhana*) per se. It is from this orientation that the author writes this book keen to assist others in discovering their own spiritual practice, in the midst of their day-to-day lives and buckling down to fearless practice.

When opening *Eastern Light in Western Eyes*, one finds the memorable lines from the *Bhagavad Gita* (XVIII.55.66), which set the devotional and didactic tone of this work:

To love is to know Me,
My innermost nature,
The Truth that I am:
Through this knowledge he enters
At once to my Being . . .
Abandoning all dharmas.
Take refuge in me alone.

Readers will find many relevant aspects of the spiritual path discussed in Marty Glass’s elaborate

and worth-mentioning Introduction—consisting of some forty-seven pages. The author summarizes the intricacies of Shankara’s metaphysic contained at the axis of the *sanatana dharma* with skillful simplicity and elegance:

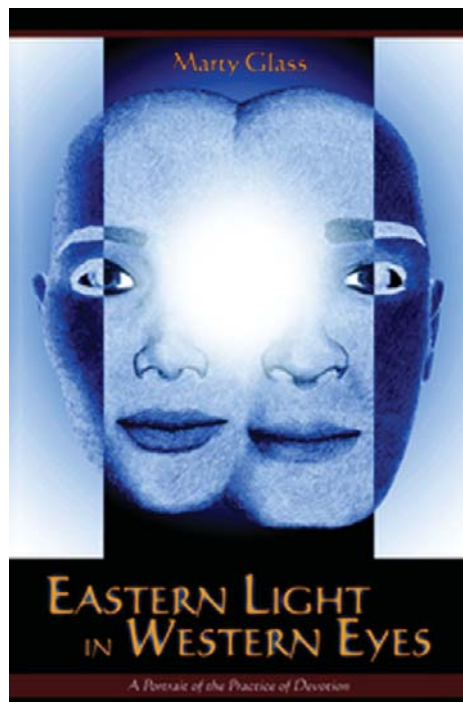
The essence of the Upanishadic

message, or *sanatana dharma*, Eternal Truth, is summarized *Brahman satyam, jagan mithya: Ayam Atma Brahman*. Brahman is real, the world is not: this Self is Brahman. Which means that only the Absolute or Brahman, the impersonal Ground of all Being, is truly Real, all else being an *appearance*,

called *maya*, superimposed upon that Reality, and the innermost Self of each of us, called the Atman, is identical with that Absolute: *Aham brahmasmi*, I am Brahman. Atman and Brahman are One. (p. 9)

The author illustrates three crucial points that could be translated or interpreted qua the traditional language of whichever path one was called to take in order to provide the seeker with a solid context from which to recognize the intrinsic decline of the current era’s spiritual milieu:

1. We live in the Kali-Yuga: the end of the cosmic cycle.
2. The Path indicated for the Kali-Yuga, is *bhakti*.
3. The specific practice for the Kali-Yuga is Invocation of a Holy Name, or, Hindu terminology, *man-*



REVIEWS

tra-japa: repetition of a Holy Name or *mantra*. (p. 29)

Readers interested in the subject of the Kali-Yuga will be very grateful for the following two titles by the same author: *YUGA: An Anatomy of our Fate* (Hillsdale, New York: Sophia Perennis, 2004) or perhaps: *The Sandstone Papers: On the Crisis of Contemporary Life* (Hillsdale, New York: Sophia Perennis, 2005).

Throughout this book, seekers will find valuable pointers, commentaries, reflections, and most of all remembrances for embarking and traveling the spiritual path. Examples of these are: "RELIGION is direct experience of the Divine Reality, direct experience of the Truth." (p. 3), "Two great Paths, or *margas*, are recognized by the religion of India: *Bhakti*, or the

Path of Love, and *jñana*, the Path of Knowledge. Both lead to the same indescribable Realization, and each is present in the other" (p. 11). "The Advaitic or "non-dual" position perhaps enjoys the greater prestige, but it does not deny, nor does it seek to, the authenticity of theistic experience" (p. 12), "The pain of our lives is the burden of 'selfhood'" (p. 210), "Paradoxically enough, we have to pray for the ability to pray" (p. 214), "All human love is a quest for God, no matter how grotesquely or pathetically misdirected. All those people out there, chasing rainbows—they're really chasing Him. They just don't know it" (p. 217).

Other perennial exegeses by Marty Glass are found in the following selections, yet they are in no way limited to these alone: "On the road to yourSelf" emphasizes what will be discovered en route to the intrinsic condition of what it

means to be truly human:

In prayer and meditation everything accidental about us—the details of an individual life, everything that makes us appear particular and unique, our 'personality', the person our friends believe they know so well—gradually fades away and we emerge as what we truly and always really are: a human soul here in the universe and present before God. We become essential, generic, universal, representative, archetypal. (p. 61)

The author continues underscoring the shortcomings of psychological methods or what could be termed psychologism having no foundation in the transpersonal, which is imperative for development of the integral human condition. Reductionistic methods that exclude the transpersonal dimension are in

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essence inept in discovering who and what the true Self is:

To present ourselves before Him in sincerity means to discard every layer of our social selves, our “worldly” selves, to remove the masks we wear in social situations and even, although to a lesser extent, when we are alone. Undiluted honesty. It is definitely not the ego, the psychological self which “pours its heart out” to a therapist, and for two big reasons. First, because the ego is precisely the “lower self,” composed of fears and desires, which divine wisdom unanimously declares we are not; second, because this self is always defined by the past, by time—it’s actually what we call our “biography”—and is therefore a mental construct, whereas presentation before God always happens now, in immediacy, in a pure Present sometimes called “the Eternal Now.” (p. 62)

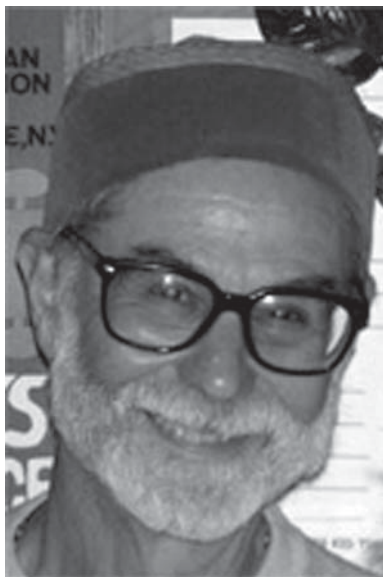
“Do we get what we deserve? Do we deserve what we get? What *do* we get? Who *are* we?” explores the not so obvious limitations of individual intention and effort and why the outcomes always fall short of the mark. Thus, exposing the utter dependence of the human individual upon what is supra-individual, what is beyond him or herself:

[I]t is axiomatic that Grace . . . cannot be coerced. There is nothing we can do, no effort or attainment on our part, no sacrifice, austerity, or traditional practice—no “worthiness”, in other words—that can guarantee or determine a divine response. “I can of mine own self do nothing” (St. John of the Cross). “The Vision of God is possible only through His Grace” (Ananda Moyi). (p. 90)

In “A Sequence on Identity”, the author enters further into the crucial topic of human identity and the spiritual process of transmut-

ing the egoic personality based on separateness into the transpersonal identity. He presents to the reader a transcendent—immanent portrayal of the *sanatana dharma* in a summarizing manner:

“The Vedantic doctrine, the doctrine of Atman [the Self] and Brahman [the Absolûte], is the doctrine of identity par excellence, Self-Realization can be experienced as the realization or fulfillment of the Vedic Truth within us” (p. 127).



AUTHOR MARTY GLASS

“Ask the Teacher” offers vital observations for those who are thinking about entering into a formal guru—disciple relationship and how this key relationship can be looked at in the broader context of the current era or the *Kali-Yuga*. The reader is reminded that

“These are militantly secular times . . . The traditional guru relationship is not available to the overwhelming majority of householders” (pp. 136-137).

The author also explores the unanimous and traditional symbol of the heart in “A Sequence on the Heart” and its function on the spiritual path.

When we experience God as more dear to us, more loved by us, than anything or anyone else, we spontaneously equate Him with “my very heart.” We think those words: “my very heart”. It’s intuitively evident to us that a love so complete, so absolute, and so unqualified can only originate in a prior unity, in Oneness, in an identity of the lover with the Beloved that has always been the case only we didn’t know it, and that Oneness is directly experienced in devotional meditation. (p. 203)

This work also takes on challenging and unpopular topics of the spiritual path in “Getting up early enough to meditate, and similar challenges” that are often overlooked, but essential. The author reminds the seeker that

“We do not enter a spiritual Path in the pursuit of happiness, to relax, to ‘center’ ourselves, or to relieve stress, nor for any other airhead ‘New Age’ goal. We enter a spiritual Path because we were made for the Truth. The Path is not therapy and it is not easy.” (p. 46)

The author remains true to the nature of non-dual doctrines (*advaita-vâda*) in the negation of his own self-importance, including the efforts to write this very book. For the author, in the truest sense of the *Advaitic* message, he cannot be other than that who is the source of the timeless and unanswerable question “Who am I?”:

“None of what I am writing here is literally true.” The author continues: “But this is a figure of speech, a verbal convenience, a concession to the illusion of separate existence. Actually, It is everything and It is everywhere, and so am I. *Tat tvam asi*: That art Thou.” (pp. 205-206)

In the titled section “I suggest this parry for that thrust”, Marty Glass articulates an important truth about the spiritual path that is universal: “We surrender. Not be-

cause we have no other choice, but because we realize that 'I am Thine' was the truth all along anyway, and now we are confessing it, acknowledging it, accepting it. Embracing it" (p. 210).

In "Many people don't realize how important these two words are", the author discusses both Mercy and Grace in the context of duality and non-duality that gives the reader a primary orientation to the deeper meaning of these two concepts:

And finally, Grace, as well as Mercy, is an illusion, for our status as recipients depends upon our erroneous conviction that we are separate beings. Grace, in other words, is a relationship within *maya*, the universal illusion or relative world or world-appearance.... The highest Truth is always non-dualism, the end of the Path is always non-dualism, absolute Identity: there is nothing but the Self, the One without a Second. Grace and Mercy only exist "from our side", and our side, and we ourselves, are a dream. (p. 222)

"Who put the serpent in Paradise? And why?" presents insightful perspectives on: why evil exists in the world, devoid of provoking a protagonist versus an antagonist polarity, for the providence of Maya is much too multifaceted for such interpretations.

Evil cannot and should not be argued away, nor a benevolent Providence demonstrated, by tormented redefinitions. . . . At the same time the existence of God requires no "proof"—being evident to the human Intellect, which is in itself proof, as is Existence, and given in direct experience to those who sincerely seek Him—and is in no way contradicted or compromised by fatal household accidents, earthquakes, cancer, squalor, war or crimes against humanity (p. 242).

"I have great news: I lost my life!" One cannot fail to sense the ironic, and yet challengingly playful, humor behind the author's title selections and general writing style, and the previous titled section does a superb job of demonstrating this point.

The notion of the "I" or "me" at the center of sapiential existence needs to be cast off for one to travel the spiritual path as any assertion of separation as the author illustrates is erroneous and therefore fictitious. "The original, central, and fundamental 'point' in the path of devotion might be epitomized like this: *I have no 'life'. I am no one. Thou art all.* . . . We have to get this notion of 'my life' out of our heads. There's no such thing. This is the very heart, the very core of the Teaching" (p. 247).

The author continues by encapsulating the core of Advaita Vedanta:

1. All consciousness, all awareness, is God;
2. There is only one Self in the universe;
3. That Self is the universe;
4. It is Infinity and Eternity, beyond all manifestation, in which universes appear and disappear forever like the myriad instantaneous jewels of light that scintillate on the surface of the ocean at sundown;
5. "I am the Self-Awareness of the universe that is the universe";
6. *Tat tvam asi*: That art Thou! (pp. 247-248)

May Eastern Light in Western Eyes be of service to all seekers who yearn to discover the underlying spiritual significance of what it means to be integrally human. It is via devotion to spiritual practice and the active participation in a revealed tradition that the author shares not only his discerning theoretical orientation but also the depth of his wisdom which is analogously waiting within each and every reader for there is—the *One-and-Only Reality*—even if it is currently unknown or unacknowledged.

SAMUEL BENDECK SOTILLOS has received graduate degrees in Education and in Psychology. He has travelled throughout the world to visit sacred sites, and had contact with noted spiritual authorities. He currently works as a mental health clinician in California.

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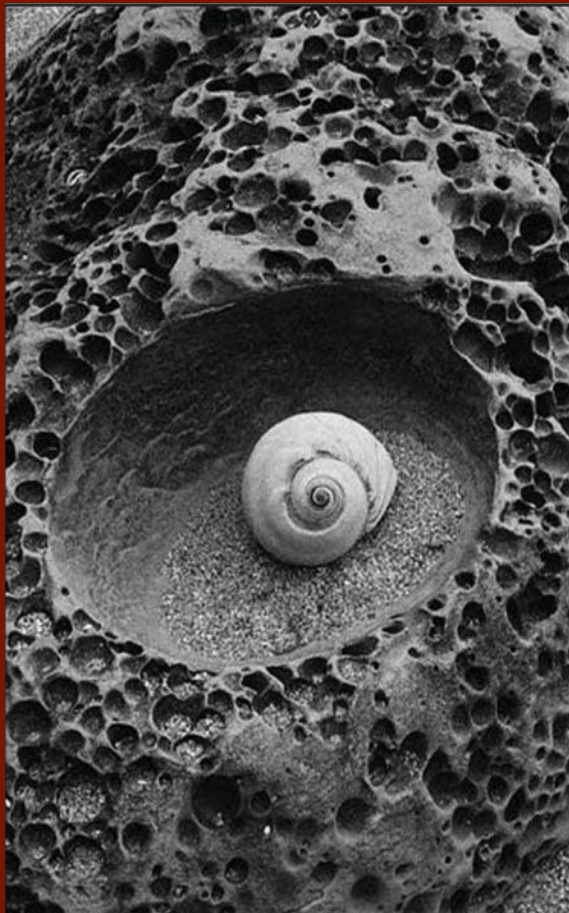
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