

9-1-2021

Harris Friedman: Pioneer of Transpersonal Psychology as a Science

Harris L. Friedman

University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA

Glenn Hartelius

Alef Trust, Wirral, UK

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/ijts-transpersonalstudies>



Part of the [Dance Movement Therapy Commons](#), [Other Psychiatry and Psychology Commons](#), [Philosophy of Mind Commons](#), [Philosophy of Science Commons](#), [Psychological Phenomena and Processes Commons](#), [Religion Commons](#), [Somatic Psychology Commons](#), and the [Transpersonal Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Friedman, H. L., & Hartelius, G. (2021). Harris Friedman: Pioneer of transpersonal psychology as a science. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 40 (1). <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2021.40.1.iii>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#). This Preliminary is brought to you for free and open access by International Journal of Transpersonal Studies. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Journal of Transpersonal Studies by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact the editors.

Harris Friedman: Pioneer of Transpersonal Psychology as a Science

Editors' Introduction

Building on a career of 40 plus years as a transpersonal psychologist, Harris Friedman continues to play a substantial role in the development of transpersonal psychology, which he sees as a heterodox subfield of scientific psychology. This tribute article consists of an introduction by the journal's Editor-in-Chief, Glenn Hartelius, followed with an interview of Harris by Glenn, an introduction to the articles in this issue, and then a brief summary statement by Harris regarding his approach to transpersonal psychology—published as a standalone piece (Friedman, 2021).

Other tributes have been written about Harris' work (e.g., Fracasso et. al., 2011; Richards, 2015), but not in a specifically transpersonal journal, and undoubtedly Harris deserves recognition in a journal that is aligned with the specific area of scholarship to which he has contributed so much. In addition, Harris has authored a few invited papers of an autobiographical nature (Friedman, 2018a, 2019). He has received a number of accolades for his work, such as the "Abraham Maslow Award" in 2016 from the American Psychological Association (APA) through its Humanistic Psychology Division, "given to an individual for an outstanding and lasting contribution to the exploration of the farther reaches of human spirit," and the Florida Psychological Association's 2003 annual award for "Outstanding Contributions in the Public Interest" for his applied work in helping underserved and disadvantaged groups.

Harris sees himself as one the first-generation transpersonal psychologists. Although not one of the area's founders, apparently he was the first doctoral student to graduate with an accredited PhD with a major area concentration explicitly naming transpersonal psychology¹. He received his doctorate from the APA-approved clinical psychology program at Georgia State University, and his dissertation produced the first measure of a specifically transpersonal construct (Friedman, 1981). This opened the way for scientific advancement in a field seen by most at that time, and many still today, as resisting scientific work. Completing this concentration and dissertation within a mainstream school was a challenge he has written about in this journal (Friedman, 2013a)

Harris published the major findings from his dissertation in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (Friedman, 1983), and he has continued to develop and apply his measure in many settings (e.g., Friedman, 2013b, 2018b, 2021; Friedman, MacDonald, & Kumar, 2004; Friedman & Pappas, 2006; Pappas & Friedman, 2007, 2012; Rock et al., 2021). These are fitting achievements for a scholar who pioneered the transpersonal field as a science. However, Harris was at first reluctant in his embrace of a scientific approach to transpersonal psychology, as he discusses in the interview.

Beyond his contributions in scientific approaches to transpersonal psychology, he has made major contributions to the area as a whole. These include both academic and applied endeavors.

In academic terms, in 2003 he assumed responsibility for the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* (IJTS)—now the field’s largest journal (Hartelius, 2021), and brought it from the University of Hawaii to Saybrook University, where he served as the journal’s editor. When the latter institution prepared to shut down its publication in 2006, Harris negotiated for the transfer of IJTS to the nonprofit organization Floragades Foundation. Serving as Senior Editor since 2010, he has overseen the transformation of IJTS to an online publication available at no charge, and its development from around 100 paying subscribers to an indexed journal with about 100,000 article downloads per year. It is now the main resource for current empirical research in the transpersonal field (Hartelius, 2021).

Harris also conceptualized the need for an integrating volume that would overview the entire area of transpersonal psychology. He promoted this idea to a major mainstream publisher, and as senior editor of what became *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Transpersonal Psychology* (Friedman & Hartelius, 2013), he guided its production. With 38 chapters representing more than 55 authors on topics recommended by a wide sampling of scholars, it is at once the most current and most comprehensive introduction to transpersonal psychology. This handbook provides one readily accessible academic source for those wanting an overview.

Harris has also promoted the viability of transpersonal psychology as a “movement,” one that provides an expansive worldview compared to mainstream psychology more narrow perspective. Harris revived the International Transpersonal Association (ITA), an institution founded by Stanislav Grof (Grof et al., 2008), with the vision of supporting collaboration among the far-flung professional associations that serve the field. He has served as the president of the board of the ITA since its reincorporation, and received several grants that have enabled it to make useful contributions.

Harris was also a long-term board member of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology (ATP), and as its co-president Harris recently participated in the development of a conference celebrating the area’s 50th anniversary. He has also pressed to update a mid-20th century professional association model into a more

contemporary design. These efforts toward building the area’s infrastructure have been an instrumental part of its viability, visible in the expansion of its literature (Hartelius, 2021) and the emergence of a second wave with increased focus on diversity as well as embodiment, embeddedness, and transformation of the whole person (Hartelius et al., 2021).

Above all, Harris’s incessant push for scientific approaches to transpersonal psychology has stimulated the area to grow—each decade since its founding has seen an increase in empirical research (Hartelius, 2021). Other transpersonal scholars, such as Abraham Maslow, Charles Tart, Stanley Krippner, Stanislav Grof, and Anthony Sutich, have emphasized the need for empirical work within the field, but Harris was the first to make a formal call for transpersonal psychology to function as a subfield of scientific psychology. He has also put forward delineations between transpersonal psychology as a science, other transpersonal sciences such as transpersonal anthropology, and transpersonal studies that do not use scientific approaches. Furthermore, Harris has not just talked about aspiring to do transpersonal science but has repeatedly shown how it can be done. He has contributed to transpersonal science by prolifically publishing empirical papers in both mainstream and humanistic-transpersonal journals.

Harris’ call for using scientific approaches has raised some objections in the transpersonal literature (e.g., Cunningham, 2019a, 2019b; Ferrer, 2014), but these were typically aimed more at caricatures of science than at the version of careful qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method inquiry advocated by Harris (e.g., Friedman, 2015; cf. Hartelius, 2019). Currently there is a culture war in transpersonal psychology, and Harris has taken a leading role in advocating for scientific approaches. One of his most influential papers on the role of science (Friedman, 2002), for example, met with a harsh rejection by reviewers at the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, who claimed he “was throwing out the baby with the bathwater” by advocating for scientific silence when it comes to any utterances about ultimates, a theme he entertainingly declined to write about in a recent paper (Friedman, 2018c).

Much of Harris’ work has focused on carefully defining and measuring transpersonal constructs,

such as his work on self-expansiveness (Friedman, 1983; 2018b). In addition, in close collaboration with Douglas MacDonald and others, Harris has been a participant in writing about scientific transpersonal assessment (e.g., Friedman & MacDonald, 1997, 2002), and cataloging the empirical measures relevant to a transpersonal approach (MacDonald & Friedman, 2009; MacDonald et al., 1999; MacDonald et al., 1995)—thereby gathering some of the tools necessary for building the field in a scientific manner.

Harris's (2002) initial strong call for transpersonal psychology to function as a science was fortuitously timed, coming just after Ken Wilber (2000) had withdrawn his metaphysically-based integral model from the transpersonal field (Hartelius, 2017), and coinciding with Jorge Ferrer's (2002) proposal for a non-metaphysical frame for the transpersonal study of spiritual pluralism. Together, these contributions by Friedman and Ferrer provided structure and fabric for a scientific transpersonal psychology based in a flexible and inquisitive open naturalism (Hartelius, 2019).

In addition to wide-ranging research in transpersonal psychology, Friedman's scholarship also includes work in less controversial areas. For example, he has consulted globally with organizations and governments, leading to an interest in "transcultural competence" (e.g., Friedman, Glover, Sims, Culhane, Guest, & Van Driel, 2013; Glover & Friedman, 2014, 2015). He also has recently cultivated an interest in "transpecies" studies (e.g., Bloom & Friedman, 2013; Bloom et al., 2021; Trevathan-Minnis, 2021). In both of these areas, he enjoys the use of the prefix "trans" as he advocated going beyond usual boundaries toward expansive understandings.

This is also reflected in his interest in parapsychology (e.g., Rock et al., 2013a, 2013b), which goes beyond the boundaries of ordinary conception about humans and the world. In a paper in this issue, he engages in a dialogue with Dean Radin and Stanley Krippner on the subject of bringing transpersonal and parapsychology into better alignment (Friedman et al., 2021).

He also has participated in the development of incisive critiques of mainstream scientific claims, such as debunking Fredrickson's (e.g., 2004) widely cited research in positive psychology (e.g., Brown et

al., 2016; Brown et al., 2013; Heathers et al., 2015). In one paper, he showed the flaws in five of the articles by this one lauded positive psychologist (Friedman et al., 2020). He also claims that by having to be defensive in presenting transpersonal psychology to the criticisms of mainstream psychology, has learned how to become a more astute methodologist, which has enable him to better criticize the many foibles within mainstream psychology.

Harris's entry into the transpersonal area in 1981 coincided with the founding of IJTS by Don Diespecker, so this 40th volume of the journal seems a fitting place to acknowledge the scholar who has tended the publication for roughly half of its existence. In the following interview conducted in July of 2022, Harris Friedman considers his decades-long trajectory in the field of transpersonal psychology.

Interview with Harris Friedman

Glenn Hartelius: *Harris, how did you get into transpersonal psychology?*

Harris: I was interested in psychology as a field because I was looking for a way to make a right livelihood. I wanted to do something that had integrity, something that I thought would be worthwhile and would contribute to the world. I was very attracted to the hard sciences, to physics and chemistry and medicine, but at that time the Vietnam War was raging and people in physics and chemistry were being hired by technology companies to develop weaponry and such. As an undergraduate I was also very interested in religion and philosophy, so I turned to psychology. I thought psychology would be benevolent, and would be something that I could do to help people—that I could make a living, and also do well for the world.

My undergraduate degree was in psychology, but the conservativeness of psychology never did attract me. Frankly, I was astounded at the rigidity around methods in psychology, where the emphasis was so strongly on quantitative methods and statistics. Fortunately, at Emory we had a joint graduate program in social psychology in which half of the masters students were in sociology and the other half were in psychology. So my MA was in sociology,

but it was actually an interdisciplinary program in sociology and psychology, along with a heavy dose of anthropology. All of the methods courses I took were in sociology rather than psychology, and this has always served me very well. In sociology we had statistics and we had quantitative approaches, but the field was much more open methodologically—ethnography and other qualitative approaches were deemed just as important as quantitative research. The idea in sociology was always to find a problem and not be limited in your methods: use whatever methods are appropriate to get answers to your problem. Psychology, on the other hand, was much more ritualistic.

For my doctoral work I initially enrolled in the prestigious, high-powered psychology program at Emory University, but I left it to go to Georgia State University because Georgia State welcomed innovation and creativity, and it had a lot of people who were mavericks. When I told my mentor at Emory where I was going, he described the people at Georgia State as a bunch of white elephants. He told me many of the faculty at Georgia State had been forced out of Emory—not given tenure—either because they had radical ideas or they just didn't fit the conservative climate of Emory, which was a prestigious conservative southern Methodist university. So Georgia State had a lot of the rejects from Emory on their faculty, but these rejects were actually the most charismatic and interesting people. In my first term as a doctoral student in the clinical psychology program at Georgia State, I ran across a copy of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* that someone had just left on a table in the graduate student lounge. This was the Fall of 1972, so it would have been one of the very early issues of that journal. I picked it up and looked at it, and I said, "Ah, there's a name for the type of psychology that I want to do." We had to declare a major and a minor area of specialization, and so I declared transpersonal psychology as my major area and body awareness as my minor. I was practicing Aikido seriously and I was interested in somatic based interventions like bioenergetics. I finished my doctorate in 1981, and I think I earned the first doctorate specialized in transpersonal psychology from a fully accredited psychology program.

For my doctoral dissertation I was required to do an empirical study, so I looked at measures and found that there were no transpersonal measures, or at least none that were explicitly transpersonal. There were of course ones that were similar—in fact, the one that I modeled my measure on was the Hood Mysticism Scale (1975), and I used that measure to validate the transpersonal scale in my measure. Hood's measure is more in the Christian tradition with a psychology of religion approach, and was not explicitly transpersonal.

The result was that I created the first explicitly transpersonal measure. Like many people attracted to transpersonal psychology, I wanted to write a theoretical dissertation, but I was denied that choice. I had been told that if I chose to work in a more conventional area, other than transpersonal psychology, I would have greater freedom and could do something that wasn't empirical. But since it was daring to specialize in transpersonal psychology, I had to do an empirical dissertation to graduate. My major professor was willing to support me, but he also tried to discourage me. He said, "Look Harris, if you work in a more conventional area and you use methods that we approve of, and if you find nothing, then we will still give you a doctoral degree, because you went through the process in the way that the discipline of psychology operates. Whether you find something of significance does not really matter. But if you dare to go off the beaten path and try to find something in the transpersonal area, and you find nothing, that's not a dissertation." He said, "You could go out to try to find elephants in North Georgia. You know they don't exist there, and everybody knows that, so if you don't find them, that's not a dissertation—that's an effort in futility." But he also said that if I did find a herd of elephants in North Georgia, it would be a dissertation. So the department gave me the freedom to do what I wanted to do, even though they didn't believe finding anything scientifically worthwhile in the transpersonal area could be done.

Incidentally, while dissertating, I discovered Ken Wilber's (1977) first book, and I was upset. I said to myself, that's what I wanted to write for my dissertation, but was not allowed. Of course, Wilber did a much better job than I would have!

Anyway, I completed my empirical dissertation (Friedman, 1981) by defining and

measuring a transpersonal construct, self-expansiveness. The reason I worked on creating a transpersonal measure was I needed a compatible tool to use in transpersonal research, and none yet existed, so my dissertation focused on creating such a tool. After doing this, I felt my job as a transpersonal scientist was done. I had shown that a scientific approach could be used in transpersonal psychology as a “proof of concept,” and I went on to an applied career as a clinical and organizational psychologist.

However, some years after I finished my dissertation, Doug MacDonald (MacDonald et al., 1994) replicated the measure I created for my doctoral work—found it to be psychometrically sound, and even took it a bit farther. When I shared this with my major professor, he told me I was “vindicated.” I asked him what he meant by vindicated, and he said, “Well, a lot of the faculty in the program thought that it was not possible to find coherent data in the transpersonal field. But then you came back with a doctoral dissertation that was so elegant, and all the data fit your theory so well, so that a lot of people thought you made it all up: they thought you faked your data. So having Doug McDonald replicate your work has vindicated you.” I was both shocked and kind of proud, you know, that I had gone against the mainstream and had managed to do something transpersonal that did show empirical validity, not only through my own work but through the work of others. After all, science is a collective activity, and replication and extension by others is key to cumulative progress.

Glenn: *You didn't continue in academia at that time.*

Harris: Doug's vindication re-inspired me to return to transpersonal science, and I did come back to academia soon after he replicated my dissertation. Prior to that I got licensed as a psychologist and got trained as a gestalt and bioenergetic therapist, and I did a lot of work with hypnotherapy and family systems therapy. I also had a career doing organizational consulting globally. I wasn't doing anything explicitly transpersonal, but the transpersonal view was always my underlying frame of reference. That was how I thought about things. I didn't speak that language to others, however, such as if I was working with a

psychiatrist in a hospital setting. My transpersonal perspective was just implicit.

During the time I had graduated with a doctorate, I did consider an academic job at the University of West Georgia. Although I had a pretty successful consulting company going, I was thinking about an academic job, and I was interviewed at West Georgia University. West Georgia was a humanistic-transpersonal program, and it was much more that way back in the early 1970s. However, the rewards for working in academia were meagre, and the political climate in rural Georgia at that time was threatening, so I decided to go into an applied career.

Glenn: *What finally brought you back to academics?*

Harris: One day, maybe seven years after I graduated with my doctoral degree, I was looking through the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, and I saw this article replicating my research, the one by Doug (MacDonald et al., 1994). That's when I got vindicated, but I also got revived. That was when I said to myself, “Oh, I want to do research again!” I had been doing some research before that, but it was more oriented to social-change topics. For example, I did a nationwide study of the hospitality industry in the Bahamas—I spent a couple of summers hanging out in the four- and five-star hotels in the Bahamas—you know, hard work, but somebody had to do it. I also did a couple of applied research projects, but nothing that was explicitly transpersonal.

But once I saw that what I had done in prior years had been replicated and even extended—that it was not just, you know, my own imaginary production but had had some meaning in a more substantial and consensual way, then I started doing more research. At a certain point, I decided to leave the much higher paying professional activities of organizational consulting and clinical psychology and, instead, return to academia. I took a job at Saybrook University as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean.

I might mention that I never would have been hired as a faculty member at Saybrook on my scholarly credentials back then. They had a lot of very well published and well-known people. So I really was not competitive as a faculty member, but

I got hired because I knew how to write grants and I knew how to run organizations, so I bypassed the usual academic route by returning to academia in an administrative role at age 50, and rededicated myself to an academic pathway, including research and writing scholarship. After serving in that administrative role, I had the opportunity to stepback into a faculty role, so that's how I broke into academe.

Glenn: *During that time, were you at all involved with the Association for Transpersonal Psychology?*

Harris: No, I was only a member, but I wasn't active in any way. If there was any area of psychology I was involved with it was more the social psychology areas of social change and cultural psychology.

Glenn: *How did you get involved with the International Journal of Transpersonal Studies (IJTS)?*

Harris: IJTS was founded in Australia by Don Diespecker in 1981, and it was published as the *Australian Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* through 1992. Then in 1993 Sam Shapiro took it over and brought it to the University of Hawai'i where he was a professor. When he was retiring, he was trying to get somebody to take over the journal, because he knew there would be no ongoing support for it at his university. He approached Stan Krippner, a professor at Saybrook at that time, who brought it up with me as Academic Dean at Saybrook.

I lobbied for Saybrook to adopt the journal, and the Board was in favor, providing that at least one faculty member at Saybrook would agree to be its editor. Every faculty member that I spoke with said it was a wonderful idea to have Saybrook adopt IJTS, but nobody wanted to be the editor. Since there were no other options, I reluctantly agreed to take it on. So that's how I became the editor. Luckily my good friend Doug McDonald, who had vindicated me by replicating my research, agreed to be co-editor with me. He and I shared the burden, which made the load much lighter, and we edited the journal together from 2003 through 2006.

Glenn: *Tell me about what you taught while you were at Saybrook.*

Harris: After I stepped out of deaning, I taught research methods classes, assessment classes, systems of psychotherapy classes—mainly in the clinical and transpersonal area. I also started writing scholarly papers again. At Saybrook, a lot of the students expressed the view that they had no use for assessments, that they were being forced to take the course because it was part of the curriculum. So I wrote a paper on transpersonal assessments (Friedman & MacDonald, 2002), and how it was important to be able to formulate ideas about people in order to guide treatment. If one just jumps right into treatment without some sort of plan, one is not as likely to end up at a good destination.

The first dissertation I supervised at Saybrook was James Pappas', who further replicated and extended the Self-Expansiveness Level Form that I developed in my doctoral work. His dissertation received the Sidney Jourard Award for the outstanding dissertation of the year by Division 32 of the American Psychological Association—now the Society for Humanistic Psychology. It also received the award for the best paper of the year by the Council of Spiritual Practices. I nominated James Pappas's dissertation for the best dissertation award at Saybrook, but I got tremendous pushback. People literally were shouting at me, saying that Saybrook can't have a quantitative dissertation as its best dissertation of the year—so it was rejected based on ideology.

As much as there was prejudice in the mainstream against transpersonal topics, there was pushback in the other direction by many humanistic-transpersonal scholars. I challenged the Saybrook faculty who privileged qualitative methods as best suited for transpersonal explorations to debate the topic with me, but nobody accepted the challenge. Later, however, I wrote an adversarial-collaboration paper with Mike Arons supporting the position that qualitative methods are best: Mike argued for using only qualitative methods, while I argued for methodological pluralism (Franco et al., 2008). Mike was quite a gentleman for agreeing to defend this, what I considered indefensible, position, as many others refused my challenge to debate this issue. I see this position as a blemish on humanistic-transpersonal psychology (Friedman, 2008, 2014), but I'll leave it to readers to see how the debate unfolded.

When I was working as a psychologist and a consultant I had always seen myself as kind of progressive on the liberal or even radical side of things—you know, pushing frontiers—but when I got to Saybrook I found that in their system I was seen as conservative and an obstructionist who bought into mainstream values that they rejected. I was pushing for using conventional scientific approaches to expand the boundaries of exploration into transpersonal perspectives, whereas at Saybrook the majority of people wanted to abandon conventional methods in favor of what they thought were frontier approaches—things that were very open-ended and non-structured—that they saw as being more humanistic and transpersonal. I'm all for innovation, but I saw these more as lacking in rigor—more pre-personal than transpersonal, to use Ken Wilber's distinction (see MacDonald & Friedman, 2020). I'm an advocate for using all the tools that are available to answer interesting questions, without holding an ideological preference for one method or another, and that position caused me a lot of pain at Saybrook, a lot of rejection, with people literally shouting at me—students as well as faculty members—who thought that was bad.

Glenn: *Interesting. So how did you end up coming out of Saybrook with the journal, with IJTS?*

Harris: At a certain point Saybrook made the decision that it was no longer advantageous to publish the journal, and I scurried around looking for alternatives. But I couldn't find any, so I took it upon myself to adopt the journal through Floraglades Foundation. Floraglades, which stands for Florida Everglades, is an environmental foundation that I had created to preserve endangered land where I lived in the south Florida wilderness, so I took on that responsibility. Not enthusiastically, but out of wanting to see the journal preserved and seeing it as an important voice for transpersonal perspectives. Also, in contrast with the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* I saw the international journal as having a broader reach, being international and being defined as “studies” rather than just as psychology. I saw it as being more transdisciplinary, more welcoming to scholars from a variety of disciplines who embrace a transformational perspective on the world.

Harris Friedman: Pioneer of Transpersonal Psychology

Glenn: *What got you interested in reviving the International Transpersonal Association?*

Harris: A big part of my interest was thinking that I could give the international journal a home there. If I couldn't find an academic home for it, then perhaps I could affiliate it with an organization that could support it, rather continuing to support it out of my own pocket, as I largely self-funded Floraglades. Serendipitously, I found out that Stan Grof had shut down the International Transpersonal Association that he had founded and run for a number of years. He used it as a vehicle to put on many international transpersonal conferences, but for a variety of reasons he chose to let it go. I got in contact with Stan and he agreed to let me revive it and use the name. I was able to reincorporate it and give it a second life.

Glenn: *What do you see as the accomplishments under the umbrella of the ITA?*

Harris: I was able to get support to do things like build a website for the organization, and I have personally provided contributions to support its existence; even today the Floraglades Foundation pays for some of its incorporation fees and helps in other ways.

We've also played a supportive role with a number of conferences. ITA hasn't put on its own conference, but we've been able to work with other transpersonal organizations that were putting on conferences and help those events become more international. For example, there was a conference in Russia for which I was able to get funding through the Fetzer Foundation, and also through the Dharma Foundation, to be able to offer scholarships and airfare and lodging for international transpersonal scholars who otherwise would not have been able to afford traveling to the conference to present their scholarship. Also, there was a large transpersonal conference in Brazil a number of years ago, for which I was able to find funding to help people attend. Furthering transpersonal conferences was Stan Grof's initial mission for the ITA, and that's most of what we've actually done.

But I'm a little disappointed that more hasn't happened. The ITA has never really found its standing in the world transpersonal community. My vision for

the ITA was for it to become an umbrella organization that could support all of these transpersonal organizations that exist around the world, and perhaps also help develop new transpersonal organizations in places where there's a lot of interest, but maybe not the resources to organize.

But a challenge has been that several other transpersonal organizations see themselves as preeminent and worldwide—for example, the Association for Transpersonal Psychology sees itself as an international coordinating organization, and EUROTAS also sees themselves as an international transpersonal organization. My hope was that ITA could serve a mediating role, a place where these organizations could have a forum in which to collaborate. For example, instead of having one organization offering a conference at a time that overlaps with when another organization wants to put on a conference, they could work through ITA to find a way to collaborate for the benefit of supporting the whole of the transpersonal field.

Glenn: *I recall that the ITA had solicited and received nominations for representatives from pretty much all of the international transpersonal associations, but one or two key holdouts effectively blocked the project.*

Harris: That's accurate.

Glenn: *You also joined the Association for Transpersonal Psychology. What were your goals there?*

Harris: When I was elected co-President of the ATP board, it was with the condition that I resign from the ITA, because some of the people on the ATP board thought that there was a conflict of interest to be in a leadership role for both organizations—whereas I saw the roles as complementary. But in order to help ATP in a way that I thought was beneficial, I did resign from the ITA Board, and later I became co-president of ATP.

I was hoping to first off help ATP become more viable. As the first transpersonal organization, at one time ATP had I think over 3000 members. When I became co-President, I believe the membership was down to a couple of hundred, rather than being in

the thousands, and I saw ATP as really not having done anything substantial in a number of years. Part of my contribution to ATP was that we did offer a large successful conference in California in honor of the 50th anniversary of the field, which I helped to organize as its co-President.

I'm also really very invested in having the transpersonal movement become more global and not so Westernized, and in particular not so American-centric—even not so California-centric. One of the things that I think I accomplished with ATP is that it used to be governed by a board that was almost totally California-based, and I was able to promote a geographical diversification of the board. We were also able to get some ethnic diversity on the board, so that was very good.

I also hoped that I could, through being in a leadership role, get ATP to form a more cooperative stance with the other transformational organizations, and I hoped that maybe, even though I was no longer on the ITA board, I could further the collaborative goals that I had for ITA when I revived that organization. Unfortunately, I was not very successful at all.

I've now rejoined the ITA board, and the board is really looking closely at what ITA wants to do and its continued viability as an organization.

Glenn: *What do you see as far as transpersonal psychology's contribution to the larger field of psychology?*

Harris: I think we've had a profound impact, but we're not recognized. So, for example, mindfulness is so prevalent these days that people use the term "McMindfulness," and there are thousands of research papers on it, but before transpersonal psychology any discussion of meditation was not seen as part of psychology or science. I'm thinking of Daniel Goleman's (1971, 1972) early publications in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* where he did some brilliant work looking at meditative systems. I don't know that any other psychology journal would have published it. And now, Dan has gone on to be a popular figure in the area of emotional intelligence, which has received a lot of recognition.

I see meditation as a psycho-technology, a way to enter alternate states of consciousness that can give us a more holistic, richer, deeper,

broader view of the world. But I don't want to put meditation into some sort of unique context. I think it's just one of many tools that can do this. For example, I see psychedelics as another technology akin to meditation—one that can be aligned with meditation. We're seeing so much interest in healing from psychedelic medicines, a sort of psychedelic renaissance after a long hiatus when these medicines were banned. I think psychedelics can provide an enhanced way to do meditation, rather than just relying on traditional systems of altering awareness. Then there's the ecological aspect of transpersonal, that uses the model of interconnectedness to point to the shortsightedness of human opportunism, of people who prey on the environment and take from the world resources, who degrade the oceans and the atmosphere, without regard to giving back. That sense of interconnectedness is implicit in transpersonal understandings, and transpersonal psychology was one of the pioneers in this way of thinking about the world.

Systems theory existed before transpersonal psychology, but transpersonal psychologists pioneered the notion of systems worldviews, which is a powerful way of looking at the whole area of ethnic diversity. Prior to transpersonal psychology most people who looked across cultures—anthropologists and psychologists and sociologists—looked at non-European people in denigrating ways, as primitive, or as less than Westerners. White people were assumed to be at the top of some pinnacle of evolution. Transpersonal psychology and transpersonal anthropology opened up the notion that we can study people not as objects of lesser regard, but that we can not only learn *about* indigenous and non-Western practices, but we can learn *from* them. Multiculturalism was a big part of what transpersonal psychology helped to usher in, but we don't get recognized much for it. If you look at the thousands of articles every year on these topics like meditation, psychedelics, and multiculturalism, transpersonal psychology is rarely mentioned, if at all.

I believe that the transpersonal approach is a more inclusive and more holistic and more useful approach to psychology and many other disciplines, and I think bringing this into the world is something very worthwhile to do. I'll go back to my statement

about right livelihood. You know, we all get opportunities to do something with our limited life in this world, and when I discovered transpersonal psychology, well, it captures a lot of what I want to do within my chosen profession of psychology. I see furthering the transpersonal field as very much part of my calling.

In This Issue

We are pleased to offer a Special Topic Section on Empirical Research in Transpersonal Psychology, introduced separately. This and the next three issues together will consist primarily of empirical papers on transpersonal topics—reflecting what we hope will be the beginning of an empirical phase within the field. While not an exclusion of other types of papers, an empirical phase would bring much-needed evidence for the understanding of transpersonal theories, constructs, and processes.

Our general section opens with Harry T. Hunt's paper on "Socio-Cultural Bases of a Globalizing Neo-Shamanism and its Relation to Climate Crisis: Possibilities, Inevitabilities, Barriers." This work concludes his six-paper series on Intimations of a Spiritual New Age. Hunt examined past impulses towards such a spiritual renewal in Parts I–IV, which addressed Simone Weil, Wilhelm Reich (two parts), Martin Heidegger, and Carl Jung. His concluding paper looks forward and offers the prospect of moving past hyper-individualistic New Age spirituality towards an entheogen-energized neo-shamanism that might inspire re-sacralization of the planet in time to inspire containment of ecological disaster.

A second paper by Neda Wassie considers "Meditation-Induced After Death Communication" as "A Contemporary Modality for Grief Therapy." Her paper considers evidence from research on psychomanteum use, induced after-death communication, and mediumship, concluding with a call for more empirical study of this modality for therapeutic treatment of grief.

After the Special Topic Section, a concluding paper presents discussion between three transpersonal scholars entitled, "Parapsychology and Transpersonal Psychology in Dialogue: Could These Two Movements Be Brought into Better Alignment?"

Here Harris Friedman, Dean Radin, and Stanley Krippner consider the considerable similarities and complementarities between the two areas of study.

The issue concludes with a book review by Sheri D. Kling of Rosemarie Anderson's recently published work, *The Divine Feminine Tao te Ching: A New Translation and Commentary*. This review presents Anderson's focus on this ancient Chinese classic as a "fresh take on ancient wisdom," embellished with accounts of Anderson's time in China forty years ago, and her encounters with Chinese calligraphy, along with her engagements with Chinese language and philosophy.

*Harris Friedman, Senior Editor
Glenn Hartelius, Editor-in-Chief*

Note

1. Although there were earlier transpersonal dissertations at schools such as Sofia University (formerly the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology) and Saybrook University (formerly the Humanistic Psychology Institute and later Saybrook Institute), such as Anthony Sutich's PhD degree for his dissertation on the founding of humanistic and transpersonal psychology on April 9, 1976 (Vich, 1976), Saybrook (2022) only received regional accreditation in 1984; the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology received regional accreditation in 1998.

References

Bloom, T., Trevathan-Minnis, M., Atlas, N., MacDonald, D., & Friedman, H. (2021). Identifying facial expressions in dogs: A replication and extension study. *Behavioural Processes, 186*, 104371. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beproc.2021.104371>

Bloom, T., & Friedman, H. (2013). Classifying dogs' (*Canis familiaris*) facial expressions from photographs. *Behavioural Processes, 96*, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beproc.2013.02.010>

Brown, N., MacDonald, D., Samanta, M., Friedman, H., & Coyne, J. (2016). More questions than answers: Continued critical reanalysis of Fredrickson et al.'s studies of genomics and well-being. *PLoS One, 11*(6), e0156415. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0156415>

Brown, N., Sokal, A., & Friedman, H. (2013). The complex dynamics of wishful thinking: The critical positivity ratio. *American Psychologist, 68*(9), 801–813. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032850>

Cunningham, P. (2019a). Scientism and empiricism in transpersonal psychology. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 51*(1), 6–27.

Cunningham, P. (2019b). Science and unity in transpersonal psychology--Part II. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 51*(2), 176–197.

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

Ferrer, J. N. (2014). Transpersonal psychology, science, and the supernatural. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 46*(2), 152–186.

Fracasso, C., Franco, Z., MacDonald, D., & Friedman, H. L. (2011). Measuring the transpersonal: The research and mentoring contributions of Harris Friedman. *NeuroQuantology, 9*(3), 499–514. <https://doi.org/10.14704/nq.2011.9.3.460>

Franco, Z., Friedman, H. L., & Arons, M. (2008). Are qualitative methods always best for humanistic psychology research? A conversation on the epistemological divide between humanistic and positive psychology. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 36*(2), 159–203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873260802111242>

Fredrickson, B. L. (2004). The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *Philosophical transactions of the royal society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences, 359*(1449), 1367–1377. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2004.1512>

Friedman, H. L. (1981). *The construction and validation of a transpersonal measure of self-concept: The Self-Expansiveness Level Form*. Georgia State University.

Friedman, H. L. (1983). The self-expansive level form: A conceptualization and measurement of a transpersonal construct. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 15*(1), 37–50.

Friedman, H. L. (2002). Transpersonal psychology as a scientific field. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies, 21*(1), 175–187. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2002.21.1.175>

Friedman, H. L. (2008). Humanistic and positive psychology: The methodological and epistemological divide. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 36*(2), 113–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873260802111036>

- Friedman, H. L. (2013a). Friedman, H. L. (2013a). Searching for wild elephants in the north Georgia forests: The saga of writing a transpersonal dissertation at a mainstream university. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 32(1), 164–166. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2013.32.1.164>
- Friedman, H. L. (2013b). Transpersonal self-expansiveness as a scientific construct. In H. Friedman & G. Hartelius (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Transpersonal Psychology* (pp. 203–222). John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118591277.ch11>
- Friedman, H. L. (2014). Are humanistic and positive psychology really incommensurate? Response to Waterman. *American Psychologist*, 69(1), 89–90. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034865>
- Friedman, H. (2015). Further developing transpersonal psychology as a science: Building and testing middle-range transpersonal theories. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 34(1-2), 55–64. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2015.34.1-2.55>
- Friedman, H. L. (2018a). Everyday heroism in practicing psychology. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 58(4), 397–414. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167817696843>
- Friedman, H. L. (2018b). Transpersonal psychology as a heterodox approach to psychological science: Focus on the construct of self-expansiveness and its measure. *Archives of Scientific Psychology*, 6(1), 230–242. <https://doi.org/10.1037/arc0000057>
- Friedman, H. L. (2018c). An explication of all cogent scientific conceptualizations regarding the non-dual: Finding nothing to write. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 37(2), 116–118. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2018.37.2.116>
- Friedman, H. L. (2019). My biggest mistake as a consultant. *Organizational Development Journal*, 37(3), 71–79.
- Friedman, H. L. (2021a). The Self-Expansiveness Level Form: A Measure of a Transpersonal Construct. In *Assessing Spirituality in a Diverse World* (pp. 189–213). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52140-0_9
- Friedman, H. L. (2021b). An approach to transpersonal psychology as a science. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 40(1), xvi–xxi. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2021.40.1.xvi>
- Friedman, H., Glover, J., Sims, E., Culhane, E., Guest, M., & Van Driel, M. (2013). Cross-cultural competence: Performance-based assessment and training. *Organizational Development Journal*, 31(2), 18–31.
- Friedman, H. L., & Hartelius, G. (Eds.). (2013). *The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of transpersonal psychology*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118591277>
- Friedman, H. L. & MacDonald, D. A. (1997). Toward a working definition of transpersonal assessment. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 29(2), 105–122.
- Friedman, H. L. & MacDonald, D. A. (2002). Using transpersonal tests in humanistic psychological assessment. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 30, 223–236. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873267.2002.9977037>
- Friedman, H. L., MacDonald, D.A., & Coyne, J. (2020). Working with psychology journal editors to correct problems in the scientific literature. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 61(4), 342–348. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000248>
- Friedman, H. L., MacDonald, D. A., & Kumar, K. (2004). Validation of the Self-Expansiveness Level Form with an Indian sample. *Journal of Indian Psychology*, 22(Special Issue), 44–56.
- Friedman, H. L., & Pappas, J. (2006). Self-expansiveness and self-contraction: Complementary processes of transcendence and immanence. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 38(1), 41–54.
- Friedman, H. L., Radin, D., & Krippner, S. (2021). Parapsychology and transpersonal psychology in dialogue: Could these two movements be brought into better alignment? *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 40(1), 123–135. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2021.40.1.123>
- Glover, J., & Friedman, H. (2015). *Transcultural competence: Navigating cultural differences in the global community*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14596-000>
- Glover, J., & Friedman, H. (2014). Cultural dilemmas and sociocultural encounters: A transcultural approach for understanding, assessing, and changing culture. *Organizational Development Journal*, 32(2), 79–92.

- Goleman, D. (1971). Meditation as meta-therapy: Hypotheses toward a proposed fifth state of consciousness. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 3(1), 1–25.
- Goleman, D. (1972). The Buddha on meditation and states of consciousness, Part II: A typology of meditation techniques. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 4(2), 151–210.
- Grof, S., Friedman, H., Lukoff, D., & Hartelius, G. (2008). The past and future of the International Transpersonal Association. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 27(1), 55–62. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2008.27.1.55>
- Hartelius, G. (2017). Circular reasoning is not the uroboros: Rejecting perennialism as a psychological theory. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 36(2), 121–135. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2017.36.2.121>
- Hartelius, G. (2019). Is diversity possible in an integrative psychology-Transpersonal as a whole person / all person approach. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 38(2), iii–x. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2019.38.2.iii>
- Hartelius, G. (2021). Transpersonal psychology: Trends in empirical research and diversity during the first five decades of the field. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 40(1), 39–44. <https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2021.40.1.39>
- Hartelius, G., Crouch, C. R., Adler, H., Thouin-Savard, M. I., Stamp, G., Harrahy, M., & Pardo, S. (2021). Is transpersonal psychology in its second wave? Evidence from bibliometric and content analyses of two transpersonal journals. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 53(1), 9–30.
- Heathers, J., Brown, N., Coyne, J., & Friedman, H. (2015). The elusory upward spiral: Comment on Kok et al. (2013). *Psychological Science*, 26(7), 1140–1143. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797615572908>
- Hood Jr, R. W. (1975). The construction and preliminary validation of a measure of reported mystical experience. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 14(1), 29–41. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1384454>
- MacDonald, D. A., & Friedman, H. L. (2009). Measures of spiritual and transpersonal constructs for use in yoga research. *International Journal of Yoga*, 2(1), 2–12. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0973-6131.53837>
- MacDonald, D., & Friedman, H. (2020). Growing up and waking up: A conversation with Ken Wilber about leaving transpersonal to form integral psychology. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. Online first. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002216780902287>
- MacDonald, D. A., Friedman, H. L., & Kuentzel, J. G. (1999). A survey of measures of spiritual and transpersonal constructs: Part one—Research update. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 31(2), 137–154.
- MacDonald, D. A., LeClair, L., Holland, C. J., Alter, A., & Friedman, H. L. (1995). A survey of measures of transpersonal constructs. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 27(2), 171–235.
- MacDonald, D. A., Tsagarakis, C. I., & Holland, C. J. (1994). Validation of a measure of transpersonal self-concept and its relationship to Jungian and five-factor model conceptions of personality. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 26, 175–201.
- Pappas, J. D., & Friedman, H. L. (2007). The construct of self-expansiveness and the validity of the Transpersonal Scale of the Self-expansiveness Level form. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 35(4), 323–347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873260701593334>
- Pappas, J. D., & Friedman, H. L. (2012). The importance of replication: Comparing the self-expansiveness level form transpersonal scale with an alternate graphical measure. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 40(4), 364–379. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873267.2012.724259>
- Richards, R. (2015). Will the real scientists please stand up? Taboo topics, creative risk, and paradigm shift. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 55(3), 292–322. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167814533725>
- Rock, A., Friedman, H. L., Storm, L., Jinks, T., & Harris, K. (2021). Transliminality and transpersonal self-expansiveness predict paranormal belief. *Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cns0000281>
- Rock, A. J., Storm, L., Harris, K., & Friedman, H. L. (2013a). Shamanic-like journeying and psi-signal detection: I. In search of the psi-conductive components of a novel experimental protocol. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 76(2), 321–347.

- Rock, A. J., Storm, L., Harris, K., & Friedman, H. (2013b). Shamanic-like journeying and psi-signal detection: II. In search of the psi-conductive components of a novel experimental protocol. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 77(2), 249–270.
- Saybrook University. (2022). *From the Humanistic Psychology Institute to Saybrook University: Our timeline*. <https://www.saybrook.edu/unbound/timeline>
- Trevathan-Minnis, M., Bloom, T., Atlas, N., MacDonald, D. A., & Friedman, H. L. (2021). Black dog syndrome: Using dog facial-emotion recognizability to explore this putative phenomenon. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 49(4), 616–629. <https://doi.org/10.1037/hum0000252>
- Vich, M. A. (1976). Anthony J. Sutich: An appreciation. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 8(1), 2–4.
- Wilber, K. (1977). *The spectrum of consciousness*. Quest Books.
- Wilber, K. (2000a). *Waves, streams, states and self—A summary of my psychological model (Or, outline of an integral psychology). Appendix C: The death of psychology and the birth of the integral*. http://wilber.shambhala.com/html/books/psych_model/psych_model1.cfm/xid,7345/yid,3040482

About the Authors

Harris Friedman, PhD, is Research Professor of Psychology (Retired) at University of Florida, and currently supervises doctoral dissertations as Associated Distinguished Professor of Integral and Transpersonal Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies. Starting in September, 2019, he is a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University. He received his PhD in Clinical Psychology at Georgia State University, holds Diplomas both in Clinical Psychology and in Organizational and Business Consulting Psychology from the American Board of Professional Psychology, and is a Fellow of both the American Psychological Association and Association of Psychological Science. He is past President of the International Transpersonal Association and current Co-president of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology, as well as serves as the Senior Editor of the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* and as the Associate

Harris Friedman: Pioneer of Transpersonal Psychology

Editor of both the *Humanistic Psychologist* and the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. With more than 200 scholarly publications, his most recent books include *Transcultural Competence: Navigating Cultural Differences in the Global Community* (2015; American Psychological Association), *The Praeger Handbook of Social Justice and Psychology* (2013; 3 volumes), and the *Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Transpersonal Psychology* (2015/2013).

Glenn Hartelius, PhD, is Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, co-editor of *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Transpersonal Psychology* and *The Ketamine Papers*, and Secretary of the International Transpersonal Association. He also leads a research team focused on a novel approach to the measurement of consciousness, and is an Honorary Research Fellow for Alef Trust in Liverpool, UK. His research on the definition and scope of transpersonal psychology over 20 years has helped to define the field. He has taught at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Naropa University, Saybrook University, Sofia University, California Institute of Integral Studies, and Middlesex University in the UK.

About the Journal

The *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* is a Scopus listed peer-reviewed academic journal, and the largest and most accessible scholarly periodical in the transpersonal field. IJTS has been in print since 1981, is published by Floragrades Foundation, sponsored in part by Attention Strategies, and serves as the official publication of the International Transpersonal Association. The journal is available online at www.transpersonalstudies.org, and in print through www.lulu.com (search for IJTS).

International Journal of Transpersonal Studies xv