

1-1-2000

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Recommended Citation

Gilot, L. B. (2000). Gilot, L. B. (2000). Psychological and spiritual roots of transpersonal psychology in Europe. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 19(1), 133–140.. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 19 (1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2000.19.1.133>



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Psychological and Spiritual Roots of Transpersonal Psychology in Europe

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European sources of transpersonal psychology involve science and the spiritual tradition: both are relevant for consciousness research, developmental studies, and psychotherapy. The almost common element of scientific sources (Jung, Assagioli, Dürckheim, Frankl) is the concept of the ego-Self axis, whereas in Christian mysticism it is virtues—humility, devotion, and surrender to God’s will, leading to mental silence—fundamental for the unity of the Soul with the Divine. Eastern and Western spirituality are complementary, as the former, based on awareness practices, is deeply relevant for the opening of the third-eye chakra, or spiritual intuitive intellect (wisdom), and the latter for the opening of the heart chakra (love). Joining the paths of love and wisdom is an important finality of an integral model of transpersonal development, education, and psychotherapy. May the research on the integral model unify the efforts of American and European seekers for the benefit of the world and humanity.

*Sickness comes from matter,
but healing comes from Soul.*

—Paracelsus

TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY originated in the USA in the late 1960s and developed in Europe in later decades as a new field of research and endeavour proposing a revolutionary approach to theories of mental health based on a unified paradigm joining scientific psychology and traditional wisdom. In the very beginning, the word “transpersonal” referred to “the farther reaches of human nature” (Maslow, 1969) and to states of consciousness in which “the sense of identity or self extends beyond the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, *psyche*, and cosmos” (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993, p. 3).

In the preface to his book *Toward a Psychology of Being* Maslow (1962) defined transpersonal psychology as a transhuman and more elevated perspective, centered on cosmic rather than individual needs and interests, thus going beyond the single human condition, and to be elaborated on the basis of compassion and love for human

nature, rather than on disgust and indifference. Through such a higher psychology the science of life could be also a life of passion, hope for humanity, and revelation of values.

In more recent times, especially through Ken Wilber’s research (e.g., 1997), transpersonal psychology has become a specialized field of developmental studies, addressing the stages of identity and consciousness in which the highest talents, creativity, and intuitive intelligence flourish as optimal well-being and behavior, contributing to the peaceful evolution of the planet. In this frame of reference, transpersonal psychology intends to offer not only a context for mental healing, but a system of growth in which potentialities that are latent in the unconscious can be integrated to the point of attaining the spiritual goal of Enlightenment, corresponding to direct realization of the spiritual essence of the Self and to Liberation from the suffering due to ontological ignorance.

The realization of the Self, as outlined in the meditative tradition, corresponds to the apex of all the lines of development: the *cognitive* ones, corresponding to superconscious intuition which perceives the

universal principles; the *affective* ones, corresponding to unconditional and inclusive love; the *moral* ones, corresponding to action without attachment in the service of life; and the *interpersonal* ones, corresponding to solidarity, compassion, and generosity toward others (Boggio Gilot, 1987).

Transpersonal studies have developed in the USA emphasizing the value of the Eastern meditative tradition, overall Hindu and Buddhist, for its methods of awareness and transformation, and much work has been done toward a synthesis between these methods of meditation and psychology. Antecedents to transpersonal psychology, however, existed in Europe much before the birth of the American movement. As pointed out by Descamps (1991): "Transpersonal psychotherapy was, at its beginning, a typically European construction, with the Swiss Carl Gustav Jung, the Italian Roberto Assagioli, the French Robert Desoille, the Austrian Viktor Frankl, the German Karl Dürckheim. These are the five precursors of transpersonal psychotherapy."

In addition to the foremost psychologists mentioned by Descamps, the leader of the French Transpersonal Association, Europe has also contributed a precious spiritual tradition, mainly from Christian sources, and both contributions are relevant for the development of research in the field.

• The Ego-Self Axis in European Transpersonal Psychologists •

The common element of four of the above five European transpersonal pioneers is the conception of the ego-Self axis.

Carl Gustav Jung

GOING FAR beyond the narrow psychoanalytic concept of personality, based on the mechanistic, materialistic, and biomedical model, Jung (1980, 1983) defined the Self as a totality, embracing individual and collective unconsciousness and synthesizing all of their polarities in a wholeness. He pointed out that the Self is not only a totality but also a center transcending the ego and operating on it. Such a paradoxical description of the Self as a wholeness and transcendent center is widely described in the Upanishads, the last part of the Vedas, the ancient Hindu sacred texts on which is founded the Advaita Vedanta tradition, providing the largest source of knowledge on the nature of the Self and Self-realization. Jung used a symbolic language

to define the Self. The symbol he used was the circle, an archetypal figure of wholeness where the circumference represents all the forms of individuality and the center the point to which all refers. In other words, the circle represents the Self as the center of an extension that includes all human components and that maintains and holds in equilibrium the entire psyche and the personal ego.

Comparing the totality of the Self to the fragmented ego expressing itself as a mask or persona, Jung used another metaphor, noting that as the earth turns around the sun, so the ego turns around the Self. As a central and transcendent principle, the Self is like an interior guide of a superior order: differentiated by the conscious personality, it is a higher subject acting as a regulating factor, inspiring the ego and bringing it to maturation. The Self operates beyond the psychological contents and independently of conscious efforts.

Roberto Assagioli

THE FATHER of psychosynthesis, Assagioli, shared with Jung the concept of the ego-Self axis. In his view, the Self is behind, or above, the conscious ego, and exists in an area of reality which is different from the flow of psychological phenomena and from organic life: the Self cannot be influenced by their contents, but its own influence can deeply modify the psychophysical conditions (Assagioli, 1973).

Assagioli recognized that the Self has a permanent nature and is interconnected to universal life. In other words, the Self has a universal and transcendent nature that is beyond the limits of death and finitude. It is the archetypal essence of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, and the seat of the manifest spiritual virtues which originate from an undifferentiated and indivisible reality (Spirit, Consciousness, *Summum Bonum*).

Compared to Jung, Assagioli goes beyond theory and proposes a practical experiential goal. For Assagioli, Self-realization becomes connected to applied and transformative spirituality: he referred to this as the goal of psychosynthesis and the highest meaning of human development.

Assagioli emphasized that *Self-experience* is different from *Self-realization*. The former is a temporary and transitory experience which can arise when ordinary consciousness is deconstructed for various reasons, such as through meditative techniques or deep visualizations as well as through

traumas or experiences of deep love. Far more than a transitory experience, Self-realization is, instead, the ending point of the developmental process of integration of all the unconscious potentialities: it is the highest stage of identity and consciousness.

Viktor Frankl

THE MEANING of ego transcendence is implicitly found also in the theories of Viktor Frankl (1983), the Austrian codifier of logotherapy. In this context, the human dimension goes beyond psychological patterns and includes a higher noetic area. Suffering is related not only to psychodynamic causes, but also to noetic disturbances resulting in existential frustration and inner void and despair.

Going beyond the behavioristic perspective, according to which individuals merely obey or react to external stimuli, the Austrian psychotherapist stressed the free capacity to address the issues of life and to realize the specific meanings of an individuated existence. The need for meaning is independent from others and is an expression of human nature and a sign of mental health. The lack of meaning is behind the many corruptions of modern life, and the repression of the need for meaning has a relevant role in the genesis of psychopathology and suicide.

The meanings pointed out by Frankl refer to the actualization of human potential, consisting in the unconscious talents of intelligence, creativity, and values: the psychology which addresses meanings is a “high psychology,” that is different from, but complementary to, “depth psychology.”

The search for meaning is what produces the shift to ego transcendence—namely, putting oneself in relation with something higher. Ego transcendence is based on universal values and meanings, which include the actions of helping others. In this context, the evolution of human growth shifts from that of *Homo sapiens*, who move between success and failure, to that of *Homo patiens*, who understand suffering as a means of evolution toward a higher and more expansive way of being in the world.

Karl Dürckheim

FOREMOST PSYCHOLOGIST and spiritual teacher Karl Dürckheim (1982), proposed an inner path that takes as an example the great self-realized Masters and balances the two cultures of meditation and psychology. Deeply connected to the dimension of the sacred, Dürckheim finds that love of God gives

meaning to inner life and that spirituality nourishes the search for mystery inside the intimate Soul.

To Dürckheim, the ego dimension is a part of the great unity of the Self, and unifying the ego-Self dichotomy gives the highest meaning to life. Overcoming ordinary personality and discovering the unifying essence of the Self is the issue of real maturity and optimal mental health. The goal of transcending the ego is realized through the path of initiation—that requires silence and action: silence for the time of inner search, and action for activating creativity to the service of life. Joining contemplation to action and service is the basic and fundamental way to realize transpersonal development.

The level of the human being and the expression of the Self are mirrored in the relationship to life when action produces well-being and harmony. The supreme level of human development manifests itself as a constancy in overcoming egoism: The more elevated the level of the human being, the more his/her life is determined by unity in behavior, feeling, and thought. In this context, unity is not a philosophical term or an abstract theory but a practical way of living, consisting of intuition, cooperation, love, and service. Dürckheim stresses the power of liberated human beings who are witnesses and messengers of the transcendent, superior order of life. These human beings of “high rank” are unattachable—authentically free from the boundaries of any kind of attachment to material and mental dimensions.

Dedicated to healing suffering but working differently than an Eastern guru, Dürckheim has been a spiritual psychotherapist using psychodynamic, analytical methods combined with the best of authentic religious life.

• Ego Transcendence in Christian Spirituality •

THE THEME of ego transcendence is present in all the writings of these European pioneers of transpersonal psychology, but the way to reach it is only part of spiritual traditions. In this context, since the very beginning, and up through the present, the transpersonal movement has mostly approached Eastern traditions rather than Western ones.

Perhaps this cultural choice could be related to the more explicit reference of Eastern traditions to a transformative spirituality associated with optimal mental health and development. Eastern sacred texts contain deeply detailed

methods of mental awareness and transformation which help the healing processes at both the psychosomatic and the psychological level. Moreover, as exemplified especially in Patanjali's Yoga tradition, they consist of progressive techniques which are especially helpful for the difficulties of the neophyte, whereas Christian tradition teachings are often more fit for advanced meditators at an evolved stage of trans-ego development. At the present time, therefore, research in comparative Eastern and Western spirituality seems to be an urgent need, as it can contribute to a deeper understanding of transpersonal processes and methods.

In my experience as a transpersonal psychotherapist and researcher in developmental theories, with both a Christian background and deep experience as a seeker in the Yoga-Vedanta tradition, I have found common and complementary elements in Western and Eastern spirituality relevant to transpersonal development and optimal mental health. In a developmental perspective, Hindu teachings are crucial for the integration of cognitive translogical structures (e.g., the process of discrimination in Vedanta develops superconscious intuition), whereas Christian mysticism is especially valuable to opening the heart chakra and for the deep transformation from egocentric feelings to altruistic and unconditional love. The combination of the wisdom of Vedanta with the agape of Christianity seems to unify the masculine and feminine polarity of spirituality and for this reason can represent an integral way for transpersonal development (Boggio Gilot, 1992). In a healing perspective, both Christian and Hindu practices produce positive mental qualities and well-being.

Let me point out some basic Christian assumptions which I found relevant for transpersonal purposes in both a developmental and a healing perspective. They are taken from Meister Eckhart, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, Thomas Merton, the Fathers of the *Philokalia*, and from two anonymous jewels of Christianity, *The Imitation of Christ* and *The Cloud of Unknowing*.

The common denominator in these Christian sources is the idea that the spiritual path is composed of three basic stages: *purification*, *insight*, and *unification with God*. In this context, virtues and mental qualities which are deeply relevant for ego transcendence and liberation from suffering are cultivated and developed. The most important ones are *humility*, *devotion*, and *surrender to God's will*. These spiritual qualities, which are the basis of the

Christian path, are also valuable for the transformation of mental factors of ignorance and separation, and their practice can have a direct application in psychotherapy.

Humility

IN MEISTER ECKHART (1987), humility is described in terms of forgetting oneself. This is very similar to the Eastern concept of disidentification or detachment. Forgetting oneself does not mean that we must lose the love for ourselves or separate from our needs, but that we have to transcend the arrogant personal importance and the blind assumption that only our ideas are valid. A similar concept is found in Thomas Merton (1991), who points out that we have to detach not from things but from ourselves in order to see God. The obstacle is our separate will.

Both the Eastern and the Western traditions consider egocentric intentionality as a barrier to the integration of transpersonal potentialities and to Self-awakening. Personal will (by which is meant not the indispensable mental function but the praxis of an activity dominated by egocentric aims and attached to its pleasures and possessions) is the real enemy of spiritual unity.

In Christian mysticism there are two levels of humility: one comes from contemplating human fragility and the higher one from contemplating the perfection of God.

In *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Anonymous, 1992) humility is described as the true knowledge and full awareness of one's own ego as it is. A similar concept is found in St. Teresa of Avila (1992), who describes humility as the virtue that allows us to see ourselves as we are. Since humility is connected with knowledge, it is also connected with awareness and insight about the ego's unconscious dimensions. In fact, if we reach humility we are no longer disturbed by what we are, we stop defending ourselves from our shadow, and we accept seeing our real nature. In other words, the condition of humility, as acceptance of oneself, permits one to overcome the defensive mechanisms which create perceptual filters that obscure the vision of oneself.

Because it permits the acceptance and knowledge of oneself, humility is the main quality of clear vision, psychological integration, and mental healing.

In the absence of humility, and when pride is present, illusion and suffering develop. Psychothera-

pists know that superego pathology, which constellates neurotic and narcissistic conflicts, is full of pride and therefore void of humility.

Pride is a main factor of inner hate, as it builds omnipotent expectations and motivations which damage peace of mind and create inner conflicts. The narcissistic struggle against one's unacceptable limits and defects is a characteristic of the proud mind, which creates separation in the inner world. Substituting humility for pride is a task of psychotherapy, in order to create healing factors which alleviate mental conflicts.

Devotion

LIKE HUMILITY, devotion is a main quality for the Christian lover of God, applied as an expression of reverence toward God and all His creation. Devotion has an implicit meaning of all-pervasive and inclusive love for nature and humanity: it fosters ecological concern, compassion, empathy, and forgiveness. Moreover, devotion is an attitude of pure intentionality, which represents the essence of spiritual transformation.

In *The Imitation of Christ* (Anonymous, 1997), it is said that the basis of the elevation to God is the intention to reach Him. Right intention is the devoted attitude of looking beyond the visible reality, including one's body and desires, toward the invisible essential goodness. In the Vedanta tradition (Samkara, 1981), devotion is considered an ardent will for liberation from ignorance, expressing itself as the unceasing search for one's real nature (the Self, or immanent Divine). In this context, devotion is at the service of Self-realization. The more devotion provides a pure and selfless intentionality, the more it donates a heart full of love. The Christian pure intentionality, as the Vedanta ardent will for liberation, is the cry of the heart for unity with the Sacred and such a state of spiritual desire propels one toward right action and loving feelings.

From an ethical point of view, intentionality, as the ardent direction to realize the divine qualities, releases consciousness from ego attachment and promotes a redirection of desires and choices from egoistic projects to altruistic and loving ones.

Besides being an ethical quality fostering the loving relationship with God, devotion is a fundamental tool for developing intuition: transpersonal insight is the gift of an open and loving heart. In fact, the space of mind where devotion exists as an attitude or pure intentionality toward the Sacred, qualifies itself as a state of silent receptivity

where intuition starts to develop. Like humility, devotion is also a quality of mental healing, dissolving solitude, insecurity, and weakness.

Surrender

IN THE Christian path, devotion is the door to surrender to God's will: the peak of realization of inner peace. It consists in accepting everything that happens in life, as it is and as it comes, with trust and serenity, listening with hope to the teachings of life. Such a deep acceptance brings the human being closer to the Truth, and also builds calmness, another quality of mental health.

The awareness produced by humility, the sense of love and insight produced by devotion, and the serenity produced by surrender to God, are also qualities of mental health which open one to unity and interpersonal harmony.

The person who experiences humility, devotion, and surrender becomes less and less concentrated on personal needs and more concentrated on the needs of others, thus forgetting personal difficulties and problems while becoming attentive to those of others. Such an egoless and altruistic attitude opens one to Service and is also a way of healing one's wounds. Helping others and forgetting oneself produces an openness through which it becomes possible to receive transcendent healing energies; moreover, it gives meaning to life, dissolves fear, and increases freedom.

On Solitude

IN THE path of ego transcendence, both in the Eastern and the Western traditions, it is easy to encounter obstacles and pitfalls. The Christian sacred texts advise the seeker of God that even Service, which is the essence of egolessness, can become an obstacle for spiritual evolution if one is attached to the idea of being a good person; in this sense, Service might reawaken pride and personal importance. The advice is to consider oneself as a selfless servant, to be protected from the ever-present risk of pride. The real spiritual ascender knows that *what really matters is not what one does, but what one becomes by doing*. The real aim of Service is to acquire the virtues that can help in transcending the ego's prison.

In order to avoid pitfalls, Christian purification teaches that it is necessary to live in solitude and silence, dedicated to prayer and meditation. The condition of mental silence is also mentioned in the

Hindu tradition as a basic qualification for enlightenment.

Patanjali (1992) states that "Yoga is the suspension of mental contents." Yoga, which means unity of the individual soul with the universal soul, requires the dissolution of mental contents and the absorption in the void as pure awareness without thought and images. Like Patanjali, St. John of the Cross points out that since perfection consists of the unity of the soul with God, in order to realize it, the mind must be released from sensorial reactions, intellectual thinking, and imagination. Any kind of mental process is an obstacle to the divine unity and must be dissolved. As do the Eastern masters, St. John (1979) describes how personal attachments to sensorial desires and temporal possessions prevent the silence of mind and produce weakness, affliction, anxiety, and lack of awareness. In other words, the path of purification of will, thought, imagination, feeling, and sensation leading to silence develops qualities of spiritual insight and a progressive freedom from suffering.

For the Fathers of the *Philokalia* (*Philocalia*, 1981), absolute solitude (Hesychasm) is the fundamental means to develop mental silence, preventing stimuli which capture attention and move the flow of thinking. In Hesychasm, solitude is cultivated by living in a cell: this is not only a concrete environment, but metaphorically it is the private inner space of prayer and meditation. The cell is the inner dimension wherein the meditator abides and leads the spiritual practice. It refers to a state of consciousness of introversion and attention to inner movements, which submits the person to the so-called inner struggle against the mental enemies or egotistic drives.

In the spiritual path, the more virtues that develop, the more knowledge and healing develop. Purification fosters gratitude and love for God, but also peace of heart and interpersonal harmony.

✠ Mental Health Beyond Egocentric Suffering ✠

AS ALREADY mentioned, the integration between psychotherapy and spiritual teachings offers an expanded framework for spiritual growth and mental healing (Boggio Gilot, 1998). Such an integral model is neither just another way of dealing with psychopathology nor another school of psychotherapy. It is a larger perspective for developing psychological diagnosis and therapy

which reveals the role of egoism in mental suffering and the role of spirituality for mental healing.

In this integral perspective, transformative spirituality is a means of ego transcendence and a healing factor for egocentric suffering. Transformative spirituality emphasizes the fundamental role of love as a factor in the solution of conflicts and wisdom as a factor of peace, freedom, and creativity. In this frame of reference, two main categories of practice are relevant:

1. The Eastern practices of awareness and observation—in order to understand mental processes and overcome the illusory perceptual filters which create boundaries of consciousness.
2. The Christian practices of virtues—in order to develop positive states of mind based on love.

Observing the Sources of Mental Suffering

IN THE awareness and observation path, it is possible to realize how egoistic factors can be harmful and produce mental suffering. For example, greed for pleasure and the focus on obtaining only gratifications, avoiding any frustration, is the root of existential anxiety and hostile defence against the world.

The need for ego assertion is at the very root of rage, fear, hate, and rebellion. The stronger the reference to oneself, in terms of "I like/I don't like, I want/I don't want," the more the person is weak and dependent on others. Such a dependence is a fundamental fragility consisting in the incapacity to bear the normal sorrows and failures of life. In other words, egocentric vulnerability is proportional to the feeling of personal importance: From the strong attachment to oneself comes possessiveness and the anxiety of losing things, and therefore gives rise to dependence and aggressiveness.

In the egoistic mind, solitude is always present. No one in the world can warm the solitude which inhabits a heart closed by egocentrism. Moreover, passions, such as desires and aversions, create a basic feeling of insecurity and fear. The stronger the egocentric drive, the greater the terror of being disappointed and deprived. Resentment, jealousy, envy, and competition are factors of egocentric suffering present in those who are unable to accept that their will can be defeated.

The anxiety of abandonment is the result of the egoistic pretense that others must nourish one's inferiority and frustrated needs. Such people tend to become satellites of others and expect love and food

from them, in the illusion that others have the power to nourish them. From the egocentric attitude, particularly the pretense of being perfect, also comes the feeling of inferiority and shame for one's limits and defects. Such a narcissistic context, connected to the idea of perfection, is based on the will for power and can be found in individuals who are extremely concentrated on their ambitions.

Integral psychotherapy teaches that optimal mental health can only be reached beyond the boundaries of ordinary egoistic attitudes, starting with their building rocks: *pride* and *avidity*. Real poisons of mind, they are at the very root of the sense of separation from the unity of life. They build ignorance and are the sources of all other factors of suffering.

One who is possessed by avidity and pride experiences the stress of competition, fear of failure, fragility, touchiness in interpersonal relations, and anxiety for the future. One who is enthralled by avidity and pride experiences the worst state of dependence and weakness. Possessiveness and defensive attitudes are the effects of avidity and pride: they develop dishonesty and violence as means to compensate for the ego's insecurity.

The Practice of Virtues as Healing Process

OVERCOMING THE suffering created by such poisons of the mind requires a process of mental purification, which is nothing else than a cultivation of spiritual qualities. In Christian terms, the practice of humility heals the wounds of pride, which are intolerance, fear, and competition; the practice of devotion heals the wounds of possessiveness and liberates one from the sense of separation from others; the practice of surrender to God's will heals the wounds of both pride and avidity and releases one from any personal desire.

The purity of mind reached through humility, devotion, and surrender allows the archetypal forms to start being integrated. Courage, strength, will, and creativity are reflections of humility and devotion, as mental stability and lack of anxiety are effects of the surrender to God's will.

In the spiritual path, both East and West, liberation from egocentric suffering starts when consciousness becomes inhabited by attention to mental contents. It then grows through the awareness of the duality of evil, or egocentric illusions, and goodness, as altruistic creativity. Liberation is eventually realized as the joyful expression of a nonego state, when personal importance is abandoned and we live concentrated on cultivating virtues.

Liberation becomes a state of invulnerability when surrender to the divine will is attained, as the serene acceptance of the good and evil of one's experiences, beyond attachments and aversions, in the joyful reverence for all that occurs in life.

❖ Concluding Remarks ❖

SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS help us understand that ego transcendence, through transformative spirituality, yields not only an ethical way of being but also optimal health and lasting joy. In the path of ego transcendence through dissolution of the egocentric boundaries, the themes of mental health, consciousness expansion, and development of virtues appear in a continuum and demonstrate the interface between psychology, spirituality, and social ethicalness.

Ego transcendence is what our world really needs in order to foster peace. Beyond ego there is unity with the interrelated life of the universe, embracing the infinite, and harmony with the Sacred.

By observing life in the perspective of unity with the Sacred, any concern disappears and the ever-present inner joy awakens.

When, in permanent joy, the archetypes of the Self appear as the essence of beauty, goodness, and truth, all that has been sought after in the external world stops existing. Any external expectation dies and the feeling of deep fulfillment and gratitude takes the place of any personal drive.

In the harmony of a purified mind, ego transcendence permits us to be what we really are: no longer a false and weak identity struggling for power, success and wealth, but lasting channels of the divine power and joyous witnesses of its beauty. To strive toward this ultimate goal is the spiritual task of transpersonal research and its real meaning—that any seeker should keep in mind and pursue with the best of efforts, talents, and love.

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Appendix

Transpersonal European Organizations

THE FORMAL transpersonal movement started in Europe with the establishment of the *European Transpersonal Association* (EUROTAS) in 1987. EUROTAS was founded by Monique Tiberghien (Belgium), Marc-Alain Descamps (France), Laura Boggio Gilot (Italy), and Rumold Mol (Netherlands).

Beyond personal frontiers and in the context of different disciplines, cultures, and professions, EUROTAS is open to a wide range of trends with a transpersonal perspective and is not limited to any particular discipline, school of thought, or technique.

Over the years, some EUROTAS members, oriented toward a deeper context for research and transformative spirituality, gave rise to a more professionally oriented organisation, the *European Transpersonal Psychology Association* (ETPA).

ETPA was established in 1999 by Laura Boggio Gilot and Marc-Alain Descamps as an association of professional psychologists and psychiatrists for the study, teaching, and research of transpersonal psychology and psychotherapy in the integral perspective. Pointing out the relevance of integral psychology, as defined by Ken Wilber, ETPA is focused on transformative spirituality and consciousness development beyond ego, through spiritual practices, in order to understand reality and heal individual and social life.

In this context, ETPA fosters a dynamic epistemology toward body, mind, soul, and Spirit wholeness, and unified or nondual consciousness, in which the qualities of intuitive awareness, compassion, and discriminative wisdom are expressed in a socially engaged spirituality.

Teaching and research of transpersonal psychology and psychotherapy in an integral perspective include: developmental research, consciousness disciplines, teaching and practices of the nondual tradition, purification and self-healing techniques, awareness training, clinical aspects of spiritual crises, relationship between psychotherapy and meditative practices, and Eastern and Western psychology.

ETPA's members are recommended to be committed to daily spiritual practices, such as meditation, action without attachment, service, cultivation of altruistic love, and truthfulness.

In addition to individual membership, ETPA includes the following six national associations:

- AIPT, Italian Association of Transpersonal Psychology
President: Laura Boggio Gilot
- AFT, French Transpersonal Association
President: Marc-Alain Descamps
- ALUBRAT, Portuguese-Brazilian Transpersonal Association
President: Mário Simões
- ATRE, Spanish Transpersonal Association
President: Manuel Almendro
- GTA, German Transpersonal Association
President: Martin Gruber
- NTF, Norwegian Transpersonal Association
President: Loyd Henriksen

