

# Russian Soul

A report from the 2005 EUROTAS conference in Moscow

Glenn Hartelius

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The 2005 EUROTAS conference exemplified its theme of “Human consciousness and human values in an interconnected world.” The Russian Association of Transpersonal Psychology and Psychotherapy graciously hosted over 200 participants from more than 20 countries, with the support of several other organizations. Vladimir Maykov, Gennady Brevde and a team of volunteers guided us through four days of presentations (June 23-26), translating tirelessly between English and Russian (Drew 2005).

The following pages constitute a small tour of the conference, offering a series of six presentations drawn from the 70-some offerings on the program. These were selected for their ability to reflect the flavor of the conference, and for highlighting topics that were more original in character, or less widely known. **Vladimir Maykov** (Russia) opens the conference by situating it in the context of a Russian transpersonal project that reaches back to antiquity. He speaks from a uniquely-informed vantage point, as one of the most accomplished members of the Russian transpersonal community, and part of the underground transpersonal movement in the late Soviet era. **Jason Wright** (UK) draws on his work with addicts to weave a story of how psychological healing can grow out of rebuilding narratives that are the very fabric of “self.” Jason’s work reaches deep into theoretical and scientific realms to understand experiences of transformation he witnesses with his clients. **Vitor Rodriguez** (Portugal) offers a glimpse into his clinical experience with the diagnosis and treatment of psychic attack. He begins with a fascinating clinical story that shows the practical value of an esoteric approach. **Mark Burno** (Russia) shares fruits from 30 years of practice using “spiritual culture” as an avenue to therapy. He makes an insightful distinction between idealist and materialist approaches to spirituality. **Rupert Tower** (UK) uses an enchanting Russian fairy tale to lead us into the shadow, frankly broaching issues of power and leadership in psychotherapy training

organizations. **Tanna Jakubowicz** (Poland) rounds out this mini-series with an inspiring call to direct action.

## **The transpersonal tradition in Russian culture**

Vladimir Maykov

*Vladimir Maykov, Ph.D. is a leader of transpersonal studies in Russia. Maykov was one of the first Soviet teachers of transpersonal psychology, and since 1990 he has developed and taught more than 20 training programs in transpersonal therapy. In addition to authoring several books, he founded an international publishing project to publish transpersonal psychology texts in Russian; he has edited about 50 books for this project. He founded the Transpersonal Institute in 1994 and the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in 1997, and serves as president of the Russian Association for Transpersonal Psychology and Psychotherapy. He can be reached through Transpersonal Project, Moscow ([www.transpersonal.ru](http://www.transpersonal.ru))*

The transpersonal tradition is deeply rooted in Russian culture. Unlike any other country in the world, Russia is geographically connected to Asia, the Near East and Europe. In addition, Russia has its own shamanic culture, Celtic pagan tradition and Russian Orthodox Church. This rich tapestry underlies Russian thinkers and writers of recent centuries, who embody within their works the principles and spirit of transpersonalism. Even though the transpersonal vision is new in the West, it is traditional in Russia.

We can see three distinct layers underlying the Russian transpersonal tradition which establish its origins in distant antiquity. First, there is an ancient layer of shamanism—a practice that continues in Russia to this day. Contemporary shamans live and work in places such as Buryat, Tuvinia, Altai, Yakutiya and Khakassiya. Second is a layer of Russian paganism: Celtic paganism held sway over western Russia for centuries, and left its imprint. Then there is a more modern layer, covering the last thousand years.

In the modern layer, I identify seven different roots of Russian transpersonalism. The first of these is the Russian Orthodox Church, which includes the mystical doctrine of hesychasm. Although there are many aspects to hesychasm, it includes both a practice in which the saying of prayers is synchronized with the breath, and a contemplative phenomenon in which one's chest begins to vibrate and shake. Clearly, Russian Orthodox mysticism invokes altered states of consciousness.

In addition to Russian Christianity, there is the Russian religious philosophy of N. Berdyaev and L. Schestov, the theosophy of E.P. Blavatsky, the anthroposophy of R. Steiner, the existentialist writings of authors such as L. Tolstoy and F. Dostoevsky, the Fourth Way of G.I. Gurdjieff, and the tradition of Russian cosmism of such visionaries as S.N. Fyodorov, K.E. Tsilokovsky, and academician V. Vertnadsky. Together these inform the modern transpersonal project in Russia.

Transpersonalism is thus inherent in the Russian soul. Yet it is not easy to explain our inner being, the soul behind Russian transpersonalism. It has been said that excavating the Russian soul is like peeling an onion: the more you penetrate its layers, the more you cry. In the end, you are left with empty nothingness. In fact, as noted by the academician D.S. Lihachev, space holds a special place in Russian consciousness. Russians experience space as open sky, as the pure potentiality of life that pulls you out of bondage.

There is an archetypal wounding of the Russian soul, typified by the image of St. George lancing the dragon. This symbol has been central to Russian national imagery for five hundred years. How does this wounding manifest itself? Personal development is different in Russia than in the West. In the West, the body is born, it becomes a personality, and then it spends its life striving to become a spiritual being. In Russia, the body is born and, through wounding, it becomes a spiritual being. But there is almost a full absence of personality in the Western sense of the word, with its correlatives of civil society, lawful state, democracy, market economy and declaration of human rights. Rather, the Russian soul must spend its life striving to become a personality—trying to become functional in society.

The continuous historical development of this transpersonal urge was interrupted early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The gap between that time and ours was bridged by a small cohort of thinkers and practitioners who escaped from Stalin's terror and raised Russian transpersonalism from the ashes: men such as V.V. Nalimov, M.M. Bakhtin, A.F. Losev, M.K. Mamardashvili, A.M. Pyatigorsky and V.N. Mihejkin. In the 1970s and 80s a broader transpersonal underground developed, laying the groundwork for the founding of the Russian Association of Humanistic Psychology in 1990, shortly after Perestroika. In

May of 2002 we took a further step toward professional development with the founding of the Russian Association of Transpersonal Psychology and Psychotherapy.

The Russian transpersonal project of today is more highly professional and many-sided than ever before. Many academic scientists have been drawn to this perspective, yielding a community in which intensive searches are conducted in many directions; there is no strict adherence to any one epistemology or theoretical framework. Russia, a country with centuries-old transpersonal roots, is poised to speak with the entire world in the common language of the transpersonal.

## **Synthesis and plurality: Stories of the self**

**Jason Wright**

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This essay was inspired by an epiphanal moment, which occurred whilst on a lonely holiday to Turkey in 1997. As I lay beside my hotel pool exhausted from looking at a rock piled up by the ancients, it occurred to me that ideas live in us as we live in the world. We are the medium of ideas—they live, breed, and die in us. I became fascinated with this as process, and as imagery. As imagery that helps me describe the work I have done over the last 12 years treating people who are struggling with addiction.

I work at the CORE Trust, a London-based center that uses a holistic multi-disciplinary approach to addiction involving complementary therapies and psychotherapy individually and in groups, with the whole project held as a community. In this context we understand the unifying intention to all the therapies is a spiritual one: we work within a transpersonal metaphor and see the fundamental issue facing the addicted person is the choice of whether or not to live: to live even in the face of devastating early-life trauma and alienation, inadequate parenting and dysfunction.

In its raw form this basic question is an insoluble and often torturous dilemma: Should I live, or not? Here, the assumptions about the nature and qualities of the self that

is at stake remain unexamined. In therapy this question can and often does transform into the more useful question, What self am I, that I might want to live? Although narcissistic, this question opens the door to useful inquiry. From here it becomes possible to explore how the self image of the client is organized, and how its organization might be made secure enough to be sustained over time.

From a Buddhist perspective, of course, this self is an illusion. However, this is not simply the end of the matter. Rather, it piques us with the question, What is this self that I experience? Following from the imagery above and my multidisciplinary work at the CORE Trust I was unable to sustain my image of self as a “thing.” i.e. ontically and diachronically secure. Rather, it seems to me, in a semiotic and narrative context, that an image of self exists at the point where a person’s inner conscious and unconscious stories and outer stories of community and culture meet. This self image is identified with as me. However this is not a self as thing but as a process that alters with the ever-changing tides of inner and outer narrative.

Here I am thinking about process as does Pickering (1999) in terms of Alfred North Whitehead’s process philosophy. Whitehead (1933) considers transitional processes, structures of activity, and the evolution of those structures to be inherent in the character of reality, in the “continual creative advance of nature.”

If the self is also such a process, then the key to transformation in psychotherapy is moving beyond the personal self to the process behind it: transcending the fixed ideas of self and encountering the self as an ongoing process. The focus moves away from the artifact of this process, i.e., the personal self, and into the process itself. Following Pickering’s argument I would view these processes as being essentially semiotic in nature --that is, composed of culturally-meaningful signs--and negotiated through narrative. Here then we return to the inspirational images that open this short paper. Access to this process would then mean access to the possibility of more effective and more useful narratives, a process that can radically change the self-experience of the client. Here we meet James Hillman’s (1983), idea that you need to heal the story, not the person.

How do we approach this? What might be the mechanism of this self-process? In his book *Approaches to Consciousness* (2004), Les Lancaster brings together cognitive neuroscience and mysticism to explore the nature of consciousness. I shall use his ideas

here to think about how we might generate and sustain the process of self, how we might think about redefining those narratives, and the cultural milieu from which they arise.

For the purposes of understanding consciousness, Lancaster recognizes the link between cognitive neuroscience approaches and mystical approaches. For example, consider the following elucidation of the perceptual process as understood by Abhidhamma practice seen in conjunction with processes of consciousness as defined by cognitive neuroscience. Lancaster identifies the fact that the process of identifying a “self,” or “I-tagging,” comes late in this sequence of six events that make up the perceptual process.

There are six stages in Lancaster’s model of this process:

1. In the process of seeing an object, a set of neurons fire and are analyzed through the visual cortex.
2. The memory process responds to the input.
3. Various schemata are activated through neural resonance.
4. Identity of an “object” is established separate from the background information.
5. For Lancaster, this is the moment when the I-narrative and the perceptual process come together. The perceived object is incorporated in the individual’s ongoing meaning narrative. In Abhidhamma this is known as *javana*. There is no literal translation for the word *javana*, but it conveys an active role in the perceptual process--there is a clear transition from perceptual mechanism to narrative.
6. Finally, memory is updated by relaying back the current perception, including the narrative interpretation.

The important feature to grasp is that this activity is preconscious; it goes on outside of normal awareness. The sense of I-ness is added prior to the normal waking experience of consciousness, but late in the perceptual process. Under mundane conditions the nature of I-tagging is powerful. The sense of self is continually reinforced by registering new I-tagged perceptions into the individual meaning narrative.

The advantage of studying this process from a mystical perspective such as Abhidhamma is that it points out this deconstruction of the perceptual process. Lancaster suggests that such deconstruction, through meditation or other mystical processes, offers

the opportunity to decrease the reinforcing nature of the I-tag, and thereby allow the possibility for a greater number of associative schemata to reach consciousness.

Here then we are back to the key for transformational process in psychotherapy: moving beyond the personal self image to the process behind it, to the thoughts of the world, or the mind of God. Through altering the relationship between the narrative of self and the narratives of experience, it becomes possible to develop more effective and more useful narratives. Here we are immediately into the ground of psychotherapeutic work, be that in a classical psychoanalytic frame such as a Winnicottian (1951) model of transitional space or a Hillmanesque view of narrative reconstruction or soul making from a case history to teleological soul history (1983, 1996).

How does this operate in my practice as a transpersonal psychotherapist working with addicted people? The essential frame is to effect a de-identification with the self image within “me” in order to imagine differing possibilities. The goal, if there is one, is to develop an overarching narrative with the client, one that enables the client to cope with his or her experience creatively rather than destructively—a narrative that is open and containing rather than destructive and constraining. Sometimes I feel as if I lend an alternate self to the client—both as a stop-gap tool for coping and as an example of the narrative reconstruction process—until such time as the client grasps the process enough to do his or her own reconstruction.

Working with a client in this way requires some skill and art at perceiving the individual content streams within the client’s narrative, and then helping the client to re-weave them.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate it is with a brief clinical example:

H was 41 at the time of presentation. Her father had been deceased for 10 years, her mother was still alive; she had one sister. She had been treated violently by both parents throughout her childhood. She left home and school at age 15, but had gone on to work in demanding and prestigious jobs. These are the bare bones of the personal narrative, with significant defining features such as violence, death, and action in the world.

The client presented to CORE with alcohol, poly-drug habits and difficulties with eating. In individual therapy she identified her violent and abusive experiences in

childhood as causing problems, particularly with respect to difficulties in relating to people, a tendency to isolate herself, chronic low self-esteem and habitual self-destructiveness. The client's narrative of these symptoms as drivers of her addictive behavior indicated a compatibility between her ideas and those held by CORE as an institution. Here is the experience of shared narrative ideas that is essential to developing the therapeutic work.

H attended well during her time at CORE, but experienced initial ambivalence toward the community. She found it difficult to talk in group, and would lay down on the floor hiding her face, speaking rarely, and then not in a self-disclosing manner. Here the CORE narrative and her personal narrative came into conflict. It was not possible for her to determine the safest way to meet the needs of the CORE project as caregiver, so she attempted to control the situation by evoking her familiar narrative cycle of non-compliance and the violence it historically evoked. Within the analytic frame of repetition compulsion, the kernel of the story is here.

Concurrently in her individual therapy, the client and her therapist explored issues of trust and relationship, examined her difficulties with shame, and her linkage of violence and intimacy. Toward the end of the fifth month H was beginning to recognize that she had agency in relationship, and was not simply the victim of circumstance. Here we evidence a fundamental alteration of the client's narratives in relation to herself. CORE, and perhaps to a normative narrative. She was able both to contain and reveal difficult feelings and the story behind them, whilst developing a new overarching narrative in which she is no longer trapped in her circumstances as a victim.

However, the client's non-compliant behavior in group was still at issue. The conflict between the two narrative streams became unbearable, and she relapsed into addictive behavior. Ultimately the newfound story, and new self image contained her, and in this context historic experiences that had previously been unbearable began to emerge into consciousness. Over the next few months the client explored many of her intimate relationships, particularly with members of her immediate family. Most significantly, she was able to bear the memory of her father's sexual abuse. She considered that she might be able to pull the parts of her self together to feel more whole.

Her personal narrative was being negotiated within the containing narrative framework of CORE, and a deeper sense of self slowly emerged. As part of this process, she read her own case history. In response she wrote:

It's very strange, and enlightening, to read a case history of yourself, someone else's version of your narrative. Firstly of course it isn't long enough; it doesn't begin to explain the circumstances or the level of distress that I felt to start using when I was 12. Before alcohol, I self-harmed: burning myself, bouncing my head off walls, stitching my fingers together, trying to find a way I could cause myself more pain than what I already felt, but couldn't understand. My linear narrative didn't start until I was nine, just fragmentary memories of ages. Alcohol made me not feel pain, as later did heroin, tranquilizers, and cannabis; cocaine and speed made me not care whether I felt pain or not. When I got to CORE I'd used alcohol for 29 years and drugs for 26....Substance free, it became apparent that there wasn't a time without the feelings that made me want to self-destruct....Through CORE I have repaired myself enough to attempt a fulfilling, clean and sober life, and I am fortunate that support is available through CORE's weekly after-care treatment that I attend. Another strange thing is how completely different I feel for the vast majority of the time. I still have bad days when I plummet to the depths of despair and self-hatred instantaneously but I can contain my feelings without using. That is true liberation.

As of this moment, the client is still in psychotherapy and has remained clean for 15 months since leaving CORE. She is continuing in higher education.

It is through the interaction of differing narratives that such changes in the client's narrative stream were possible. She became capable to tolerate her experiences and re-envision herself; this new and more useful self-image better contains her narrative and her experiences.

We are back to the main idea for defining self: a set of confluent narratives woven into a master narrative which, through time and the process of the psyche develop into the image or icon called "self." Through deconstruction of the narrative stream it is possible to engage the underlying process and avoid over-identification with the images it throws

up. Transpersonal psychotherapy is not just about the *content* of our being, but also learning to be aware of the *context* within which we experience being itself.

*That the self advances and confirms the myriad things is called delusion.*

*That the myriad things advance and confirm the self is enlightenment.*

(Aitkin 1985 page 232).

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## The Psychic Defense

Vitor Rodrigues

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I want to introduce my subject by telling you about the case of a client who came to me. Picture an independent young woman who suddenly begins to have fainting spells. As a result, she cannot work or drive. Although she is an excellent swimmer, she

cannot swim; even in waist-deep water, she is likely to faint and end up floating facedown in the water. Medical tests detect no problem. Her EEG and EKG are normal; she is not epileptic.

I bring this young woman into deep relaxation and, using particular techniques I help her approach a state where she can access information about her condition. Then I ask her to tell me what is happening. She describes that she sees a man, the father of a friend. This is a man who had recently died. She tells me that he had had sort of a crush on her. She sees that at times he suddenly pulls her out of her physical body, causing her to faint.

After giving the woman some instructions for creating a psychic defense against his unwanted presence, I speak to this man that she is experiencing. I say, "Do you know you are dead?"

The young woman reports that he says, "What do you mean? I am alive!"

I ask him to remember when he died. After a few moments, he is apparently able to recall his death. Then I ask, "Do you know you are harming this woman?"

"No I am not! I just love her."

"But you are harming her, threatening her life, by causing her to faint."

After some further conversation, the man agrees to leave the young woman and goes "across" with a being of light. Within a few days the fainting spells cease, and the young woman is able to resume her life.

Here we have a scientific problem: there is no proof of an afterlife, but a therapeutic strategy that involves the soul of a dead person is effective in relieving a condition that standard treatments cannot resolve. On the other hand, many religions and traditions describe the phenomenon of psychic attack. Perhaps we should take seriously the possibility that these occurrences are on some level real. In the end, it is not as important to argue about *what kind* of reality is represented by such processes as it is to find ways to assist those who suffer them. In any case, the possibility of psychic attack is something we cannot directly test for empirically due to ethical constraints (we would have to consider the fact that if the attacks were effective, they would be damaging to the subjects). However, parapsychology research suggests it is not only possible to influence

thoughts at a distance (Radin, 1997; Dalton, 1997; Bem & Honorton, 1994), but also possible to influence biological systems at a distance (Nelson, Bradish, Jahn & Dunne 1994; Nelson, Jahn, Dunne, Dobyns & Bradish, 1997; Ostrander & Schroeder, 1997; Schlitz & Braud, 1997).

I myself had to learn a lot about psychic attacks. From my adolescence onward I underwent many of them over a period of 20 years. Gradually I came to understand how these episodes were constructed, and how to deal with them. In my experience there are three sources of such attacks: 1) the presences of those who have died, as illustrated by the previous story, 2) other entities, and 3) living persons.

Many teachers picture the wonders of conscious expansion, the glories of penetrating other realms. This is all true: it is nice to learn a spiritual path, to have meaning in your life, to expand. But if the folktales speak truly, then there are some dangers in these realms — even for those who are not on a path. These dangers include more than the souls of the deceased.

Some teachers naively tell you that you should meditate a lot. If you follow their advice, it may happen that you end up in some trouble. You have your moments of light, but then you hit anxiety. You go to the teacher for help, and he or she tells you it is only coming from inside you—so, meditate more. If you follow this advice, there is at least some chance that you may experience a serious breakdown.

What such teachers say is partially true: you are dealing with your inner demons. But all religious traditions talk about outer demons as well. In the end, I believe they are right—even if you do not speak about “demons,” but only about aggressive “entities”. For the psychologist who encounters these phenomena, it is necessary to understand such attacks. They are a real feature of the spiritual dimension of human life, and those who suffer from them need and deserve skilled assistance. Until we have more scientific-sounding words to talk about this dynamic, it will be necessary to use traditional terms— at the risk of speaking in language associated with medieval superstition.

Unfortunately I have found very few authors dealing with the matter of psychic attacks in a somewhat realistic way (Bailey, 1930; Fortune, 2001). If we assume there is some kind of real phenomenon behind such reports, what kind of a model can we use to understand outer “demons”? “Inner demons,” of course, are our own unfinished

business—unwholesome fears, greeds and ambitions. Left unchecked, these unwholesomenesses lead to evil actions. One way to understand outer demons is as subtle presences that connect with us through these inner flaws, and who cultivate those flaws.

Psychic attacks can also come from humans. Some will try to perform interesting rituals, some will try to project their own negative energy onto you, some will ask for help from demonic entities. Two of the main procedures of classic witchcraft are the *dajida*, and the charge.

A *dajida* is a witchcraft doll prepared by the practitioner of dark arts, and sympathetically connected to the victim by means of a sample such as a bit of that person's hair, nails, blood, sperm, saliva, photograph, or a piece of clothing that has been worn for some time. Once the connection is established, it is believed that what the practitioner does to the doll will happen to the victim at a distance. Fortunately, this is not so easy to accomplish. Part of the effect is through suggestion, reinforced by the folkloric beliefs of the victim. But in some ways the doll also helps the practitioner project his or her own energy and intention. Some classical experiments seem to produce interesting effects, though it is difficult to do such experiments ethically. However, a few related experiments have been done under laboratory conditions (for some hints at a modern version, see Ostrander & Schroeder, 1997).

A charge is an object filled with bad feelings and bad intentions, such as a dead cat. Typically, the sorcerer gets a cat or rat, connects it to the victim in the same manner as a *dajida*, then puts it some place to rot. The rotting process is intended to have repercussions on the victim. Another variation is a cursed stabbing knife that is placed where the victim will find it. The intended outcome is that the negative qualities in the knife will induce the victim to use the blade to kill himself.

Symptoms of psychic attack include the following:

1. A feeling that someone is blowing on the back of your neck, but no one is there
2. A persistent stinging in parts of the body, producing a specific pain
3. Strange pains that do not respond to painkillers
4. Unexplained illness that cannot be diagnosed by medicine

5. Pressure on the back of the neck, spine, or back of head, as if someone is pressing with a finger

6. Panic attacks; while most such attacks result from stress and worry, some are different in origin. These come on when everything in life is OK, and occur as a sudden feeling of intense anguish or fear, or the sensing of a threat; they may occur with nausea.

7. Nightmares; most are from indigestion, stress, worry, and personal problems. Other incidents have a quality of vividness. It may feel as if an octopus or some other threatening thing is grabbing the person, or as if some specters or demons are present; sometimes the dream experience is one of being engaged or otherwise imprisoned.

8. Direct visions. A girlfriend of mine was combing her hair in front of the mirror, and saw black serpents in her hair. Other clients have seen a vampire at the door, or a bedcover has seemed to become a python.

9. Hearing threatening voices. Of course, to a psychologist this is a probable sign of schizophrenia. But in my experience many people hear voices who clearly are not schizophrenic—that is, they are living normal productive lives. Some small percentage of these may result from psychic attacks

10. A sense of constriction and despair, a feeling of oppressive darkness that is darker than the absence of light

11. Fatigue, weakness, feeling a burdensome weight

12. Unexplained fainting

13. Waking up and feeling as if movement is impossible, as if a force is preventing full return to the body. This can be felt as total paralysis lasting for some minutes or even hours.

14. Sudden, intense, uncontrollable emotion

15. Repulsive odors, such as rotteness, that are suspended in a precise location

16. A sound of bells that comes from nowhere

17. Paranoia—the feeling that someone or something is after you

Naturally, all of these symptoms may arise from causes other than psychic attack. However, when more conventional causes or cures do not work, it is possible that the symptom may result from such an attack, mostly if several symptoms like the ones above are showing up together, and “normal explanations” have first been ruled out. There are

specific protocols for treatment of such conditions, which are omitted from this review. Vulnerability to such attacks can also be decreased by the development of personal and spiritual power.

If a person such as my client wants to develop her power, she must deal with her inner demons. If done properly, she will have power—but she must use that power with love. If not, eventually it will amount to black magic: the manipulation of psychic energies for your own purposes. As power develops, we learn to let go of our own personalities so something different can happen spontaneously inside of us. According to the spiritual traditions of the world this different thing, which is really our soul, will start moving in harmony with God’s plan for the purposes of love, justice, and beauty. This is a coincidence: moving in unity with everything, so God’s plan is your plan.

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# On therapy by means of spiritual culture

**Mark E. Burno**

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Therapy by means of spiritual culture is a psychotherapeutic approach in which the leading psychotherapeutic mechanism is that of creative self-expression, creative inspiration. Yet the state of creative inspiration can be felt in different ways according to the nature of the particular soul. For example, an individual with a more idealistic nature will experience spirituality and creative inspiration quite differently than one with a more materialist bent.

In Western tradition, the state of creative inspiration is often understood as something sent from Above, as to a receiver. As such, this state is called Freedom (Fromm), Logos (Frankl), Self-Actualization (Maslow), Personal Growth (Rogers), Psychosynthesis (Assagioli), Transpersonal State (Grof), etc. This approach is more of an idealistic relationship to a transcendent spirituality.

In Russia there are more people of a materialistic nature of soul than in the West or the Far East. Such people feel the state of creative inspiration as an emission of their own bodies. Because of this, the Russian notion of spirituality is broader; it includes not only what is sent to us from Above, but is also Something emitted by ourselves. In this way we can say that Pushkin and Chekov are spiritual writers, but without an idealistic, religious worldview; they are more in the natural-scientific stream.

This same distinction can be seen in psychotherapy. Alexander Jarotsky, a physician with a materialistic worldview, is one of the fathers of Russian clinical psychotherapy in the natural-scientific approach. Jarotsky named his classical book, published 103 years ago, "Idealism as a physiologic factor." He understood idealism as a state of captivity to altruistic ideals. In Russia there are many intellectuals with this materialistic understanding of spirituality.

With the help of many others, I have worked out this psychotherapeutic method over more than 30 years. The essence of the method is as follows: The patients with painful feelings of inferiority study elements of clinical psychiatry, characterology, natural history, and psychotherapy in order to learn to express themselves creatively in harmony with their natural characterological peculiarities. In order to live naturally, that is, in accordance with one's own nature, one must study one's own natural features; these then become real orienting points for following one's own spiritual nature: one's own nature, emitting spirit.

This method helps not only people of a materialistic outlook, but also those with a more idealistic nature, to find their own psychotherapy. Here is an excerpt from a group session on creative self-expression that helps individuals to feel their own outlook and understand whether they are more idealistic and religious or natural-scientific in their own nature. This session is called "Polenov and Rublev." It begins by viewing a painting by the Russian artist Vasilii Polenov entitled "Christ and the Sinner" (1887). In Polenov's picture, Jesus is a young but wise man: wholly human, realistically depicted. This is realistic pictorial art on a religious theme. Then we view an icon by Anton Roublev, the famous Russian artist and monk of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Here we see the face of Jesus, but we do not know whether the neck is male or female. The nose looks rather like a duck's bill, and the hair is just an inarticulate mass. For the idealist it must be this way: the face of Christ should not be full-blooded and alive, for it is the origin of Spirit. If the face were life-like, we would not see the stream of Spirit flowing from his eyes. This image of Christ is the glance of the transcendental world, of God. It reminds us of how the girl in Gogol's story speaks of the stars in the sky. She says, "The angels open the windows of their houses."

So, we have one image of spirit for idealists, and another for materialists. Spirit is no less important to the materialist, but it is secondary: body (matter) emits spirit. For such a person, his or her own body is the source of spirit. So, therapy by means of spiritual culture may be creative inspiration that takes a more religious, idealistic form, or it may take the natural-scientific form of creative self-expression. The approach is different for differing patients.

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## **Creativity lies at the Edge of Disintegration: Addressing the Shadow of Power and Leadership within Psychotherapy Training Organisations**

**Rupert Kinglake Tower**

*“One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. The latter procedure, however, is disagreeable and therefore not popular” (Jung, CW13, par. 335)*

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I want to begin by telling you a Russian fairytale loosely taken from Marie-Louise Von Franz (1987, pp. 236-9). This tale, called “The Black Magician Czar,” describes an encounter with the Shadow and how to cope with it. In the discussion that follows, I will also draw upon six informal qualitative interviews that I conducted with senior, experienced psychotherapy colleagues outside of CTP who act as representatives for their training organisations within the Humanistic and Integrative Section (HIPS) of the

UKCP. Based in large part on their experiences of encountering the Shadow during difficult transitions and periods of conflict within their organisations, I will examine how power and leadership are held, and how later generations may unconsciously carry the Shadow for the founders. Finally I wish to suggest innovative forms of holding authority and leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### *The Black Magician Czar*

*There was a czar who was a black magician and a very powerful ruler. One day he gave a dinner party for all his subjects, and said to them: "Whoever can run away and hide himself from me shall have half my kingdom and my daughter as his wife, and after my death he can rule over my whole empire". Everybody who sat there remained silent and turned pale. But a very bold young man got up and said, "Czar, I can hide from you and escape." And the czar answered, "All right, bold young man, hide yourself. Tomorrow I will hunt for you and if you don't succeed in hiding yourself, your head must come off!" The bold young man went off to hide, but the czar read his book of magic and found out where the youth had gone, and sent his servants to find him and bring him before him. And he himself, the czar, took a sharp sword and cut off the youth's head (and found great pleasure in his evil game). The next day the czar issued the same challenge and again a bold young man suffered the same fate.*

*On the third day there was another dinner party and the czar made the same offer. There was a third bold young man who said he could escape him, but only on the third attempt. He went out of the city and shape-changed into a weasel, a drill, and then a falcon and flew in front of the czar's daughter's window. She saw him and opened the window and he flew in. Inside her room he turned himself back into a young man and had a nice private dinner with the czar's daughter. Then he turned himself into a ring she put on her finger. However, the czar again consulted his magic book and discerned the youth's hiding place. "So", he said, "now your head must come off your shoulders!" But the youth replied that it had been arranged that he should have three tries, and the czar let him go.*

*The youth departed once more, shape-changing into several animals, and was again admitted to the czar's daughter's room where he turned into his own form. They had a nice feast and spent the night together and tried to plan a way to escape the czar. The next day he went to open fields and turned himself into a blade of grass. But once again the czar consulted his magic book, found the youth and demanded that his head must come off his shoulders, but the youth said No, he still had another chance to hide, the last one, and the czar agreed. The youth left the palace, and shape-changed into a gray wolf, a pike, and then a falcon. Flying over mountains and cliff, he saw the nest of the Magovei bird (a magic bird in Russian fairy tales) on a green oak tree and dropped down into her nest. The bird was not there at the time, but when she came back and saw the bold youth sitting there, she said, "What impertinence!" She seized him by the collar and flew with him out of the nest, across the blue sea and put him on the magician czar's window. The youth changed himself into a fly, flew into the palace and then became a piece of flint, a fire stone, and lay down by the fireplace.*

*Meanwhile the black magician began to read and search his magic book which told him the youth was in the Magovei bird's nest, but his servants found the nest but no youth. The czar looked in his book and thought that he must be there. The czar himself joined in the hunt. They hunted and hunted. The czar thought that even if he had not found the youth he could no longer be alive on the earth.*

*So they went back to the empire. The second and third day passed. One morning the maid got up and started to lay the fire. She took the flint stone and rubbed it on some steel; the stone flew out of her hand and there stood the youth. "Good morning, mighty czar", he said.*

*"Good morning, bold young man. Now your head must come off your shoulders."*

*“No, mighty czar,” the youth said, “you have sought me for three days and had given up the search. I have now come voluntarily. Now I should have half the kingdom and your daughter as my wife!”*

*The czar could do nothing so the two were married and had a wonderful wedding feast. The youth became the the czar's son-in-law and got half the empire, and on the death of the czar he was to ascend the throne.*

The “Black Magician Czar” describes a kind of incestuous situation between the father and the daughter where the feminine principle is a captive of the masculine principle. The czar is a diabolical “negative shadow” figure whose primary drive is to dominate and retain power. Those young men who also attempt to adopt a power attitude are swiftly beheaded.

The black czar’s magical book seems to represent a closed system of magic which misinterprets the way of the feminine, misuses power, and seeks possession through personal will alone. The hero in this tale succeeds because he is able to receive knowledge directly from its natural source, which cannot be misused by evil forces, and he knows a way to approach the feminine principle so that he is helped three times. He represents openness to a wider, deeper consciousness that utilises wit and emotional intelligence, connects us with our spontaneity, immediacy, and an instinctual living basic nature of the psyche.

### **The Abuse of Power and Authoritarian Leadership**

The tale of “the Black Magician Czar” expresses the debilitating effects of the ruthless drive and desire for power. The czar’s willingness to kill the bold freshness of ardent youth reflects a drama prevalent with an omnipotent fantasy of omniscience, and his primary motivation to possess power. He is unable to recognise the limits of reality or the existence of the other. Any possibility of dialogue is prevented through an atmosphere of terror and dehumanisation. (Biran, 2003)

An organisation is an ongoing drama enacted by fallible players, where the idea of the organisation as a unity (the ego ideal) contrasts radically with reality, where the character of organisational life more viscerally resembles a “*snakepit*”; for “...*there must*

*be for each of us, individually and collectively, a shameful, secret underside to organisational life” (Schwartz, 1990, p. 10)*

Experience of power dynamics within psychotherapy organisations seemed to indicate that more often than not leaders promoted initially a visionary drive towards personal and professional excellence and integration, which contained many inherent strengths, but over time this gradually tipped over into a narrow form of perfectionism and inflated “magnificence”, with an exaggerated focus on an organisational ideal that denied and became rapidly out of step with reality, eventually in some cases leading to organisational decay and breakdown.

What seemed increasingly to be held in the Shadow in these instances were the qualities of ordinary humanness – the permission to express fallibility, fragility, or vulnerability, to be unsure or unclear sometimes about where the project was going, and to acknowledge limitation – and a degree of trust in staying with the mess and chaos of a creative, processing space of not knowing, where it felt safe enough to question, debate, disagree and voice criticism. Alongside this, there was a loss of recognition that a necessary part of being human was the acknowledgement and ownership of one’s own capacity for envy, competitiveness, nastiness and destructiveness.

It was the denial of this reality, the failure to recognize faults within themselves and to discern the fantasy nature of the organisational ideal, that caused a rot to gain hold from within. Typically, any perceived challenge to the leaders’ authority, or anyone who dared to hold a different vision to the status quo would be isolated, and these shadow qualities would be projected onto the imagined perpetrators. Anyone that metaphorically speaking wished to “grow up” and assume responsibility for new ideas and new input that deviated from or appeared to threaten the organizational norm, was likely to be cut down in czar-like fashion.

The interviews also showed that when an organization goes through the demise or departure of a founder, a distinct transitional stage showed itself amidst the vacuum and chaos, prior to finding a re-framed identity. The Jungian analyst Robert Hobson calls this the “*therapeutic community disease*” (Hobson, 1979, p.232). He outlines three phases (1) The coming of the Messiah (2) the Enlightenment (3) the Catastrophe. A gifted individual steps forward within the vacuum with revolutionary ideas opposed to the original Vision

and is experienced by self and others as magical, a potential Saviour Hero who will bring revitalizing purpose to the organization. Initially a period of intellectual stimulation follows, there seems to be inner cohesion; but outer groups are constellated, individual differences and anxieties are denied, and the Shadow goes underground. However, inevitably the pain, death, rage and mourning for what was lost with the original founder has to be faced, and disillusionment, breakdown and usually unnamed destructive components of the process force themselves into consciousness (Perry, 1991). The saviour fantasy must be relinquished, and only then can the organization begin to remain present with what Nigel Wellings and Elizabeth McCormick refer to as "*Fallow Chaos*", by facing the unpalatable but unavoidable journey that "*to do or be something new we must first let go of something or some part of ourselves that is old*" (Wellings and McCormick, 2005, p. 98).

There is an African proverb that holding power is like holding an egg. Hold it too loosely, and it may drop and fall; hold it too tightly, and it may break. It is in the holding of the tensions of these polarities that the "unthought known" (Bollas, 1987) of the transcendent function can reveal itself.

There are several methods for mediating with shadow influences that can aid such a process of internal self-examination. "Social Dreaming" is increasingly used within analytical training institutes and mainstream organisations to build a communal relationship with the shadow and unconscious processes. (Gordon-Lawrence, 2005). Another emerging approach to leadership and service is "servant-leadership" which emphasises an ethical awareness and appropriate use of power by the encouragement of a long-term, transformational philosophy to life and work – in essence a way of being – that is committed to an individual's personal growth within organisations and promotes a sense of community (Greenleaf, 2003). Collective leadership is yet another paradigm in which mutual interconnection configures the presence of collective leadership, where difference, messiness and diverse ideas remain and flourish but are held, becoming differentiations of "*one-mindedness*" (Bohm, 1982, p. 72). The nature of leadership is no longer that of a spiritual parent to a child, but of peer to peer, allowing leadership to shift, devolve, and be shared by individuals that are able to provide many differing

qualities of leadership in differing circumstances according to their particular style, strengths and personal attributes.

Creative methods such as these may help us to own, name and respect the destructive and creative forces of the personal and archetypal Shadow that will always be present in some form or another within our organisational life. It is within the oft unspoken, unnoticed, unassuming acts of determination to bear difference, and in open-hearted gestures of kindness and the courage of forgiveness, that possibility lies to co-habit more fruitfully with our Shadow sides and remain open to our unruly complexity amidst all its savagery and beauty.

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## **We were made for these times**

**Tanna Jakubowicz-Mount**

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Having Jewish roots, studying mystical Judaism, Buddhism and shamanism, I have followed many paths, finally arriving at this one place with no name. Ain Sof, Holy Spirit, Great Spirit, are among the many names for this one ground from which all life springs. But if you ask me what I believe in, I might confess that I practice the religion of love, because *religio* means putting together and love has the biggest bonding power. My concern is how to make this world a better place to live.

Czech president Václav Havel, speaking at Harvard University, said, “I am persuaded again and again that, lying dormant in the deepest roots of most, if not all, cultures there is an essential similarity, something that could be made—if the will to do so existed—a genuinely unifying starting point for that new code of human coexistence that would be firmly anchored in the great diversity of human traditions” (1995). Deep down in the ground there are the same seeds of truth, love, wisdom, compassion, peace and justice. It takes new moral energy to create new political will. We need politics of awareness based on morality and new morality based on love for all living beings.

When we look at the world from an eagle’s eye view we see two struggling forces. The old order is a fragmented world based on the illusion of separation, battling for spheres of influence and control over territories and human minds. The new order, set by unitive consciousness, perceives the world as one organism based on the shared ground underlying all spiritual traditions.

There are no spectators in this struggle. We need to establish direct connection between our spiritual practice and service for the world. My intention is to join all people who are concerned about the state of affairs in our world right now, and who are awake enough to contribute to the process of healing, transformation and reconciliation. We can all see that transpersonal and holistic awareness is becoming more popular. Why?

Because this is the right answer to the burning problems of the world and the painful dilemma of being human.

The real pain in the lives of most people may not be about starvation as much as about lacking trust—a deprivation of higher purpose and meaning. As Eyad el Sarraj observes, “The hopelessness that comes from a situation that keeps getting worse, [is] a despair where living becomes no different than dying” (2002). Even if spiritual emptiness is a phenomenon particular to the West, it has great impact on the entire human civilization. It is the spiritual starvation of the so-called developed world that causes physical poverty and starvation in underdeveloped nations. These “developed” societies pump natural resources out of the soil of the Third World and dump back their junk and toxic waste, thereby stripping the inhabitants of natural dignity and spirituality; they are left naked like slaves and beggars of a “better” world. In this way, both rich and poor nations are left spiritually bereft.

Earth is being devoured because most people are disconnected from the Source of Life, uprooted from the earth, spiritually homeless, thirsty, unsated. This is the cause of deep despair, fear, anger, oppression and wars—the emptiness inside us that leads us to reach for everything outside us, to conquer other territories and exploit natural resources. We have an ongoing history of genocide and holocausts—a long chain of cruel wars between oppressors and victims, and victims who become oppressors.

How can we respond to this situation? How do we heal and seal the hole in the soul of our society? As Ian Gordon Brown used to say, “The future is brought into the present by people who conspire together—that is, breathe together” (1994). A saying attributed to the Hopi Indians says, “We are the ones we have been waiting for.” In my vision I saw that the most urgent and beautiful task is helping people to tap into a deep source of spiritual abundance. A second, equally important work is to learn how to transform and reconcile inner conflict so we do not cast our shadow on the world. When we are deeply connected to the whole, we feel relieved and happy, willing to contribute to common goodness. In this state of mind we can embrace and respect all diversities as a manifestation of the One.

In practical terms, I imagine this work to be one of supporting already-existing trends in our culture such as:

1. Promoting the renaissance of holistic culture, drawing from old spiritual traditions, cultivating the real nature of man as a manifestation of the true nature of all creation, reclaiming the sacredness of life and death
2. Enhancing the evolution of humankind from *Homo tribus* to *Homo holos*. The tribal human is preoccupied mostly with the tribal drives of the first three chakras—basically having to do with territory and survival. The holistic human is able to raise awareness to the heart and the crown chakra level, and embrace the entire Earth community.
3. Inspiring new women's movements to reclaim feminine power and wisdom, and to bring in more love and respect for the Earth and all living beings.
4. Developing the politics of awareness, fostering a new sense of planetary consciousness that is interfaith and multicultural.
5. Supporting culture and communication without violence.
6. Co-creating a new code of co-existence based on the values that underlie the great spiritual traditions.

Indra's diamond net is an ancient vision of the world in which all beings have the nature of a diamond, and exist in a boundless network of reflections and relationships. My personal vision is to set up a network of international action so we can inspire each other to do this most urgent work with the people who are within our reach. My idea is to create INDRA-net, standing for International Direct Radical Action Network. We need to think about what kind of actions we can develop, so more people can get access to spiritual experiences, and find their way home. The guardians of the old order are very well armed and organized. We need to encourage each other to intensify our activities and make them more effective.

I believe we have a special responsibility in this time in history. This is our opportunity to trigger the tipping point, to transform a minority perception into a majority embrace. In the words of Clarissa Pinkola Estes, "we were made for these times" (2003).

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