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S. I. Shapiro  
*University of Hawaii*

Grace W. Lee  
*University of Hawaii*

Philippe L. Gross  
*University of Hawaii*

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# The Essence of Transpersonal Psychology

## Contemporary Views

*S. I. Shapiro    Grace W. Lee    Philippe L. Gross*

University of Hawai'i  
Honolulu, Hawai'i, USA

The authors compiled 80 chronologically ordered passages from the contemporary psychology literature that address the essence of transpersonal psychology. A thematic analysis of these passages revealed that the two most frequent categories, occurring 53 (66.2%) and 49 (61.2%) times respectively, were: (a) Going beyond or transcending the individual, ego, self, the personal, personality, or personal identity; existence of a deeper, true, or authentic Self; and (b) Spirituality, psychospiritual, psychospiritual development, the spiritual, spirit. Other, less frequent, themes included: special states of consciousness; interconnectivity/unity; going beyond other schools of psychology; emphasis on a scientific approach; mysticism; full range of consciousness; greater potential; inclusion of non-Western psychologies; meditation; and existence of a wider reality.

*A monk asked, "If this is the True Realm of Reality, where did it come from?"*

*The master said, "Please say that one more time."*

—Chao-chou [Jōshū]

(In Green, 1998, p. 47)

**D**URING THE course of a larger study of developmental trends in transpersonal psychology, we took special note of English-language passages in the literature, from 1991 through 2001,<sup>1</sup> that characterized the field of transpersonal psychology. From these we selected those statements which specifically reflected how the authors construed the *essence* of transpersonal psychology. In choosing the entries we selected only those that clearly addressed the essence of *transpersonal psychology* per se, and not, for example, transpersonal studies, transpersonal therapy, or transpersonalism in general.

We also exercised some selectivity in choosing entries,<sup>2</sup> such that in our judgment they did not exhibit narrow sectarianism and that they credibly reflected viewpoints about the essence

of transpersonal psychology in terms of our knowledge of the history and development of the discipline. As a result, all but a few of the sources for the entries we selected were recognizable to us as having been written by colleagues in the transpersonal psychology movement, as having appeared in established journals, as having a scholarly or reference nature, or as coming from established educational organizations.

The total number of appropriate entries we found for the compilation was 80.<sup>3</sup> The citation sources represent: books (40); journal articles (13); websites (8); brochures (5); newsletters (5); dictionaries<sup>4</sup> (4); letters or flyers (4); encyclopedias (3); school catalogs (1); organizational constitutions (1); and unpublished convention papers (1).<sup>5</sup>

Below we present the compilation of statements<sup>6</sup> in chronological order followed by a thematic frequency analysis.

1. Transpersonal psychology is a Western formulation which transcends and includes all of the Western behavioural sciences. In encouraging the notion of "going beyond" and "more than," transpersonal psychology

addresses such concepts as life, breath, soul and spirit, holism, and perception as communion. Transpersonal psychology is an endeavour in which consciousness and Mind are primary. [p. 30]

Diespecker, D. (1991). *One mind: An introduction to transpersonal psychology*. Bellingen, NSW, Australia: Earthrise Press.

2. Many transpersonal psychologists believe that the ego or self is a useful fiction. For these psychologists, ego formation is an important stage in development, but in later developmental stages this illusion of separateness can be transcended, and more globally encompassing modes of consciousness are possible. [p. 6]

[Statement of Purpose]. (1991, Fall). *Transpersonal Psychology Interest Group (TPIG) Newsletter*, 6.

3. The transpersonal perspective is a view of people and their relations to the larger world that is compatible with the new world view that sees the universe and everything in it, including human beings, as a series of interconnected, interacting, and mutually influencing systems. Transpersonal psychology approaches human beings in the context of the wider world, including the invisible world of spirit. It insists on recognition by individuals of the breadth of the context in which they live. But transpersonal psychology does not exclude the practical world of everyday living, for it is through our daily lives that we make our imprint on the wider world; while we, in turn, are in the process of being transformed by the practical world every moment of every day. In the transpersonal view, the only way the spiritual world can manifest is through ordinary people in the visible world. [pp. 142-143]

Singer, J. (1991). *Seeing through the visible world: Jung, gnosis, and chaos*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.

4. The published literature, my own thinking, and a number of discussion groups lead me to suggest the following as core characteristics of the field [transpersonal psychology]: Constructed Consciousness; Valid Alternate States of Consciousness; Superiority of Some Alternate States; De-Automatizing for Consciousness Change; Consciousness Disciplines in Religions; Genetic Motive for Consciousness Growth; Cosmic Unity; Cosmic Flow; Interdisciplinary Study of Personality.<sup>7</sup> [p. 5]

Tisdale, J. R. (1991, Fall). Characteristics of transpersonal psychology. *Transpersonal Psychology Interest Group (TPIG) Newsletter*, 5.

5. [...] the new field of transpersonal psychology (a psychology that deals with all the things orthodox psychology deals with, but also studies the psychology of spiritual experience). [p. 4]

Wilber, T. K. (1991). In K. Wilber, *Grace and grit: Spirituality and healing in the life and death of Treya Killam Wilber*. Boston: Shambhala.

6. TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY An offshoot of humanistic psychology that encompasses a wide range of self-transcending phenomena, including ecstatic and mystical experiences. Its proponents seek to appropriate insights from the great religious traditions, especially those of the East, in order to develop a new paradigm of scientific understanding. [Glossary, p. G-30]

Wulff, D. M. (1991). *Psychology of religion: Classic and contemporary views*. New York: Wiley.

7. Transpersonal psychology is both an evolving clinical and scientific tradition within psychology and also an ancient psychospiritual lineage. Transpersonal psychology can be understood to be the study of non-ordinary states of consciousness not traditionally covered by the discipline of ego psychology. This includes states of consciousness such as meditation, religious ecstasy, trance and "unitive conscious experiences" often described in the esoteric and spiritual literature of humankind. This would also incorporate the study of the psychophysiological techniques and introspective disciplines associated with these states of consciousness. Finally the field includes both metaphysical and philosophical paradigms often encountered in the contemporary fields of theoretical physics, neuroscience and cognitive psychology. The transpersonally oriented clinician's perspective is often inclusive of anomalous experiences and does not reflexively reduce noetic or spiritual experiences to organic, psychopathological or even unconscious causes and dynamics, nor elevate disturbed psychological states to the sublime. Also the range or spectrum of consciousness is not necessarily localized to one mind or set of body-mind boundary conditions, or for that matter to one life-time. [pp. 301-302]

Bynum, E. B. (1992). A brief overview of transpersonal psychology. *Humanistic Psychologist*, 20(2/3), 301-306.

8. Following in the path of humanistic psychology, transpersonal psychology grew as a reaction to the limitations of mainstream (first and second "force") psychology, specifically in regard to its failure to address adequately "the farther reaches of human nature." [...]



Transpersonal psychology responded to these limitations by developing an expanded view of human nature and potential, through which human identity could be perceived as including *and transcending* conventional understandings of ego and personality. [pp. 3-4]

Cordts, J. (1992, August). *Consciousness, culture, and method: Integrating transpersonal and phenomenological psychologies*. Paper presented at the Centennial Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

9. Transpersonal psychology. Name given to the so-called "fourth force" in psychology. Transpersonal psychology follows from "first force" classical psychoanalytic theory; "second force" behaviorist psychology; and "third force" humanistic psychology. It deals with such areas of human conditions as self-transcendence, peak experience, mystical transformation, and ultimate values. The term "transpersonal" itself refers to that which transcends the ego, and thus implies a sympathy for mystical and paranormal topics and ideas. [p. 301]

Drury, N. (1992). *Dictionary of mysticism and the esoteric traditions* (Rev. ed.). Bridport, England: Prism Press.

10. For me Transpersonal Psychology is a psychological perspective or framework which assigns primary importance to experiential reports of concern or contact with entities, beliefs or realms greater than oneself using them as a basis for conducting and interpreting psychological theories, intervention and research. When I say theory I mean development theory, motivational theory, personality theory. When I say interventions I mean psychotherapy, counseling, and education. [p. 308]

Krippner, S. (1992). In R. May, S. Krippner, & J. L. Doyle, The role of transpersonal psychology in psychology as a whole: A discussion. *Humanistic Psychologist* 20(2/3), 307-317.

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

Lajoie, D. H., & Shapiro, S. I. (1992). Definitions of transpersonal psychology: The first twenty-three years. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 24(1), 79-97.

12. The beauty of transpersonal psychology is that it accepts the full spectrum of human consciousness, working with the body, emotions, mind, and spirit, according to Frances Vaughan, a well-known transpersonal therapist. Practitioners use dreamwork,

guided imagery, and Eastern meditative practices, as well as traditional therapeutic techniques. Unlike other branches of Western psychology, however, the transpersonal approach accepts spiritual insight as a legitimate part of the healing process, so it includes realms of experience, wisdom, and creativity beyond the personality, such as mystical experience, ecstasy, and enlightenment, which were once thought to be the exclusive domain of religion. [p. 92]

Miller, R. S., & The Editors of New Age Journal. (1992). *As above so below: Paths to spiritual renewal in daily life*. Los Angeles: Tarcher.

13. Thus humanistic psychology tended to neglect another part of human development, our fourth aspect, the *spirit*. Not "spirit" in the limited sense of vitality or authenticity, but as something *real* behind the material manifestations of life, something we get fleeting glimpses of in "mystical experiences," the vital energy underlying religions before they all too often ossify into mechanisms for social control. *Transpersonal psychology*, the study of the parts of our nature that are beyond (*trans*) our ordinary, limited, personal self, is the social manifestation of trying to understand and develop this fourth aspect. [p. ix]

Tart, C. T. (Ed.). (1992). *Transpersonal psychologies: Perspectives on the mind from seven great spiritual traditions* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

14. Another important conceptual difference [between traditional and transpersonal psychology] exists in regard to the dimensions of the human psyche. While the model of traditional psychology is limited to post-natal biography and to the individual unconscious, the transpersonal image of the human psyche resembles that in the perennial philosophy. It suggests that there exist no absolute boundaries in the universe and that, in the last analysis, the human psyche of each individual is commensurate with all of existence. It thus confirms the famous statement of the *Upanishad*, *tat tvam asi* (thou art That: you are divine, of the same nature as the creative principle). [p. 9]

Grof, S. (1993, Fall). In F. Vaughan, C. Grof, R. McDermott, C. T. Tart, & R. Walsh, The future of transpersonal psychology. *ATP* [Association for Transpersonal Psychology] *Newsletter*, 8-11.

15. I see transpersonal psychology as a science which studies the person in his/her wholeness, in the context of a social, ecological and cosmic relationship. In this way transpersonal psychology is intercultural, as well as related to other scientific

approaches such as medicine, anthropology, sociology, physics, and other sciences.

Transpersonal psychology also incorporates elements from other schools of psychology such as behaviorism, psychoanalysis, Jungian psychology, humanistic psychology, and others that study human consciousness, especially in its capacity to transcend the person and the ego. Transpersonal psychology can be defined, therefore, as the scientific study of states of consciousness. [p. 3]

Matos, L. (Winter, 1993). An intercultural perspective on transpersonal psychology. *ATP* [Association for Transpersonal Psychology] *Newsletter*, 3-7.

16. At the turn of the century, he [William James] outlined the foundations for the discipline of psychology that would include cognitive science, transpersonal psychology (the investigation of spiritual and religious experience) and psychical research. [p. 276]

Mishlove, J. (1993). *The roots of consciousness* (Rev. ed.). Tulsa, OK: Council Oak Books.

17. Transpersonal psychology is about dualism, *trans* meaning beyond, beyond the personal [...] Transpersonal psychology is the study of experiences that seem to transcend that assumption of limited embodiment. [p. 124]

Tart, C. T. (1993). Mind embodied: Computer-generated virtual reality. In K. R. Rao (Ed.), *Cultivating consciousness: Enhancing human potential, wellness, and healing* (pp. 123-138). Westport, CT: Praeger.

18. *Transpersonal experiences* may be defined as experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (*trans*) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, *psyche*, and cosmos [...]

*Transpersonal psychology* is the psychological study of transpersonal experiences and their correlates. These correlates include the nature, varieties, causes, and effects of transpersonal experiences and development, as well as the psychologies, philosophies, disciplines, arts, cultures, lifestyles, reactions, and religions that are inspired by them, or that seek to induce, express, apply, or understand them.<sup>8</sup> [pp. 3-4]

Walsh, R., & Vaughan, F. (Eds.). (1993). Introduction. In *Paths beyond ego: The transpersonal vision* (pp. 1-10). Los Angeles: Tarcher.

19. Transpersonal psychology has been in existence for the last twenty-five years and has become an increasingly important force in scientific, cultural, and political life. It began in the late 1960s as a new movement in psychology which

recognized spirituality as an important dimension in human life and studied the entire spectrum of human experience, including non-ordinary states of consciousness. Transpersonal psychology has provided an important bridge between Western psychology and the spiritual history of humanity, particularly shamanism, the great mystical traditions of the world, and the spiritual philosophies of the East.

Grof, C., & Grof, S. Letter/Flyer received ca. 1994.

20. Transpersonal psychology attempts to research those experiences in which the sense of identity expands beyond (*trans*) the individual person, personality, or ego to encompass aspects of humankind, life, and the universe. Such experiences have been valued in most cultures at times. Transpersonal psychology aims to explore the nature, varieties, effects, and means of inducing such experiences as well as the philosophies and traditions inspired by them. It attempts to integrate contemporary science and philosophy with the perennial wisdom of East and West [...] Topics of special interest include consciousness and altered states, cross-cultural studies, meditation, contemplation and yoga, lucid dreaming, mythology, psychedelics, philosophical foundations, values, ethics, relationships, exceptional psychological well-being and capacities, transconventional development, transpersonal emotions such as love and compassion and motives such as altruism and service, transpersonal pathologies, psychotherapies and related clinical concerns, comparative religion, and psychological roots of contemporary global crises. [pp. 548-549]

Walsh, R., & Vaughan, F. (1994). Transpersonal psychology II. In R. Corsini (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of psychology* (2nd ed., Vol. 3, pp. 548-550). New York: Wiley.

21. The aim of transpersonal psychology, then, is to give a psychological presentation of the perennial philosophy and the Great Chain of Being, fully updated and grounded in modern research and scientific developments. It fully acknowledges and *incorporates* the findings of modern psychiatry, behaviorism, and developmental psychology, and then adds, where necessary, the further insights and experiences of the existential and spiritual dimensions of the human being. We might say it starts with psychiatry and ends with mysticism. [p. x]

Wilber, K. (1994). Foreword. In J. E. Nelson, *Healing the split: Integrating spirit into our understanding of the mentally ill* (Rev. ed., pp. viii-xii). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

22. Transpersonal has been called the "fourth force" in psychology (the other three being depth, behavioral, and humanistic psychology). In many ways the transpersonal work has put the soul, spirit, and even consciousness back into the discipline of psychology. [p. 98]
- Achterberg, J. (1994). The foundations and future of transpersonal psychology. *ReVision*, 16(3), 98.
23. Transpersonal psychology seeks to awaken the individual's fullest potential and consciousness, to reach through and beyond the personal to the essence of being, the mystery of life. Embracing this mystery brings us together as we share the sense that there is something more, a vision of healing, creating, becoming whole.
- Department of Transpersonal Psychology, Graduate School for Holistic Studies. (n.d.). [Brochure]. Received 1995. Orinda, CA: John F. Kennedy University.
24. Transpersonal psychology has set for itself the goal of constructing a paradigm that accounts for the full range of human consciousness. [p. 132]
- Flier, L. (1995). Demystifying mysticism: Finding a developmental relationship between different ways of knowing. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 27, 131-152.
25. Adherents of this branch of psychology [transpersonal psychology] believe that there is more to being human than is recognized by the other main approaches in the field. Transpersonal psychology contrasts with perspectives that reduce human experiences to strictly personal terms. [p. 283]
- George, L. (1995). *Alternative realities: The paranormal, the mystic and the transcendent in human experience*. New York: Facts On File.
- Also: George, L. (n.d.). *Welcome to spiritual emergence*. Retrieved November 14, 2001, from <http://www.spiritualemergence.net/pages/trans.html>
26. The defining perspective of transpersonal psychology is the application of scientific methods to those areas of human experience beyond the strictly empirical, such as unitive consciousness, transcendence of self, spirit and spiritual practices, meditation, and compassion based in a cosmic consciousness [...] Transpersonal psychology has come to give particular attention to Eastern religious experience and Eastern psychology [...] The transpersonal realm involves levels of spiritual experiences—described primarily in terms of Eastern religious/psychological thought—moving toward enlightened oneness with ultimate reality. [p. 66]
- Kelly, E. W., Jr. (1995). *Spirituality and religion in counseling and psychotherapy: Diversity in theory and practice*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
27. A much larger and faster growing field of investigation, though, is *transpersonal psychology*, a twenty-five-year-old branch of psychology that actively investigates mystical experiences and the like, experiences that are *trans*, beyond our ordinary personal and biological self. It is primarily interested in understanding and helping to facilitate such experiences. We moderns are desperate for genuine spirituality based on deep experience, not simply ideas, and there is great hope that transpersonal psychology can bring a nonsectarian spiritual vitality into our culture that can help us.  
Transpersonal psychology rests on an understanding that a "successful" spiritual life needs a solid basis in deep experience. [p. 9]
- Tart, C. T. (1995). World parliament of superstition? Scientific evidence for a basic reality to the spiritual. *ReVision*, 18(1), 3-10.
- Also: Tart, C. T. (1997). *Body, mind, spirit: Exploring the psychology of spiritualism*. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads. [pp. 47-48]
28. So they established transpersonal psychology as a means of studying psychological health, peak experiences, and nonordinary states of consciousness. [...] The movement has attracted many individuals of varied backgrounds who are interested in the development of human potentialities and who have found existing images of the person to be too limited [...] [I]ts primary focus on subjective experiences allows these experiences to be interpreted in different ways, though in a spiritual context. [p. 21]
- Vaughan, F. (1995, Fall). Transpersonal psychology. *Gnosis*, 21.
29. At times it seems that one of transpersonal psychology's special contributions is to "make sense" of realities that a conventional viewpoint might dismiss or ignore. [p. iv]
- Vich, M. (1995). Editor's note. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 27, iv.
30. Transpersonal psychology has attempted to examine phenomena which are an intrinsic part of the quest for wholeness in a situation in which "Boundaries are illusions" (Wilber, 1985, p. 31). It is, then, an attempt to once again find a place for ourselves as part of the universe rather than as its exploiters and dominators (Fox, 1990), and to bring back into consideration experiences and ideas which are generally regarded as "spiritual" rather than scientific. [p. 42; References are to: Wilber, K.



(1985). *No boundary: Eastern and Western approaches to personal growth*. London: Shambhala; Fox, W. (1990). *Towards transpersonal ecology*. London: Shambhala.]

Brazier, D. (1995). *Zen therapy*. London: Constable.

31. Transpersonal Psychologies. In the 1960s, transpersonal psychology emerged as a movement devoted in part to the study of alternative states of consciousness. Though by no means representative of the mainstream of psychological research in the West, transpersonal psychologists are intrigued by the possibility that human beings possess transcendent powers of consciousness. Some speculate about the mind's untapped potential for awareness and hold to a view of the universe as conscious and purposive. They are convinced that we can be motivated by broader and less selfish impulses than physiological needs and egoistic emotions. For these psychologists, our most important motivations spring from a selflessness that revolves around the pondering of ultimate questions—questions about the meaning, purpose, and value of human life. Often influenced by the recent influx of Eastern psychologies and philosophies into the West, transpersonal psychology seeks to reverse what it considers the disproportionate attention given to man's psychological afflictions at the expense of his great potentialities. This movement may be understood as an attempt to reconnect the science of psychology with the perennial metaphysical teachings of the spiritual traditions. [p. 57]

Needleman, J., & Eisenberg, R. (1995). Consciousness, States of. In M. Eliade (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of religion* (Vol. 4, pp. 57-59). New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan. (Originally published 1987)

32. In the 1960s Abraham Maslow's research on healthy, self-actualizing people included a concern for spiritual issues...

By the end of the decade, transpersonal psychology was differentiated from humanistic psychology, placing greater emphasis on the study of spiritual experiences, optimum psychological health and the full spectrum of human consciousness, including some states that had previously been mapped only by Eastern disciplines... Transpersonal psychology, as it developed in the seventies and eighties, focused more on the relationship of psychological health to spiritual development and the investigation of inner experience. [p. 162]

Vaughan, F. (1995). *Shadows of the sacred: Seeing through spiritual illusions*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books.

33. Of note in the mission statement [in the first issue of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*] are three major motifs: (1) a focus on issues traditionally considered religious or spiritual, for example, transcendence and ultimate meanings or values; (2) an emphasis on empirical, scientific studies; and (3) a suspension of belief in the content of the experiences, that is, "optional" interpretations about whether the phenomena are supernatural or not. In other words, transpersonal psychology was to be a reflective, scientific-minded approach to matters traditionally considered religious or spiritual. [p. 11]

Chinen, A. B. (1996). The emergence of transpersonal psychiatry. In B. W. Scotton, A. B. Chinen, & J. R. Battista (Eds.), *Textbook of transpersonal psychiatry and psychology* (pp. 9-18). New York: Basic Books.

34. In its strict sense, transpersonal psychology (*trans* from the Latin for "beyond" or "through," and *personal* from the Latin for "mask") studies those experiences which allegedly enable the individual to see beyond the conditioned ego, and to identify some deeper and more enduring sense of self. By extension it is also concerned with those beliefs (such as religious beliefs) that regard individual existence as an expression of some wider reality, whether this reality is defined in terms of an impersonal life force, or personalized into a deity or deities. [p. 3]

Fontana, D., & Slack, I. (1996, Fall). The need for transpersonal psychology. *ATP [Association for Transpersonal Psychology] Newsletter*, 3-7.

35. Transpersonal psychology is a branch of psychology that recognizes and accepts spirituality as an important dimension of the human psyche and of the universal scheme of things. It also studies and honors the entire spectrum of human experience, including various levels and realms of the psyche that become manifest in non-ordinary states of consciousness (NOSC). [p. 44]

Grof, S. (1996). Theoretical and empirical foundations of transpersonal psychology. In S. Boorstein (Ed.), *Transpersonal psychotherapy* (2nd ed., pp. 43-64). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

36. Transpersonal psychology has developed since this period [late 1960s] as that branch of psychological theory which takes religious and mystical experiences seriously as constituting a domain *sui generis*, refusing to follow the reductionistic interpretations widely accepted in other psychological schools. In doing so, it claims well-known authorities like William

James and Carl Gustav Jung as predecessors. Transpersonal psychologists have devoted themselves to both empirical and theoretical research. The empirical branch has largely concentrated on the field of so-called Altered States of Consciousness (ASC's) induced either by drugs or by various mind-expanding techniques. Theoretical work has concentrated on devising all-embracing "cartographies of consciousness" which distinguish a hierarchy of levels in the psyche. The premise is that the traditional psychological schools address the lower levels of the psyche, but are largely inadequate for dealing with the higher or transpersonal levels. The latter are seen as the proper domain of spiritual traditions, especially of Oriental origin. Transpersonal psychology thus aims at a theoretical synthesis of western psychology and Oriental spiritual systems and technologies. [p. 51]

A central concern of transpersonal psychology lies therefore in developing "maps" of the mind which explain the dynamics of consciousness within a comprehensive framework, encompassing the complete spectrum from unitive consciousness to the limited ego. [p. 246]

Hanegraaff, W. J. (1996). *New Age religion and Western culture: Esotericism in the mirror of secular thought*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

37. Transpersonal psychology is a vital, thirty-year-old international movement that is leading the way toward reintegrating spirit—the essence of consciousness and selfhood—into modern healing practices. Its success in challenging the powerful resistances of entrenched materialism and religious dogmatism speaks for the hunger in Western societies to return psychology to its ancient roots as a *logos* of the *psyche*, a path to knowing the soul.

The overriding aim of these transpersonal techniques is essentially fourfold: (1) To open the compassionate heart to recognize one's own authentic self, which leads to empathetic acceptance of the uniqueness, yet common spirit, of others; (2) To foster creativity by gaining access to recurring archetypal myths that guide humanity to greater wisdom; (3) To open the intuitive "inner eye" that lifts an individual beyond the constraints of his ordinary senses, opening the visionary capacity latent in us all; (4) To expand consciousness to the point that an individual directly experiences identity with a universal divine Presence. [pp. 137-138]

Nelson, J. E. (1996). Transpersonal psychology and depression. In J. E. Nelson & A. Nelson (Eds.), *Sacred sorrows: Embracing and transforming depression* (pp. 137-145). Los Angeles: Tarcher.

38. transpersonal 1 (in literature, etc.) transcending the personal. 2 *Psychology* (esp. in psychotherapy) of or relating to the exploration of transcendent states of consciousness beyond personal identity.

*The Oxford English reference dictionary*. (1996, 2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

39. The word *transpersonal* simply means "personal plus." That is, the transpersonal orientation explicitly and carefully includes all the facets of personal psychology and psychiatry, then *adds* those deeper or higher aspects of human experience that transcend the ordinary and the average—experiences that are, in other words, "transpersonal" or "more than the personal," personal plus. Thus, in the attempt to more fully, accurately, and scientifically reflect the entire range of human experience, transpersonal psychiatry and psychology take as their starting point the entire spectrum of consciousness. [p. xviii]

Wilber, K. (1996). Foreword. In B. W. Scotton, A. B. Chinen, & J. R. Battista (Eds.), *Textbook of transpersonal psychiatry and psychology* (pp. xvii-xx). New York: Basic Books.

40. In Maslow's final years, he advanced a new outlook that he called *transpersonal psychology*—focusing on spirituality and "the farthest reaches of human nature." He was a key figure in launching this nascent discipline, for he felt that humanistic psychology was inadequately dealing with spiritual concerns. [p. 14]

Hoffman, E. (Ed.). (1996). *Future visions: The unpublished papers of Abraham Maslow*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

41. Transpersonal psychology can be understood as the melding of the wisdom of the world's spiritual traditions with the learning of modern psychology. [p. 8]

[...] Transpersonal psychology studies how the spiritual is expressed in and through the personal, as well as the transcendence of the self.

Transpersonal psychology in this sense affords a wider perspective for all the learning of conventional psychology. It includes and exceeds traditional psychology. And by holding all of conventional psychology within it, it recasts psychology into a new mold and spiritual framework. [p. 10]

Cortright, B. (1997). *Psychotherapy and spirit: Theory and practice in transpersonal psychotherapy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

42. Transpersonal psychology is a scientific discipline that investigates human experiences which transcend the ordinary, particularly spiritual experiences and altered states of consciousness.



- Lukoff, D. (1997). *Sample learning guide for transpersonal psychology and psychotherapy* (Course #3510). San Francisco: Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center. Retrieved January 3, 2002, from <http://www.saybrook.edu/textonly/Learnguide.html>
43. [...] transpersonal psychology, a new philosophical-psychological trend engaged in the study of human nature and the integrity of human consciousness beyond its personal manifestations. [p. 13]
- Granovsky, Yu. (1997). Dedicated to the memory of V. V. Nalimov. *Voices of Russian Transpersonalism*, Vol. 4, *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 16(2), 9-14.
44. Transpersonal Psychology is a marriage of psychology and spirituality. It is the human science that studies, with scientific methods, the psycho-spiritual development of the individual and its manifestations.
- Australian Transpersonal Association. (n.d.). [Flyer]. Received August, 1998.
45. Whenever possible, transpersonal psychology seeks to delve deeply into the most profound aspects of human experience, such as mystical and unitive experiences, personal transformation, meditative awareness, experiences of wonder and ecstasy, and alternative and expansive states of consciousness. In these experiences, we appear to go beyond our usual identification with our limited biological and psychological selves. [p. xxi]  
An important concept within transpersonal psychology is interconnectedness. The *trans* in *transpersonal* conveys two aspects of that connectedness. One meaning of *trans* is "beyond"; it implies the existence of, and connectedness with and relationship to, something beyond the individual. Another meaning of *trans* is "through"; this implies a connectedness among the various aspects of oneself, as well as a connectedness of oneself with others and with all of Nature. [p. 39]
- Braud, W., & Anderson, R. (1998). *Transpersonal research methods for the social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
46. The transpersonal perspective includes the wisdom and methods of the preceding orientations [the psychoanalytic, behaviorist, and humanist perspectives], and expands on them to include the spiritual aspects of human experience.  
Transpersonal psychologists are concerned with the development of a healthy individuality and its extension to include aspects of the Higher Self. This viewpoint acknowledges that behind the masks, roles and melodramas of one's conditioned personality lies a deeper state of being that transcends individual identity.
- Transpersonal psychologists believe that any model of the human psyche must include this full range of human experience, for it is the upper range that sets the context for understanding the whole human being.  
As the transpersonal perspective unites the spiritual with the psychological aspects of human experience, it addresses an integration of the whole person—body, mind, emotion and spirit. In doing so, the field is grounded in Western psychological theory and draws on the world's spiritual traditions, mythology, anthropology and the arts as well as research on consciousness. [p. 3]
- Department of Transpersonal Psychology. Graduate School for Holistic Studies. (n.d.). [Brochure]. Received August, 1998. Orinda, CA: John F. Kennedy University.
47. Transpersonal psychology recognizes as a working hypothesis the infinite variability and the infinite potential of the human mind, and the essential challenge that underlies the mystery of being. [p. 7]
- Fontana, D. (1998). Modern science and the transpersonal vision. *Transpersonal Psychology Review*, 2(2), 5-9.
48. Transpersonal psychology, with its initial intellectual roots in the work of William James, Carl Jung, humanistic psychology (particularly the work of Abraham Maslow), and early studies of Asian contemplative traditions, was self-consciously forged as a separate discipline in the late 1960s. The initial impetus was to bring into psychology the study of a variety of experiences not commonly examined in mainstream psychology and to develop wider conceptions of the nature of the mind, consciousness, human nature, and reality than were found in behaviorist, psychoanalytic, and humanistic approaches. [p. 3]
- Rothberg, D. (1998). Ken Wilber and the future of transpersonal psychology: An introduction to the conversation. In D. Rothberg & S. Kelly (Eds.), *Ken Wilber in dialogue: Conversations with leading transpersonal thinkers* (pp. 1-27). Wheaton, IL: Quest Books.
49. It was out of the humanistic movement that the "fourth force" grew, namely transpersonal psychology, in which psychological science has formed a central connection with spiritual and religious studies [...] In this forum, psychology not only opened itself to a realm of experiences that had been only marginally considered by any science but also entered into a dialog with the full spectrum of world religions. [p. 63]
- Wertz, F. J. (1998). The role of the humanistic movement in the history of psychology. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 38(1), 42-70.

50. Transpersonal psychology is a fundamental area of research, scholarship and application based on people's experiences of temporarily transcending our usual identification with our limited biological, historical, cultural and personal self and, at the deepest and most profound levels of experience possible, recognizing/being "some-thing" of vast intelligence and compassion that encompasses/is the entire universe. [p. 4]  
Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. *General Catalog, 1998-1999*. Menlo Park, CA: Author.
51. Transpersonal psychology, a more recent development in the field of psychology, views the individual as a whole: body, mind, and spirit. It goes beyond the limits of the ego-self toward the transcendent/spiritual Self. [p. 310]  
Marcandonatou, O. (1998). The experience of being silent. In R. Valle (Ed.), *Phenomenological inquiry in psychology: Existential and transpersonal dimensions* (pp. 309-320). New York: Plenum Press.
52. transpersonal psychology, a branch of psychology that recognizes altered states of consciousness and transcendent experiences as a means to understand the human mind and treat psychological disorders. [1970-75] [Brackets in original]  
*Random House Webster's unabridged dictionary*. (1998, 2nd ed.). New York: Random House.
53. Transpersonal psychology: a body of psychological and spiritual insights into the spectrum of human consciousness incorporating the stages in the development of the ego and the stages of development beyond ego. [pp. 317-318]  
Singh, K. D. (1998). *The grace in dying: How we are transformed spiritually as we die*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
54. A "fourth force" in Western psychology was also emerging that was explicitly concerned with extending the parameters to encompass the upper reaches of psychospiritual development. As such, it aspired beyond ego, or beyond the personal, hence its name: Transpersonal Psychology. [p. 253]  
Snelling, J. (1998). *The Buddhist handbook: The complete guide to Buddhist schools, teaching, practice, and history* (Rev. ed.). Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions.
55. The purpose of transpersonal psychology was to create a new psychological approach based on planetary needs rather than egocentric ones, honoring the entire spectrum of human experience, including spirituality and non-ordinary states of consciousness, and integrating the various expressions of the spiritual heritage of humanity, both from the Eastern and Western traditions.  
*The Annual Council Meeting of EUROTAS* [European Transpersonal Association] *and the Founding Assembly of the EUROTAS Creative Initiative*. (1999). [Flyer].
56. transpersonal 1 going beyond what is personal. 2 denoting a form of psychology or psychotherapy that emphasizes the use of mystical, psychological, spiritual, religious, etc. experiences as a way of achieving greater self-awareness, potential, etc. Early 20c.  
*Chambers 21st century dictionary*. (1999). Edinburgh, Scotland: Chambers Harrap.
57. Transpersonal psychology extends psychological research to optimal mental health, consciousness and its non-ordinary states, and unexplored human potentialities, such as meaning, will, values, creativity, etc. A fundamental purpose is to develop a global psychology, based on planetary rather than egocentric needs, encompassing the entire spectrum of human experience, the psychopathological, the existential and the spiritual one.  
European Transpersonal Psychology Association. (1999). *Constitution: October 1999*.  
Also: European Transpersonal Psychology Association. (n.d.). Retrieved October 27, 2001, from <http://www.descamps.org/etpa/index.html>
58. Transpersonal psychologists define their field as one that studies experiences in which one's sense of identity extends beyond the personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, and the cosmos [...] [p. xii]  
Krippner, S. (1999). Foreword. In D. Moss (Ed.), *Humanistic and transpersonal psychology: A historical and biographical sourcebook* (pp. xi-xiii). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
59. Transpersonal or Spiritual Psychology acknowledges the reality, which transcends beyond body-ego boundaries. Transpersonal Psychology also transcends extensive focus on negative values, weaknesses, problems and pathology, and without ignoring challenges, draws its strength from positive values, wellness and creativity. For raising questions about the true purpose and meaning of one's life on earth Transpersonal Psychology aims to strengthen one's ability to be present in the moment. [p. 1]  
Hiltunen, S. S. (1999). *Therapeutic Noh Theater* [Brochure]. Washington, DC: Author.
60. Transpersonal Psychology is the extension of psychological studies into consciousness

studies, spiritual inquiry, body-mind relationships and transformation. [p. 2]

*Institute of Transpersonal Psychology*. (n.d.). [Brochure]. Received March, 1999. Palo Alto, CA.

Also: *Institute of Transpersonal Psychology*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 14, 2001, from <http://www.itp.edu/about/tp.html>

61. The experiences mystics have described since the beginning of history are the focus of what is today called Transpersonal Psychology—psychology beyond the self. [p. 34]

Katra, J., & Targ, R. (1999). *The heart of the mind: How to experience God without belief*. Novato, CA: New World Library.

62. [...] transpersonal psychology is the disciplined study of behaviors and experiences that appear to transcend those hypothetical constructs associated with individual identities and self-concepts, as well as their developmental antecedents, and the implications of these behaviors and experiences for education, training, and psychotherapy. [p. 97]

Krippner, S. (1999). The varieties of dissociative experience. *International Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 18(2), 81-101.

63. [...] transpersonal psychology, is devoted to the scientific study of what may be called the "spiritual core" of human beings, and implies a much broader view of the human psychoperceptual range than that proposed in conventional Western psychology.

[...] At the heart of transpersonal psychology is the proposal that there is a "mind" or "life" component to consciousness that is qualitatively different from known physical systems, and that some transpersonal experiences are not to be dismissed as merely interesting illusions, unusual patterns of neural firing, and so on, but actually tell us something about the potential for transcending our ordinary physical limits, as for example in out-of-body experiences. [8]

Hughes, J. (1999). *Altered states: Creativity under the influence*. New York: Watson-Guptill.

64. [...] between 1967 and 1969, humanistic psychology split into at least three parts: The first was transpersonal psychology, with its emphasis on spiritual practice, meditation, and higher states of consciousness. [p. 274]

Taylor, E. I. (1999). *Shadow culture: Psychology and spirituality in America*. Washington, DC: Counterpoint.

65. Transpersonal psychology is also a psychology with a vector, with an emphasis on mental health and optimal well-being. The human being is assumed to be basically good and oriented toward growth, including not just the self, but also the transcendent levels beyond

the personal state. In asserting that there are peak and transcendent experiences, there is also the implicit position that these are worth seeking, just as humanistic psychology holds that human potential is worth exploring and achieving. [p. 197]

Hastings, A. (1999). Transpersonal psychology: The fourth force. In D. Moss (Ed.), *Humanistic and transpersonal psychology: A historical and biographical sourcebook* (pp. 192-208). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

66. Transpersonal psychology stands at the interface of psychology and spirituality. It is the field of psychology that integrates psychological concepts, theories, and methods with the subject matter and practices of the spiritual disciplines. Its interests include spiritual experiences, mystical states of consciousness, mindfulness and meditative practices, shamanic states, ritual, the overlap of spiritual experiences with disturbed states such as psychosis and depression, and the transpersonal dimensions of interpersonal relationships, service, and encounters with the natural world.

The core concept in transpersonal psychology is *non-duality*, the recognition that each part (e.g., each person) is fundamentally and ultimately a part of the whole (the cosmos). [p. 4]

Davis, J. (2000). We keep asking ourselves, what is transpersonal psychology? *Guidance & Counseling*, 15(3), 3-8.

Also: Davis, J. (n.d.). A brief definition of transpersonal psychology. Retrieved September 1, 2000, from Metropolitan State College of Denver Web site: <http://clem.msdc.edu/~davisj/tp/>

67. Transpersonal psychology, while not necessarily denying Freudian theory, sees "transpersonal" or spiritual development as another phase of human growth beyond the level of ordinary personal concerns. To adherents of this movement, transpersonal work is intended not only to heal personal trauma, but to help people realize their fullest potential.

[...] Taken at its broadest, transpersonal psychology encompasses all forms of psychology that regard the "transpersonal" or spiritual dimension to be an integral part of the psyche; it says that developing this dimension is part, perhaps even the core, of the purpose of human life. [pp. 299-301]

Smoley, R., & Kinney, J. (1999). *Hidden wisdom: A guide to the Western inner traditions*. New York: Penguin/Arkana.

68. Transpersonal psychology seriously studies and respects the entire spectrum of human experience, including holotropic states, and all the domains of the psyche—biographical, perinatal and transpersonal. As a result, it is more culturally sensitive and offers a way of understanding the psyche that is universal



and applicable to any human group and any historical period. It also honors the spiritual dimensions of existence and acknowledges the deep human need for transcendental experiences. In this context, spiritual search appears to be an understandable and legitimate human activity. [p. 217]

Grof, S. (2000). *Psychology of the future: Lessons from modern consciousness research*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

69. Ordinary psychology has addressed itself to the ego and the instinctual personality. Transpersonal psychology, while also interested in the ego, is especially interested in the Soul, as a spiritual dimension that is beyond ego and the flow of mental phenomena [...]

Transpersonal psychology expands the scope of inquiry into human nature to explore the further reaches of human development and consciousness. Three decades of research combining ancient wisdom with contemporary science have yielded a rich treasury of insights. Formerly unsuspected states of consciousness have been discovered, with higher stages of development and latent abilities that are potentially available to us all.

Italian Association of Transpersonal Psychology. (2000). *Assisi 2000, Time of the soul: Consciousness, creativity, commitment* [Brochure].

70. Transpersonal psychology [...] aims to study aspects of the psyche or cosmos beyond the personal, ego, or individual, such as spirituality and mystical experiences. It might be considered an example of ontological idealism (or dualism) if it posits a transcendental realm; or epistemological idealism, insofar as it employs the methods of intuition and contemplation. [p. 206]

Valentine, E. R. (2000). Metaphysics. In A. E. Kazdin (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of psychology* (Vol. 5, pp. 204-209). New York: Oxford University Press.

71. "Transpersonal psychology" is a branch of psychology that is concerned with the study of those states and processes in which people experience a deeper or wider sense of who they are, or a sense of greater connectedness with others, nature, or the "spiritual" dimension. The term "transpersonal" means "beyond the personal" and a common assumption in transpersonal psychology is that transpersonal experiences involve a higher mode of consciousness in which the ordinary mental-egoic self is transcended.

Daniels, M. (n.d.). What is transpersonal psychology? In *Introduction to Transpersonal Psychology*. Retrieved October, 27, 2001, from <http://www.mdani.demon.co.uk/trans/tranintro.htm>

72. "In short, transpersonal psychology stands for the re-enchantment of psychology in combination with the highest levels of theoretical and clinical perception and skill. It advocates freedom and full self-realization for all beings. It sees the meaning and value of all things and the sacredness of the life journey. Without discounting suffering—psychological, social, political, environmental—transpersonal psychology finds delight, comfort, and a sense of Home in the primal and profound interconnection of all existence." — John Davis

[...] Transpersonal Psychology stands for the study and cultivation of optimal mental health, and it calls for the inclusion of spirituality in psychology as the foundation for full human development. Psychology benefits from a recognition and ability to work with an expanded range of human potentials, providing a fuller and richer understanding of therapy and growth. At the same time, psychological concepts and methods can benefit transpersonal seekers. Thus, transpersonal psychology represents the integration of spirituality and psychology through theory, research, and practice.

*Transpersonal Counseling Psychology*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 27, 2001, from Naropa University Web site: <http://www.naropa.edu/transpersonal/>

73. Transpersonal psychology embraces what writer/philosopher Aldous Huxley (1945) called the "perennial philosophy." This philosophy holds the following premises:

- The world as we know it is an expression of a Divine ground of being.
- Humans can know about the Divine ground of being from inference and from direct intuition.
- All human beings possess a dual nature of phenomenal ego and eternal Self.
- Each person can identify with either the phenomenal ego or the eternal Self and each person's life on earth is a means to the end of identifying with the eternal Self.

Transpersonal psychology includes in its mission a facilitation of human development toward these transpersonal goals, as embodied in the perennial philosophy. As such, it becomes a valuable resource for counselors who seek to integrate spirituality into their practice. [p. 13]

Faiver, C., Ingersoll, R. E., O'Brien, E., & McNally, C. (2001). *Explorations in counseling and spirituality: Philosophical, practical, and personal reflections*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

74. transpersonal 1: extending or going beyond the personal or individual 2: of, relating to, or being psychology concerned esp. with esoteric mental experience (as mysticism and altered states of consciousness) beyond the usual limits of ego and personality.

*Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. (2001, 10th ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

75. It [transpersonal psychology] embraces the combined fields of clinical psychology, spiritual and pastoral counseling as well as any philosophies which recognize the close connection between the body and the spirit. Transpersonal Psychology works on the basic assumption that physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth are interrelated. Transpersonal Psychology focuses attention on the human capacity for self-transcendence as well as self-realization and is concerned with the optimum development of consciousness. [p. 1]

National Association for Transpersonal Psychology. (n.d.). *What is Transpersonal Psychology?* Retrieved November 14, 2001, from <http://www.starlighter.com/natp/>

76. [...] transpersonal psychology stresses spirituality, transcendence, and compassionate social action [...] [p. xxiv, n. 1]

Schneider, K. J., Bugental, J. F. T., & Pierson, J. F. (Eds.). (2001). Introduction. In *The handbook of humanistic psychology: Leading edges in theory, research, and practice* (pp. xix-xxv). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

77. Transpersonal theory is concerned with the study of the transpersonal and spiritual dimensions of human nature and existence. Etymologically, the term *transpersonal* means beyond or through (trans-) the personal, and is generally used in the transpersonal literature to reflect concerns, motivations, experiences, developmental stages (cognitive, moral, emotional, interpersonal, etc.), modes of being, and other phenomena that include but transcend the sphere of the individual personality, self, or ego. [p. 5]

Ferrer, J. N. (2002). *Revisioning transpersonal theory: A participatory vision of human spirituality*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

78. Compared with the positivism and reductionism that had long dominated the field, transpersonal psychology's inclusion and validation of the spiritual dimension of human experience opened the modern psychological vision to a radically expanded universe of realities—Eastern and Western, ancient and contemporary, esoteric and mystical, shamanic and therapeutic, ordinary and non-ordinary, human and cosmic. Spirituality was now

recognized as not only an important focus of psychological theory and research but an essential foundation of psychological health and healing. [p. viii]

Tarnas, R. (2002). Foreword. In J. N. Ferrer, *Revisioning transpersonal theory: A participatory vision of human spirituality* (p. vii-xvi). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

79. Broadly inclusive, it [transpersonal psychology] focuses on psychological, physical, and spiritual experiences that are *transpersonal*—reaching through, across, and beyond the self. It is concerned with the study of the origins and development of humanity's deepest potentials and their impact on individuals, groups, and cultures [...]

The field was founded with a commitment to open inquiry, experiential and empirical validation, and a holistic approach to human experience.

Association for Transpersonal Psychology. (n.d.). [Flyer]. Received January, 2002. San Francisco, CA.

80. Transpersonal psychology contributes to the more traditional concerns of the discipline an acknowledgment of the spiritual aspect of human experience [...] One basic tenet of transpersonal psychology is that there is in each individual a deeper or true self that is experienced in transcendent states of consciousness. Distinct from the personality and the personal ego, it is the source of inner wisdom, health, and harmony. [p. 452]

Fadiman, J., & Frager, R. (2002). *Personality and personal growth* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

## Thematic Analysis

TO BETTER grasp the degree of congruence in the contents of the compilation, we did a frequency analysis of how often different themes in the entries occurred. Table 1 presents the themes and their associated frequencies for those themes occurring six or more times in the 80 entries comprising the compilation. (In tabulating frequencies we did not count the same theme occurring more than once in a given entry.)

The most frequently occurring theme ( $n = 53$ ; 66.2%) reflected going beyond or transcending the personal, ego, or self in some sense—not surprising, since the term “transpersonal” directly suggests this meaning (see, e.g., Sutich, 1976). Although this theme appeared the most frequently, the precise meaning of terms like “ego” and “self” have yet to be explicated and agreed upon in

the transpersonal literature (Ferrer, 2002, p. 196, n. 9; Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992a, 1992b).<sup>10</sup>

The second most prevalent theme (n = 49; 61.2%) encompassed the notion of spirituality. This theme, too, can be traced to the origin of transpersonal psychology, one of the aims being to enable the study of religious/spiritual experiences independently of institutionalized religion and theological frameworks (Shapiro, 1994; and see Maslow, 1970). The number of entries that contained both of the most frequent themes was 27 (33.7%).

Beyond the two prevailing themes, the frequencies of other themes dropped precipitously, as Table 1 indicates. These themes, occurring six or more times, were: special states of consciousness; interconnectivity/unity; going beyond other schools of psychology; emphasis on a scientific approach; mystical experience/mysticism; studying the full range/spectrum of consciousness/experience; emphasis on recognizing greater human potential; inclusion of non-Western psychologies; meditation; and the existence of a wider reality. Some examples of infrequently occurring themes (occurring fewer than six times) were: perennial philosophy; optimal mental health; transformation; mystery of being; and reality or consciousness as constructed.

Two earlier studies have some bearing on the thematic frequency analysis. In an analysis of the "Statement of Purpose" published in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* from its inception in 1969 through the first issue of 1982, Lajoie, Shapiro, and Roberts (1991) found that while some terms were deleted in the Statement and others were added, some terms continued to appear in one form or another, including peak experiences, ecstasy, mystical experience, essence, bliss, awe, wonder, unitive consciousness, oneness, cosmic awareness, cosmic play, spirit, sacralization of everyday life, and individual and species-wide synergy. Of these concepts, mystical experience, unitive consciousness, oneness, cosmic awareness, and spirit appear with some frequency in the present study. However, it should be noted that among the ongoing terms that appeared in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* Statement, ecstasy, bliss, awe, wonder, cosmic play, and individual and species-wide synergy were rarely, if ever, the subject of articles published in the journal (Lajoie, Shapiro, & Roberts, 1991).

In a second study by Lajoie and Shapiro (1992b), definitions of transpersonal psychology

Table 1  
Thematic Frequency Analysis\*

Frequency	Theme
53 (66.2%)	Going beyond or transcending: the individual, ego, self, the personal, personality, or personal identity; existence of a deeper, authentic, or true Self
49 (61.2%)	Spirituality, psychospiritual, psychospiritual development, the spiritual, spirit
26 (32.5%)	Non-ordinary states of consciousness; altered states of consciousness; other modes of consciousness; transcendent states; higher states of consciousness
17 (21.2%)	Interconnectiveness; cosmic unity or consciousness; cosmic relationship; unity, unitive, unitive consciousness
17 (21.2%)	Goes beyond other schools of psychology
14 (17.5%)	Emphasis on transpersonal psychology as a scientific approach or discipline; using scientific methods; integrating a scientific approach with other approaches
14 (17.5%)	Mystical experience; mysticism
14 (17.5%)	Full range or spectrum of consciousness or human experience
13 (16.2%)	Greater/deepest/highest/fullest/infinite potential
10 (12.5%)	Inclusion of non-Western psychologies
7 (8.7%)	Meditation
6 (7.5%)	Existence of a wider reality

\*Based on total of 80 entries

spanning the first twenty-three years of the transpersonal psychology movement were compiled and subjected to a thematic frequency analysis, similar to the present study. The most frequent themes, occurring 15 or more times in the 37 entries analyzed, were: states of consciousness; highest or ultimate potential; beyond ego or personal self; transcendence; and spiritual. Themes that occurred 5 to 14 times were: transpersonal experience; cross-cultural



(Asian/East/West); inner states; unitive consciousness; holistic; transformation; and mystical/mysticism. Although no direct comparison between these results and the present study is possible because the criteria for selecting entries in the two compilations differ,<sup>11</sup> we note that most of the themes of the earlier 1992 study are represented in our Table 1.

Our overall conclusion, based on the thematic analysis of the entries in the compilation, is that contemporary views of the essence of transpersonal psychology over the past decade favor the theme of going beyond the personal and the theme of spirituality, although, less frequently, the essence of transpersonal psychology also reflects a variety of other characterizations.

### Notes

1. Including a few from 2002 that came to our attention before going to press early in the year.
2. The Internet is where we exercised the most selectivity, inasmuch as this medium reflected the most idiosyncrasy in potential entries—not surprisingly, as it is generally less subject to external review than books and journals and is more often associated with marketing endeavors. The compilation is likely to be least exhaustive with respect to the Internet, where search engines can produce thousands of websites with some link, however tenuous, to the phrase “transpersonal psychology”; moreover, the contents of websites can periodically change.
3. We did not include entries that were a direct or nearly direct quote of a previous entry in our compilation unless additional substantive material was included, and in these cases (entries 25, 65, and 80) we included only the additional material.
4. Although we consulted several dozen English-language dictionaries of various sizes, we only found four that referred to transpersonal psychology, though some others contained the term “transpersonal.”
5. The total number of citations for the 80 entries is 85 because five entries are listed with two sources.
6. Bracketed material, including bracketed ellipses, are our additions unless otherwise noted.
7. The nine items in this list are captions, each of which the author explains in more detail.
8. Cf. following variant entry of same year:

*Transpersonal experiences* may be defined as experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche, or cosmos [...]

*Transpersonal psychology* is the area of psychology that focuses on the study of transpersonal experiences and related phenomena. These phenomena include the causes, effects and correlates of transpersonal experiences and development, as well as the disciplines and practices inspired by them. [p. 203]

Walsh, R., & Vaughan, F. (1993). On transpersonal definitions. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 25, 199-207.

9. In cases where we found another (verbatim or near-verbatim) citation source for a given entry, we included the additional source for the convenience of readers.
10. For an example of the potential intricacy of more precisely characterizing a concept like ego in a single tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, see Guenther (2001).
11. We chose to focus the present compilation on the essence of transpersonal psychology rather than on definitions of the field in the hope of capturing more information about how transpersonal psychology is conceptualized.

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