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La dimensión colonial de la Modernidad. Un ensayo sobre el caso del sikhismo

The colonial dimension of Modernity.
An essay on the case of Sikhism

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Resumen

En este artículo se examina cómo la Modernidad, a través de la empresa colonial, ha reconfigurado y hasta ha llegado a crear la mayoría de religiones del mundo. Al contrario de lo que suele pensarse, la Modernidad no se opone a la religiosidad, sino que en buena medida ha delimitado y configurado las religiones del mundo no-abrahámico. Lo estudiaremos con el caso del sikhismo, una religión del Norte de la India que ha sido definida y fuertemente ecualizada a lo largo de los últimos 200 años. Asimismo, comprobaremos como, en esa relación y dialéctica, el mundo no-occidental ha contribuido a dar forma a esa episteme que llamamos "Modernidad".

Palabras clave: Modernidad, Sikhismo, Colonialismo, Religión, India

Abstract

This article examines how Modernity, through the colonial enterprise, has reconfigured and even created most of the World Religions. Contrary to common belief, Modernity is not opposed to religion, but has largely defined and shaped the religions of the non-Abrahamic World. We will study the case of Sikhism, a religion of northern India, which has been defined and strongly equalized throughout the past 200 years. We will also see how, in that relationship and dialectics, the non-Western world has helped to shape this "episteme" we call "Modernity".

Keywords: Modernity, Sikhism, Colonialism, Religion, India

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Aseverar que lo transpersonal está íntimamente ligado a las tradiciones espirituales y religiosas del mundo puede parecer un truismo, una obviedad. Desde que se acuñara el término, a finales de los 1960s, lo transpersonal resulta asimismo impensable sin un mínimo conocimiento de las religiones del mundo. Las referencias a las múltiples formas de meditación budista, a los yogas hindúes, a la filosofía Vedânta, a las técnicas chamánicas de diversas religiones primales, a la mística cristiana, sufí o judía, etcétera, son continuas. Lo transpersonal tiene que ver con la religiosidad y la espiritualidad. Sucede que, desde mi óptica, conceptos como los de "religión", "espiritualidad", "meditación", "mística"… son cromáticos y problemáticos. En talante terapéutico, les propongo en este breve artículo un pequeño ejercicio hermenéutico. Consiste en profundizar en la tríada Modernidad-colonialismo-religión; en concreto, en la forma cómo la Modernidad (y su lado oscuro: el colonialismo) ha reconfigurado y hasta me atrevería a proponer –en favor de una sana polémica– que ha creado la mayoría de religiones del mundo.

Con este talante, me sitúo del lado del intelectual inquieto que, más que determinar la naturaleza de las cosas, interroga lo que está aceptado y parece evidente. Para el mundo de lo transpersonal, pienso que la periódica revisión de una categoría como la de "religión" es un ejercicio saludable y creo que necesario. Para la tarea nos serviremos de la religión sikh o sikhismo.

Modernidades

Indaguemos, en primer lugar, en el concepto "Modernidad"; un término complejo, cromático y contradictorio (Giddens, 1991); un concepto que estimo sano y necesario problematizar.

En un sentido restringido, la "Modernidad" remite a un *período histórico*. Pero hay poco consenso respecto a su inicio. Para algunos comienza con la era colonial, en 1492 (Dussel, 1994). Para muchos está íntimamente ligado a la Reforma (siglo XVI). Incluso se ha propuesto que se origina antes, con los trovadores provenzales de la Baja Edad Media. En cualquier caso, esta fase histórica proseguiría con la Ilustración y tendría su expresión más elocuente en la Revolución Francesa. De ahí la propensión a considerar a Occidente como el lugar "natural" de la Modernidad. A lo largo de los siglos XIX y XX la Modernidad quedó definitivamente homologada a lo progresista y lo desarrollado, siempre en contraposición a lo tradicional y lo atrasado. Algunos sostienen que todavía nos encontramos en este período. Otros hablan de postmodernidad, también de transmodernidad (Dussel, 2004) y hasta de ultramodernidad (Willaime, 2011). Al final, sospecho que estas afirmaciones históricas revelan más acerca de quien las enuncia que no sobre la configuración de nuestra sociedad.

Por otro lado, la Modernidad también remite a un *imaginario*. Un imaginario en el que se suele incluir al racionalismo, los derechos humanos, el igualitarismo, la libertad, la democracia, el desarrollo científico y tecnológico, el laicismo, el Estado-nación, etcétera. Por tanto, encontraremos distintas versiones de la Modernidad, tantas como imaginarios o puntos de mira adoptemos. De ahí que tenga tanto sentido hablar de las Modernidades, en plural.

Al mismo tiempo, hay tendencia a asociar la Modernidad a un *proceso*. Un proceso político, económico, social e ideológico que tiene su eje en la implantación y desarrollo del capitalismo, la industrialización, los sistemas políticos democráticos, el secularismo, la configuración del Estado-nación, el desarrollo de la ciencia y la tecnología, etcétera. De donde surge cierta tendencia a confundir algún imaginario de la Modernidad con el proceso de modernización.

Finalmente, la Modernidad se constituye como una *ideología*, o como diversas ideologías, pero que tienen en común una hipertrofia de los imaginarios y fuerzas de la Modernidad. En este sentido, la Modernidad puede concebirse perfectamente como el conjunto de narrativas que tomaron como forma la *mission civilisatrice* y similares. De ahí que sea inseparable del colonialismo, el nacionalismo, la globalización o el racialismo. Se trata de una ideología que puebla eurocéntricamente actitudes y

pensamientos. Para muchos pueblos –sobre todo los de pequeña escala– la Modernidad llegó en el mismo paquete que la explotación y el genocidio. En muchos casos, ha sido como la "sombra" o el "lado oscuro" del igualitarismo, la libertad o la democracia. Por eso, intermitentemente, ha generado diferentes críticas –o autocríticas–, tanto en Occidente (Touraine, 1992) como en las ex colonias (Appadurai, 1996; Chakrabarty, 2002).

Desde mi punto de vista, estimo terapéutico y sano revisar los imaginarios y las ideologías de la Modernidad. Operar cierta descolonización de clichés, prejuicios y binarismos (Pániker, 2005). Ni la Modernidad conforma esa descomunal ruptura con el pasado como ella necesita aparentar, ni se opone tan frontalmente a la tradición o a la religión como muchos de los popes –de la Modernidad o de la religión– defienden.

Modernidades no-occidentales

Me interesa subrayar en particular el papel del colonialismo y de las sociedades colonizadas en la construcción de estos vectores que constituyen lo que llamamos "Modernidad" (Dube et al., 2004). La India nos servirá.

Mi propósito pasa por cuestionar la centralidad que se otorga a Europa en la construcción y desarrollo de la Modernidad. Poner patas arriba la absurda –pero muy extendida– manía de otorgar a Europa el copyright de la Modernidad. Y problematizar la idea de considerar al cristianismo como única religión compatible con la Modernidad (Gauchet, 1985). Aunque es evidente que los imaginarios y las ideologías de la Modernidad se han preparado, ensamblado y cocinado en gran medida en los hornos de Occidente, no suscribo la idea de que sea un proceso inherentemente occidental, aposentado exclusivamente en sus raíces culturales, religiosas o raciales. Ni comparto la extendida noción de que sea un paradigma en oposición al espíritu de la religión.

Sin ir más lejos, la muy oriental India es un espacio históricamente mucho más impregnado de las fuerzas y los valores que asociamos a la Modernidad, que un país extremo-occidental como España. Obviamente, al haber sido colonizada por una potencia europea, la India aprendió y heredó muchos de los principios modernistas del Reino Unido, fuera su sistema judicial, sus protocolos políticos o sus instituciones universitarias. Pero yo reivindico que la India posee sus versiones "indígenas" de Modernidad. Unas formas y valores que fueron los que precisamente permitieron la reinscripción e hibridación de las versiones occidentales de Modernidad. Si la India no tuviese sus tradiciones de racionalismo, de ciencia, de pluralismo religioso, de libertad o de diálogo filosófico, jamás podría haber tropicalizado los modos europeos de Modernidad. Y lo mismo cabe decir de muchos otros espacios del planeta que fueron colonizados.

Valga el ejemplo del "Parlamento de las religiones" auspiciado por el emperador Akbar en su corte cercana a Agra, a principios del siglo XVII. En el mismo momento que en Roma se ejecutaba a Giordano Bruno por orden de la santa Inquisición, Akbar reunía a musulmanes sunnitas y chiítas, a hindúes shivaístas, vishnuístas y yoguis, a parsis, a jainistas, a judíos, a cristianos (concretamente jesuitas italianos y catalanes) e incluso a ateos para debatir acerca de religión y política, acerca de espiritualidad y práctica religiosa, filosofía y pluralismo religioso (Sen, 2005). Si hoy el país de la jerarquía institucionalizada (sociedad de castas) es al mismo tiempo la democracia más grande del mundo (aún a pesar de sus déficits y problemas de pobreza, corrupción o analfabetización), es porque los valores del igualitarismo, del diálogo o del pluralismo existían en la India mucho antes de la llegada de los europeos. Abandonemos de una vez la arrogante imagen de un Occidente que va a enseñar a los pueblos pre-modernos lo que es la libertad, la tolerancia o la democracia.

No se trata de saber quién posee la paternidad de la episteme, sino de reconocer la imbricación de la relación colonial en la construcción de las Modernidades. Casi que la democracia le debe tanto al emperador indio Ashoka (siglo -III) como a Aristóteles y la antigua Grecia (Sen, 2005). La ciencia moderna es asimismo impensable sin el sistema decimal ni las matemáticas importadas de la India, vía el mundo islámico. El desarrollo del capitalismo es inconcebible sin el comercio en los puertos libres del Océano Índico (Frank, 1998). Incluso la medicina le debe más de lo que es capaz de aceptar a las

tradiciones venidas de Asia o a los "laboratorios" y bancos de pruebas coloniales (Arnold, 1993). La globalización hace milenios que opera.

"Colonialidad"

No sólo la India y otras "colonias" han contribuido de forma más decisiva de lo que se reconoce a eso que llamamos Modernidad, sino que en Occidente ésta se ha imaginado en gran medida por oposición al "otro" colonizado (van der Veer, 2001). Occidente necesita de un otro "pre-moderno", "tradicionalista" o "subdesarrollado" para verse a sí mismo moderno y avanzado. No es que España, Portugal, Francia o el Reino Unido crearan imperios coloniales, mas que los imperios crearon las "nociones" de Francia, Portugal, España o el Reino Unido. La *englishness* solo tiene sentido si se sitúa en el contexto y el marco colonial indio (Viswanathan, 1998). La imagen de un Occidente racional, secularizado y amante de la libertad sólo puede postularse frente al estereotipo de un no-Occidente irracional, supersticioso y preso por el dogma o el despotismo (Said, 1978). La declaración universal de derechos del ciudadano solo es posible tras las polémicas en Valladolid acerca de la naturaleza de los indios "descubiertos" en las Américas. El capitalismo y la revolución industrial son impensables sin la depredación colonial. Etcétera.

Ocurre que para capear la crasa contradicción de la explotación de sociedades, culturas y pueblos indígenas, los colonizadores inventan la *mission civilisatrice*, el desarrollismo o la diferencia racial. Generan fortísimas dicotomías del estilo Oriente/Occidente, tradición/Modernidad, Tercer Mundo/Primer Mundo, ario/semita, Razón/superstición o Progreso/atraso. Esas categorizaciones y diferencias sirven para justificar tanto la trata de esclavos, el genocidio de pueblos enteros, la explotación económica como el Holocausto.

La Modernidad, ese vago paradigma político, social, económico y cultural que todos habitamos, en la *longue durée* y en toda su amplitud, no es patrimonio de ninguna cultura, civilización o sociedad particular. La colonia no fue una mera extensión del mundo moderno, sino parte de lo que hizo ese mundo moderno (Comaroff y Comaroff, 1992). Por tanto, y desde mi punto de vista, la experiencia colonial es un elemento crucial en la construcción de la Modernidad. Se entenderá que los sociólogos latinoamericanos hayan inventado el concepto "colonialidad" (Castro-Gómez et al., 1999; Lander, 2000) para explicar este complejísimo proceso.

Y aún iría más lejos.

La construcción del sikhismo

Mi tesis es que a medida que nos alejamos del mundo monoteísta abrahámico, la Modernidad no sólo no se opone a las religiones, sino que, en cierto sentido, *ha creado* o configurado muy vigorosamente las religiones. No quiero alzar ninguna tesis absoluta al respecto, pero sí abrir cierta polémica y discusión. Se trata ahora de problematizar el concepto "religión". Nos serviremos del sikhismo.

El sikhismo nació en los llanos del Punjab, en el Norte de la India, hace unos 500 años. Por tanto, es una tradición joven y, en cierto sentido, hija de las modalidades anglo-indias de Modernidad. Sin embargo, cuando afirmo que la Modernidad crea el sikhismo apunto hacia otro aspecto más profundo. También la Modernidad crea el hinduismo (Sontheimer y Kulke, 1989), aún a pesar de la antigüedad de sus tradiciones; y también la Modernidad crea los contornos actuales del budismo, del cristianismo y del resto de *ismos* del mundo. El período, los imaginarios, las ideologías y los procesos que llamamos Modernidad han reconstituido poderosamente las religiones del mundo. Y en algunos casos, como el que ahora vamos a tocar, existen fundadas razones para pensar que es la Modernidad la que ha dado luz al sikh-*ismo*.

En efecto, a lo largo de todo el siglo XIX, y en un proceso que se prolongó durante el XX y todavía sigue su curso, se pusieron en marcha una serie de desarrollos que alejaron irremisiblemente las tradiciones de los sikhs de la matriz hindú que las vio nacer (Oberoi, 1994). Las agencias de

reconstitución fueron una serie de grupos llamados "reformistas", como los Nirankaris, los Namdharis y, sobre todo, el Singh-Sabha (fuera en su corriente "radical" Tat-Khalsa como en la "conservadora" Sanatani). Con el reto del proselitismo misionero cristiano y del neohinduismo en alza, y en el marco de la colonialidad (recordemos: Modernidad + colonialismo), la intelectualidad sikh promovió y dio contorno a una versión racional, desmitologizada, igualitaria, etnicizada, clericalizada y textualizada del sikhismo, una versión ecualizada según los principios de los más poderosos imaginarios e ideologías de la Modernidad. Veamos.

Desde mediados del siglo XIX se detecta en las tradiciones sikhs una creciente tendencia a eliminar y suprimir las jerarquías sociales, notablemente las de casta (Pániker, 2007). Al mismo tiempo, y en sintonía con otras tradiciones de la India, la intelectualidad sikh se esforzó en una labor de "regeneración" de la mujer sikh y leve supresión de las desigualdades de género (Jakobsh, 2003). Estos procesos, todavía en curso, enraízan en el corazón del imaginario de la Modernidad: el individualismo y el igualitarismo.

Uno de los aspectos más oscuros de la Modernidad ha sido su anclaje en una visión racialista de los pueblos y las sociedades. Aunque esta posición ha recedido desde la II Guerra Mundial –por políticamente incorrecta–, fue muy dominante durante la mayor parte del siglo XIX y principios del XX. En la India, el racialismo se desarrolló al amparo del mito de la "invasión aria" (Trautmann, 1997). En la gradación de los pueblos de la India, los sikhs cayeron entre los nobles y marciales pueblos "arios", por tanto, lejanamente emparentados con los amos coloniales. En este contexto, ganó muchos enteros el poderoso estereotipo del marcial, honesto y viril sikh (en oposición al hindú o musulmán).

Esta masculinización, racialización y marcialización del sikh enraíza asimismo en otro de los aspectos estelares de la Modernidad: la demarcación de fronteras religiosas (un poco, al estilo de las nacionales) y la cosificación de identidades etno-religiosas. Este aspecto, asimismo muy propio de los monoteísmos excluyentes (pues tienden a exigir una lealtad absoluta, ya que solo existe un único Dios y su Verdad), ha sido particularmente nocivo en el Sur de Asia, donde las fronteras religiosas tendían a ser porosas, flexibles y fluidas. Los censos de la población, que el gobierno colonial llevaba a cabo decenalmente, no fueron ajenos a la cuestión (Cohn, 1987). Ahí cada súbdito debía mostrar su inequívoca afiliación a una única religión. En esa tesitura nacía en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX el mito del declive sikh (y su supuesto "regreso" al regazo hindú) que tanta ansiedad despertaría entre los dirigentes coloniales (que empezaban a depender de sus soldados sikhs) y entre la intelectualidad sikh, que se imponía la heroica misión de rescatar al sikhismo de la boa constrictor hindú. Es comprensible, por tanto, que se promocionara el sikhismo de la Khalsa (la fraternidad militante creada en 1699 por el décimo Guru de los sikhs, de espíritu marcadamente marcial y combativo) como el "genuino" corazón del sikhismo. Los símbolos de la Khalsa (como las famosas cinco "ks": el cabello sin cortar –de donde la barba y el turbante de muchos sikhs varones–, un peine que lo sujeta, un brazalete de acero, un calzón corto y una daga o espada) pasaron a considerarse como la mejor expresión de la "sikh-idad". Las autoridades coloniales sólo reclutaron en el ejército o la policía a aquellos "genuinos" sikhs que portaran los símbolos de la Khalsa, aquellos emblemas que los distinguían de los hindúes o musulmanes. Así, el propio aparato burocrático del Estado moderno fue en buena medida responsable de promover el sikhismo militante de la Khalsa.

No extrañará, por tanto, que el factor nacionalista, otro de los distintivos aceptados de la Modernidad, entrara también a formar parte en la configuración del sikhismo. A partir del siglo XX se fue dando un creciente etno-nacionalismo sikh, íntimamente asociado a la cuestión identitaria. Un movimiento que en sus versiones más extremas, en la década de los 1980s y principios de los 1990s, puso al gobierno de Nueva Delhi en serios aprietos. El etno-nacionalismo sikh (o mejor: el nacionalismo religioso sikh) constituye una expresión muy palpable –y moderna– de la cosificación de las identidades (Shani, 2008; Pániker, 2009). Aunque sin duda expresa sentimientos antiguos, se articula, toma forma y consistencia con la Modernidad. (Recordemos que los nacionalismos, como los fundamentalismos, son fenómenos estrictamente modernos y modernistas.)

Otro de los factores de mayor peso a la hora de constituir el sikhismo ha sido el complejo proceso de racionalización de la religiosidad sikh, una "purga" que en muchos casos equivalió a una deshinduización de la misma (Oberoi, 1994; Pániker, 2007). Los reformadores sikhs se embarcaron en un arduo combate de rechazo de la religión popular, en especial de aquellos festivales más carnavalescos (como el Holi) o

"demasiado" asociados al universo hindú (como el Dashahara), lo mismo que a cultos sincréticos de carácter popular, como los de Gugga Pir o Sakhi Sarvar, las ofrendas a los fallecidos o el culto a los avatares y divinidades "hindúes" como Shitala, Ganesh, Durga o Lakshmi. Cantidad de aspectos de ese universo rural, impregnado de la *baraka* de santos sufíes o de la exuberancia de divinidades hindúes, fue desplazado al poco honorable reino de lo "folclórico" o de la "superstición". Se fue ecualizando un sikhismo lo más desmitologizado posible y estrictamente monoteísta (en más sintonía con el Dios abrahámico, considerado por la intelectualidad de la época como más "racional"). Muchos esfuerzos se pusieron también en establecer formas de culto y, sobre todo, ritos de paso, de carácter ineludiblemente sikh. La reforma de los rituales de matrimonio (idénticos a los hindúes hasta la década de los 1860s) fue emblemática. Ya entrado el siglo xx muchísima energía se utilizó en que el sikhismo de la Khalsa tomara el pleno control de los templos (*gurduaras*) y, concatenadamente, creara una institución (el SGPC) que velara por su buen funcionamiento. De esta forma, una religión estrictamente laica fue poderosamente clericalizada.

En el espíritu de las reformas de racionalización y deshinduización, se dio una marcada textualización –o mejor, re-textualización– de la tradición, lo que equivalía a elevar el *Guru Granth Sahib* como única fuente escritural de autoridad (al modo del *Corán* o la *Biblia*) y defenestrar las corrientes textuales más "hinduizadas" o con proclividad a recurrir a la mitología hindú (como el *Dasam Granth*). En esta misma línea, fue codificándose un código "universal" de conducta sikh (el *Sikh Rahit Maryada*, aceptado por las principales corrientes del sikhismo en 1950), una especie de catecismo sikh que ha hecho mucho por ecualizar las distintas sensibilidades del sikhismo, y muy en particular las de las importantes comunidades de la diáspora (McLeod, 1997).

Este complejísimo proceso de racionalización, nacionalización, democratización, etnización, textualización o reificación (todos ellos vectores indiscutibles de eso que solemos llamar Modernidad) de lo que eran diferentes tradiciones de culto, sectarias, regionales, de casta, de linaje… o lo que es lo mismo, el proceso de creación e integración de la Modernidad en el Norte de la India durante los últimos 200 años, ha acabado por crear la religión sikh; eso que hoy llamamos sikhismo.

Religión y Modernidad

Obviamente, hay espacio para matices. En ningún momento insinúo que la fraternidad de la Khalsa o el *Guru Granth Sahib* (por poner dos ejemplos claros), no hubieran sido importantes para los sikhs antes del siglo xix (Pániker, 2007). Lo que trato de decir es que fueron las categorías modernistas acerca de lo que las religiones son –o deberían de ser– las que filtraron y movilizaron diferentes procesos para acabar dando forma a una nueva religión. Desde luego, este proceso es siempre inacabado y defectuoso, ya que a medida que se reconfiguran la ortodoxia y las corrientes principales, eso mismo genera discrepancias, tensiones y nuevos vectores de modernización. Pero a mi me parece importante subrayar que en aquellos espacios del mundo históricamente alejados del hemisferio donde el concepto *religio* nació y estuvo largamente incrustado, fue el encuentro con –y participación en– las categorías de la Modernidad las que acabaron por dar forma y contenido a las distintas religiones del mundo (Smith, 1991).

Yo mismo he escrito largamente sobre un proceso muy parejo a propósito de esa religión que hemos convenido en llamar "hinduismo" (nombre que, muy significativamente, nace en lengua inglesa en la década de los 1820s). Fue en la interacción colonial cuando se puso en marcha el fabuloso proceso de cosificación, semitización, racionalización, textualización, nacionalización y reforma que acabaría por dar forma a la religión hindú (Pániker, 2005). Se trata de una interacción de las antiguas tradiciones de los hindúes con los imaginarios de la Modernidad, con la ideología de la Modernidad y con los procesos de modernización del Sur de Asia.

En cierto sentido, tanto Occidente como la India son colonizados por las categorías y desarrollos de la Modernidad (Pániker, 2005). No se trata de perversos blancos imponiendo categorías a indefensos morenos sin agencia. Nadie escapa a la expansión de estas cuadrículas mentales generadas en multitud de contextos y relaciones –bien que asimétricas–. Y una de las grandes manifestaciones de estos procesos es, a mi juicio, la creación de *las religiones del mundo*. ¡Ojo!: no insinúo que no existieran fenómenos

religiosos antes de la Modernidad (falta por hallar todavía una sociedad sin lo que solemos designar "religión"). La religiosidad es connatural al ser humano (Duch, 2010). Pero ya es mucho más problemático agrupar estos fenómenos transculturalmente bajo la etiqueta "religión". Eso que hoy llamamos sikhismo o hinduismo –como la mayoría de *ismos* religiosos– no pasaba de ser un amorfo y amplísimo conjunto de tradiciones textuales, mitológicas, sectarias, rituales, cultuales, de casta, de región, de linaje, etcétera. Ningún vector –y menos aún texto, institución o dogma– apelmazaba ese conglomerado de prácticas, filosofías, grupos religiosos o tradiciones sectarias. En tono provocativo: habían hindúes pero no hinduismo; sikhs (o nanak-panthis) pero no sikhismo.

En realidad, fue con la pluralización del concepto *religio*, un hecho realmente sólo reconocible a partir de la prolongada experiencia colonial, posiblemente a lo largo del siglo XVII, por darle algún anclaje histórico, cuando "nacieron" muchas religiones del mundo. Nótese que en muy pocas lenguas no-occidentales podía encontrarse un término que tradujera ese concepto latino. Se buscó en las lenguas indígenas el equivalente más aproximado (en la India se "encontró" en el polisémico término *dharma*) y se proyectó sin demasiados miramientos hacia el pasado.

Desde mi óptica, la Modernidad y la religión no pueden postularse como polos opuestos, ya que han sido precisamente las Modernidades las que han generado la mayoría de religiones que hoy conocemos. (Lo mismo que han generado la "filosofía", la "historia" o el "arte" en muchas partes del mundo.) Incluso me atrevo a proponer que esas mismas religiones o espíritus religiosos han impregnado –siempre en retroalimentación– muchos más aspectos de la Modernidad de lo que bastantes estarían dispuestos a reconocer.

De la misma forma que la ciencia moderna tiene un sospechoso parecido familiar a la teología medieval (Whitehead, 1925), o determinados valores republicanos y liberales tienen su origen en la ética cristiana, y hasta la Modernidad hipertrofiada de algunos puede devenir una verdadera religión (con sus profetas, sus textos sagrados, sus rituales laicos, sus mitos o su escatología), como digo, por un proceso semejante la religión ha contribuido y sigue contribuyendo a reconfigurar eso que gustamos llamar Modernidad. Pienso que hay que dejar de oponer Modernidad y religión. Las que se oponen han sido ciertas ideologías de la Modernidad y ciertas ideologías religiosas (y de forma muy encarnizada, por momentos).

Conclusión

Ojalá que con estas disquisiciones a propósito de las Modernidades, y en especial de la contribución no-occidental a la configuración de las mismas, hayamos podido problematizar tanto este concepto como su supuesta oposición al de religión. Aunque no hay que tomar en un sentido estrictamente literal mi aseveración de que es la Modernidad la que crea las religiones –no abrahámicas– del mundo, sí espero haber aportado elementos para la reflexión y para interrogar los conceptos heredados. Las religiones hunden sus raíces en estratos muy –pero que muy– antiguos, sin el menor género de duda; pero las religiones del mundo, tal y como hoy las *concebimos y conocemos*, son hijas de la Modernidad. Y ese es un aspecto que cualquier estudioso de lo transpersonal no debiera pasar por alto. Conceptos como espiritualidad, sabiduría, consciencia… no son amputables de los procesos y contextos históricos en los que vienen incrustados. Al final, no puedo estar más de acuerdo con el gran pensador francés Edgar Morin, que lleva décadas reivindicando el carácter complejo y pluridisciplinar del mundo en el que participamos. La relación entre Modernidad y religión, más aún en el marco de la colonialidad, es un buen ejemplo.

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Encounters with Nature as a Path of Self-Realisation: A Meaning-Making Framework

El encuentro con la Naturaleza como medio para la autorrealización: un marco de trabajo significativo

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Abstract

Following an overview of some of the literature and studies which inform this theoretical paper, the article argues that participatory encounters with nature are an important pathway for self-realisation and the expansion of experience through the widening of consciousness. The paper outlines some key cornerstones for a meaning-making framework informing experiences of in-depth participatory encounters with other species and living systems with reference to two cartographies. The paper concludes by suggesting that the framework supports further thinking about participatory encounters with nature as a psycho-spiritual path, the dynamics of participatory encounters with Mystery in a nature setting, as well as emphasising the importance of further research into the psychological effects of purposive encounters with nature.

Key words: Consciousness, Nature, Self-Realisation, Spirituality, Transformation

Resumen

Revisando la literatura y estudios mencionados en este trabajo teórico, se estudia la hipótesis de que los encuentros participativos con la naturaleza sean un importante camino para la auto-realización y la expansión de la consciencia. Se subrayan algunas claves para crear un marco de trabajo significativo, con el que comprender las experiencias que revelan un profundo encuentro participativo con otras especies y sistemas de vida, en referencia a dos cartografías. El trabajo concluye apoyando los encuentros participativos con la naturaleza como camino psico-espiritual, así como destacando la necesidad de mayor y más profunda investigación en cuanto a los efectos psicológicos derivados de dichos encuentros.

Palabras Clave: Consciencia, Naturaleza, Auto-Realización, Espiritualidad, Transformación

Introduction

This theoretical paper offers some preliminary thoughts on a meaning-making framework for encounters with nature as a path of self-realisation and the expansion of consciousness to widen experience. Following a review of some of the background literature and studies which inform this article the paper continues by considering (1) the idea of a *contracting* and *expanding* experience of self, first in relation to a time and space metaphor as defining the self-concept of the individual, and then in relation to the dynamic between nature and the individual. This will be followed by considering the themes of (2) nature as container, (3) the body as container or alembic, (4) the self-realisation of beings, (5) encounter with nature as a participatory experience, (6) liminality as the space in-between, (7) projection and the numinous ground of being, and (8) the metaphors of *ascending* and *descending*. It is important to note that this paper does not differentiate between self and ego concepts, but takes these concepts to mean conscious awareness. This paper also refers to psyche and self-system as metaphors for both conscious and unconscious parts of consciousness. Also, the capitalisation of terms like Nature, Mystery, Ground, and Dynamic Ground refers to the greater reality or bigger picture within which everything exists.

Theoretical and research review

The background to this paper is the volume of writing on the relationship of *Homo sapiens* with other species and living systems (e.g., Abram, 1996, 2010; Adams, 2007, 2010; Fox, 1990a, 1990b; Mathews, 1991, 2003, 2007; Metzner, 1991, 1999; Naess, 1973, 1986; Naess & Sessions, 1995; Roszak, 1992, 1993; Schroll, 2007, 2010). For instance, this literature emphasises the importance of maintaining a conscious connection with nature, of which *Homo sapiens* is an intrinsic part (Adams, 2007, p. 274), and in different ways continues to warn of the dangers of losing sight of the reality of the interconnectedness of all beings, and the co-influencing fact of the web of life where nothing occurs in isolation of other things. This emphasis marks a gradual turning away from preoccupation with our separateness and alienation *from*, and exploitation *of* nature (Adams, 2010) to a realisation that our life on this earth is one of many life forms, and that *Homo sapiens* lives horizontally alongside other species rather than in dominion over these; in "kinship" *with* rather than in possession *of,* or "belonging" *to* as an extension of identity (Diehm, 2007, p. 1). Tobin Hart (2000), for instance, acknowledges an easing away from a tendency towards "hyper-individualism" in the West, with its narcissistic absorption in self, toward an other-centred "ecological awareness that recognises our interconnectedness with nature" (p. 37). It is likely that this easing away facilitates a turning towards other species and living systems with an openness to the possibility of knowing the subjectivity of other through mutual participatory encounters.

This co-creative, participatory, perspective draws upon the ideas of Ferrer, Albareda and Romero (2004), Ferrer and Sherman (2008), Washburn (2003), Abram (2010), and others. David Abram (2010), for instance, writes that *Homo sapiens* is blueprinted with a "primordial impulse to animate and participate with our terrestrial surroundings" (p. 277), and for John Davis (1998) this means entering into a "deeply bonded and reciprocal communion" with the more-than-human-worlds (p. 62). Moreover, Freya Mathews (2003) asserts that "When such contact with the self as they [other species] experience it – as subject – is made, and they communicate to us something of the meaning they have for themselves, we do in fact share a deep sense of mutual knowing, but this is a felt form of knowing, only secondarily translatable into information" (p. 78). This is "knowing" (e.g., a tree, bird, or landscape) through a felt-sense encounter rather than through explaining or information gathering. The latter "knowledge", writes Mathews, "seeks to break open the mystery of another's nature; encounter leaves that mystery intact". This means that "the mysterious other retains its capacity to surprise" (p. 78). This encounter is participatory, and the ensuing knowing is transformative (Ferrer, 2002, p. 123). Adams (2010) takes up this participatory theme in his suggestion that "a participatory consciousness…exists in and *as* the community of nature – a nondual, transpersonal, dynamic, and interrelated mind or psyche" (p. 22). My

suggestion is that participatory encounters with nature increase felt-sense awareness of this "community", and potentially promotes self-realisation and facilitates the expansion of identity.

However, the idea of the expansion of identity in relation to nature is a contentious issue. Plumwood (cited in Diehm, 2002), for instance, draws our attention to a danger here in an idea of an expansion of identity as a self which "rejects boundaries between self and nature" (p. 30). Diehm argues, further, that there is "a certain violence" in this type of engagement (p. 30). But Mathews demonstrates through her writing that the expansion of identity through encounter does not necessarily mean a rejection or violation of boundaries. Moreover, I propose that the expansion of identity or consciousness is an expansion of *experience*, rather than expansion through "appropriation" or "possession" of other (Ferrer in Ferrer & Sherman, 2008, p. 137). Any *experience* of identification of another is *temporary*, in the same way that an empathic response might be a way of temporarily identifying or engaging with another to seek a sense of knowing, in ways suggested by Ferrer and Mathews. This temporary identification might be understood as seeking a type of *kinship* (e.g., Diehm, 2002, 2007; Gruen, 2009). Related to this theme is the phenomenon *participation mystique*, that is, "awareness of symbiotic relatedness with the natural world" (Metzner in Schroll, 2007, p. 44), or as Jung (1921) puts it "a peculiar kind of psychological connection with objects, and consists in the fact that the subject cannot clearly distinguish himself from the object but is bound to it by a direct relationship which amounts to *partial identity*" [emphasis added] (para. 781), which Jung asserts is the same as projection (as cited in Sabini, 2002, p. 113). This supports our earlier suggestion of temporary identification as a way of "knowing through encounter" (Matthews, 2003, p. 78).

Recent empirical studies into the effects of being in nature have found that being in nature is not only mentally restorative (Hug et al., 2009), enhances mental alertness (Berman et al., 2008), and increases vitality (Ryan et al., 2010), but "can also positively enhance perceptions of physiological, emotional, psychological and spiritual health in ways that cannot be satisfied by alternate means" (Brymer, Cuddihy, & Sharma-Brymer, 2010, p. 21; cf. Davis, 2004). Of particular interest is Brymer's et al. finding that "actual contact and feelings of connection" with nature bring about profound positive influence. These authors propose further research into the specific correlations of aspects of nature with different types of positive influence experiences (p. 24). Furthermore, Cohen, Gruber, and Keltner (2010) report on the "long lasting and meaningful changes in personality" in relation to "experiences of profound beauty" and "spiritual transformations" which evoke feelings like awe, appreciation, and peacefulness (p. 133; cf. Abkar, Kamal, Maulan, & Mariapan, 2010). Studies also indicate the likely positive impact on health and well-being associated with nature settings designated as "sacred" (Mathews, 1991, p. 133; cf. Hild, 2006). For instance, Terhaar's (2009) investigation into intense spiritual experiences in nature reports on the well-being benefits of individual perceptions, highlighting seven physiological and psychological sensations related to encounters of intense spiritual experiences: "unity, the presence of an 'Other', ineffability, timelessness and spacelessness, intense affect, paradoxicality, and noetic perception" (p. 337). These might include the experience of "flow" or "optimal experience" (Csikzentmihalyi, 1990) related to absorption in something beyond distraction (e.g., watching an otter playing).

While some of these studies suggest a healing benefit from being in nature, Santostefano (2008) disagrees with the premise of the "automatic" healing impact of nature on the basis that it does not take into account relational patterns of early life as either enabling or hindering influence or healing (p. 515). However, while Santostefano's position may in some cases be supported, his point can be challenged by contrasting theoretical views and studies (e.g., Bernstein, 2005; Brymer et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 2010). For instance, Bernstein (2005) points out that, in relation to early trauma, psychotherapy sometimes confuses the pathological with the sacred or transpersonal by reducing or minimising encounters with nature as neurotic symptoms of early wounding (p. 11). However, I acknowledge that Santostefano points to a gap in the research of the impact of early relational deficits or trauma on experiences in nature. Moreover, a recent study into the influence of self-awareness of connectedness with nature (Frantz, Mayer, Norton, and Rock, 2005) suggests that the "modern sense of self poses the greatest risk to the

environment", through a preoccupation of self as object (p. 433). The study reports that this is because heightened *objective self-awareness*, that is, a view of self as "object-like, and separate from nature", increases self-focus rather than heightened *subjective self-awareness* which increases other-focus (p. 428; cf. Dambrun & Ricard, 2011).

To provide the reader with an insight into the of the type of experience characteristic of participatory encounters with nature, Freya Matthews (2007) gives an insightful illustration in her citation of Frans Hoogland, a Dutch-born initiate into Aboriginal Law:

> At a certain time for everybody, the land will take over. The land will take that person. You think you're following something, but the land is actually pulling you. When the land start pulling you, you're not even aware you're walking - you're off, you're gone. When you experience this, it's like a shift in your reality. You start seeing things you never seen before...all of a sudden [the training process you have acquired through your upbringing] doesn't fit anything. Then something comes out of the land, guides you. It can be a tree, a rock, a face in the sand, or a bird (p. 8).

The expanding and contracting self

The *expanding* and *contracting* nature of self is a typical experience in encounters with nature (e.g., Cohen, 1997). Harris Freidman (1983) offers an insightful way of understanding this phenomenon through *his cartography of self-conception, including levels of self-expansiveness*, which he writes, "rests on the metaphor of space and time as defining the self-concept of the individual" (p. 37; cf. Pappas & Friedman, 2007). It is worth presenting his cartography here as an important point of reference for my discussion.
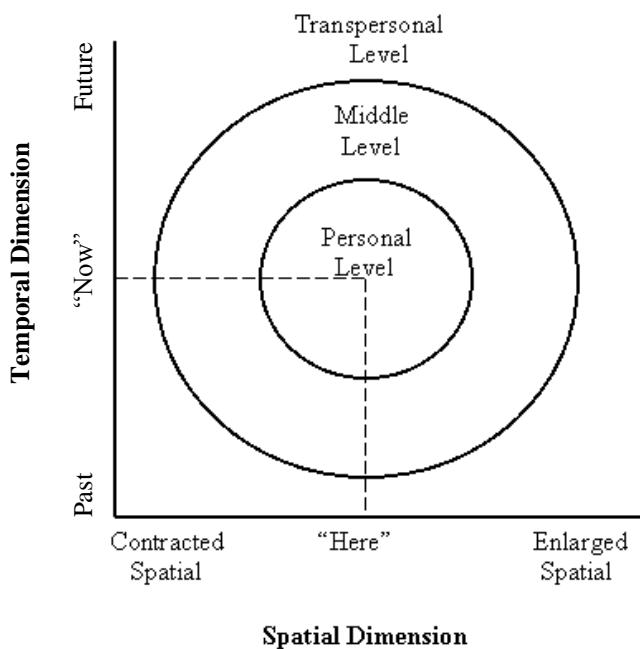

Figure 1: Friedman's cartography of self-expansiveness.

Friedman writes that "A key construct in this conceptualization is the *level of self-expansiveness*, which is defined as the amount of the self which is contained within the boundary demarcating self from non-self through the process of *self-conception*. This definition is based on an assumption of the expanded nature of the self. Specifically, the position is taken that the relationship between self and non-

self is inherently unlimited" (p. 38), and "the degree to which individuals manifest expanded self-concepts reflects the extent to which they accept or deny their unity with their *true unbounded selves*" [emphasis added] (p. 39). This cartography is useful because it allows me to suggest that the *now-here* point of intersection can be in two positions at the same time, that is, simultaneously in the personal and middle levels (e.g., the past), or in the personal and transpersonal levels. This means, for instance, that the individual both experiences and is aware of the self-expansion, while at the same time is *also* aware of a perhaps more familiar contracted experience of self. My suggestion is that this contracting and expanding of self is a fluid process, and that any diagrammatic representation of this might benefit from using broken rather than solid lines to imply a constancy of movement, as the following map tries to demonstrate:
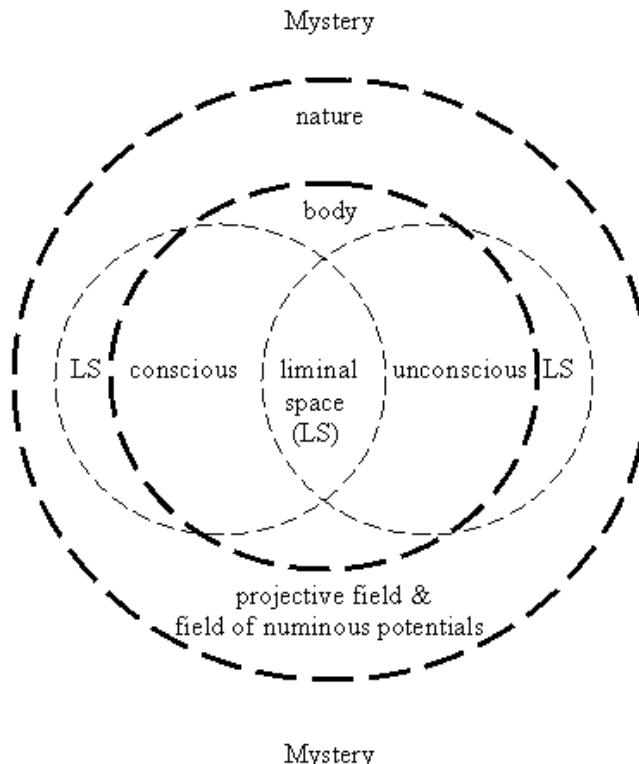

Figure 2: Cartography of self-system expansiveness in relation to nature

The fluidity of the self-system suggested by the feint broken lines in Figure 2, while mostly contained within the inner heavy broken line representative of the boundary of the physical body, is wholly contained within the second heavy broken line representative of the boundary of nature. Space is depicted here as the distance between the body and a point in nature which could be a tree, a mountain, or the moon. Here the self-system is taken to mean both conscious and unconscious processes which overlap constituting a *space in-between* or *liminal space* (LS). Like Friedman's map, my image also assumes the expansion of the conscious part of the self-system. Expansion potentially extends from the boundary of the body to a point in nature (e.g., tree, fox, mountain), and is *both* a conscious and unconscious dynamic process. That is, expansion of consciousness is not necessarily always a conscious process, as it is can be spontaneous. It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider the expansion of consciousness and self-realisation through encountering "nature" within other than to refer the reader to an extraordinary example of engaging with the content of the unconscious in Jung's method and process of *active imagination* as written about and depicted in his *Liber Novus* (2009). The reader might also be interested in the Eames (1977) film *Powers of Ten* which also relates to our consciousness theme. Moreover, the subjective *space in-between*, *liminal space* within, or fluid interface, might also be metaphorically understood as a threshold or border crossing between conscious and unconscious aspects

of the self-system, an inner space consisting of images (e.g., dreams, fantasy, symbols). As my cartography illustrates, there are also the spaces between inner and outer. These in-between spaces are *liminal spaces*, where familiar reality appears to take on symbolic significance. For instance, in moments of liminality a bird is both a bird as well as a conveyor of symbolic meaning.

My cartography suggests that both sides of this self-system (conscious/unconscious) potentially expand beyond the physical boundary of the body, into a *participatory* relationship with nature which is simultaneously (1) a *container for the process of self-expansion of experience and increased self-awareness*, (2) *a receiver of our projections*, and (3) *a field of numinous potentials*, as this paper will explain. First, it might be useful to acknowledge that my cartography of the conscious and unconscious parts of the self-system might also be conceptualised as the figure of eight below, with the *space in-between* sitting at the point of convergence. Viewing consciousness in this way helps to emphasise the moving dynamic of both aspects of the self-system. Though a full exploration of this is beyond the scope of this paper, this will become clearer in the following section with reference to the ideas of Michael Washburn (2003).
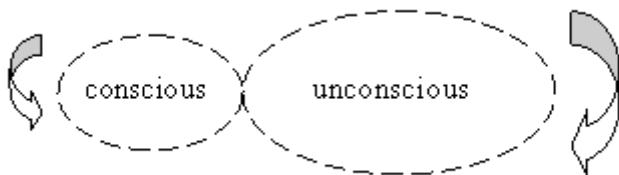

Figure 3: Figure of eight dynamic of the self-system

Nature as limitless container

Nature is a living, *holding*, container (Figure 2), frame, or field, within which psycho-spiritual unfolding can take place. My suggestion is that this *holding* is similar to the understanding of *holding* in psychotherapy when the therapist's *holding* capacity enables the person to be more open to the unknown, the psychological void, or the unconscious, from which potentials and other things can emerge. Or as David Michael Levin (1985) puts it, the earth "is the source of our individuation, since it [allows us to] stand becoming ourselves" (p. 289). The ground supports our becoming. Levin reminds us, further, that this unfolding or individuating process, or becoming, is that of a "deepening". This "deepening", he continues, is to be understood in terms of our "bodily felt sense of wholeness" (p. 291) *in relation to the earth* as the source of our individuation, which "requires – is – an act of faith, a 'passion' of trust which entrusts our…existence, to the *support* [emphasis added] of the grounding earth" (p. 306). Body is our immediate point of contact with the living earth, and the bodies of the living earth are the first point of contact with *Homo sapiens*. To put it another way, nature is the living container in which we can become fully ourselves if we allow it.

However, the "grounding earth" is not synonymous with the ground itself, but "is the Ground in its elemental presence" (Levin, 1985, p. 284), that is fire, earth, water, and air. We might say that the ground is embodied Ground. The essence of this ground is Mystery, "big mystery" (Abram, 2010, p. 278), or Being, and the ground is "a presencing of Being" (Levin, 1985, p. 270). Or we might prefer to say that nature is embodied Nature, or (which is the same thing) that nature has its being in Nature, or (which is the same thing again) that the Being of Nature allows nature its being. For instance, a mountain, a river, a tree, or an otter is *something of* nature, but it is not Nature itself. It is nature's Mystery which brings nature into being. This Nature is limitless. It follows on from this, with reference to our maps, that the self which is part of Nature (given that nothing exists outside of Nature) is also limitless in its expansiveness.

More importantly, following Freya Matthews (1991), nature is a multiplicity of self-realising systems. It is subject rather than object. This not only means that nature is *holding* us, but it *requires our holding*. The self-realising of the moss under my feet in the forest witnesses my self-realisation while allowing me to walk across its spongy greenness. But this self-realising moss also requires *my* care. Later we will consider the process of our becoming or self-realisation as a participatory encounter with the self-realisation of nature.

It is worth theorising further on the Ground of nature to fully appreciate something of the dynamics of participatory encounters with nature. Michael Washburn's (1994, 1995, 2003) writing on the spiral process of becoming, in relation to what he refers to as the Dynamic Ground, is an important point of reference here. Washburn theorises that encounter with the Dynamic Ground is a spiral rather than a linear process. This is because the journey is always in relation to this Dynamic Ground of Being or deep psyche (2003, p. 2). What this means is that although "the beginning and end of the spiral path are maximally different" (p. 26) by virtue of what is possible through a developmental process, both points "share the same deep foundations. The ego (or conscious part of the self-system), in reaching the end of the spiral path, is once again rooted in the Ground, enlivened and graced by the power of the Ground" (p.5). This means that "The beginning and end of the spiral path are alike in being points at which consciousness is at one with the fullness of life" (p. 36). This implies a developmental separation from the Ground, followed by a potential later return; although paradoxically the Ground is always present (refer to Figure 3). As Washburn (2003) asserts further "The sacred ground from which the spiral path takes leave and to which it returns is precisely *this earth, and our shared, incarnate lives on earth*" [emphasis added] (p. 4). This perspective is strikingly similar to Levin's (1985) writing on "ground", and his idea of the earth allowing us to become ourselves (p. 289). From both perspectives the ground is "sacred". My suggestion is that this "sacred ground" is the Dynamic Ground, the energetic ground of Being, Nature, the unconscious, deep psyche, and Mystery.

Moreover, as James Hillman writes, following Theodore Roszak (in Roszak, Gnones and Kanner, 1995), "An individual's harmony with his or her 'own deep self' requires not merely a journey to the interior but a harmonizing with the environmental world. The deepest self cannot be confined to 'in here' because we can't be sure it is not also or even entirely 'out there'" (p. xix). This crucial point supports our suggestion of the expansive nature of self referred to earlier, which participates with nature (Figure 2), suggesting a permeable, flexible or expanded boundary between self and other. For, as Freidman reminds us, the self is "inextricably embedded in the universe", and its expansiveness is "inherently unlimited" (Friedman, 1983 p. 38). This being "embedded" gravitates *Homo sapiens* away from a too narrowing or contracting of identity. Nature knows no boundaries. Psyche is part of Nature, therefore psyche is also unlimited. With reference to the figure of eight (Figure 3), the gravitation is away from overly contracting the left loop, to enabling expansion into the right. While this facilitation is the function of spiritual paths as well as some forms of psychotherapy, my assertion in this paper is that purposive encounters with nature also facilitate this expansion. My assumption here is that self-expansion is both inner and outer.

The idea of nature as container suggests a dynamic holding of the process of becoming, which potentially enables the expansion of self beyond the individual's sensate experience of nature, to also include a transformative encounter in, through, and with, the Mystery of the ground itself. Nature offers itself as a frame within which, and in relation to which, the conscious self expands and contracts, opens and closes. It is in this sense that the ground allows us to become most fully, and most expansively, ourselves. Later we will consider the importance of *ascending* and *descending* of self.

Body as container or alembic

While nature is the living container which supports the expansion of experience through the widening of consciousness and facilitates self-realisation, the body is the container for the individual's felt sense experience of that development. The conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche constitute the self-system in the body. Moreover, my earlier consideration about the expanding self raises the question as to whether consciousness is limited to the brain, which is one of the hard unresolved questions in the study of consciousness (e.g., Chalmers, 2010; Metzinger, 2009). The assumption in this paper is that it is not.

Following Washburn's (2003) hermetic view that "the body is the alembic in which the elixir, the sacred power implicit in nature, effects a transformation of the 'soul' from base metal into gold, that is, from an imperfect to a spiritually perfected state" (p. 162), we might assume that the "sacred power" is the ground of Being or Mystery. Therefore, the body is another living container, or "temple of the Spirit" (p. 168), which goes through awakening and transformation (p. 149). Supporting this view, it is worth repeating Levin (1985) who follows Heidegger, in his assertion that the earth "is the source of our individuation, since it [allows us to] stand becoming ourselves", through "the wisdom in our bodily felt experience" (p. 298). Washburn (1994) picks up this theme in his assertion that "The integrated person realizes that the body is a native vehicle of spirituality and therefore that spirituality is at home in the body" (p. 311). Levin (1985) continues by stating that the body "*needs and uses our senses* to complete its realisation" (p. 182).

Freya Mathews (1991) develops this theme by asserting that "A self-realizing being is one which, by its very activity, defines and *embodies* [emphasis added] a value (*viz.*, its value-for-itself)" (p. 143). By locating the process of self-realisation within the context of the self-realisation of nature itself, Mathews helps us to appreciate the "value" of our two living containers: nature and body. To highlight this point further, human value exists in *connection with*, rather than separate from, the value of other beings; subject to subject rather that subject to object relatedness. This means that the unfolding or becoming of the individual is always within the context of an inter-dependent system, or co-creative community of other self-realising beings and living systems (e.g., fox, bee, tree, water, air, grass), that are, ecological "selves within wider selves" (p. 15). Mathews continues that "The relation of part to whole in a self-realizing system is systemic/holistic rather than linear/aggregative" (p. 143). This means that there is no Great Chain of Being hierarchy

The first encounter with nature is often through our body's senses. As Abram (2010) poetically reminds us, "The sensing body is like an open circuit that completes itself only in things, in others, in the surrounding earth" (p. 254). "Our animal senses" he writes, "are neither deceptive nor untrustworthy; they are our access to the cosmos. Bodily perception provides our most intimate entry into a primary order of reality that can be disparaged or dismissed only at our peril". By virtue of the fact that *Homo sapiens* is also part of nature, our self-realising, or becoming, is profoundly joined to the self-realising of other beings, on which we wholly depend. As Abram points out, "Incomplete on its own, the body is precisely our capacity for metamorphosis". Our transformation *requires* that we allow for the transformation of other beings. We are intrinsically related to our environments in what Abram calls "an enigmatic and encompassing field of relationships to which we can only apprentice ourselves" (p. 307). Perhaps more profoundly, he writes that it "is only by turning our bodily attention toward *another* that we experience the convergence and reassembly of our separate senses into a dynamic unity. Only by entering into relation with others do we effect our own integration and coherence" (p. 254). With this simple word *only* Abram implies that there is no other way. This conjoins with Mary's Oliver's (1994) words in her poem *Wild Geese*, where she writes "You only have to let the soft animal of your body/love what it loves" (p. 14). This invitation is to *only* live from listening to the wisdom of your body. My suggestion is that both *onlys* are necessary: turning our bodily attention toward both other and self.

The self-realisation of beings

Continuing our theme of the self-realisation of beings, from earlier, given that *Homo sapiens* is in the process of self-realisation, and fundamentally interdependent on and interconnected with other self-realizing beings, it then makes sense, following Freya Matthews (1991), that self-realisation is to be understood within the context of the universe as a creative "self-realizing system" (p. 152). Mathews (1991) cites Arne Naess in posing this as a "metaphysical fact" and an "ontological given" (p. 148). While Naess prefers not to be precise about his meaning of the term "self-realisation", Mathews is able to be more specific. *Homo sapiens*, she writes, is endowed with the givens of self-interest, self-love, and self-concern. This gravitates *Homo sapiens* away from self-realisation to a narrowing of identity (cf. our discussion in relation to Figure 3). Conversely, when self-realisation is understood within the wider context of our interdependence on and interconnectedness with nature as whole, then our concept of self widens to allow for "an expansion of scope in our identity and hence in the scope of our self-love." Self-expansion rather than self-contraction. What follows on from this is that an attitude of "duty" shifts to that of "protectiveness" or "care" for a self-realizing universe of which *Homo sapiens* is a part. Mathews emphasises this shift as a "transition from self-love [or ego-love] to *Self-love*" (pp. 149-151). That is, from the narcissism of ego-centricity to trans-species altruism. This is similar to Washburn's (2003) notion of transformation of the ego by the Spirit of the Ground, which ego recognises as a "higher essence of its own being" in the process of becoming, which brings forth an "overflow" of love from which others might also benefit (pp. 122-123), including other species and living environments. Within the context of our present theme, this protectiveness, care, and love often manifests as a concern for the earth through some form of ecological or spiritual activism, or other forms of engagement which aims to heal the split between culture and nature (e.g., Berry, 2000; Higgins, 2010; Korten, 2006; Macy, 1999; Plotkin, 2008), and restore our relationship with the earth.

A leading figure in bringing nature back into our developmental models of psychology is Bill Plotkin (2008). His theory of human development supports some of the themes we have considered so far. For instance, he puts emphasis on identity circling around being "holistically ecocentric" during *late adulthood*, with the focus on generosity as the centre of gravity for an individual, as if it were coming *through* the individual rather than *from* (pp. 384-87). This is interesting in the context of what we have already considered about the "overflow" of love, "protectiveness" and "care" as characteristic of this stage of psycho-spiritual maturity. Some indication of developmental progression in Plotkin's theory lies in the fact that *early adulthood* circles around being "ecocentric", rather than egocentric, with one's centre of gravity immersed in culturally embodying the mysteries of nature and psyche. The progression from ecocentric to cosmocentric comes with *early elderhood* with a gravitational pull from the soul of the wider web of life, or Washburn's Dynamic Ground perhaps. Then, with identity defined by being spirit-centred or cosmocentric, in *late elderhood*, the centre of ones gravity deepens to embrace the cosmos or spirit. Again, there appears to be a parallel here with Washburn's (2003) notion of Regeneration in Spirit which ego recognises as a "higher sense of its own being" (p. 86).

The participatory nature of encounter

It follows on from this that the process of self-realisation is *participatory* in relation to the self-realisation of the whole of nature. This view is supported by Will Adams (2010) in his description (referred to earlier) of the experience of self-expansion as "a participatory consciousness that exists in and *as* the community of nature – a nondual, transpersonal dynamic, and interrelational mind or psyche" (p. 20). This means that an individual can "suddenly open *to* and *in* and *as* the nondual presence – or dynamic *presencing* – of an interresponsive fellowship of being" (p. 22). Adams also draws our attention to Gregory Bateson who wrote, that "The individual mind is immanent but not only in the body. It is also immanent in the pathways and messages outside the body; and there is a larger Mind of which the

individual mind is only a sub-system" (as cited in Adams, 2010, p. 26). While self-realisation may not be synonymous with self-expansion, it is arguable that the latter includes the former. Moreover, self-realisation and self-expansion for *Homo sapiens* is concomitant to self-realisation and self-expansion of other species and living systems, in a participatory unfolding which embraces the whole web of life.

If we were to suggest further that soul is the *experience* of participatory encounter in contrast to an inner essence or Neo-Platonic divine spark, then it makes sense to follow Ferrer (2000, 2002) in his assertion that knowing of Mystery through this encounter is also participatory. That is, the *experience* of *soul* through encounters with nature is then a co-creative participatory event through which we come to know something of Mystery. Participatory encounters with nature are at the same time participatory encounters with soul, which is grounded in Mystery. Plotkin (2008), for instance, in using the term *soul* states that profound transformation often follows an irreversible soul initiation "where the light of everyday ego consciousness sinks towards the depths" (p. 305), and opens the person to a life in service of Mystery (Jung, 2009; Roszak, 1993), thus precipitating another stage in development of the individual (Plotkin, 2008: 307; cf. Washburn, 2003). Relating this argument back to Figure 2, my suggestion is that the felt presence of soul is an *experience* of profound liminality, and an encounter with Mystery through connecting with the subjectivity of nature (by going out), or by connecting to Mystery as the ground of my being (by going in). Also, given that everything is rooted in Mystery, everything is also in soul. Therefore, *Homo sapiens* is also *in* soul.

What often follows (and sometimes precipitates) a soul encounter is the creation of a ritual or ceremony (an outward orientated activity), or engaging in a conversation with other through what Jung referred to as *active imagination* (an inward orientated activity). Following Levin (1985) the former is often a bodily felt experience, for "body [is the] primary ritual bearer" (p. 171). Interestingly, Jung also defined active imagination as a bodily felt activity. Symbolic language, and symbolic seeing are also important features of encounters with nature, which includes being attentive to the dreaming process, and allowing the dream to work *with* and *through* the dreamer, for as Jung reminds us, dreams are "pure nature" within (as cited in Sabini, 2002, p. 19). This suggests that *Homo sapiens* is in closer proximity to nature than is ordinarily considered. Encounters with nature are not only through our senses, but also through our dreams by virtue of psyche's proximity to the Ground. This sentiment is beautifully expressed by Mary Oliver (1994) in her poem *Sleeping in the Fores*t:

I thought the earth
remembered me, she
took me back so tenderly, arranging
her dark skirts, her pockets
full of lichens and seeds. I slept
as never before, a stone
on the riverbed, nothing
between me and the white fire of the stars
but my thoughts, and they floated
light as moths among the branches
of perfect trees. All night
I hear the small kingdoms breathing
around me, the insects and the birds
who do their work in the darkness. All night
I rose and fell, as if in water, grappling
with a luminous doom. By morning
I had vanished at least a dozen times
into something better.

The felt sense experience of participatory encounters with nature then takes on the primitive feel of *participation mystique* (Levy-Bruhl cited in Sabini, 2002, p. 113), that is the trancelike merging with a projection, for instance, "grappling with a luminous doom", or a symbolic merging with, say, a bird, as the bird might allow a shaman to do. This panpsychist (e.g., Mathews) view accepts that everything can become an opportunity for dialogic encounter, and synchronicity is often a consequence of this (e.g., Jung as cited in Sabini, 2002; cf. Plotkin 2008). These are moments when conscious differentiation between self and other appears to drop away to allow for a more unified experience of nature. This in-depth encounter with nature is less about getting somewhere, but more about experiencing the otherness of other so as to heal the split of separation. For as Abram (2010) points out "our impulse toward participation, our yearning for engagement with the more-than-human otherness, has never been eradicated" (p. 277).

Self-expansion, like self-realisation, is a gradual or spontaneous process which arises out of participatory encounters with other. The gradual process might be facilitated by a considered crossing into nature. One assumes there to be many boundary crossings, transitional spaces, and thresholds, during nature explorations, which mark points of entry into spaces within which encounters take on symbolic meaning, as well as points of departure from the symbolic into the more concrete world. For instance, there is a symbolic crossing, threshold or "border crossing" (e.g., Plotkin, 2008; Shorter, 1982) into a nature setting itself. This might be a bridge crossing a river, or a gate into a forest, Active imaginations or explorations might follow on for this, for example, when one approaches nature's "altar" one bows in knowing that this bowing is both to Mystery, the Dynamic Ground, *and* humbly to the same Ground within oneself. As we know, active imagination is a bodily felt, participatory activity with aspects of subjectivity, often an inner image from a dream or an image from the deep imagination. This activity is a profound participation *in* the Ground of being, and our bodily felt experience is the interface for this type of encounter. For as Abram (2010) reminds us "The body is precisely our interface and exchange with the field of awareness. It is our *bodies* that participate in awareness" (p. 272). To return to a view expressed earlier, that nature knows no boundaries (e.g., Jung in Sabini, 2002; Wilber, 1996), participatory encounters with Ground *in* and *through* nature can also evoke an encounter with the same Ground *within* the individual, through the images and symbols offered up by that Ground. More spontaneous participatory encounters with the Ground through nature include peak and unitive experiences. As Abram (2010) reminds us "When we speak of the human animal's *spontaneous* [emphasis added] interchange with the animate landscape, we acknowledge a felt relation to the mysterious that was active long before any formal or priestly religions" (p. 277). These interchanges often remind us of the Ground, but also privileges us with felt-sense experiences of its mystery.

Liminality is the space in-between

As we have considered, encounters with nature often contain experiences of liminality. The space in-between or the liminal space (from the Latin meaning *threshold*) is one of the most important areas of experience in encounters with nature, as it brings new bodily felt meaning, as well as opportunity for the ego to align more fully with the Ground (Washburn, 1995, p. 223) or Mystery, as inferred, for instance, by Mary Oliver's "grappling with a luminous doom". An often familiar experience of liminality is in the dreaming process, though active imagination is also an activity of the *threshold*. We awake from the dream with a "taste" of the dream, or emerge from the active imagination as if from another reality, sometimes with a sense of having encountered the *numinous*, mystery or sacred. My suggestion is that encounters with nature are also activities of the *threshold*, in the sense that we turn our attention towards Mystery through the privilege of experiencing other, and that this is a sacred activity.

Moreover, Washburn (2003) suggests that "During initial awakening [that is, self-realisation] the ego is a liminal ego that, caught between mundane and supernatural worlds, is unable to return to its old worldly self", but is no longer restricted in this way "Once regeneration in the Spirit" or rebirth of the ego

begins (p. 118; cf. Jung, 2009). For Washburn this rebirth is a new alignment with the Ground. The individual on the journey towards becoming is increasingly defined by the Ground itself, and must be prepared to pass through liminal space in the spiral process of becoming. Whereas Washburn appears to attribute liminality to an inner threshold between conscious and unconscious parts of the psyche, my suggestion, as we have seen in Figure 2, is that liminality can be also experienced as an outer phenomenon in relation to nature, or it might appear to move from inner to outer, or outer to inner, or be both inner and outer at the same time (cf. my thoughts on *soul*). This dynamic might be poetically thought of as our dance with Mystery.

Projection and the numinous ground of being

At the beginning of this paper I suggested that the nature setting (Figure 2), as well as being a community of beings in the process of self-realisation (e.g., Mathews, Naess), is also both a *projective field* and a *field of numinous potentials*. This means that the nature container which supports our unfolding, self-realisation, self-expansion, becoming, or transformation, is able to receive our projections (*the projective field*), and appear to offer the individual phenomena (*field of numinous potentials*) which might hold unique meaning for the person. Specifically, my use of the term *numinous potentials* refers to the idea that through encounters with nature, a co-creative experience of the numinous can bring about a transformation of self. Moreover, numinosity is the felt-sense experience of finding oneself in the space in-between. Taking time to consider these two themes more closely, beginning with the more familiar concept of projection, we know that the content of a projection requires a receiver who is in some way susceptible to accepting the projection. Similarly, nature accepts our projections. Jung wrote that "we need to project ourselves into the things around us. My self is not confined to my body. It extends into all the things I have made and all the things around me" (as cited in Sabini, 2002, p. 155). The *projective field* is everything around me, which includes creative explorations of all kinds, for instance, the ceremonies and rituals referred to earlier. We also project our highest as well as our darkest thoughts into nature (cf. Terhaar, 2009). These projections afford us the possibility of seeing ourselves in that moment. Abram (2010) offers a contraposition to this view, however, when he wonders whether we actually do project "mood" onto our surroundings when he writes:

> Well, no, not if our manner of understanding and conceptualising our various 'interior' moods was originally borrowed from the moody, capricious earth itself. Not, that is, if our image of anger, and livid rage, has been borrowed, at least in part, from our ancestral, animal experience of thunderstorms, and the violence of sudden lightening. Not if our sense of emotional release has been fed not only by the flow of tears but also by our experience of rainfall, and if our concept of mental clarity is nourished by the visual transparence of the air and the open blue sky (p. 153).

This is a beautiful illustration of our profound participatory inheritance. It is as if *Homo sapiens* is only able to project onto nature because we first "borrowed" the qualities of our projections from nature. Perhaps it makes sense to hold these different perspectives together.

Homo sapiens is one of millions of self-realising beings within a creative self-realising universe, the ground of which is Mystery. Poetic imagination alone is able to take the creative leap of considering that everything originates in nature, and that our projections are ways of re-connecting, seeking at-one-ment, or even giving back something which was first given to us. Abram continues to write that:

> In truth, it's likely that our solitary sense of inwardness (our experience of an interior mindscape to which we alone have access) is born of the forgetting, or sublimation, of a much more ancient interiority that was once our common birthright – the ancestral sense of the surrounding earthly cosmos as the voluminous *inside* of an immense Body, or Tent, or Temple (p. 154).

We are in Nature and Nature is in us. It is often considered that consciousness or self-awareness separates *Homo sapiens* from its origins in Mystery (e.g., Jung; Washburn), and that this initial separateness is perpetuated by believing that we are separate; this is a form of contracting (cf. Figure 3) a consequence of which is that we become estranged from our source of origin in Mystery.

Encounters with nature offer a way of re-remembering, that is, bringing together that which was separate. For in the projection is the potential for re-membrance of something that is in two places at the same time; *over there* as well as *here*, or *outside* as well as *inside*. Perhaps this re-membrance is felt as a longing in *Homo sapiens*, a longing to return to our source of origin in Nature or Mystery. Also, perhaps the bird projects onto me something other than fear or threat. Perhaps, too, the forest reveals to me something of its feeling quality while also being receptive to mine. But this demands more than merely thinking about. It demands curiosity, empathy, and an imagination which reaches deep into our tacit knowing of this intrinsic connection. Moreover, perhaps our bodily felt-sense experience of beauty in nature is an encounter with that which is longed for. These experiences might be *soul* experiences as it is often through beauty that the numinous makes itself present.

Turning our attention now to consider nature as a *field of numinous potentials*, it is possible, perhaps even likely, that these *potentials* are projections of an extraordinary variety, and that, like "big" dreams, have a transformative capacity. It is also likely that at the same time these *potentials* are something of Mystery presencing itself to us, or perhaps even projecting itself onto *us*. We might receive these potentials as *gifts* of insight, awareness, and expansions of consciousness. These *gifts* might be moments of self-realisation, of meaningful encounters with other species. These *gifts* might be breakthroughs of intuition, or outpourings of creativity. The *gift* might also be tears for the suffering earth. We might come to recognise that these *potentials*, this presencing, as something embedded deep within ourselves, as well as simultaneously extending limitlessly beyond ourselves, and come to know that it is the embedded something which makes participatory encounters with the Ground possible.

Following Rudolf Otto (1968), the numinous is a mysterious, frightening, fascinating or awesome presence; *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. Continuing our earlier theme of the different thresholds of liminality (Figure 2), the numinous is either *subjectively* and/or *objectively* and/or, following Ferrer (2002), *participatively* known, or *inner*, *outer*, and *together*. The new paradigm in transpersonal psychology (e.g., Ferrer) is to think in terms of participation (together/co-creatively/between) rather than dualistically (inner or outer). This participatory understanding of encounters with Mystery through nature draws the individual away from a narcissistically perceived ownership of this experience as something happening *to me* or only *within me*, or of perceiving Mystery as something coming *to me from outside*. Perhaps it is all of these things at different times. But, following Ferrer (2002), I prefer to adopt a participative understanding of numinous experiences so that the transformative experience of encountering the light coming like fingers through the trees is, in that moment, co-created by both person and setting.

There is something about the numinous which appears to magnetically attract the person. Washburn (2003) brings an interesting perspective to assist with our understanding of this phenomenon. He asserts that the "power of the Ground as numinous Spirit initiates a profound transformation", or breakthrough, which penetrates or engulfs (p. 249) the ego to its foundations (p. 113). The individual is drawn to the attracting energy of the Ground (p. 80) by "*numinous attractors*" [emphasis added] (p. 190), for instance, a bird, a stone, the quality of light, or atmosphere of place, which, according to Plotkin (2008) become signposts on the soul path (p. 339). Murray Stein goes further to write that numinous experience offers a "hint" of awareness "that human life has a link to transcendence and that the individual is a 'soul' with potential to come into relation with the spiritual in a wholly natural way" (as cited in Casement & Tacey, 2006, p. 49). This "link" is that *Homo sapiens* consist of *something of* the Ground, but is *not* the Ground. Throughout the ages the wisdom teaching is that to identify too closely with the Ground is dangerous, because over-identification encourages narcissism. The irony here is that

narcissism is *also* a great separator from Nature because of the narcissistic tendency to *appropriate* experiences of encounter with Mystery as self-generated. While it is not within the scope of this present paper to explore this further, it is worth acknowledging that embodying the values of humility and compassion help to minimise this tendency. Abram (2010) appears to support our discussion up to this point by asserting that "This instinctive rapport with an enigmatic cosmos at once both nourishing and dangerous lies at the ancient heart of all that we have come to call 'the sacred'" (p. 277).

The ascending and descending self

The experience of self as *expanding* and *contracting* (Figure 1) sits alongside the dynamic of *ascending* and *descending*. This brings our theme of numinosity into sharper focus. Washburn (2003) develops this ascending-descending dynamic by offering a complementary pair of archetypal metaphors. These are the "lighted clearing" and "the shrouded forest" (pp. 188-189); both of which contain aspects of unfathomable numinous Mystery referred to earlier (Alighieri, 1995; Otto, 1968). Washburn reminds us that "the shrouded forest" is where the person encounters the inescapable "negative numinous energy" (p. 189). This is perhaps a reminder, following Meister Eckhart, that the ground of Mystery is dark (McGinn, 2001, p. 59). Also, Terhaar's (2009) investigation into intense spiritual experience in nature draws attention to two variations of experience as either "a felt sense of benevolent presence in nature" or that "the felt presence is malevolent" (p. 311). Moreover, Robert Ryan (2002) reminds us that for Jung, images of descent also include "entry into the earth, a cave or tunnel or by water – especially large bodies of water – or immersion in water or in a well" (p. 142). Again, mythologies throughout the ages tell of the adventures of the perilous journeys of descent (e.g., Virgil, Orpheus, Psyche); whereas the "lighted clearing" represents "the positive, light side of numinous energy [which] breaks through and becomes manifest" (Washburn, 2003, p. 189). As we know, mythologies also tell of the experiences of ascendance (e.g., Christ, Eiljah). These two metaphors are further reminders of the qualities in Rudolf Otto's *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. Moreover, Washburn (2003, p. 55) points out that "There is no way to ascend to higher spiritual realms without first descending into the depths" (p. 55), which affirms Jung's statement that the "Psychic depths are nature, and nature is creative life" (as cited in Sabini, 2008, p. 208; cf. Jung, 2009). Yet, we might also say that psychic heights are also Nature.

Furthermore, the participatory encounter of Mystery in the "depths" is also complemented by encounter with the "peak". Maslow (1971) termed "peak experience" as the, often life transforming, core religious or mystic experience which is a "poignantly emotional, climactic, autonomic response to the miraculous, the awesome, the sacralised", (p. 348) and the beautiful (p. 166). Interestingly, John Davis (2004) points out that psychological research supports the view that "nature is a trigger for peak experiences" (p.6). And to continue our theme from earlier, these experiences are also unitive (Maslow, 1971, p. 348) or non-dualist (e.g., Plotkin, 2008; Washburn, 2003), though this comes with the challenge of retaining some separateness from the experience by not over-identifying with it as we have already seen. This challenge involves finding ways of benefitting from the formation of "an expanded, more gracious, more spacious sense of self" (Davis, 1998, p. 75), while at the same time retaining a sense of humility. As we know the word *humility* comes from the Latin "humus", meaning the earth or ground. So humility means to be close to the literal earth. Finally, a contrast to "peak experiences" are "plateau experiences", which Maslow (1971) considered as more serene or tranquil (p. 348), therefore more grounded or earthed.

Conclusions

This paper has offered some preliminary thoughts on a meaning-making framework for participatory encounters with nature which potentially facilitates an expansion of experience through the widening of consciousness and supports the processes of self-realisation. I have suggested that this

necessitates a temporary and partial identification with other as a way of knowing. I have also suggested that knowing is kinship-seeking rather than appropriation. My thoughts are that both cartographies, and the figure of eight, offer useful ways of construing self-expansion, and that Figure 2 in particular offers a way of talking about, and holding together, a range of experiences and processes (e.g., expanding, contracting, ascending, descending, liminality, numinosity, participation mystique) linked to psycho-spiritual unfolding through encounters with nature. It was also important to present self-expansion and self-realisation alongside the self-realisation of nature as a whole, to help convey a sense of *Homo sapiens* as living horizontally alongside other species and living systems. At the same time the use of the species name *Homo sapiens* was a deliberate way of inviting the reader to think in terms of *Homo sapiens* as one of many self-realising life forms, also grounded in Mystery. While it has not been possible to offer full accounts of the processes and experiences referred to, I hope that I have been able to engage the reader with the ideas presented.

It is my view that further thinking about participatory encounters with nature as a psycho-spiritual path is of value, and that the development of meaning-making frameworks as ways of mapping the territory, but not defining the country, may help deepen understanding of this path. Further thought might also be given to considering the dynamics of participatory encounters with Mystery in a nature setting. In fact, I am currently conducting a pilot study into the psychological effects of self-evaluated transformation through purposive encounters with nature. Other areas for investigation might include qualitative explorations into the experiences of liminality and numinosity. Moreover, Brymer's et al. (2010) proposal of further research into the specific correlations of aspects of nature with different types of positive influence experience (p. 24) might reveal some interesting findings. Also, following Santastefano's (2008) suggestion that further investigation into the possible impact of early relational trauma on experiences in nature could be a valuable area of study, particularly within the context of the growth in ecotherapy (e.g., Totton, 2011) and ecopsychology (e.g., Scull, 2009). Additionally, my suggestion is that the areas highlighted as being outside the scope of this paper, for instance the figure of eight dynamic, and the importance of the development of values such as humility and compassion to help minimise potential narcissism, are perhaps worth considering more fully, and that each of the themes developed in this paper would benefit from lengthier explorations. Finally, it is perhaps important to note that it has become evident during the writing of this paper that the content is the outline for a larger project.

Acknowledgements

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El sentido en la vida, dimensión evolutiva. Hallazgos empíricos en la rebaremación del test PIL (Purpose In Life) en España

Meaning in life, the evolutive dimension.
Empirical findings with new norms for the Purpose In Life (PIL) test in Spain

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Resumen

Se realiza una nueva baremación del test PIL para España en base a las contestaciones de 215 personas en el año 2003. Se han obtenido puntuaciones significativamente mayores que en el baremo anterior de 1994. En el estudio por edad, el incremento se relaciona con un aumento significativo de las puntuaciones de los jóvenes (menores de 30 años), mientras los adultos siguen presentando puntuaciones similares. Este hecho no puede relacionarse con el relativamente bajo número de participantes, ya que en una muestra de datos de 340 jóvenes correspondientes a 2011 se confirman puntuaciones similares. Ni la edad ni el sexo justificarían ahora baremos separados. Los hallazgos nos confirman las diferencias socioculturales en la percepción de sentido, en las que habrá que seguir profundizando con nuevos estudios.

Palabras clave: Logoterapia. Sentido. Test PIL. Baremo. Dimensión evolutiva.

Abstract

New norms were obtained for the Purpose of Life (PIL) test in Spain. In 2003, a sample of 215 participants answered the test. The 2003 scores were significantly higher than those found in 1994. When viewing the age variables, the increase may be related to the scores of adults less than 30 years old, as older adults did not show similar increase in scores. This fact cannot be related to the relatively low number of participants, as the data in a sample of 340 young people for 2011 confirms similar scores. Neither factors of age or sex can justify the different scales in the new norms. The findings confirm socio-cultural differences in meaning and perception and indicate further studies to deepen these issues.

Key words: Logotherapy. Meaning. PIL test. Norms. Evolutive dimension.

Introducción

La necesidad de encontrar sentido en la vida y la capacidad de lograrlo que la acompaña, es una realidad existencial del ser humano que se manifiesta de diferentes modos a lo largo del ciclo vital de las personas. Igualmente, su expresión y desarrollo se encuentra vinculada a las características culturales de las sociedades.

Tanto el aspecto evolutivo como el cultural del sentido en la vida, ha sido puesto de manifiesto por distintos autores e investigaciones en el ámbito de la psicología humanista (i.e. Rogers, Maslow), existencial (i.e. Yalom, Frankl) y transpersonal (i.e. Assagioli, Wilber). Siendo la logoterapia la corriente exclusivamente centrada en el estudio de la necesidad del ser humano, de búsqueda de sentido en la vida.

Entendiendo el común denominador existente entre las escuelas mencionadas anteriormente, así como el reconocimiento que dan a la necesidad de encontrar sentido en la vida, se presenta este estudio siguiendo únicamente el marco logoterapéutico.

Viktor Frankl (1978, 1987, 1988, 1990), generador de la logoterapia, señala como vías para encontrar sentido, los valores creativos, vivenciales y actitudinales, y expresa cómo en todas las culturas, condiciones y posiciones personales (sexo, edad, creencia, nivel socioeconómico, etc.) las personas lo experimentan. Para ello aporta la referencia a investigaciones que se iban realizando siguiendo los presupuestos de la logoterapia (Frankl, 2001).

Claudio García Pintos (2004) abunda en la dimensión evolutiva planteando la preponderancia (sin exclusividad) de unas metas y valores u otros, en función de la edad: nacimiento a adolescencia - logro de la propia identidad y valores creativos; juventud a adultez - aspiraciones psicológico-sociales y valores vivenciales; madurez y vejez – mayor expresión autotranscendente y valores actitudinales.

Por otra parte algunos trabajos con tests logoterapéuticos también han aportado datos relacionados con la variabilidad del sentido en función de la edad y la cultura (Noblejas, 1994, 2006). En especial destacamos la existencia de diferencias significativas encontradas por edad, que dieron lugar al establecimiento de baremos diferenciados. Asimismo, se ha evidenciado la necesidad de validación de los tests logoterapéuticos en cada país y realidad cultural.

Dado el carácter evolutivo y la relación cultural de la variable sentido en la vida, transcurridos 10 años desde la obtención del baremo español (Noblejas, 1994) y considerando la variación cultural de las sociedades en el devenir de las generaciones, nos planteamos contrastar hasta qué punto estos aspectos influían en la realidad de la vivencia de sentido en la vida cotidiana de las personas. Por ello, en el marco de una investigación más amplia diseñada para baremar otros 4 tests logoterapéuticos y profundizar en las diferentes dimensiones que engloba el constructo de sentido de la vida (en el 2003), se ha realizado un trabajo específico de rebaremación del test PIL y el correspondiente contraste con el baremo anterior.

En concreto, expondremos en este artículo el estudio de la fiabilidad, validez y baremo de la nueva estandarización del PIL realizada sobre datos de 2003, asi como una comparación con los resultados obtenidos anteriormente en España y EE.UU.

Materiales

El test PIL (Purpose In Life) de Crumbaugh y Maholic (1969) es un instrumento diseñado para la evaluación del sentido en la vida o su realidad existencial contraria, la frustración existencial, contando con el autoinforme de las personas que lo cumplimentan a través de una escala de tipo likert de 7 puntos.

El PIL fue baremado para la población española por Noblejas (1994) (ver Anexo 1), obteniéndose dos baremos diferenciados según la edad. El baremo reflejó diferencias significativas en sus puntuaciones tanto respecto a la versión original americana como a las adaptaciones en otros países. El estudio de la validez de criterio o concurrente en la versión española mostraba un 38% de varianza compartida con el Logotest significativa al 99,9 %. La fiabilidad del test (Noblejas, 2000) para la muestra de baremación anterior fue de un valor alfa de Cronbach de 0,879. Además se estudió su estructura factorial (Noblejas, 1999).

[PIL, version española (Noblejas, 1994) disponible a texto completo en Tesis Digitales UCM]:
http://cisne.sim.ucm.es/search~S7*spi?/Xnoblejas&searchscope=7&SORT=DZ/Xnoblejas&searchscope=7&SORT=DZ&SUBKEY=noblejas/1%2C2%2C2%2CB/frameset&FF=Xnoblejas&searchscope=7&SORT=DZ&2%2C2%2C

Esta baremación ha sido utilizada en diferentes investigaciones (Noblejas, 1995, 1998; Porras, 2005; Porras y Noblejas, 2004, 2007; Prats Mora, 2001; Rodriguez Fernández, 2007; Kroeff, 1999 y Sánchez Herrera, 2005), así como aplicada en el trabajo clínico de logoterapeutas, mostrando su utilidad en ambos casos.

Participantes

La obtención del baremo exige contar con una muestra representativa de la población a la que se puede aplicar el test, a saber, personas de 16 años o más (condición de aplicación que establece el test PIL) y, en nuestro caso, de nacionalidad española.

Por los datos obtenidos en estudios previos de baremación del PIL en España (Noblejas, 1994) se consideró suficiente la obtención de la contestación de los cuestionarios por parte de unos 200 participantes. Los tests se acompañaron de un cuestionario sociológico para recoger las características de la muestra.

En nuestro caso, se realizó un muestreo no probabilístico de tipo casual. Sin embargo se puede considerar un "híbrido" del tipo de muestreo por cuotas, ya que se cuidó obtener una muestra representativa de la población española en cuanto a sus características (distribución geográfica y sociológica), o al menos poder comprobar que las características que no están ajustadas no influyen en el resultado del test.

Se redactó una hoja que contenía la presentación de la experiencia y las normas de aplicación de los tests, respetándose en todo momento la voluntariedad en la participación y la confidencialidad de los datos. Tras conocer el tema sobre el que versaban los instrumentos, algunas personas no quisieron cumplimentarlos, y otros decidieron no continuar en algún momento. Los tests se rellenaban de forma anónima y se introducían en un sobre para ser, posteriormente, numerados e identificar los correspondientes a una misma persona.

Un total de 215 participantes contestaron el conjunto de los instrumentos en el año 2003. La edad media de la muestra es de 42 años (con una desviación típica de 14.41 y un rango de 16 a 81 años), siendo 72 varones y 143 mujeres. Esta descompensación entre sexos indica una mayor disposición a colaborar de las mujeres, que también se aprecia en el trabajo de Scherler, Lajunen y Gülgöz (1998) llegándose en él a proporciones de 1 a 4, y apunta a la utilización de tests no paramétricos para minimizar su influencia estadística.

Análisis estadístico

Una vez obtenidas las puntuaciones de las muestras, pasamos al estudio estadístico mediante los métodos que expresamos a continuación.

Dado que estamos trabajando con escalas de tipo Likert, donde se asegura una escala ordinal pero no de intervalo, será necesario utilizar sistemáticamente pruebas estadísticas no paramétricas. Incluso, desde un punto de vista estricto (normalmente no considerado en la práctica), no sería adecuado utilizar

medidas tan clásicas como la media o la desviación típica (Pérez Juste, 1980). Sin embargo, con el fin de posibilitar la comparación con trabajos precedentes, se realizarán simultáneamente las pruebas paramétricas correspondientes contrastando sus resultados con los de las no paramétricas. No obstante en estudios anteriores, las diferencias entre las pruebas paramétricas y no paramétricas han sido irrelevantes.

Se describirá la muestra con los estadísticos más comunes y se comprobará el ajuste a la distribución normal por medio de la prueba de Kolmogorov-Smirnov.

Las diferencias entre grupos se contrastarán con la prueba de Kolmogorov–Smirnov y Mann-Whitney (Kruskal-Walllis y Jonckheere-Terpstra cuando hay más de dos grupos); como pruebas paramétricas se usarán el análisis de varianza (ANOVA) y los test estadísticos t, LSD, Tukey, Scheffe y Bonferroni (cuando haya más de dos grupos a comparar simultáneamente y como tests post hoc), asi como el de Levene para la diferencia entre varianzas.

La fiabilidad se estudiará con los índices Alfa de Cronbach, Lambda 4 y 6 de Guttman, correlación entre dos mitades aleatorias y test Guttman sobre dos mitades.

El análisis factorial se realizará con una extracción de factores por componentes principales y rotación varimax, procedimientos que suelen ser habituales en el estudio de tests psicológicos.

Los análisis se realizarán con el programa SPSS versión 9.0 bajo Windows.

Resultados y discusión

Los estadísticos básicos de las puntuaciones obtenidas para el test PIL, que describen las características de la muestra de participantes se recogen en la Tabla 1.

Tabla 1.
Estadísticos descriptivos del test PIL

	Todos los participantes	**Jóvenes (edad < 30 años)**	**Adultos (edad >= 30 años)**
N	215	51	164
Media	108.07	109.96	107.49
Mediana	110	111	110
Desv. Típica	15.117	11,275	16,111
Asimetría	-0,867	-0,281	1.039
Apuntamiento	1,273	-0,238	-0,862
Mínimo	47	82	47
Máximo	135	131	135

Los coeficientes de asimetría y apuntamiento se pueden considerar cercanos a uno, pero los valores están truncados en sus valores altos (sesgo hacia puntuaciones de bajo sentido) y la distribución apuntada para todos los participantes.

Se ha comprobado el ajuste a la distribución normal con el tests de Kolmogorov-Smirnov y encontrado diferencias significativas (p = 0,001). La falta de ajuste a la distribución normal concuerda con anteriores estudios para España (Noblejas, 1994), en los cuales tanto el PIL como el Logotest presentaban diferencias significativas con esta distribución. Sin embargo, en ese mismo estudio citado, las submuestras de unos 300 individuos no presentaban diferencias, interpretándose este hecho en términos de que al aumentar los casos se obtienen las características de la muestra con tal precisión que la más mínima diferencia resulta ser significativa. Sin embargo, ahora, con una muestra pequeña, sí se obtienen diferencias significativas, lo que nos hace pensar en una muestra más alejada de la normal (ver Figura 1).

Figura 1.
Distribución de frecuencia de los valores de las puntuaciones del PIL.
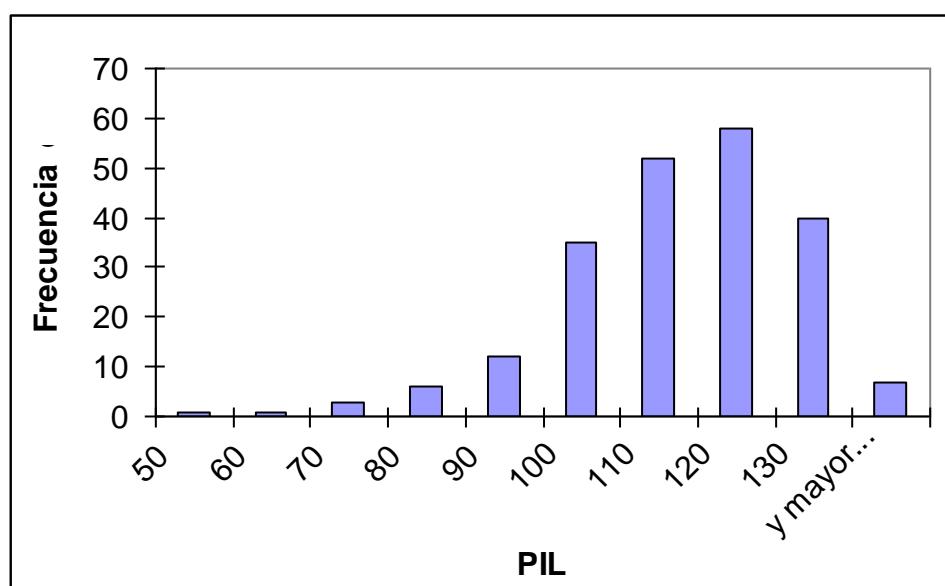
Las características de fiabilidad obtenidas para la puntuación total son:
Alfa de Cronbach: 0,8980
Lambda 4 de Guttman: 0,8722
Lambda 6 de Guttman: 0,9080
Correlación de dos mitades aleatorias: 0,7740
Guttman dos mitades = 0,8722

Estas fiabilidades se mantienen similares a las obtenidas anteriormente por Noblejas (2000).

Se realizó también un nuevo análisis factorial en el cual se aprecia una continuidad de los factores anteriores, aunque con pequeños cambios. No obstante, el informe y discusión pormenorizados de este análisis supera los objetivos de este artículo.

El contraste de las puntuaciones en relación al **sexo** no revela diferencias significativas, ni por los métodos paramétricos, ni por los no paramétricos, al igual que en investigaciones precedentes.

En relación con la edad, tampoco obtenemos diferencias significativas, ni por métodos paramétricos ni no paramétricos, ni agrupando de 5 en 5 años, de 10 en 10, o en dos grupos (menor de 30 años o mayor); sólo el test de Levene informa de una diferencia significativa en la varianza (que como podemos observar en la Tabla 1 es menor en los jóvenes). Estos resultados contrastan con los de trabajos anteriores (Noblejas, 1994) en los que se obtuvieron diferencias significativas por edad, dando lugar a la propuesta de dos baremos diferenciados.

Para favorecer el contraste de los resultados obtenidos en el estudio actual con los de 1994, presentamos en la Tabla 2 el baremo anterior para España y los datos correspondientes a la muestra actual de 2003.

Tabla 2.
Comparación de estadísticos de los grupos de edad del baremo de 1994
y de la muestra actual de 2003 (Columnas: test / grupo de edad. Filas: percentiles).

	PIL (1994)			PIL (2003)		
EDAD	todas	- 29	30 -	todas	- 29	30 -
C75	116	114	118	119	119	119
C50	107	106	109	110	111	110
C25	96	95	99	100	102	97
C20	93	92	95	97	101	96
C10	84	81	86	89	94	88

Recordamos que la interpretación de estos baremos siguiendo el criterio de Lukas (1986, 1988) sería:

- El 25% de la población con mejor puntuación (valores altos, por encima de C75): *logro interior de sentido bueno*.
- El 50% de la población con puntuaciones intermedias (entre C25 y C75): *logro interior de sentido medio*.
- El 25% de la población con puntuaciones peores (valores bajos del PIL): *logro interior de sentido malo*.
- El 5% de la población entre C25-C20: *cercano a frustración existencial; ¡señal de atención!*
- El 10% de la población entre C20-C10: *fundamento para pensar en frustración existencial*.
- Población por debajo de C10: *fundamento para pensar en neurosis o depresión noógena; logro interior de sentido muy malo*.

Considerando las puntuaciones de ambos baremos, sin distinción por edad, se observa el aumento en todas las puntuaciones de los percentiles en el de 2003. Más adelante trataremos el contraste estadístico de ambos baremos (Tabla 3).

Si analizamos las puntuaciones considerando la edad, observamos que son los jóvenes los que muestran un incremento mayor en sus puntuaciones. Realizamos pruebas estadísticas para contrastar las diferencias entre los diferentes grupos de edad implicados, cuyos resultados se reflejan en la Tabla 3.

Tabla 3.
Significación de las diferencias (p valores) entre los grupos
de baremación anterior (1994) y actual (2003) y subgrupos por edad.

	Total participantes (1994) PIL x̄ = 104.72 vs Total participantes (2003) PIL x̄ = 108.07	Jóvenes (1994) PIL x̄ = 103.63 vs Jóvenes (2003) PIL x̄ = 109.96	Adultos (1994) PIL x̄ = 106,43 vs Adultos (2003) PIL x̄ = 107,49
Levene (varianza)	0,346	**0,033**	0,809
t-test	**0,006**	**0,001**	0,499
Tukey	**0,019**	0,053	0,957
Scheffe	**0,026**	0,120	0,975
LSD	**0,007**	**0,007**	0,485
Bonferroni	**0,021**	0,069	0,999
ANOVA	**0,006**	**0,005**	0,499
Mann-Whitney	**0,008**	**0,012**	0,559
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0,125	0,116	0,740

En relación con las muestras totales, vemos que sí existen diferencias significativas al 99 % (aunque una de las pruebas no lo refleje, damos prioridad al test de Mann-Whitney y el ANOVA, como no paramétrico y paramétrico respectivamente).

No son significativas las diferencias entre los dos grupos de adultos. Sin embargo, entre los dos grupos de jóvenes, con el criterio anterior, diríamos que hay diferencias significativas al 95 %.

Para profundizar en estos resultados, se han contrastado las características de los jóvenes de 2003, con una nueva muestra de puntuaciones del PIL correspondientes a 340 jóvenes obtenida en 2011, en el contexto de una investigación sobre juventud y sentido (Psicosoc, en prensa) y que, aunque se restringía geográficamente a la Comunidad de Madrid, era sociológicamente amplia, incluyendo jóvenes trabajando y no, y jóvenes estudiando y no. Los resultados, tanto con pruebas paramétricas como no paramétricas no evidencian diferencias significativas entre ambos, por lo que el cambio detectado en 2003 es estable y se mantiene en 2011, no pudiendo ser atribuído a la relativa escasez de participantes en la muestra.

Esta evolución de las puntuaciones de los jóvenes en España, recuerda los resultados de Preble (1986), ya que baremando el Logotest en EE.UU. y relacionándolo con el PIL, obtenía puntuaciones totales en éste más parecidas a las nuestras de 2003 (superiores a las de 1994). Aunque sólo aporta datos por grupos de edad para el Logotest, podemos observar que para este test el grupo 20-29 años presentaba puntuaciones similares a las de los adultos, y sólo el grupo de menos de 20 años presenta valores de sentido algo menores.

Esto nos hace pensar en una evolución en España similar a la de otros países de cultura occidental, aunque con posteridad en el tiempo.

La comparación de los grupos resultantes de la aplicación de otras categorías socio-demográficas no se realiza aquí por exceder los objetivos de esta investigación.

Los interesantes resultados encontrados respecto a la edad piden un intento de comprensión que, sin duda, no será alcanzado sino con nuevas investigaciones. Las posibles hipótesis que en base al conocimiento que de la variable sentido vamos teniendo serían:

- Evolución cultural específica de los jóvenes, reflejada por el PIL dada su sensibilidad a las variaciones culturales

- Autoconcepto de joven, evolución desde una concepción como de vivir en una "sala de espera" a otra de considerarse en una "estación término" (García Roca, 2000).

Estas y otras posibles hipótesis se seguirán contrastando con datos de futuros trabajos.

Conclusiones

Según los resultados actuales, no sería necesario para la población española realizar baremos diferenciados por edad, pudiéndose utilizar tanto el baremo general (sin diferencia de edad) antiguo (1994) como el actual (2003), ya que las diferencias entre ambas muestras no son significativas. Sin embargo, los jóvenes de la muestra de baremación presentan puntuaciones que difieren significativamente de las obtenidas en la anterior.

Podemos pensar que hay una evolución de la juventud que presenta unos valores del PIL mayores, y una menor varianza que en la baremación anterior. Es necesario realizar nuevas investigaciones para profundizar en estas diferencias.

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Using Altered States of Consciousness to reduce the effects of daily stress

Usando los Estados Alterados de Consciencia
para reducir los efectos del estrés

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Abstract

The stressful conditions of daily life create cumulative disorders that may push human beings beyond their limits of normality and objective reality. As the affected person deviates from her ideal norm, the resulting sense of scarcity and unfulfilment may interfere with her inner ability to harmoniously function. The application and implementation of specific techniques of altered states of consciousness can re-activate this normal or inner harmonious ability or state.

The effects of altered states of consciousness techniques upon the subjects' perceptions of power of concentration, lust for life, frustation and tolerance levels, and self-acceptance are presented. Two measurement strategies were employed: a subjective method based on a questionnaire, and an objective method based on electronographic measurement. The subjects' post-treatment results indicated rebalancing, improved vitality, and increased flexible and realistic thinking, thereby confirming the non-entropic capacity of these techniques.

Keywords: Stress, Normality, Electronography, Altered States of Consciousness

Resumen

Las condiciones estresantes de la vida diaria crean acumulativos desórdenes que pueden llevar al ser humano más allá de sus límites de normalidad y realidad objetiva. La persona entonces se desvía de la normalidad, hacia la deficiencia y el vacío existencial llegando a verse interferida su habilidad y funcionamiento habituales. La aplicación e integración de técnicas específicas que trabajan con estados alterados de consciencia pueden reactivar el estado armonioso natural de la persona.

Se presentan los efectos producidos por éstas técnicas, en cuanto a los niveles de percepción del estado de concentración, ganas de vivir, frustración y tolerancia, así como autoaceptación. Para ello fueron empleadas dos estrategias de medición: un método subjetivo basado en un cuestionario y un método objetivo basado en la medición electronográfica. Los resultados de los sujetos tras el tratamiento mostraron reequilibrio, revitalización e incremento de pensamiento flexible y realista. Por lo tanto, se confirman las capacidades no-entrópicas de las técnicas utilizadas.

Plabras clave: Estrés, Normalidad, Electronografía, Estados Alterados de Consciencia

Normality as a state of mental health

Normality in social life appears to be a comprehensive and complex outcome of multiple parameters. These parameters exist in a dynamic equilibrium that is untouched in its history and projected upon the genetic model of individual existence, both functionally and morphologically. Removing the perception of normality may create a feeling of deficit or unfulfillment in the person. Failure to recreate harmony may manifest in feelings of disorganization or personal dissolution. When an individual experiences decreased powers of concentration and appetite for life, her inner calm is taxed.

Although abnormality is viewed as a deviation from the average or normal, it is not always coorelated with pathology. Delay and Pichot (1975) consider abnormality as a deviation from qualitative and functional values in the overall significance of the human model. Abnormality can be also be viewed as a transition phase between the normal and pathological models and represents a continuity between these two terms.

Research in the fields of medicine, biochemistry and neurophysiology have concluded that when survival or safety is threatened, living things exhibit a similar reaction: showing aggression in order to escape or to overcome the danger. Avoidance of dangerous or unsafe situations is also seen. Aggression or flight reaction corresponds with what is known as a stress reaction. The Canadian Dr. Hans Selye (1955) originally introduced the term stress reaction. Stress is a term that may be overused, but in contemporary societies, stress and conflict often accompany human activity. Stress is defined as any factor or combination of factors that cause an abnormal reaction in the physical body. The stimulus or situation is subjectively experienced and perceived, then evaluated and interpreted by the individual as tension, discomfort or anxiety. This perception operates with two unique types of stress: "*distress*" where the individual's critical needs are unmetand the painful zones of the limbic portion of the brain stimulated, and "*eustress*" where the vital needs are met, and the pleasure zones of the limbic system are stimulated. Stress is the body's nonspecific response to requests that are beyond its adaptive capacity and typically occurs when its existence is threatened on the physical, emotional and spiritual levels. In these situations the body seeks to maintain biological homeostasis or normality at any cost. An imminent danger instantly triggers a state of distress. The distress of today may also be psychological in nature. Multiple stressful factors in the dimensions of physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal relationships may produce unpleasant side effects.

Electronography as a method of analyzing the human being

The anthropologist Cornelia Guja (1993), Manager of the Anthropology Institute of the Romanian Academy, defined Electronography (EnG) as a technique that delivers a high voltage bio-electro-fluorescent current (tens of kilaVolts) between a plain electrode and a body sitting on thae electrode, causing the layer of air between the two surfaces to become electrified. A radiological film is the placed on the plain electrode, where it becomes a "photosensitive witness" in the electronographic phenomenon.

The goal of this study is to increase the information, images, and knowledge of the EnG through a dynamic exploration of involved phenomena. Guja further stresses the importance of the electonographic analysis and the steps of the experiment: Identifying the types of streamers (lighted discharges that have the shape of a tree) that occurr electronographically confirms an 'electromagnetic conformed space' in the gravitational field with a bio-generative interface. The electromagnetic phenomen is not an epiphenomenon or an additional effect that occurs as a result of the bio-chemical phenomena, but it appears in specific and quasi-independent ways (not always connected to the biochemical one to which is associated). This situation occurs when trying to interpret some of the EnG images corresponding to the sensations of relaxation or stress (Guja, 1993).

It is well known that living organisms are open, cybernetic, and adaptive systems that communicate information and self-regulate through the use biochemical phenomena. The transient electromagnetic phenomena of fast downloads, variablity, and pulses are other types of variability that may be observed.

General Principles of the Electronographic Method

Dumitrescu (1979) described a Romanian method of Electronography where the images were produced by the body's electrical characteristics. His research revealed that the body and its surrounding area contain electric fields. The human body as an inhomogeneous volume conductor that is non-uniform and anisotropic was found to possess a variable spatial geometry and significant temporal variations of its parameters which directly related to its functionality.

A proximal electrical environment exists close to the physical body and contains ionized gases. These gases are produced by the changes in organic electrolytes and ions above the transcutaneous skin layer, producing a high degree of electrical conductivity. The evaporation of perspiration also contributes to the polymorphic and partially ionized environment located near the skin's surface. This gaseous shell is also described by some authors as a quantum field with redistributive effects that create the lines of a Lorentz force, an force that is connected to the charged particles influencing an active field. The uneven distribution of the electromagnetic fields around the body surface results in unique electromagnetic effects and also determines the movement of the particles in this proximal electrical environment. The distribution of the electrons on the body's surface additionally influences the shapes of the streamers that are produced.

The theory of streamers refers to the effect of light or bio-electro-luminescence and the emission of photons that are produced in the gaseous environment between the two electrodes. The first experiments with the effects of light produced by high-voltage discharges were made by Loeb and Meek (1941) and further developed by Loeb (1965). See Diagram 1.

Diagram 1
Illustrating the process of electron avalanche
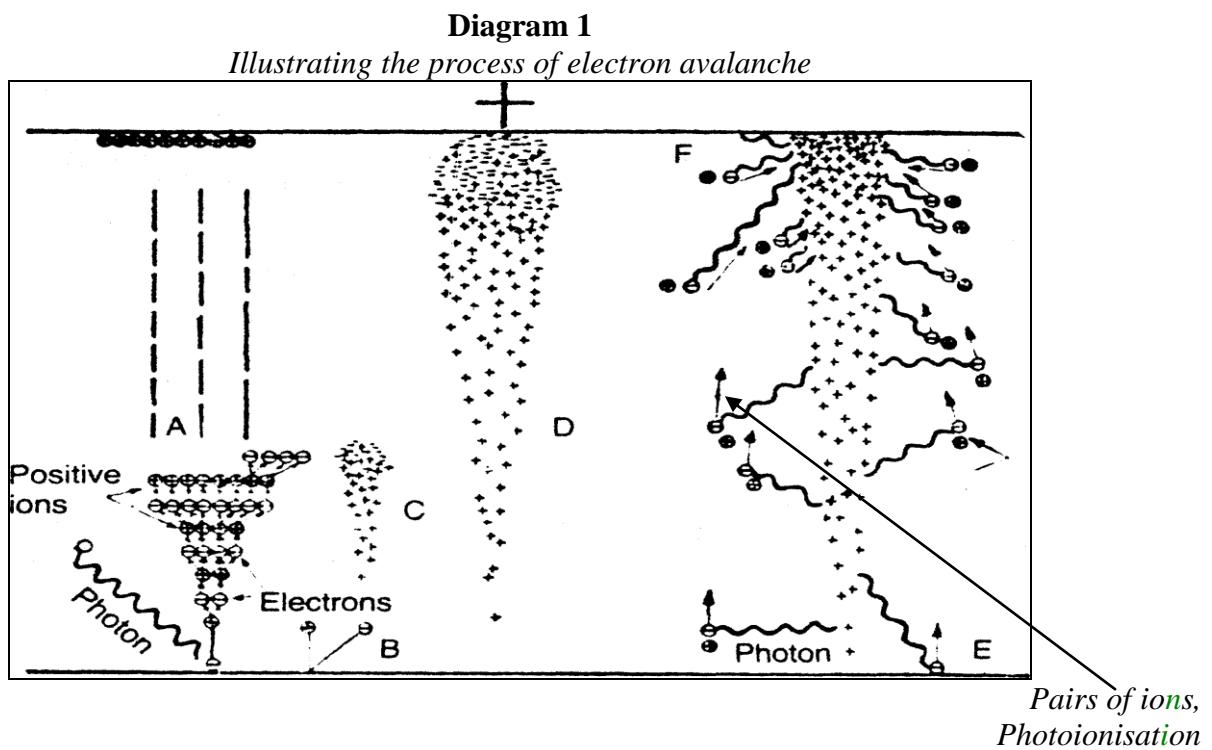
(Dumitrescu,1983, p.98)

The ionized molecules, atoms, and electrons take part in the photo-ionization process. The photo-electrons created around the positive ion channel in the vicinity of the anode have a targeted and accelerated action that results in a visible trajectory due to the slow recombination of electrons. The action of the electrons establishes a tree-shaped luminous discharge which form the streamers, is

manifested in parallel with the field lines, and produces a strong illumination that can be recorded and subsequently analyzed.

An electronographic method was employed where the tree-shaped structures created by the electrochemical effects were clearly impressive and could be recorded on photographic X-ray film. The variation of skin impedance is partly due to the secretions of the sweat glands. These glands are controlled by the autonomic nervous system and vary the amount of water and the electrolytes found on the skin's surface. Changes in the electrical resistance of the skin are also due to the slight depolarization that is produced by the sympathetic nervous fibers in the dermal-epidermal membrane. These changes produce a dynamic mosaic with differenting electrical impedances due to a neurovegetative activity which is in permanent fluctuation.

Mental activity produces a major influence on the autonomic nervous system. Sudden changes in the skin's resistance and electrodermal reflexes may be triggered by various mental or psychogenic factors. These electrodermal activity changes take place between the participating components synergistically and synchronously, causing changes in well-defined anatomical areas. See Diagram 2.

Diagram 2
Neurovegetative system and electrodermal control center
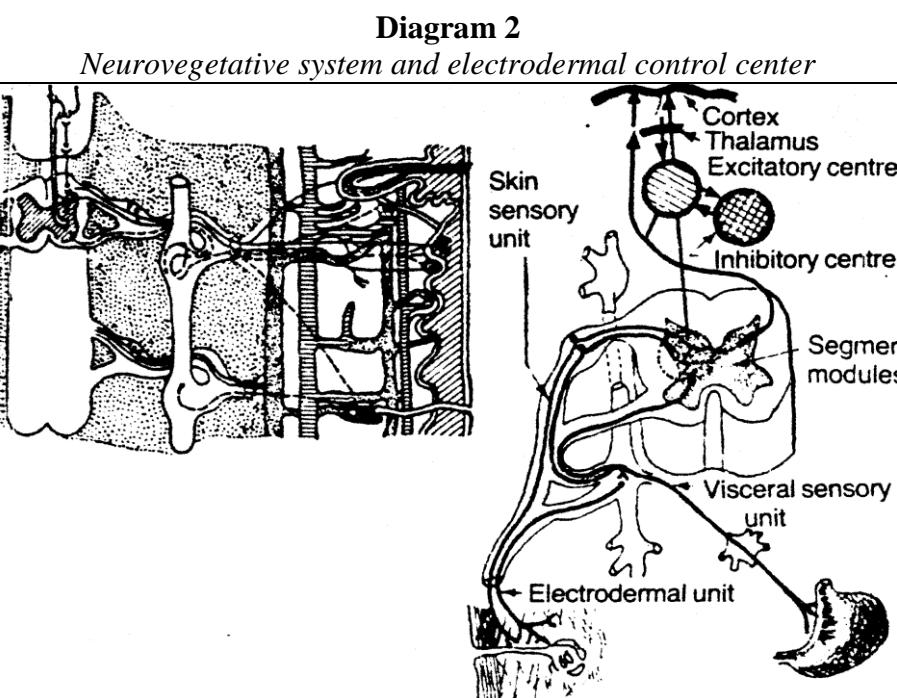
(Dumitrescu, 1983, p.130)

The distribution is limited to those areas characteristic of electrically sensitive psychogenic activity. These areas manifest with a rapidly acting sympathetic tone that is activated by the electrodermal reflexes and are present on the face and the ventral aspect of the palms. This electrodermal reflex mechanism has been previously studied and has highlighted the influence of mid-brain structures and other parts of the reticular formation and cortical vegetative areas in these autonomic reflexes. See Fig. 1.

Figure 1
*EG Picture cathodic increased 6 times: a drop of water directly on the rim,
resting on an X-ray film of electro-glass screen.*
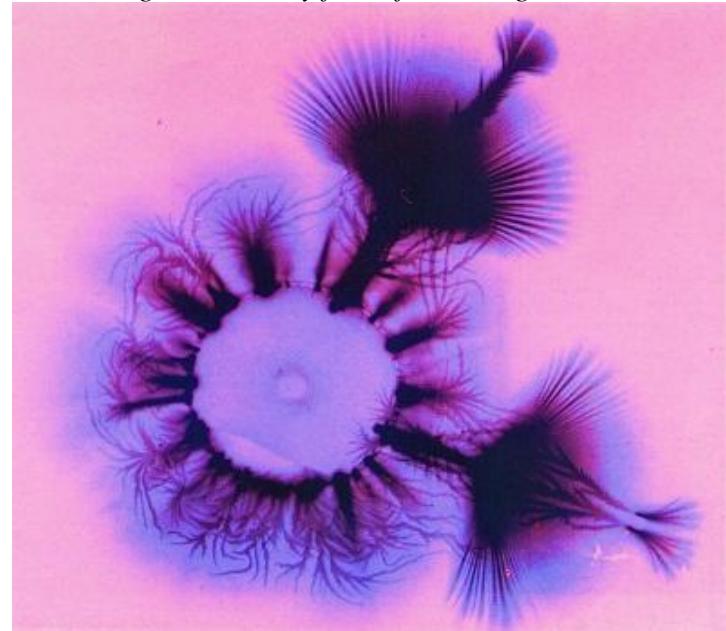
(Guja & Iliescu, 2001, p.16)

The quantitative ratio between electric charges at a characterized time in the studied interface can be measured and shows electric stress in the environment. See Figure 2.

Figure 2
*EG Picture of a cathodic electrode obtained by positioning the head of a
dragonfly punctual plates placed on the glass screen, 5 times larger image.*
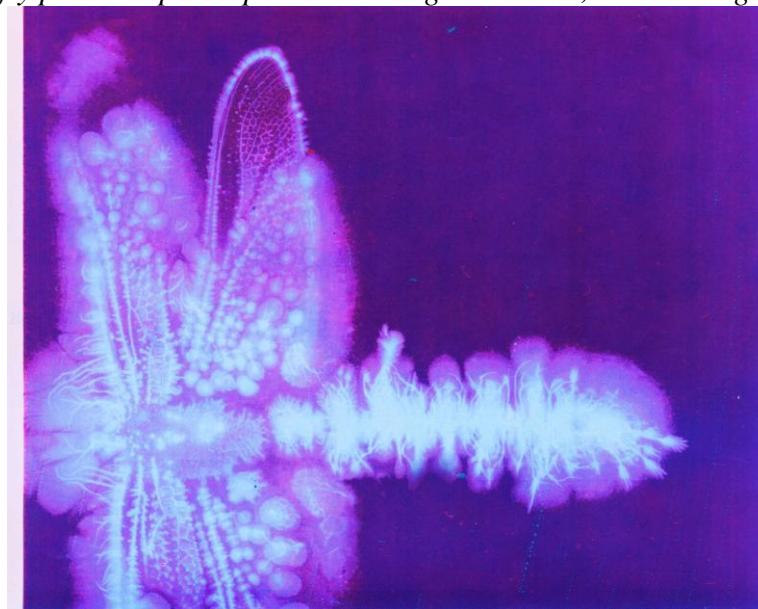

(Guja & Iliescu, 2001, p.21)

This inquiry was based on the knowledge that emotions and feelings, regardless of their biological, psychological or socio-cultural motivations, can modify the physiological parameters of the body, sometimes in a spectacular way. In order to read the images Eng (Eng screening) and decipher the meaning of the architectural forms recorded on a photosensitive X-ray film, we used a global interpretative model. Electronography demonstrates the changing internal state of the body that can be seen even at a distance by the modifications of the discharge or streamers' shape. This suggests a relationship between the internal condition of the body and the external space.

Differentiation in the image sequence is seen in the streamers' types and architecture and the evolution in time of the EnG results. One series of images explored variations of the EnG over time, which demonstrated a close relationship to the condition of the body. The main criteria for the analysis of the fingerprint images in bioelectromagnetic pairs were the studyies of left-right symmetry or asymmetry and a streamlined analysis of the homogeneity of the shape and surface of the subjects' palms. Using these two criteria, the subjects were evaluated under the treatment of altered states of consciousness.

The electronographic exploration offers an unique way to glean experimental knowledge of human specificity. This study's results focused on the specific area from which the EnG data were recorded: the palms of the hands. The results highlight important attributes that clearly differentiate man from other biological structures, indicating a highly evolved morpho-functional organization. The anatomical and functional asymmetric shape of the hand with its five opposable fingers suggests that a distinction has evolved over time with the hands being complementary to each other. See Figure 3.

Figure 3
Image polarity anode EG obtained by placing the hand on the glass plates
on the screen and mobile application of an electrode on the forearm; thumbnail 2 times.
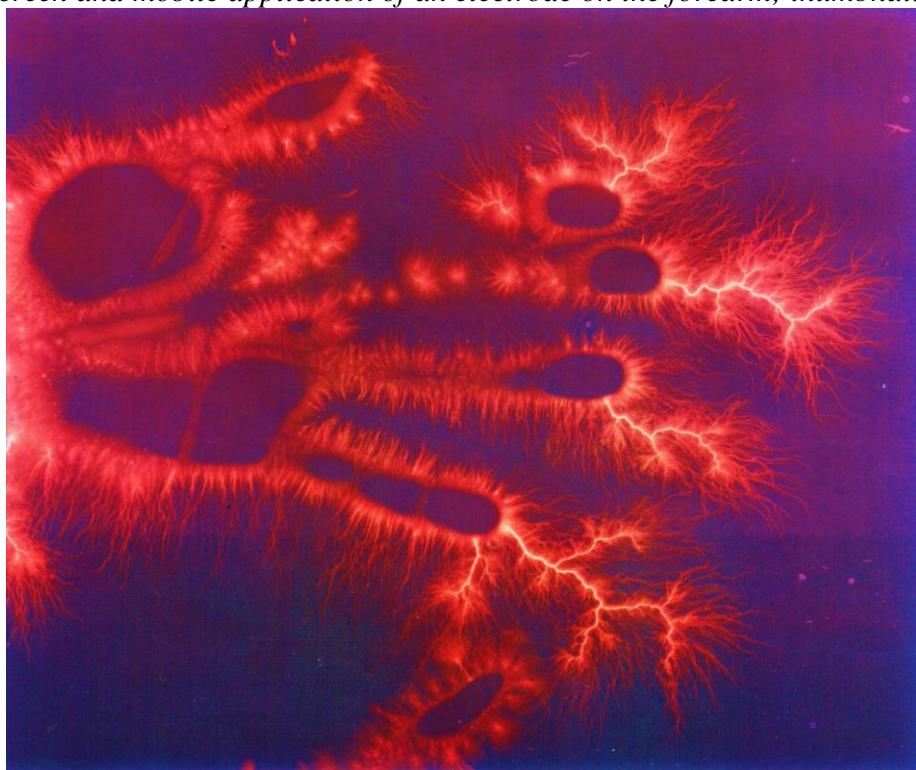
(Guja & Iliescu, 2001, p.22)

EnG testing also permits differentiation in the palms' categories of states or emotions that indicate the specificity and expression of human potentials.

Working Principles of the Research

Due to the unique characteristics of their biological makeup, humans produce a specific psychic energy with corresponding electrochemical and electromagnetic components. These components are closely related to, a part of, and can not be isolated from the universal energy field. This inquiry was motivated by the need to understand human complexity in the context of an altered state of consciousness induced by hypnosis. The goal of using the technique of an altered states of consciousness (ASC) was to focus on the human need for creating order and achieving an inner functioning, negative-entropic regulation, resulting in the elimination of the effects of daily stress.

The following research objectives were pursued:

1.- Demonstration of the existence of significant differences that manifest before and after the application of hypnosis as an altered states of consciousness (ASC).

2.- Highlighting the effects of the actions that the ASC evokes to achieve an inner negative-entropic balance of emotional and psychosomatic in the individuals that are under daily stress.

3.- Identifying and determining specific ways to improve the specific parameters of the human quantum field.

The study's objectives resulted in grouping the images into two Eng stages: before and after the hypnotic inductions. Two records were made for each state: first in a state of focused mental concentration and second in a state of the relaxed mental activity.

The initial hypothesis was that an electrical technique can capture snapshots of the structures of the radiative information in the proximal physical quantum field. Modification of this structure can be seen in some experimental stages, being directly proportional to the induced positive or negative changes on the mental, emotional, and psychosomatic dimensions. The following hypotheses were established for this research:

- Individuals who show high levels of stress will exhibit lower parameters of the human quantum field.

- After hypnosis, the persons will exhibit a higher level of wellness than before the hypnosis.

- Identifying the bio-electro-luminescent signs as human quantum field parametric elements will be make it easier to identify the de-structured therapeutic psycho-emotional entropy caused by everyday stress.

The forty person sample was heterogeneous and consisted of voluntary participants. A second voluntary sub-group of 20 persons was formed from the original group and was additionally tested with the electronography method, where the subjects' parameters were monitored and evaluated. The research data was interpretated using comparative methods. Photographic X-ray film was the primary recording tool of the investigation. This film recorded the electrophysical state and energy emissions (Anitei, 2000 & Chelcea, 1975) for evaluation.

The inquiry methods also included a statistically analyzed questionnaire. (Chelcea, 1975). The questionnaire was added as an investigative tool to further address the objectives of the research and assess the following parameters:

1. Increased power of concentration.
2. Elimination of persistent, emotional, or stressful feelings.

3. Achieving or improving the balance of inner calm.
4. After the experiment I feel:

      a. refreshed with lust for life

      b. as before

      c. the feeling that I wasted my time

The forty subject sample completed the questionnaire after hypnosis session. The results of the electronographic method are highlighted since it is statistically significant. The method was also applied to the 20 subject sample. See Table 1 and Diagrams 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Table 1

The results obtained from subjects participating in the experiment (sample of 40 subjects)

No.	CONTENT	PERCENTAGE			POSITIVE RESULTS %
		YES %	NO %	LESS %	
1	Increasing the concentration	92.5	2.5	5	97.5
2	Elimination of persistent emotional, stressful feelings	75	5	20	95
3	Achieving/ improving the inner calm of the ballance	85	2.5	12.5	97.5
4	After the experiment I feel:	refreshed with lust for life			95
		as before			2.5
		the feeling that I wasted my time			2.5

PARTIAL RESULTS OBTAINED BY PARTICIPANTS AND RECORDED IN END EXPERIMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Diagram 3
Increasing concentration
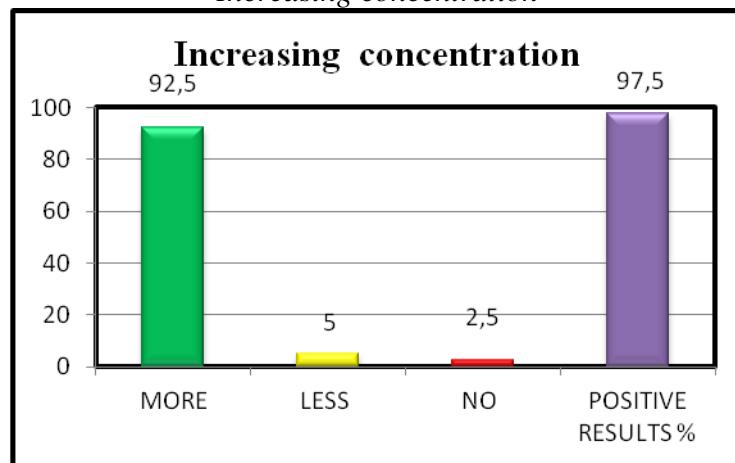
Diagram 4
*Elimination of persistent emotional states, stressful feelings*
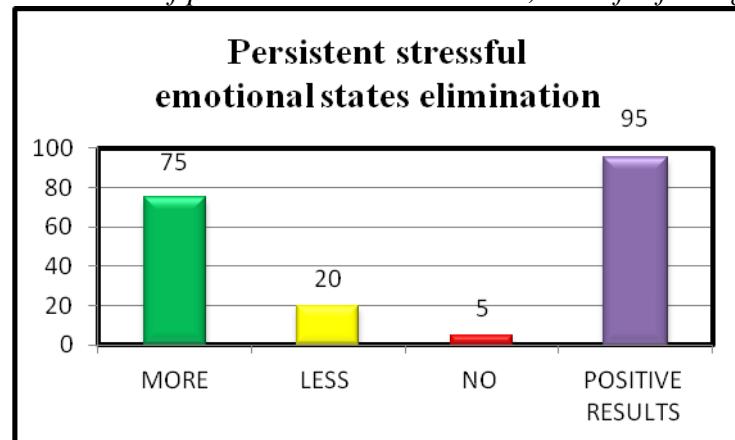
Diagram 5
*Achieving/improving the calm of the inner balance*
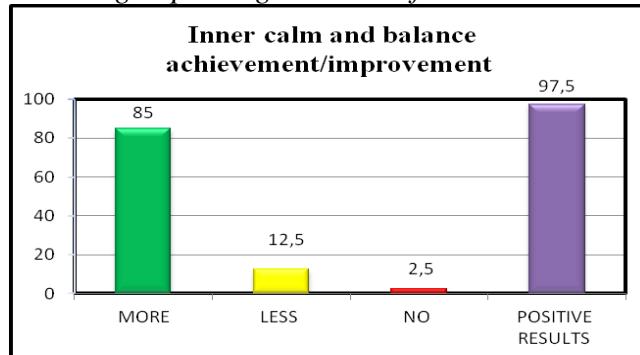
Diagram 6
After the experiment I feel…
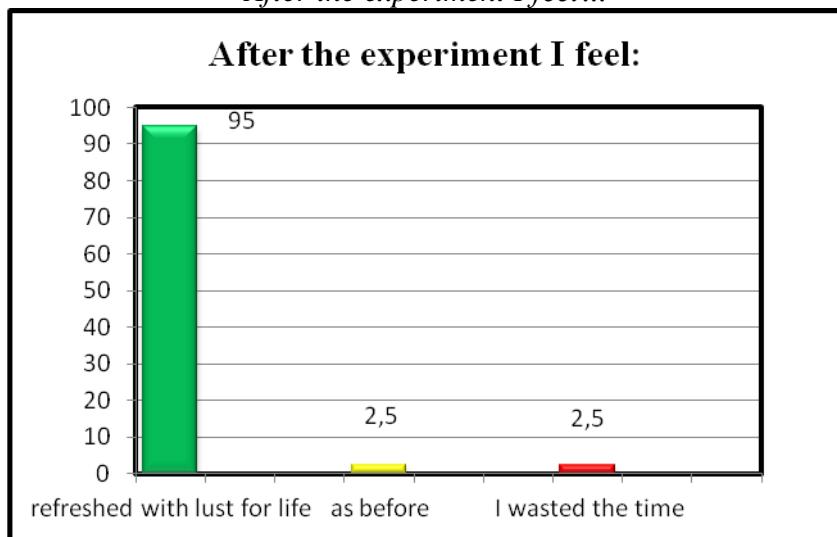
To avoid subjectivity in the type of methodology used, the results of the electronographic method are also highlighted, as they are statistically significant.

Quantum field intensity analysis of the bio-electronic display (EG) before and after hypnosis, the altered states of consciousness (ASC) technique

Prior to testing, we performed an electronographic comparison between the bio-physical capabilities of a random sample of 20 persons. Assessment was done before and after specific interventions to assess how their bio-psychical potentials were effected by their experience in the this field, gender, age, or professional training. The need for a pre-study comparion was determined to be necessary for an experimental validation or invalidation of the initial hypothesis. This hypothesis implies that hypnosis induces psychic and somatic changes in the subjects' ability to improve personal balance and potential.

Taking into account other factors beyond the percentages and standard deviation: the number of cases, the degrees of freedom, the theoretical frequencies and experimental frequencies, we used χ^2 Test. This test is expressed as a percentage, used for comparative measurements to calculate the significant difference between two activities or samples. The test also determines whether there is any agreement or disagreement between the frequencies expected (theoretical) and observed (experimental, empirical) or a connection between the theoretical and experimental distributions. The χ^2 test is used to test the significance of single responses and may also determine whether there is significant difference between the theoretical and experimental distribution. This test is especially significant, since the probability is lower and higher than χ^2 (Chelcea, 1999). For comparison of these two percentages, the formula was based on the Q association coefficient of Yule. See the sample descriptions in Tables 2, and 3.

Table 2
Sample description: Socio-professional characteristics of individuals

	Sex	Age	Education	Occupation	Ib/Ia Before Potentiation		IIb/IIa After Potentiation	
1	F	42	secondary	accountant	high	↑	high	↑
2	M	39	higher	engineer	stationary	(-)	high	↑
3	F	41	secondary	teacher	high	↑	high	↑
4	F	67	higher	artist	high	↑	high	↑
5	F	22	secondary	student	stationary	(-)	high	↑
6	F	33	higher	actor	stationary	(-)	stationary	(-)
7	M	59	higher	superior officer	stationary	(-)	high	↑
8	M	44	higher	professor	high	↑	high	↑
9	F	62	higher	engineer	stationary	(-)	high	↑
10	M	47	higher	engineer	stationary	(-)	high	↑
11	F	55	higher	biologist	high	↑	high	↑
12	F	47	secondary	teacher	high	↑	high	↑
13	F	45	secondary	teacher	stationary	(-)	high	↑
14	F	60	secondary	cashier	stationary	(-)	high	↑
15	F	58	secondary	medical assistant	stationary	(-)	high	↑
16	F	27	higher	composer	stationary	(-)	high	↑
17	F	24	secondary	student	high	↑	high	↑
18	F	38	secondary	accountant	stationary	(-)	high	↑
19	F	65	higher	economist	stationary	(-)	high	↑
20	F	61	secondary	tehnician	high	↑	high	↑

Content:

I- specific training prior to activating their own empowerment;

II - activation after specific training for their empowerment;

A: to the basal condition, ordinary

B: active state, potentiated;

Ib / Ia, IIb / IIa-bio-electro-luminescence intensity in condition b compared with the a state: ↑high, (-) stationary.

Table 3

Situation training school (in percentage) of persons participating in the experimental study

Type of studies	Number of persons	Percentage
Secondary education	9	45%
Higher education	11	55%

Table 4

Demographics of subjects' sex and age

Sex of participants	Number of participants of the same sex	Percentage of the total number of same-sex	The average age of same-sex groups	The average age of the entire group of participants
Female	13	65%	45.9	
Male	7	35%	48.4	**46.8**

Experimental results

The theoretical potential for the subjects to manifest a normal or unboosted basal state prior to the ASC techniques is 50%. However, the data in Table 5 indicates an experimental percentage of 40%. See Figure 4 and Diagram 7.

Table 5

The difference between the distribution of original theoretical and experimental effects
of Ib / Ia, before applying the ASC techniques

| Ib/Ia	Number of cases high	Number of cases stationary (-)	Total cases	Percentage cases
Theoretical (c)	10	10	20	50%
Experimental(0)	8	12	20	40%
0 -c	-2	2	-	-

$\chi^2 = 0.8$ value suggests that the percentages do not differ significantly.

Figure 4
Bio-electro-luminescent photos palm of a subject
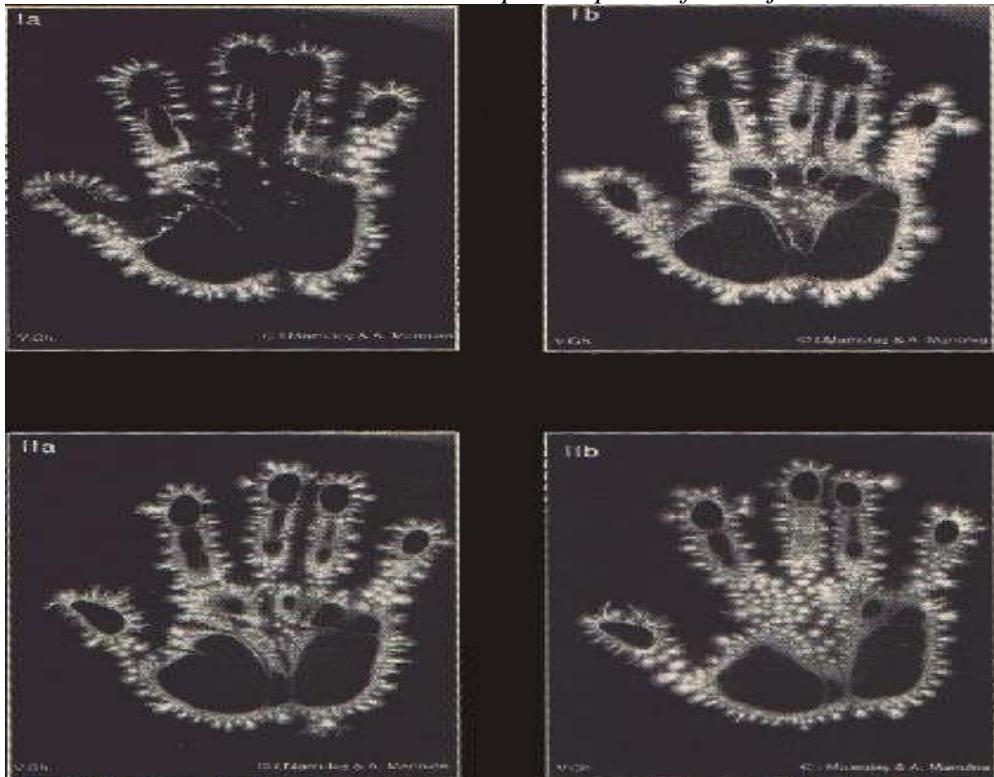
Ia-stable basal and Ib-activated state prior to activating their own empowerment.
IIa-basal and IIb-activated state after activating their empowerment.

Diagram 7
Bio-electro-luminescence intensity of active state versus
electronographic basic state before the experiment
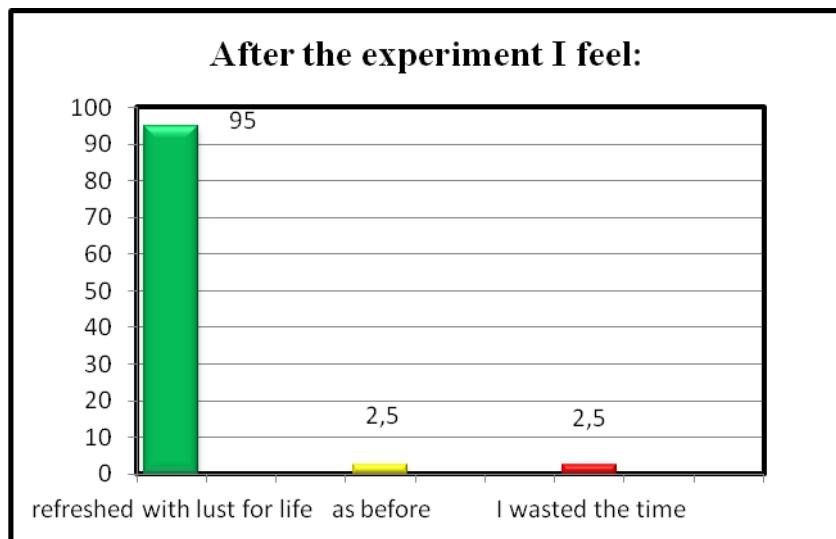
This means that at the value of $\chi^2 = 0.8$, a value that is not significantly different, the final results obtained are very accurate. In practice the experimental characteristics of participants were found to be below the average of 10%. The percentage obtained in this initial phase also showed that the sample used for the experiment had a psycho-emotional balance below the theoretical average which increased the reliability of the final results. See Table 6.

Table 6

The difference between the distribution of theoretical and
experimental effects of IIb / IIa activation after specific training to their empowerment

IIb/IIa	Number of cases high	Number of cases stationary (-)	Total cases	Percentage cases
Theoretical (c)	10	10	20	50%
Experimental(0)	19	1	20	95%
0-c	-9	9	-	-

Here, the $\chi^2 = 16.2$ value shows that the percentages are significantly different at a level of $p <0.001$. After applying the ASC techniques, the theoretical percentage of a 50% probability indicated that the subjects would receive active status based on the prevalence of an enhanced status. See Diagram 8.

Diagram 8

Bio-electro-luminescence intensity electronographic psycho-energy
activated state compared with psycho-energy basic state before the experiment
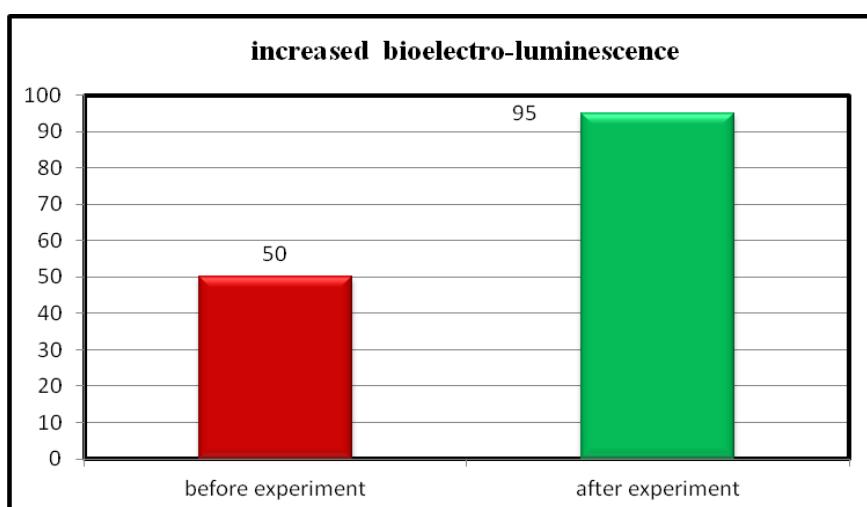
We obtained a percentage of 95% with $\chi^2=16.2$, with the compared percentages differing significantly. The probability that this resulted by chance is one in a thousand, based a test sample of twenty subjects. For many subjects, the active state did not differ significantly from the basal state. However, a comparison of the basal state before and after hypnosis indicated a significant improvement and also suggested a qualitative change in the subject's general condition. See Table 7.

Table 7

*Determination of the specific difference of experimental condition activated "b" state,
compared to basic, normal state (using Yule's Q coefficient of association)*

b/a	Number of cases high	Number of cases stationary (-)	Total cases	Percentage cases
IIb/IIa	19 (I)	1 (II)	20 (I+II)	95%
Ib/Ia	8 (IV)	12 (III)	20 (III+IV)	40%
N	27 (I+IV)	13 (II+III)	40 (I+II+III+IV)	-

$\chi^2 = 11.4$ value suggests that the percentages are significantly different at a significance level of p <0,001.

Comparing the bio-electro-luminescence intensity of the active electronographic, with the potentiated biopsihic (b), and basic normal biopsihic specific training before their activation potencies (a), it is noted that a $\chi^2 = 11.4$. This result differs significantly between the ASC states with p <0.001, ranging from 40% before to 95% after specific training. See Diagram 9.

Diagram 9

*Distribution of the bio-electro-luminescence intensity in the
enabled state electronographic basic state compared with before and after the experiment*
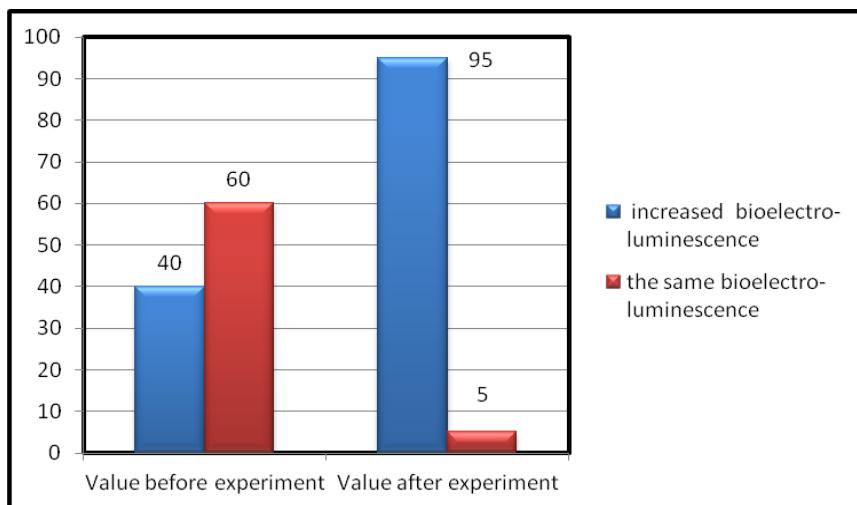
According to the researchers and psychologists Eysenk and Sargent (1982), a probability rating of p = 0.05 to 0.01 indicates that the psi phenomena are due to noticeable treatment effects and at a p = 0.001, the probability rating is excellent.

Conclusion

The hypothesis of this research was confirmed by the obtained results. The implementation of a specific techniques of an altered states of consciousness via hypnosis can reactivate a normal or an inner harmonious state. This research further highlights the human need to achieve order within a chaotic environment to eliminate the effects of daily stress. We also discovered statistically significant differences in the techniques of altered states of consciousness (ASC) by highlighting the effects of any inner emotional and psychosomatic imbalance caused by daily stress. The interpretation of the fractal and spatial distribution of quantum bio-electro-luminescence streamers as a manifestation of the emotional and psychosomatic parameters accompanying daily stress indicates that this electronographic information captures snapshots of the structure of the proximal quantum human radiative field. These proximal quantum radiative fields are directly proportional to the human's mental, emotional and psychosomatic changes and can be interpreted in experimental stages.

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Sobre el giro participativo

On The Participatory Turn

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Resumen

Tras el 'giro lingüístico' y el 'giro pragmático', los autores proponen un 'giro participativo' que trata de superar los enfoques exclusivistas y las actitudes inclusivistas, tan frecuentes en la historia de las religiones e incluso en los enfoques recientes de la espiritualidad. Un genuino pluralismo religioso es posible con una concepción participativa, según lo cual las distintas tradiciones co-crean (junto con el Poder indeterminado e inexhaustible) la realidad y los caminos de liberación o realización.

Palabras Clave: Estudios religiosos, Misticismo, Espiritualidad, Transpersonal, Enacción.

Abstract

After the 'linguistic turn' and the 'pragmatic turn', the authors propose a 'participatory turn', trying to overcome the exclusivistic approaches as well as the inclusivistic attitudes so frequent in the history of religions and even in the actual approaches to spirituality. A genuine religious pluralism is possible with a participatory view, according to which the different traditions co-create (with the indeterminate and inexhaustible Power) the reality and the ways of liberation and realization.

Keywords: Religious studies, Mysticism, Spirituality, Transpersonal, Enaction.

Este artículo es una reseña del libro *The Participatory Turn: Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies* (State University of New York Press, 2008) escrito por Jorge N. Ferrer y Jacob H. Sherman –traducción al castellano: *Sobre el giro participativo*, 2011, Editorial Kairós.

En la Introducción del libro, los autores llevan a cabo un excelente repaso por las principales tendencias que han dominado el estudio del fenómeno religioso en el siglo XX, y a decir verdad no sólo del campo de los Estudios Religiosos, sino más en general del extenso terreno de la filosofía. Buena muestra de ello es la "contextualización" del *giro participativo* en el seno de esos dos grandes giros que la filosofía del siglo XX ha conocido: el giro lingüístico y el giro pragmático. En cuanto al giro lingüístico se diferencian de manera muy oportuna tres familias claramente diferenciadas: la analítica, la hermenéutica y la postmoderna. En cuanto al giro pragmático, se destacan sus críticas al fundacionalismo y al representacionismo y se muestra la distancia entre los actuales neo-pragmatistas (generalmente cerca de un secularismo militante o un ateísmo agresivo) y los pioneros de tal visión, claramente empáticos con la vivencia religiosa, como es el caso de J. Edwards y R. W. Emerson.

Ahora bien, más allá de ambos giros académicamente bien establecidos ya, pero a la luz del nuevo paradigma propuesto, parciales e insuficientes en lo que respecta al estudio de lo religioso y de la espiritualidad, los autores rastrean una serie de tendencias que son recogidas en mayor o menor medida por el paradigma participativo. Podemos señalar entre estas: la resacralización del lenguaje, teniendo en cuenta el alcance metafísico que para muchas tradiciones tiene el lenguaje sagrado empleado en sus textos (desde la concepción cabalista y el poder teúrgico de la palabra, hasta la idea hindú del origen no-humano –*apauruseya*- del Veda); el nacimiento en las últimas décadas del estudio académico de la "Espiritualidad" (término que apunta tanto al objeto estudiado como a la disciplina encargada de ello); los enfoques feministas que han llegado incluso a la teología cristiana, las perspectivas post-coloniales, valorando perspectivas epistemológicas émicas y tratando de superar la hegemonía euro-americano-céntrica, y en general una sensibilidad postmoderna -en lo que ésta tiene de positivo y de logro irreversible- que puede entreverse en el nuevo giro propuesto.
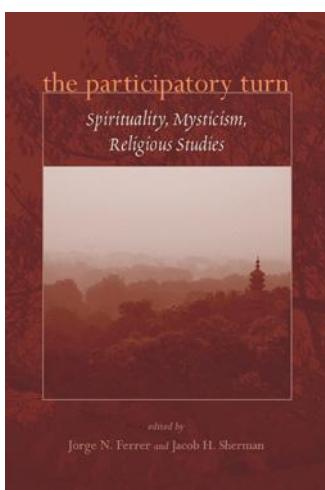
Pero, la exposición clarificadora de las características del giro participativo llega ya bien avanzada la introducción cuando los autores defienden con fuerza el diagnóstico de "narcisismo espiritual" no sólo para el exclusivismo y el inclusivismo, sino también para ese pluralismo ecuménico con múltiples rostros, desde el cristiano representado por J. Hick o Paul Knitter hasta el perennialismo tradicionalista defensor de una Tradición primordial, universal y unánime, a cuyos exponentes se considera –quizás despachándolos demasiado precipitadamente con el criterio de su escasa influencia académica- como "unas escasas voces marginales", sólo en nota a pie de página apuntando los nombres de Guénon, Schuon, Nasr, Smith y otros.

Lo cierto es que el perennialismo, en tanto que universalismo esencialista y jerarquizador, se muestra no tanto como un auténtico pluralismo, sino como un inclusivismo enmascarado que termina privilegiando una determinada manera de entender la metafísica, la religión o la espiritualidad, en nombre de *la philosophia perennis* (cuando no de la *religio* o hasta la *sophia* perennis). Pues bien, cualquier tipo de perennialismo, sean los antes nombrados u otros, como el expuesto por la psicología transpersonal –blanco de la obra de Jorge N. Ferrer, *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory*, traducido en castellano como *Espiritualidad creativa*-, si bien es ya una de las formulaciones más sutiles y cercanas al pluralismo religioso y espiritual, queda por debajo del listón puesto por el nuevo paradigma participativo y enactivo. La frontera se convierte, al parecer, en abismal; así, mientras los perennialistas siguen aferrados a sus presupuestos/prejuicios objetivistas y universalistas y comparten el mito de lo dado y la epistemología cartesiano-kantiana (algo que no sería aplicable, en rigor, a los guénonianos, defensores de una "realización metafísica" en toda regla), el giro participativo parte de una epistemología enactiva, creativa, constructivista, al mismo tiempo que sostiene una metafísica realista, pues los seres humanos, con su potencial multidimensional (corporal-sensorial-sensual-sexual, afectivo, intelectual, intuitivo, contemplativo, etc.) serían co-creadores (junto al Poder indeterminado o más bien inexhaustible de la Vida o del Espíritu) de experiencias, caminos, realidades y realizaciones espirituales y metafísicas que no tienen porqué ordenarse jerárquicamente ni reducirse a una de ellas.

Se abre así, ciertamente, un nuevo horizonte. La postmoderna llamada al respeto de las diferencias se erige en un sistema metafísico, y las metáforas de los distintos caminos que conducen a una misma meta, de los múltiples ríos que desembocan en el mismo mar, de los diferentes nombres para una misma Realidad, se muestran inservibles para la nueva sensibilidad. Ahora, no sólo los caminos son distintos –algo obvio-, también las metas pueden serlo. Ahora no todos los ríos y tradiciones espirituales conducen al mismo mar, sino –con metáfora de Ferrer- a distintas

orillas del Océano de la Emancipación, pues como los pluralistas soteriocéntricos han sabido mostrar, el concepto central que pueden compartir las distintas tradiciones es, quizás, no tanto, el de Iglesia, Umma o Sangha, tampoco el de Cristo, Krishna o Buddha, ni siquiera el de Dios, sino el anhelo de salvación/liberación a partir del estado de sufrimiento y de ignorancia en el que el ser humano medio se halla sumido.

Ahora bien, ¿es algo realmente nuevo este horizonte participativo, creativo, enactivo? Los propios autores nos recuerdan varios casos en los que pueden establecerse puntos de contacto, desde la teurgia neoplatónica y kabalística hasta la intuición cosmoteándrica de R. Panikkar. Y más concretamente en lo que respecta al carácter participativo aciertan a distinguir con claridad la participación enactiva propuesta de la participación arcaica analizada por Levy-Bruhl en las "sociedades primitivas" bajo el término *participation mystique* y de la participación romántica que llega incluso a una influyente concepción de las religiones en la que se situarían desde M. Eliade hasta van der Leuuw. Si en la primera la fusión mística es pre-reflexiva, "*los modos emergentes de participación superan el dualismo cartesiano de manera auto-reflexiva, preservando una individualidad altamente diferenciada, aunque permeable, o si se quiere, un yo participativo en tanto que agente del conocimiento religioso*" (p. 42). Si en la participación romántica se sigue preso del paradigma objetivista y representacional, el participacionismo postmoderno se libera de tales presupuestos arraigados en el modo de pensar la realidad desde antiguo, para abrirse a la capacidad cognitivo-creativa de realidades espirituales, rompiendo con la idea de una realidad pre-dada y de una conciencia-espejo de la realidad.

Como puede verse, estamos ante una audaz propuesta, que choca con una larga inercia que nos lleva a pensar que la realidad ha de ser una, unificada e idéntica para todos. El verdadero conocer es reflejar o hacer corresponder nuestras ideas a la realidad externa; el sujeto alcanza la verdad cuando se adecua al objeto, el espíritu sabe cómo son las cosas cuando aprehende intelectualmente la estructura del mundo. Cierto es que en Kant y el neo-kantismo se supera tanto el realismo ingenuo como el idealismo cartesiano o berkeleyano, pero el resultado no es sino un agnosticismo metafísico en el que el saber debe dejar paso a la fe, pues Kant decreta que la cosa-en-sí, aunque existente, no puede ser conocida, ni siquiera pensada, permaneciendo por siempre más allá de nuestro alcance. Una de las defensas más lúcidas, a mi entender, del pluralismo religioso, la llevada a cabo por John Hick, es deudora finalmente del enfoque kantiano y termina aceptando que los distintos caminos religiosos, las distintas experiencias y conceptualizaciones son modos diferentes de categorizar la misma realidad. Sigue siendo la metáfora del elefante y los ciegos, según la cual cada uno de los ciegos toca una parte del elefante y a partir de ahí describe de modo particular lo que cree ser la totalidad. Lo Real permanece más allá de nuestro conocimiento y nuestra experiencia, sólo fenómenos podemos conocer. Desde esta perspectiva no dejan de ser ingenuos todos los místicos que poseen la certeza de haber percibido, vivido, gozado, conocido, amado la Realidad última, le llamen *Brahman nirguna*, *Dharmakaya*, Dios o de cualquier otro modo.

Frente a tal postura, el participacionismo enactivo no se limita a intentar conocer la realidad pre-dada, por espiritual o metafísica que ésta sea, sino que asumiendo su propio poder co-creador, activa posibilidades, crea realidades, quizás de manera colectiva, como una tradición va creando surcos por los que posteriormente transitan los miembros de dicha tradición, reforzando, ampliando, profundizando el lecho del río, "verificando" la validez de las experiencias y conceptos configurados por esa tradición.

Podríamos comparar el carácter creativo del conocer participativo a las descripciones de lo que sucede en las experiencias extra-corporales tal como han sido narradas por un número cada vez mayor de "investigadores esotéricos". Allí se pone de manifiesto el poder del pensamiento, de la emoción, de la imaginación y de la voluntad, de tal modo que el sujeto crea lo que piensa y lo que siente con fuerza y se traslada "en realidad" allí donde piensa y quiere. Es también el papel de la "imaginación creadora" en el sufismo, especialmente en Ibn Arabi, tal como Corbin y Chittick, entre otros, nos han recordado no hace mucho. Incluso, como es sabido, podría decirse que en la espiritualidad nueva era, la noción de que "el pensamiento crea la realidad" se convirtió en uno de los lemas más repetidos. Claro que esto se puede aplicar de múltiples maneras y entender de muy distintos modos, con alcances bien diferentes. ¿Acaso en todo tipo de magia no hay mucho de ello, constituyendo incluso su principio básico? ¿Acaso en los sueños no experimentamos el poder creador del pensamiento cargado de emoción? ¿Es otra cosa el poder creador del Logos, del Verbo creador, de Vak? En una concepción no-dualista, no necesariamente acosmista *mayavada* ni disolvente del yo participativo ("altamente diferenciado, aunque permeable") como quizás en Ramanuja, en Ibn Arabi, en Sri Aurobindo, lo Divino, el Poder de lo Real, no es algo totalmente otro, radicalmente distinto y desde luego no abismalmente separado del sujeto humano, antes al contrario, el descubrimiento de la propia subjetividad transpersonal (*âtman, mi polo angélico, mi hecceidad, la joya que no tiene precio*) lleva a la convicción de que mi poder creador no es otro que el Poder Creador que se expresa a través de mí, sin anularme, sino justamente plenificándome, revelándome el Misterio del Uno-en-los-muchos, de la Vacuidad en las formas, de la Eternidad en el Tiempo, del Infinito en lo finito.

Ahora bien ¿son realmente excluyentes un cierto tipo refinado de sabiduría perenne, abierta, no dogmática, no jerarquizadora, sin tendencias inclusivistas larvadas, y el nuevo paradigma participativo? Claro que no puede ser

ya con formulaciones determinadas y no exentas de dogmatismo como las preferencias no-dualistas, monistas de guénonianos o wilberianos, o las preferencias teístas de los teorizadores de las tradiciones abrahámicas, como Zaehner, por ejemplo, quien invierte la jerarquía de experiencias místicas y en la cúspide sitúa no ya el misticismo no-dualista, sino el misticismo teísta. ¿No es cierto que hay una defensa no dogmática, más flexible y creativa de una sabiduría perenne en Sri Ramakrishna o Sri Aurobindo, en Alice Bailey o en Rudolf Steiner? Quizás en otro momento habrá que hacerse cargo de ello.

De momento, baste con saludar y dar la bienvenida a esta obra que por primera vez presenta ensayos de muy diversos autores en la órbita del giro participativo, además de los co-creadores de la Introducción otros como Sean Kelly, Brian Lancaster, Lee Irwin, Beverly Lanceta, William Chittick, Bruno Barnhart, Robert McDermot, William Barnard o Donald Rothberg.

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Dialogical self research

Una investigación sobre el ser dialógico

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Abstract

This paper presents the first appearance of a new kind of research, which pushes the limits of qualitative research in a new direction. It is based on the idea of the Dialogical Self (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010; Hermans & Gieser, 2012) that people are basically multiple, and that the best nomenclature for this phenomenon is to call them I-positions. This gets over the problem with other names such as subpersonalities, ego-states and parts that all of these seem lesser. The term I-positions can include such things as the soul and the spirit, which are not lesser at all. The idea of Dialogical Self Research is that we can take different levels of psychospiritual development (as suggested by Maslow, Loevinger, Kohlberg, Piaget, Cook-Greuter and Wilber) and set up dialogues between them – all within one person. This is a new way of investigating such phenomena, and leads to many more exciting possibilities.

Key Words: Research, Dialogical, Self, Levels of development, I-positions

Resumen

Este artículo presenta la primera aparición de un nuevo tipo de investigación, la cual trasciende los límites de la investigación cualitativa, en una nueva dirección. Está basada en la idea del "Ser Dialógico" (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010; Hermans & Gieser, 2012), la cual establece que la gente es básicamente "múltiple" y que la mejor forma de llamar a este fenómeno es con la nomenclatura "Posiciones-I". Esto soluciona el problema que traían otras denominaciones como "subpersonalidades", "estados del ego" o "partes". El término "Posiciones-I" incluye aspectos como el alma y el espíritu, los cuales no han de ser menospreciados. La idea de la investigación sobre el Ser Dialógico es que podemos diferenciar distintos niveles del desarrollo psicoespiritual (como sugirieron Maslow, Loevinger, Kohlberg, Piaget, Cook-Greuter y Wilber) y establecer diálogos entre ellos – dentro de la misma persona. Ésta es una nueva forma de investigar tal fenómeno, lo cual lleva a otras muchas más interesantes posibilidades.

Palabras clave: Investigación, Dialógico, Ser, Niveles del desarrollo Posiciones-I

Personal introduction

Research has long been an interest of mine. It was in the early 70s that I first started writing about research (Rowan 1974), first of all in the field of social psychology. I was very much involved with social psychology at the time, and in fact put forward the view that all psychology is really social psychology.

I was also very interested in group work, and the research which had been done on groups (Rowan 1975). Most of what I know about psychotherapy in practical terms I learned in groups: I made it my business to attend groups led by leaders in the field, such as Bernard Gunther, Will Schutz, John Pierrakos, Julian and Beverley Silverman, Marty Fromm, Jim Elliott, Elizabeth Mintz, Denny Yuson, John Adams, Alfred and Diane Pesso, Jay Stattman, Paul Lowe and so on.

In the later 70s I helped to set up the New Paradigm Research group with people like Peter Reason and John Heron. We had regular meetings to discuss our new ideas about research, and this resulted in the production of a book (Reason & Rowan 1981) which was quite a blockbuster and went on selling copies well into the 90s. The thrust of this book was to push qualitative research (little known at the time) and to spell out its liberating possibilities.

In 1980 I decided that I was a self-actualised person, in Maslow's terms. I had been through ten years of the growth movement, experiencing Gestalt groups, Psychodrama groups, Bodywork groups, Person-Centred groups and other groups, Co-Counselling training (which opened up the world of emotions for me), Primal Integration training (which deepened everything I had learned in therapy), training in Aplied Behavioural Science, AHP conferences in Britain and the USA, EAHP conferences in France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain and the UK, political groups such as Red Therapy, leading groups as well as going to groups. I also used LSD as an integral part of my therapy, not to have fun but to open up the spring doors of the mind and hold them open for long enough to do some serious work. In this process I moved from being an introvert (according to standard personality tests) to being an extravert – from preferring books to people to preferring people to books. I also dealt with all the most salient shadow material, going through my implantation stuff, my birth stuff, my Kleinian stuff, my Oedipal stuff, my adolescent stuff and so forth, very effectively. I also dealt with my hatred of women, and came out of that a convinced anti-sexist man, helping to edit a radical men's magazine called *Achilles Heel*.

And when I came across the work of Ken Wilber (1980), I found that he was extremely accurate about what I had been through and where I was now. I had moved from the Mental Ego level of consciousness – the consensus trance, as it has sometimes been called – to the Centaur level of consciousness, which is all about authenticity. At the Centaur level we have seen through the falsity of the self-image, and have discovered the truth of the existential self. And this is just the move which Maslow had described as moving from needing the esteem of others to self-esteem and self-validation. (Maslow 1987, Chapter 11)

About that time, I read a statement that anyone who claimed to be authentic could never really be authentic. This worried me a bit, but I later explained it along the lines that the author had probably assumed, as many of us did at that time, that authenticity was the end of the line of self development, and that therefore anyone who claimed to have achieved this was grandiose. Since Wilber, however, we no longer believe that this is the end of the line. Rather is it quite a modest way station, with quite a long way to go to the end of the line – if indeed it makes sense to say that there is a line or an end.

At a certain point after this, I wondered what it would be like to have a dialogue between these two stages of consciousness, which would explore and perhaps eventually encapsulate some of the important differences between them. Since then I have taught many people how to do this, and have found than most people can do it quite well. The Table 1 is what I came up with.

Table 1. The mental ego versus the authentic self

MENTAL EGO	AUTHENTIC SELF
Happy to play a role	Critiques the whole idea of roles
Wants to know other people's opinions	Not interested in opinions

Sees through other people's eyes	Sees through own eyes
Needs support all the time	Needs little support
Needs praise	Likes praise
Brought down by criticism	Meets criticism positively
The power is outside	The power is inside
The world is full of challenges	The world is full of opportunities
Crippled by failure	Energised by failure
Standards come from outside	Has internal gyroscope
Likes to follow the known path	Likes to be creative
Needs to be liked	Likes to be liked
Perception distorted by social needs	Clear perception
Prone to guilt, shame, anxiety	Self acceptance
Cautious	Spontaneous
Ego or close group centred	World centred
Fear of solitude	Like solitude
No peak experiences	Some peak experiences
Fearful of others	Respectful of others
No real intimacy	Capable of intimacy
Humour is often hostile	Humour is not hostile
Creativity is difficult	Creativity is easy
Conforms to culture	Can see through culture
Likes either-or thinking	Sees through either-or positions
Many internal splits	Few internal splits
Defensive	Non-defensive
Logic is Aristotelian, Boolean, Newtonian	Vision-logic, logic of paradox
Struggle to find a centre	Centre is in here

Later I tidied up and improved the first version, and what you see above is the latest version. But the method is still the same: to access the level of consciousness involved, and to speak from that position. The table above has now been used in a number of workshops and other contexts, and has I would say stood the test of time. I was encouraged to find a very similar attempt by Zimring in a later book, from a slightly different angle.

Table 2. I and Me.
(Zimring, 2001: 92)

MASLOW CHART LEVELS 3 – 4 ('ME')	MASLOW CHART LEVELS 5 – 6 ('I')
Socially defined self	Personally defined self
Behaviour guided by incorporated social standards	Goals set by own values
Morality defined by society	Morality based on personal values
Agenda for what has to be done set by society	Agenda set by self
Enables problem solution according to social standards	New, creative solutions
Repository of social knowledge and expectations	Contains self-knowledge
Provides social viewpoint in line with assimilated social values, attitudes and interactions	Reacts creatively to 'me'.
Passive recipient or reactive self	Proactive
Concerned with past and future	Experiencing the present

Focus on others	Focus on self
Lives in roles	Acts from present personal values
Negative feelings and distress occur as a result of judgement of others	Distress occurs as a result of not meeting own goals

It can be seen here how much agreement there is here between his contrasts and mine, and I was encouraged by this to go with this research method. Both of us had had the experience of moving from the earlier level (where most of us are originally located) to the later one, and both of us had seen the differences in very much the same way. At the Mental Ego level (Maslow's middle levels) we think very much in terms of our self-image, whereas at the Centaur level we think in terms of our self.

Of course already here we are going beyond what most psychologists are happy to deal with. The idea that there are different levels of consciousness is profoundly unacceptable to the scientific mind. The myth of science says that we are all equal and all the same. The copious research which shows that there are indeed several levels (Piaget 1951, Kohlberg 1981, Loevinger 1976, Graves 1970, Cook-Greuter 2004, Torbert 2004) is ignored or sidelined.

What was now clear in my mind was the idea of dialogical self research. By this I meant going to a particular level of consciousness, familiar and entered at will, and holding a dialogue with another level, equally familiar and entered at will. Wilber (2006) makes a distinction between states and stages. Anyone can enter any psychological or even mystical state at any time, but to live at a particular level for any length of time we have to develop into that stage: and that takes work and dedication. As Hegel (1974/1840) says: "Even that which is most perfect must traverse the path to the goal in order to attain it." (p.75). So what I am saying is that what I am offering in this paper is based on my own dedication to meditation, sufficient to take me to the relevant stage, which I can then enter into at will.

But now we are going on to deal with something even more hard to reach and to some no doubt unacceptable, the spiritual realm.

The subtle level

What Wilber goes on to say is that after the Centaur, the next level is the Subtle. This is very different. Here we admit that we are spiritual beings, with a direct connection with the divine. However, it is a very humble approach, with a complete dependence upon concrete representations of the divine, such as deities, archetypes and so forth. At this level we become fascinated by the work of people like Kerenyi (1976), Jung (passim), Joseph Campbell (passim), Starhawk (1989), Arthur Avalon (1978), Barbara Walker (1983), Jean Houston (Passim), James Hillman (passim) and so forth. We soak ourselves in mythology, dreams, visions, and the like, and take an interest in angels, fairies and nature spirits (Bloom 1998).

I spent the years from 1982 to 1990 exploring this realm, with the help of a Wiccan group led by Batya Podos and various forays into shamanism, tantra, western mysteries, astrological psychology, goddess worship and so forth, and wrote a book based on that work (Rowan 1987). I also wrote an article entitled 'The downward path to wholeness in transpersonal psychotherapy', which was later republished a number of times (Rowan 1992) and translated into French. The most important section of my work took place in the Serpent Institute, a training course in counselling and psychotherapy based upon a framework of goddess spirituality. I spent four years with Jocelyn Chaplin exploring that way of seeing the world, during which time I had some very significant spiritual experiences at Avebury, West Kennet, Silbury Hill, Stonehenge and other pagan sites. I joined the Pagan Federation, and developed a simple daily ritual which I incorporated into my morning meditation. At the end of that time I found that I could operate the same kind of research again, this time contrasting the Centaur with the Subtle, with the following result (see Table 3).

Table 3. The authentic self versus the soul or subtle self

AUTHENTIC SELF	SOUL OR SUBTLE SELF
Separate	Connected
Clear perception	Love, heart perception
Likes boundaries	Not much interested in boundaries
Thinks in words, likes imagery	Thinks in imagery, suspicious of words
Uses dialectical way of thinking	Uses intuitive way of thinking
Can use symbols	Immersed in symbols
Interested in people	Interested in people, animals, plants...
The divine may be out there	The divine can be in here
Understanding is the most important thing	Imagination is the most important thing
Interested in knowing	Interested in not-knowing
Thoughtful compassion	Emotional compassion
Finds self in contrast to other	Finds self in other
Creative	Surrendered, inspired
Trees can be beautiful	Trees can be devas
Has internal gyroscope	Has daemon (genius, angel, inner teacher)
Good at psychotherapy	Good at healing
In touch with the body	In touch with the subtle body
Has many skills	Waits for guidance
In touch with own authentic self	In touch with the divine
Steers clear of magic	Can use magic
Uses experiential knowing	Uses intuition
Creativity comes from inside	Creativity comes from outside inspiration
Ecstasy is personal	Ecstasy is divine
Clear about boundaries	Can allow boundaries to disappear
Not much interest in mythology	Steeped in mythology, fairy tales, etc
Sees what is visible	Sees what is invisible

What came out of this was a greater appreciation of the way in which the Subtle is all about surrender. Instead of owning our own creativity, intuition and so forth as at the Centaur level, we open ourselves up to being contacted by the divine. The whole idea of inspiration comes from this level. We are given our music, our writing, our painting and so forth – it does not come from us as individuals. I have now conducted a number of workshops on Intuition, regarded as a feature of the Subtle stage of consciousness, with fascinating results.

Later I became aware that there was a thing called the New Age, which somehow purported to be in touch with the divine realm, but which was seriously defective and misleading in a number of ways. And I tried to produce a similar chart now bringing in the necessary contrasts with New Age thinking. This produced the following (see Table 4).

Table 4. Magic/mythic, new age and psychic/subtle.
Some differences and distinctions

MAGIC/MYTHIC	NEW AGE	PSYCHIC/SUBTLE
N.B. "The elders" is a phrase to cover any form of traditional authority.		N.B. "The divine" is a phrase to cover any deity figure or other representation.
I fear the other	I love the other	I recognise the divine in the other
The elders know what is true	I know what is true	I am not much interested in truth

The safe place is in the group	I am not interested in safety	Whatever the divine sends me is a lesson to be learned
The divine is beyond me	The divine is in me	The divine can contact me
Symbols and images are laid down for me	Symbols and images are not of much interest to me, but I respect all of them	I see symbols and images everywhere, and they can inspire me
Only the elders are entitled to criticise anything	No one is entitled to criticise anything	It is important to be critical, under the guidance of the divine
The elders can be inspired	I am always inspired	I can be inspired by the divine
Most things are hidden	Nothing is hidden	The divine reveals what it is ready to reveal
I wait for the elders to tell me	I wait for nothing	I wait for the divine to reveal everything
I believe in miracles but I don't understand them	I can work miracles	Miracles come from the divine
The elders have taught us what is negative	Nothing is negative	Negative is just as important as positive
Some things are not meant to be understood	Everything can be understood	I can understand what I am allowed to understand
Astrology is beyond me	Astrology is right	Astrology is quite interesting as one symbol system
Reality can only be manipulated by the holy person	I can manipulate reality	Reality can not be manipulated: but it is usually richer than we think at first
Imagination is dangerous	Imagination is wonderful and can lead to control	Imagination can be an opening to the divine
If the elders tell me to walk on fire, I will walk on fire	I can walk on fire and not be hurt	I can walk on fire if the divine allows me to

Now this one I am not so sure about. We have all had experience of the Magic/Mythic level of thought, because we have all been children, and we have all read about remote tribes that still have all the traditional trappings of thought. But I personally have never immersed myself in New Age thought, and have seen it mainly from the outside, through books, lectures, workshops and so forth. One experience I did have which was revealing, however, was a conference extending over several days in the 1980s. It was run by some people who I think called themselves the Fourth World, though I am not sure about this. We were divided into special subject groups for two or three days, and we were then scheduled to come together at the end and to come out with a manifesto of our beliefs, which would then hopefully be influential in changing opinion.

When it came to the last plenary session, where we were supposed to endorse the manifesto, which by then was complete, there were ten or so people on the platform who had been organising the event. I shall call them the leaders, although they themselves I think would regard themselves more as facilitators. When it came to the point of endorsing and promulgating the manifesto, a hand went up. "We in our group have been discussing racism, prejudice and discrimination, and we would like to add to the manifesto one more sentence: We are opposed to racism." Immediately one of the leaders said –"That sounds a bit negative. Could you phrase it in some more positive way – perhaps "We are in favour of diversity?" There was a pause while the small group put its heads together. Then the voice came back

again: "No, we don't think that would do. We really want the minority ethnic groups to feel supported and defended by us, and your phrase is too vague to do that job." The leaders put their heads together. "We can't accept something so negative. How could you reword it yourselves? We can wait for you to go into the corridor and come to an agreement among yourselves." But again the group refused – "We want to make clear statement about racism."

Then a remarkable thing happened. The leaders came down from the platform and sat in a circle in front of the stage, with their arms around each other, and hummed, or perhaps chanted – I can't remember the exact details. This was supposed to change the energy in the room, apparently. But after a while it became obvious that this was not working. And the meeting broke up in disarray, with no manifesto and no result of any kind. It became obvious that these New Age people could not simply take a vote, because voting must include negativity, and negativity is ruled out. There is of course a contradiction here, because in order to rule negativity out, you have to be negative towards negativity! There is actually a New Age book with the title – "You can't afford the luxury of even one negative thought", (John-Roger & Williams, 1995).

So this made quite an impression on me, and I now treat this negative attitude to negativity as a crucial part of New Age thinking, and a very important flaw.

Having had a good look at the Subtle, the next stage, according to Wilber, was to deal with the Causal.

The causal level

With the Causal we enter the deep ocean of mysticism, where there are no signposts, no landmarks, no handrails and even no words to describe it. This is very different from the rich and colourful world of the Subtle, with all its concrete representations of the divine. And yet to enter it all we have to do is to give up the contractions which stop us from admitting that we are there already. If the Subtle is the realm of soul, the Causal is the realm of spirit (Cortright 1997).

I spent the 1990s in experiencing and studying the Causal, and found it to be a fascinating realm. Through my regular meditation I touched the Causal stage of psychospiritual development many times, so that at the end of that time I was able to access the Causal at will. Of course this is the realm of paradox, where our normal vocabulary breaks down altogether. It does not matter whether we describe it at the One, the All or the None – it is all the same mystery. But again I tried the same research technique, of going back and forth between the two states of consciousness – the Subtle and the Causal, with the following result (see Table 5).

Table 5. Subtle self versus causal self

SUBTLE SELF	CAUSAL SELF
Fascinated by symbols	No interest in symbols
Concerned with gender	No concern with gender
Polytheistic	Monotheistic or nontheistic
Juicy compassion	Constant clear compassion
Knows many techniques	Invents techniques as necessary
Deep linking with the other	No need for distinction between self and other
Interested in angels and auras	No interest in such things
Values diversity	Sees through distinction between unity and diversity
Fascinated by paradox	Paradox runs through everything
Values the third eye	Rises above the third eye
Focused on many beings	Focused on Being
Concern to build up resources	Infinite resources without concern
Creative approach to problems	No concept of a problem
Deeply identified with Nature	One with Nature
Can relate to trees as devas	Is all the trees in the world, and all the tree-

	cutters too, and the no-tree
Has compassion for the unfortunate	Has compassion for the unfortunate and for the fortunate
Wants the World Soul to be well and happy and free from suffering	Knows that the World Soul is already well and happy and free from suffering
Wants to save what was lost	No one has lost everything
Unafraid of what is alien	No fear because nothing is alien
Rejoices in the Many	One-ing
Rejoices in the rich taste of all	There is nothing to taste, and no one to taste it. Or perhaps there is just one taste.
The centre is up there, or down there	The centre is everywhere
Offers the deepest form of empathy	Not interested in empathy

As a psychotherapist, one of the things which interested me most was the lack of empathy at this stage of development. At all the previous stages, more and deeper empathy was the order of the day – culminating in the full Linking, or transcendental empathy, of the Subtle (Rowan & Jacobs 2002, pp 80-84). But here, at the Causal level, there was a penetrating and in some way pitiless perception of the truth of the person, underneath all the layers of false assumptions and defensive barriers.

Obviously at this stage solitary meditation can lead to self-deception, so I embarked on several experiences of sharing with others, going to Buddhist retreats and Vipassana workshops and Ch'an offerings, where I got confirmation of my *kensho*. This was reassuring, and led me to believe that I was on the right track. I kept a record of my work in meditation, which showed a definite progression from a rather crude understanding to a much deeper appreciation.

I then found that it was possible to work in psychotherapy at this level, and wrote up my findings in a paper (Rowan, 2005).

The nondual level

Then all through the years from 2000 to the present I was working with the Nondual, and getting the hang of that. This is very different from the Causal. As Wilber has well put it, we can conceive of the continuum from the earliest states of consciousness to the Causal as a series of stages, and can conceive of the movement from one stage to the next as progress and achievement. But if we picture this continuum as a ladder drawn upon a piece of paper, the Nondual is the paper itself. In other words, the Nondual is not an item on a continuum, but something quite different. This important distinction is not always recognised, however, and many people at the Causal level speak and write as if they were communicating from a Nondual position. Again I drew attention to this mistake in my paper (Rowan, 2007).

When I came to do the dialogical self research on this contrast, this is the way it came out (see Table 6).

Table 6. Causal versus nondual

CAUSAL	NONDUAL
The Dance of Being	It's not at the end of any continuum
No desires	No such thing as a desire
Eternal infinite selfing	Nothing needed
Not the peace of ignoring everything, but the peace of embracing everything	Who indeed?!
No need to get attached to Freedom, either	Laughter… Laughing…
There is no portal! I am already there! I have always been already there!	Ecstasy doesn't need an experiencer
The Clarity and the Mystery are one and the same	Not this, not that – and not NOT, either!

Steady breath of compassion	Not about altered states of consciousness – no one here to be conscious!
One–ing…	…Already given up long ago…
The Inner Light and the Inner Dark are one and the same	The brightness of the fog
Just this. Just this.	Two onions and a piece of string
Of course I am God! Of course I am not God!	What do you mean – "God"?
What ecstasy!	What ecstasy?
The Earth is empty!	What Earth?
It's all here! Nothing is missing!	Eleven fingers
No fear, because nothing is alien	The sun in the mud
Compassion flows freely.	Blood runs uphill exploding
The centre is everywhere	What centre?
Can't explain it	Not the slightest need to explain it
I insist on the absence of categories	No need to insist on anything
No fear	No one to be afraid of anything
Thou Art That!	What?
Meditation is the way	Meditation is a pile of dead leaves in the driveway
Paradox is an important key	Paradox, schmaradox!
Big Mind	Big Joke
The biggest prison of all	What prison?
It's all there!	Where?
At last! It all makes sense	At last! It all makes nonsense

Again this is a more recent version, because it did not seem to make sense to go back to the less adequate earlier findings.

Someone I showed this to said that it showed a big Zen influence, so I produced another version which was less provocative in that way, but there did not seem to be any point in including it here. Ken Wilber is also interested in these matters, and has contributed his own understanding, based on a great deal of research, of this distinction:

Table 7. Causal and Nondual
Wilber (2000: 197-297)

SOURCE	CAUSAL	NONDUAL
Aurobindo	Overmind	Supermind Sat-chit-ananda
Vedanta	Causal	Turiya
Vedanta	Bliss mind (Anandamayakosha)	Brahman-Atman (Turiyatita)
Adi Da	Nirvikalpa	Sahaja bhava
Alexander	Root mind Pure self	Brahman-Atman
Wilber	Formless mysticism Causal unity	Spirit and world process Nondual mysticism
Hazrat Inayat Khan	Wahdat – witness consciousness Djabrut-cessation Formless	Zat - absolute consciousness Nondual
Mahamudra	Simplicity	One Taste

	Cessation Emptiness	Form/Formless unity Non-meditation
Daniel Brown	Cessation Advanced insight	Enlightenment: A,b,c
Traditional	Nirvikalpa – cessation Jnana – Nirodh, Nirvana	Sahaja Non-meditation Bhava
Yoga Tantra	Causal consciousness Black near attainment Cessation	Clear-light Emptiness
Duane Elgin	Global creativity (flow)	Global wisdom (integral)

This shows how respectable the distinction is. However, what I have discovered is that numbers of people who claim to be working at the Nondual level or site refuse to recognise this distinction, and therefore cannot distinguish between the Causal and the Nondual at all. Examples include, Tony Parsons (2000), Richard Sylvester (2008), Ramesh Balsekar (1989), David Loy (1988), Peter Fenner (2007), John Prendergast (2007) and others. The compilation of Jerry Katz (2007) is the same.

In my opinion these examples show how interesting dialogical self research can be, and how it can be a real addition to the existing research paradigms. More information on all this can be found in my book (Rowan 2010).

Cautions

It must be clear immediately how great are the opportunities for self-deception in this approach. However, I believe the dangers are more apparent than real. We check out the findings with others, as in other types of qualitative research. And I have tried this out in many workshops where I have asked people to do the exercise of writing a dialogue between two selves at two different levels of consciousness. Invariably something interesting comes out, and it has been very striking to me how similar are the results of other people to my own. Perhaps the reader would like to try the experiment of writing a dialogue between any two positions of their own.

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