The Shadow in Transpersonal Psychology

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Abstract

I discuss the relevance of the archetype of the shadow for our understanding of transpersonal psychology, examining this in relation to two interdependent themes: (a) manifestations and implications of transpersonal psychology's own shadow, and (b) the importance of recognising and incorporating our transformative experiences of the archetypal shadow.

On the basis of this discussion I present a preliminary taxonomy of transpersonal experiences and practices that incorporates aspects of the transformative shadow. This taxonomy itself raises a number of important and largely ignored questions within transpersonal psychology, including that of the ontological status and psychological significance of the transcendental and of the archetypes of good and evil.

> *"If my devils are to leave me, I am afraid my angels will take flight as well"*
>
> Rainer Maria Rilke

The Shadow Archetype

At 11 am on 11th August 1999, I was standing, wet and cold, on a rocky hillside on the West Coast of Cornwall, near the prehistoric monument of *Mên-an-Tol*. Ten minutes later, the long-heralded shadow of the Moon swept silently in over a sinister sky, heavy with cloud cover. A fleeting two minutes of distant amber and the light returned, allowing a fresh glimpse of the strangely unmoving faces of anoraked

onlookers. There was brief applause, then most of those present quietly collected up their things and made their way back down the path in single file, as if in trance.

What did it all mean? Was this what I had waited more than 30 years to experience? Was this what I had driven seven hours through the night to witness? Was it worth it? Had anything changed? Questions that floated in the air like the clouds before me. The Earth did not move, but an answer eventually came. This was one of the most significant and memorable days of my life.

The image of the shadow is highly evocative, especially when considered in the context of spirituality and the transpersonal. These domains so regularly employ the metaphor and symbolism of light that it is perhaps surprising that more consideration is not given to its complement, i.e., darkness. Darkness is implied by light. Light not only has the property of illuminating the dark places, but it also, by its sheer brilliance, casts dark shadows when contacting the ordinary world of form that we inhabit.

In Jungian analytical psychology, as also in many other traditions, light is considered to be a symbol for consciousness. Light illuminates our world and brings it into awareness, thereby enabling us to act with intention and rational intelligence. Darkness is primarily a symbol for that which is not illuminated in consciousness - the unacknowledged, hidden, unconscious reality that moves silently in the depths. Darkness therefore represents a level of our own being that is outside our conscious knowledge and control.

In Jung's model of the psyche, the *shadow* is the complement to our conscious *persona*. It is, metaphorically, the shadow thrown when the light of our persona (our consciously expressed public personality) meets the larger reality of our total being. Most of us have been brought up to acknowledge and express only a limited, socially acceptable portion of our total personality. The other, socially unacceptable, parts remain unacknowledged, generally either deeply repressed in our own unconscious minds, or projected outwards onto certain others who thereby come to represent for us all that is dark, unpleasant or evil.

At this point, it is perhaps useful to mention that there are two main ways in which the Jungian archetype of the shadow may be understood. Firstly, and principally, we may conceive the shadow as those aspects of our own being that are not illuminated by the light of awareness; those parts of us that we do not, cannot or

dare not acknowledge. In this sense, the shadow is morally neutral or ambiguous. For example, while one person may find it difficult to acknowledge anger, domination, or lust, another may find it equally difficult to experience or express sensitivity, gentleness or compassion. In other words, there is such a thing as the "positive shadow" (Firman & Gila, 1997, p. 111ff), comprising submerged goodness and creative potentials. However, to the extent that most of us are brought up to express a socially acceptable, conventionally "good" persona, the shadow will typically (and hence archetypally) come to represent those qualities deemed unacceptable or "bad". In this way, the archetype of the shadow comes to acquire its secondary, negative meaning, i.e., that which is evil and reprehensible in our own psychological being.

Despite the important distinction between the positive and negative shadow, in practice our personal shadow will tend to be apprehended or *experienced* as bad, whether positive or negative, because it represents those aspects of our personality that we have learned *should not* be expressed. For example, the person who cannot express sensitivity or gentleness would consider it *wrong* to do so. The shadow is thus always in some sense evil from the relative perspective of the individual. However, in absolute terms, or from the perspective of the larger Self, the shadow is neither good nor bad - it is simply there (or rather, it is *here*).

For Jung, one of the most important primary goals of therapy was to enable individuals to begin to acknowledge and own their shadow. As long as the shadow remains unconscious, kept out of awareness by defence mechanisms such as repression or projection, it will inevitably cause psychological and interpersonal difficulties. Or when, at times of stress, intoxication or crisis, there is an uncoordinated *return of the repressed*, the unexpected emergence of the shadow into awareness will typically lead to intense feelings of guilt and unworthiness, or to personally and socially destructive forms of acting out behaviour.

The operation of defence mechanisms against the shadow also prevents the kind of higher order functioning of the personality that may become possible when previously unaccepted aspects are fully acknowledged, truly owned, and put into perspective in the context of our total being. If we continue with our principal metaphor for a moment, Jung is arguing that we need to begin to shine the light of consciousness down into those dark places that our upbringing will have made us

afraid to explore. Only in this way can we begin our psychological journey towards completion, wholeness and individuation.

According to Jung, there is another important dimension to the shadow - its *collective* manifestations. Jung is referring here to the darkness that may be found as an undercurrent in all human groups, whether families, tribes, organisations, movements or large civilisations, as well as in human nature generally. For example, in the same way that the personal shadow is the dark complement of an individual's persona, a culture's dominant *zeitgeist* will cast its own dark, antithetical, collective shadow. At the universal level, the shining light of our self-professed and sometimes expressed humanity is complemented and counterbalanced by a very dark side to human nature. We rightly react in horror and disgust at the brutality and inhumanity of the Holocaust, or of Rwanda and Kosovo. But the real horror is that we are all capable of such atrocities - especially, it seems, if we are male. It is very much a case of *"There, but for the grace of God, go I"*. Or, as Jung (1958) puts it:

> *"we are always, thanks to our human nature, potential criminals … None of us stands outside humanity's … collective shadow."* (p. 96)

Transpersonal Psychology: Persona and Shadow

As collective movements, humanistic and transpersonal psychology first arose in America in the 1960s and 1970s from the pioneering efforts of Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Anthony Sutich, and Stan Grof. Maslow himself coined the phrases "Third Force" (humanistic psychology) and "Fourth Force" (transpersonal psychology). At the time, these movements were seen as a necessary reaction against the two then dominant forces in psychology, i.e., Freudianism and behaviourism, which Maslow criticised for their "negative" and "reductionistic" tendencies. At the outset, therefore, both humanistic and transpersonal psychology were distinguished and identified by their advocacy of a positive, optimistic view of human nature, in direct contrast to the view of the Freudians and behaviourists. Maslow's own writings are typical of this positive approach, with their self-conscious, studied emphasis on self-actualisation, human potential, creativity, love, humanistic education, peak experiences, and metamotivation (e.g., Maslow, 1970, 1973, see also Daniels, 1982).

The consequence of this reaction against the perceived negativity of the prevailing psychological paradigms has been that humanistic and transpersonal

psychology have often been promoted enthusiastically as an *alternative* paradigm in which the shadow side of human nature can seemingly be ignored, cast out or overcome. This is well exemplified in Marilyn Ferguson's influential book *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (1980) and has become almost a defining characteristic of the human potential, alternative health, and "new age" movements.

An implication that can often arise within this new paradigm is that personal and transpersonal development involves a wonderful, joyful, entertaining, illuminating, "happy-clappy," always forward-moving, easy journey of discovery and spiritual advancement. This journey begins when we learn to cast off and leave behind all personal negativity and darkness, adopt an attitude of "positive thinking," and orientate ourselves and gravitate towards the light, like moths to a flame.

This optimistic perspective is perhaps most evident in some of the more popular manifestations of new age thinking, yet it is also found and often directly promoted within humanistic and transpersonal psychology. Most obviously, there are the unrelentingly cheerful theories of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. Furthermore, research in transpersonal psychology has tended to focus largely on what we may loosely call the "positive" aspects of transpersonal experience such as ecstatic mystical states, creative inspiration, human kindness and compassion, wholeness, and enlightenment.

In my view, this can lead to a naïve and simplistic view of transpersonal development that is both wrong and deeply unhelpful. It does not accord with my own life experience or that of many other people with whom I have been privileged to discuss these matters. Furthermore, if taken literally or seriously, such a view can produce a number of unfortunate, even dangerous consequences for the transpersonal movement (cf. Daniels, 1988). Many of these are encapsulated in certain myths (or, as I prefer to call them, "dangerous partial truths") that are very commonly encountered in this area. Among these, we may note the following:

- Transpersonal development may be achieved by seeking out ecstatic and other exciting altered states of consciousness.

- Enlightenment makes you happy.

- Spiritually advanced people are joyful, dynamic and charismatic.

- Spiritual development can be achieved by adopting an "enlightening" doctrine, or by discipleship to an enlightened Master.

- Ignore evil - perhaps it will go away.

- The spiritual path can be followed in a self-centred way, by focussing on our own personal and transpersonal development.

- There *is* a Santa Claus.

These myths are dangerous, I believe, because they can encourage both projected authority and spiritual materialism. Projected authority, according to John Heron (1998), is the tendency to invest spiritual authority in some external source (e.g., a teacher, book, doctrine, or group). This can lead not only to the denial of our own internal authority, but also, in its more extreme forms, to the kind of blind adherence to external authority characteristic of certain religious movements, both ancient and modern. Spiritual materialism, as described by Chogyam Trungpa (1973), represents an attitude of pleasure-seeking, spiritual greed and passive consumerism. From such a perspective, the spiritual life is reduced to a demanding quest for gratifying subtle "experiences" and new wonders. Inevitably those who hold such a spiritually materialistic attitude lay themselves open to exploitation from the ever-growing and ever-regenerating band of smiling, smooth-talking salesmen and saleswomen of the new age. In this context we should perhaps heed Nietzsche's plea in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*:

> "I conjure you, my brethren, to remain faithful to earth, and do not believe those who speak unto you of superterrestrial hopes! Poisoners they are, whether they know it or not."

These approaches to the transpersonal remind me of Art Levine's (1985) caricature of the *Pollyanna paradigm* in humanistic psychology - the ingenuous belief that by looking on the bright side, everything can be made OK. Many others, including Rollo May (1982), Maurice Friedman (1976), David Smail (1984) and Daniels (1982, 1988, 1997) have added their own criticisms to the naïve, self-serving optimism that characterises much of the human potential movement. Michael Marien (1983) delivers perhaps the most scathing attack on this attitude, which he terms the *sandbox syndrome* because it reminds him of the attitude of children innocently amusing themselves in their sandbox, playing at changing the world, while the world

itself goes about its business, untouched and unconcerned. As transpersonal psychologists, many of us undoubtedly believe that we are engaged in valuable and significant work. But perhaps we should occasionally stand back, take the perspective of an outsider, and reflect on whether transpersonal psychology may itself demonstrate features of the sandbox syndrome. To what extent are we a community of like-minded people, playing at being important, while real life itself continues in its own course, largely unaffected by our precious or puerile vanities?

The solution to the problem of the sandbox syndrome, according to Michael Marien, is for the humanistic and transpersonal movements to grow up - personally, socially and politically. We need to swallow our pride and start to deal with some of the real issues and challenges facing ourselves and the world around us. In my view, an important way forward in this respect is for transpersonal psychology to begin to face its own shadow.

One way of approaching this shadow is to examine features of the dominant persona or zeitgeist of transpersonal psychology and to consider what may thereby be neglected, ignored or devalued from this viewpoint. In the context of this paper, I can offer only a brief summary description, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Persona and Shadow within Transpersonal Psychology

Persona / Dominant	Shadow / Neglected
Transcendent	Immanent
That World	This World
Exotic	Mundane
Ascending	Descending
Vertical	Horizontal
God	Goddess
Masculine	Feminine
Hierarchy	Heterarchy
Oneness	Many-ness
Nondual	Dual
Perennial philosophy	Cultural diversity
Apollonian	Dionysian
Absolute	Relative
Linear	Non-linear
Order	Disorder
Simple	Complex
Consciousness	Matter
Immediate / Direct	Mediate / Contextual
Individual	Collective
Agency	Communion
Self	Other
Psychological	Socio-Political / Ecological
Words	Action
Spiritual Tradition	Spiritual Innovation
Authority	Democracy
Genuflection	Healthy disrespect
American optimism	European pessimism
Monotheism / Atheism	Polytheism
Eastern	Western
Buddhist / Hindu	Judaic / Christian
Nirvana	Samsara
Emptiness	Fullness
Ecstasy	Suffering
Solitary meditation	Group ritual
Causal	Subtle
Wilber	Jung / Hillman
Postmodern	Romantic
Spirit	Soul
Mysticism	Magic

Of course, there are problems with any attempt to dichotomise tendencies in this way. In drawing up these polarities I do not wish to caricature transpersonal psychology, nor to imply that what I have identified as the "shadow" side is totally unacknowledged. That is clearly untrue and most serious writers on the subject recognise many of these dialectics in their own work. However, in my view, there is still a distinct tendency within much current transpersonal psychology, to *overemphasise* the features that I have included in the left-hand column. For me, Table 1 is useful in helping both to clarify the nature of the dominant paradigm within transpersonal psychology and also in pointing out some of its tensions and possible contradictions.

Most of the characteristics I have identified in the dominant persona column are consistent with a Transcendent / Mystical / Buddhist / Ascending / Linear / Individual / Male approach to the transpersonal. On the other hand there are several apparent contradictions and odd juxtapositions, for example of the exotic / ecstatic with the simple / direct, or of American optimism with Buddhism, or of tradition / authority with postmodernism. In my opinion these are, in fact, very real and important tensions to be found within transpersonal psychology; tensions that have yet to be adequately acknowledged or fully addressed.

By way of contrast, the characteristics identified in the neglected shadow column are generally consistent with an Immanent / Magical / Polytheistic / Descending / Non-linear / Collective / Female approach to the transpersonal. There are also here, however, some seeming contradictions and odd combinations, for example of polytheism and Judaic / Christian, suffering and fullness, or pessimistic and romantic.

If nothing else, Table 1 serves to identify dialectical themes and issues that have been addressed in different contexts by a number of critics and commentators. These include Ken Wilber (e.g., 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999a, 1999b), John Heron (1998), John Rowan (1993), James Hillman (1977), Warwick Fox (1990, 1995), Michael Washburn (1995) and Peggy Wright (1995, 1998). Wilber is in something of a difficult position in this regard, since for many people he is the primary representative of the "Wilber/Buddhist/Male" approach within transpersonal psychology (Heron, 1998). However, Wilber's recent writings (e.g., 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999a, 1999b) have themselves identified several of the important polarities identified in Table 1. Furthermore his quadrant model and his related notion of

integral studies do seek to provide a conceptual framework within which it becomes possible to recognise and discuss these complex and challenging issues.

I do not have the space to rehearse all the arguments that have been put forward by Wilber and his critics (see Rothberg & Kelly, 1998, for a lively discussion). The point I wish to make here is simply that transpersonal psychology must find appropriate ways in which it can begin to acknowledge, honour and *perhaps* integrate these different perspectives if it is not to breed factionalism, partiality and endless cross-party bickering. Only in this way will it become possible to come to terms with the apparent contradictions within and between paradigms. We may not agree with Wilber's analyses but he is, in my opinion, making an honest attempt, in his own way, to provide an inclusive perspective on the transpersonal.

If I have one major criticism of Wilber, it is that despite his aim to recognise and integrate the different perspectives, he seems to remain committed to the idea that everything can be tied up and tidied up in a grand, over-arching conceptual scheme. My own experience tells me that life, self, relationships, and spirituality are fuzzy, fluid and rather messy, and that they resist all attempts to be parcelled up into neat packages. In this respect I have considerable sympathy for the position of James Hillman (e.g., 1977). Hillman, for example, rejects the Jungian and humanistic notion of the healthy, integrated self in favour of his deliberately ambiguous and undefined concept of the *soul*. For Hillman, soul *emerges* as our experience of the world is deepened and made meaningful through imagination and fantasy. Soul is not a fixed given, but is a fluid, imaginative response to life. Furthermore, although soul is experienced as we imaginatively create myths and narratives to connect us with the archetypal, there is a danger in all such myths and narratives that they can become fossilised conceptual schemes that restrict and deaden the soul with their literalness. The life, the soul, is in the *myth making*, not in the mythical form itself, which must constantly be regenerated as soul emerges afresh.

This implication of this for transpersonal psychology is, I believe, that we should not expect nor seek final answers to the apparent contradictions posed by these different approaches and perspectives. To aim to do so would be like imagining there was a final answer to the "problem" of the relationship between the sexes. In most cases, it seems to me, those who claim an answer usually find it by attempting to impose their own one-sided perspective on the other, either directly or guilefully. As with sexual relations, we should, perhaps, each seek ways of constantly discovering

our own personal meanings in this creative, challenging and fascinating melee, while at the same time listening to and honouring the differing views and experience of others.

In this respect it is not satisfactory, I suggest, to argue that these differences of approach can be fully encompassed and explained in the context of a model that recognises the differences, but seeks to *prioritise* one approach over the other. This seems to me a clear feature of Wilber's model in which, for example, causal (abstract) transpersonal experiences are believed to represent a higher mode of consciousness than subtle (image-based) experiences. In this way Hillman's notion of soul-making through imagination, myth and fantasy may be too easily dismissed by some as "merely" subtle. By implication, therefore, soul-making itself needs to be transcended in the movement to causal consciousness. While such movement may be prototypical in particular spiritual traditions, such as the path of Buddhist meditation, in my view Wilber has yet to prove that it is a universal feature of transpersonal development.

The Shadow and Transformation

I define transpersonal experiences, after Walsh & Vaughan (1993), as those in which our sense of identity is transformed *beyond* the limited boundaries of the ordinary self. In my opinion, this is consistent, if not precisely identical, with Hillman's notion of *soul making*, or the deepening of human experience. As already mentioned, there appears to be a common presumption in much of the new age and some transpersonal literature that such transformation or deepening is a wonderful, exciting, ecstatic joy ride of personal and transpersonal discovery. From here it is easy to become drawn into the belief that transpersonal progress can be measured by the number and variety of altered states of consciousness experienced, the number of workshops or retreats attended, the number of hours spent in meditation, or the range and depth of one's reading.

I call this the "exotic" approach to the transpersonal and it does not accord well with my own experience. In my time I have had various experiences that could be deemed mystical or paranormal. I have undertaken certain exotic practices and followed several systems of spiritual and esoteric training. I have also read quite widely in the area of spirituality and the transpersonal. I have found almost all of this to be of interest and significance, and it has undoubtedly contributed to my appreciation and understanding of life and of the transpersonal. If I am honest with

myself, however, I could not say that much of this has been profoundly *transformational* in the sense in which I have defined transpersonal experiences. In fact the opposite may sometimes be true. There is a real danger, not only for myself but for others in this area, that such experience can become, through an attitude of spiritual materialism, yet another way of *sustaining and promoting the self* rather than transforming it. In the language of my youth, the transpersonal can easily become an "ego-trip" for many. It can also be a good career move. In case it may seem that I am being unduly harsh on others, let me say that I am the first to stand up and plead guilty in this respect. For example, I am one of the small but increasing number lucky enough to be able to combine an interest in the transpersonal with my own professional development.

If I look back on those events and experiences in my life that have truly transformed me - challenged the sense of who I am, given me an expanded or deepened sense of reality, or perhaps made me a better, more aware, more alive, or more compassionate person - they are, almost without exception, quite prosaic. They include the Arts, conversation, sexual love, death of friends and relatives, hill walking, tracing my family history, humanitarian crises, personal therapy and therapeutic practice, creative writing, divorce, intense experiences of isolation and of community, depression and, perhaps most important, the struggle, joy and sacred trust of becoming a parent.

I call this the "mundane" approach to the transpersonal and I believe that it is much more widespread and significant than is generally acknowledged. At the present time it remains one of the shadow areas within transpersonal psychology, neglected by commentators and researchers who are still largely caught up in the delights of the exotic transpersonal[1].

Another aspect which I am forced to recognise is that, with the exception of moments of temporary enrapture, the important transformations in my life have generally been slow, difficult, painful or unpleasant. Lasting transformation, in my experience, is rarely a sudden ecstatic turnabout, accompanied by bells, whistles and instant acclaim. It is rather a gradual, often unwelcome, dawning of awareness,

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[1] James Horne (1978) is one of the few writers to have recognised explicitly these mundane experiences of the transpersonal, which he terms "casual mysticism". Horne contrasts this with "serious mysticism" (based on intentional practice). See also Rowan (1993, p. 97-98).

typically occurring at a time of considerable personal difficulty, stress, suffering or tragedy.

It seems to me rather paradoxical that transpersonal psychology should emphasise "positive" [2] experiences of transformation to the relative neglect of "negative" experiences, given the focus in many of the World's religious traditions on the significance of suffering, death, spiritual struggle, penitence and evil. In recent years, however, there has been an increasing awareness within transpersonal psychology of the importance of emotionally negative experiences such as illness, depression, tragedy, trauma, confrontation with death, loss of faith, alienation, negative near death experiences, and even alien abduction. These experiences have been conceived and characterised in a variety of ways by different writers, among which I note the following:

- Metapathology (Maslow, 1973)

- Existential crisis / existential neurosis

- Existential vacuum / noogenic neurosis (Frankl, 1967)

- Self-renewal through trauma (Jaffe, 1985)

- Psychopathology (e.g., Hillman, 1977)

- Catharsis

- Shamanic crisis (Harner, 1980)

- Crises / psychological disturbances (Assagioli, 1993)

- Dark night of the soul (St John of the Cross)

- Dark night of the self (Hale, 1992)

- Creative illness (Ellenberger, 1970)

- Night sea journey (Jung, 1967)

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[2] In this context I use the terms "positive" and "negative" to refer to the affective quality of the transformational experience, rather than its consequences.

- Spiritual emergency (Grof & Grof, 1995)

- The "wounded healer" (Jung, 1954)

- Healing of the Primal Wound (Firman & Gila, 1997)

One of the most significant features of these experiences is the way in which they are typically described as either having profoundly transformational consequences in themselves, or when *worked with* in a particular fashion. A major reason for this may be that these "negative" experiences *demand* transformation in a way that the more pleasant, "positive" experiences may not. If we are privileged to experience ecstatic states, these may be taken as reinforcing current trends and behaviours - a kind of spiritual reward and sign that we are doing things right. As such, while they may encourage various efforts to repeat the experience, they are perhaps less likely to produce genuine personal transformation, or a true deepening of experience. On the other hand, if we are suffering, or in a state of spiritual emergency, then transformation may be our only solution. Hillman (1977) argues, for example, that psychopathology is our primary route to the emergence of soul:

> *"Through depression we enter depths and in depths we find soul … The true revolution begins in the individual who can be true to his own depression"* (p. 98-99)

From the time of the classical Greeks, tragedy has been recognised not only for its cathartic effects, but also for its capacity to reveal the depth and nobility of human existence. Without tragedy, it might be said, life would be banal. For many people, Ken Wilber's most significant book is *Grace and Grit* (1991) a complex, moving, and at times brutally honest account of life during his wife Treya's five year struggle and eventual death from breast cancer. Wilber writes towards the end of the book:

> *"In the last six months of her life, it was as if Treya and I went into spiritual overdrive for each other, serving each other in every way that we could. I finally quit the bitching and moaning that is so normal for a support person, a bitching and moaning that came from the fact that I had, for five years, set aside my career in order to serve her. I just dropped all that. I had absolutely no regrets; I had only gratitude for her presence, and for the extraordinary grace of serving her."* (p. 405)

Incorporating the Transforming Shadow

An important challenge for transpersonal psychology is, I believe, to provide a framework within which the significance of both mundane and negative transpersonal experiences can be acknowledged, honoured and understood. As a first step in this direction it is perhaps useful to draw up a rudimentary working taxonomy of transformative experiences that incorporates both the mundane and the negative. Table 2 presents such a taxonomy. In drawing up this list, I have found it helpful to distinguish also between introverted experiences in which the direction of attention or energy is principally inwards, focussed within the Self, and extraverted experiences in which the direction is outwards, focussed on the Other (cf. Horne, 1978).

Table 2 is not intended to be an exhaustive or definitive list. Rather it is offered as a simple introductory guide, or aide-memoire, to stimulate thinking and research in these areas and as a corrective to those taxonomies that ignore the mundane and the negative. I recognise also, that there is some ambiguity and overlap between both classifications and exemplars. This echoes my earlier caution about the difficulties and dangers of seeking too much clarity and order in these untidy and fluid realms of human experience.

Table 2. A Taxonomy of Transformative Experiences

Positive			
Mundane / Immanent		**Exotic / Transcendent**	
Introverted	**Extraverted**	**Introverted**	**Extraverted**
Plateau experience	Inspiration	Peak experience	Peek / glimpse experiences
Flow experience	Love	Ecstasy, rapture	Psychic awareness
"Just this"	Creativity	Orgasm	Divine inspiration
Simple awareness	Action	Psychedelic experience	Divine Grace
Suchness	Connection	Mystical Union	Mystical Communion
Peace, quietude	Compassion	Kundalini awakening	Channelling
Innocent cognition	Enjoyment	Joy	Visions and voices
Negative			
Mundane / Immanent		**Exotic / Transcendent**	
Introverted	**Extraverted**	**Introverted**	**Extraverted**
Trough experience	Tragedy	Abandonment by God	Archetypal Terror
Depression	Suffering, trauma	Loss of faith	Possession
Existential crisis	Illness	Bad trip	Confronting Evil
Existential angst	Stress	Dark night of the soul	Spirit attachment
Emptiness	Ageing	Night sea journey	Alien abduction
Alienation	Failure	Catharsis	Shamanic crisis
Deadness	Dying, bereavement	Confronting own death	Negative NDE

This taxonomy of experiences also helps to provide a perspective on the variety of transformational practices that are found in the transpersonal field. Many of these practices seem particularly suited to inducing, developing or (especially with the negative) *working with* specific types of experience. Practices may therefore themselves be roughly grouped according to the same scheme of classification. Table 3 provides some preliminary suggestions for such a taxonomy of transformational practices. Again there is inevitably some ambiguity and overlap[3].

Table 3 is useful, I believe, if only to indicate those areas of interest which individuals and groups may express in their transpersonal practice. For example, it can help to demonstrate our own particular preferences and predilections in the transpersonal field, and enable us to compare these with other people's experience and practice. In this way we may better understand, and therefore be better placed to respect, the experiences and practices of others. Table 3 might also suggest to us ways in which our own developmental needs may be met by the application of particular practices. For example, a person who is experiencing alienation might well benefit from logotherapy. Perhaps Table 3 may even challenge us to consider the ways in which our own transpersonal practice may be limited and might be further developed by exploring alternative approaches. I am not suggesting that it is in any way necessary or advisable to explore self-consciously and deliberately all these areas. However, I do believe that for some people spiritual development can become closeted and restricted by sticking rigidly to any one approach or practice.

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[3] The taxonomy presented in Tables 2 and 3 has interesting parallels with the model of spiritual traditions recently developed by Andrew Rawlinson (1997). Rawlinson distinguishes between *hot* and *cool* traditions. Hot traditions emphasise the importance of relationship with a transcendent Other, whereas cool traditions assert that the essence of spirituality is within the Self. Rawlinson's hot traditions are comparable to the outer-directed exotic, whereas his cool traditions show similarities with inner-directed mundane. Rawlinson's model also makes a useful and interesting combining distinction between traditions that are *structured* (specifying a particular route to the spiritual goal) and those that are *unstructured* (arguing that the goal is already present and available, therefore there is no route to attainment). As with the model presented in Tables 2 and 3, Rawlinson acknowledges much overlap between categories.

Table 3. A Taxonomy of Transformational Practices

Positive			
Mundane / Immanent		Exotic / Transcendent	
Introverted	Extraverted	Introverted	Extraverted
Vipassana	Compassionate action	Raja yoga	Prayer
Zazen	Karma yoga	Kundalini / Tantric yoga	Worship, devotion
Focussing	Politics	Sexual mysticism	Bhakti yoga
Hatha yoga	Service	Holotropic therapy	Ritual magic
Tai Chi	Creative work	Psychoactive drugs	Psychism, spiritism
Relaxation	Some healing	Schutz Encounter	Some healing
Quietism	Parenting	Ecstatic cults	Religious visualisation
Negative			
Mundane / Immanent		Exotic / Transcendent	
Introverted	Extraverted	Introverted	Extraverted
Psychotherapy	Tonglen	Transpersonal therapy	Black magic
Counselling	Meditation on suffering	Jungian analysis	Exorcism
Existential therapy	Hospice work	Psycholytic therapy	Spirit release therapy
Logotherapy	Nursing, caring	Holotropic therapy	Sado-masochism
	Bereavement work	Bioenergetics	Confession / self-abasement
	Working with survivors		Some Tantra

Another point that I should perhaps emphasise in this context is that the classification in Tables 2 and 3 is in no way intended to imply any *hierarchy* or

universal developmental sequence. In my opinion all eight categories of experience are capable of leading to transformation and the various types of practice may have value for different people at different times in their lives, according to their own individual developmental priorities. I would strongly resist any attempt to superimpose a hierarchical structure such as Wilber's spectrum model on this scheme.

The Question of "Evil"

I am aware that there is a most important question begged by the analysis that I have presented. This concerns the question of evil, in my opinion one of the great ignored or side-stepped issues in transpersonal psychology. In our current postmodern climate we simply do not have the conceptual wherewithal to consider effectively the nature of evil. We therefore generally assume that evil does not exist - that, like God, it represents a quaint remnant of archaic theological dualism. So with the death of God, the Devil is also cast out of our equations. Wilber, for example, has comparatively little to say about evil. Although he claims to be a realist who recognises the existence of manifest "relative evil" (which should be lessened rather than eradicated) he rather conveniently argues that both good and evil can be transcended by adopting his own nondual perspective (e.g., Wilber, 1995, p. 645; 1999c, p. 223).

The Jungian concept of the *collective shadow* goes some way towards an acknowledgement of evil. Yet for Jung, the collective shadow is simply the antithesis of the dominant zeitgeist, a relative reality that is dark or hidden, but not in and of itself necessarily evil. When Jung addresses the issue of evil directly (e.g., Jung, 1969) he argues that both God and evil exist, but that these are essentially *psychological* structures, having no knowable *transcendental* reality[4]. God and evil, in other words, are fundamental *archetypes* although, for Jung, they are no less real for that.

> *"It should not be overlooked that I deal with those psychic phenomena*
> *which prove empirically to be the bases of metaphysical concepts, and*

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[4] Jung's writings and statements are often ambiguous and can be interpreted as implying that the archetype of God suggests the actual existence of a genuinely transcendent God (see, for example, Stevens, 1990, pp. 247-254).

> *that when I say 'God,' I can refer to nothing other than demonstrable psychic patterns which are indeed shockingly real."*

> Jung, cited in Wehr, 1988, p. 472

> *"I have been asked so often whether I believe in the existence of God or not that I am somewhat concerned lest I be taken for an adherent of 'psychologism' … What most people overlook or seem unable to understand is the fact that I regard the psyche as <u>real</u>… God is an obvious psychic and non-physical fact, i.e., a fact that can be established psychically but not physically."*

> Jung, 1969, p. 463-464

Whether or not we agree with Jung on this matter, his position is reasonably clear and coherent, and perhaps *can* provide an answer to the horrors of the Holocaust, Rwanda and Kosovo. For Jung, the "transcendental" exists as a psychological reality and therefore we can and need only consider God and evil through the vehicle of direct human experience.

> *"Today, probably the only way to an understanding of religious matters is the psychological approach, and this is why I endeavour to melt down historically solidified ways of thinking again and recast them in the light of immediate experience."*

> Jung, cited in Wehr, 1988, p. 299

Transpersonal psychology, however, does not generally adopt this Jungian view and therefore cannot easily utilise his sophisticated psychological metaphysics. For the majority of writers on the transpersonal, the transcendental is accepted as having some kind of metaphysical reality of its own, beyond the human, psychological realm. It perhaps behoves these transpersonal psychologists to explain as clearly as possible their own particular metaphysical view, especially as this relates to the issue of good and evil. In practice very few appear to do so.

Wilber is one of these few and his position, as I understand it, seems to be that good and evil emerge as relative realities in the human-psychological-subtle realm. The ultimate transcendental reality, however, is beyond all duality, and therefore beyond good and evil. On the other hand, Wilber, like most Ascenders, also believes that this transcendent, nondual realm is somehow accessible to human

consciousness and is also a prize worth considerable personal effort to attain. Whether in fact such a transcendent, nondual realm of experience is actually worth the candle is, however, a matter of some current controversy (see, for example, Heron, 1998).

An alternative, more fundamentalist and less fashionable view, is that the transcendental realm is itself dual. In other words, there is both transcendental Good and transcendental Evil. God and Devil exist in their own right, and not just as archetypal images in the human mind.

In my view, these metaphysical questions and answers about the transcendental status of good and evil are irrelevant as far as human existence is concerned. They may also be meaningless. For me, as for Jung, good and evil are very clear psychological and experiential realities, which is possibly all that matters. I do not wish to deny outright the reality of a absolute transcendental realm, but the direction my argument is taking me is towards the Kantian position that this noumenal realm may not only be ineffable, but perhaps also unknowable and unthinkable. As such it is of no immediate concern to human beings, who live and seek meaning in the phenomenal realms of psychological and interpersonal realities.

There is a very real danger, I believe, for those who accept the reality of the transcendental, but at the same time deny the reality of transcendent Evil. This is that they may also be led to deny, or may become blind to, the real psychological and social evils of our time. If we believe that evil can be transcended in states of nondual or "One Taste" consciousness (Wilber 1999b), then why should we worry about tackling manifest evil in any direct way, whether in others or ourselves? Wilber himself recognises this potential danger:

> "This becomes a bit of a nightmare … because once you get a strong glimpse of One Taste, you can lose all motivation to fix those holes in your psychological basement."

Wilber, 1999b, p. 138

Wilber's answer to this problem is to argue that nondual consciousness, although the "highest estate imaginable" (ibid. p. 139) is *not sufficient*. From a truly integral perspective, he argues, we still have a need and also a moral duty to work at the "lower levels" of our being. The moral duty, for Wilber, is entailed in the bodhisattva vow to "communicate One Taste to all sentient beings" (ibid. p. 139).

I agree with Wilber on the necessity for integral work. However, I question his assumption that nondual consciousness necessarily represents the most advanced and desirable achievement of the human mind (I do *not* doubt that it can be experienced). In arguing that personal experience of One Taste must be complemented by work at "lower levels," Wilber himself recognises the necessity of something *beyond* One Taste consciousness. His argument that the purpose of this complementary work is to communicate One Taste to others provides internal consistency in his position, but seems to be based simply on an ideological premise.

In my view, the drama of human existence, and the drama of the transpersonal, take place against a rich psychological backdrop of good and evil. If we deny the *psychological* reality of evil, then how can we partake fully or deeply in life's drama? This does not mean, however, that we must therefore accept the existence of *transcendent* Evil, in the sense of a metaphysical reality beyond the realm of human experience. For me, and this is crucial, the transpersonal does not necessarily imply, nor depend upon, the metaphysical transcendent. Transpersonal means the *transcendence of ego boundaries*, not the transcendence of human, psychological or interpersonal realities. Transpersonal development involves becoming more fully and more deeply human, not rising above our humanity.

In order to reclaim and enrich our humanness it is necessary, I believe, to acknowledge fully the shadow side of human nature, both personal and collective, and to find meaningful, creative, *soulful* responses to the challenges that this awareness will bring. As human beings who happen to be transpersonal psychologists, we should also realise that there is an important shadow side to the transpersonal that must be understood and responded to.

In this paper I have discussed several aspects of this transpersonal shadow and suggested ways in which we might attempt to respond meaningfully to some of the issues raised. There have been many encouraging signs in recent years that transpersonal psychology is beginning to grow up and step outside the sandbox of its own making. In so doing, the movement is showing, for example, an increasing awareness that there is a dark and sinister side to the transpersonal that needs to be acknowledged and addressed. One manifestation of this is the sexual, emotional and physical abuse of children and adults in spiritual groups, or by religious authority figures (e.g., Heron, 1998; Langone, 1995; Storr, 1997; Welwood, 1983). Another manifestation, though still largely ignored in transpersonal psychology, is the rise of

racist, fascist and terrorist organisations claiming spiritual or transpersonal authority, as well as of a variety of Satanist-styled groups of somewhat dubious status and purpose. For those who wish to explore some of these areas in more detail, the Internet is a particularly valuable, if rather unreliable, resource.

In my opinion we cannot as transpersonal psychologists, nor as human beings, ignore the activities of those who would act in evil fashion, especially if they do so in the name of spirituality. Part of the process of stepping out of our sandbox into the real world is that we are willing to take on a mature, responsible, socially, politically and spiritually aware approach to the problem of evil, whether this exists in ourselves or in the activities of others. This does not mean that we lack compassion. In fact the ability to deal firmly with evil is itself an act of compassion. It means that we are no longer flakes.

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