

# KNOWING AS BEGINNING: OMNI-DISCIPLINED VIEWS ON INTENTION AND HEALING

by Bernard Williams, Ph.D.

### ABSTRACT

The long history of healing traditions provides many paths, each offering unique and useful insight. Many cultures understand the power in aesthetic experience to repair body and soul. Research on healing with subtle energies and energy medicine requires multiple methods and perspectives; no one view is adequate to capture the rich complexity of our spiritual and embodied life. Understanding our own personal transformation is required to practice holistic healing with integrity and compassion. This presentation offers multiple working hypotheses and perspectives for the exploration of learning and healing.

**KEYWORDS:** perception, intersubjectivity, compassion, multi-modal studies, radical empiricism, state-specific science, subjective experience, holistic healing, intention, transpersonal research methods, mind-body medicine

**T**his presentation is not going to be linear. There are, however, going to be little cul-de-sacs in it that are linear. That's part of what I want to talk about: linearity within multiple dimensions of rich complexity. Linear thinking is so powerful and so useful that we can get trapped in it. I want to describe some alternatives to linear thinking. I want to explore the kinds of researches that I have the joy of working with all the time since I've been at Holos University and Energy Medicine University.<sup>1,2</sup> Continual learning. Of course I was already learning. However, before I joined these doctoral research programs, I didn't have as many very, very capable people to teach me. That's why I joined these faculties, so that I get to learn everything that all of our students create.

That's what a graduate program is, a knowledge factory. That is the one essential requirement in the long tradition of the university, to create new knowledge. This formal knowledge factory comes especially out of the German tradition, and earlier from Italy as well. The institution of the university appeared in the European tradition of craftsman's guilds. The universities were guilds of scholars. Guilds were established by agreements with the cities. The guild of scholars had one advantage over other craft guilds: their tools were in their minds, and if the city started mistreating them, it was very easy for them to go to a different city. They were guilds especially in the granting of the Master's degree, the master craftsman of knowledge.

But there is an additional requirement in the university, beyond mastery of what is already

known. To become a doctor you must extend beyond what is already known. You can only be a doctor by creating new knowledge – that's why the doctoral degree is awarded. From a less formal perspective, we are all doctors, because we are all creating new knowledge every moment of our lives. Even though governmental regulators don't want to use that language, we are all doctors. The university formalities have to do with power issues, professional identities, certifications, and so forth. And as scholars and professionals we do all these formal things. We hang our parchments on the wall. The formal institutions have a lot to do with everyone's level of comfort. If we are a professional, if we are a scholar, then our knowledge is supposed to be reliable, etc. The formal processes provide people with confidence and comfort. We do want to raise everyone's confidence and comfort, but we should also recognize that living a life is creating new knowledge continually, in our experience.

## **KNOWLEDGE**

What I want to think about together with you is this question: What is knowledge? My argument is that knowledge is only a beginning, and that we have to continually recreate these beginnings. During these wonderful four days at this conference, everyone has been manifestly teaching us that there is *not* only one path to knowledge. Any one path is inadequate. I am proposing that we need omni-disciplined views of intention and healing. Every little piece that we can add to our understanding, from every facet, can be important. To reduce knowledge to one linear stroke is just

silly. What we are working with in ISSSEEM is all the traditions that we can find.

Krishna advises Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*: “Greater than any material sacrifice is the sacrifice born of knowledge – so the culmination of all work is wisdom.” That wisdom is what we seek, but not yet what we can claim. Knowing is the beginning on that path. I need to thank Krishna Madappa, my dear colleague, for gracing me with this quotation from the Gita, and giving his blessings to our meeting room today. What I want to share with you all here is my response to these wonderful four days that we’ve had together, and also to look forward to one year hence, to the next time that we will have four wonderful days together, when Jim Oschman will have the pleasure and the joy of doing what I’m doing now, reflecting on our times together.

## SEEKING

To reflect both on our past and on our future, I want to honor the Roman god Janus, from whom we take the name of our first month in the Gregorian calendar – January. Janus is the god of portals, who looks both ways – both into the future and into the past, both into the space and out of the space (see Figure 1). I want to honor Janus especially because that is our way of being. We are both in our past and in our future. So I’m going to try to look both ways at once, in and out, up and down, at the objective and the subjective, all at once, a view from all directions, an omni-disciplined observation. When I am engaged in our community endeavors, the



*Figure 1. Janus, Roman god of portals, who looks both ways*

places that I usually spend my joyful time are either Holos University Graduate Seminary, or Energy Medicine University. I want to acknowledge how important it is to me to have the institutional support of these wonderful gatherings and communities.

But again, how do we make the sacrifice advised by Krishna, the sacrifice of knowledge to seek wisdom? Where should we seek? Where can we find that for which we look? Not where we are looking. We have to look somewhere else. We have to be very thorough at looking where we’re looking, but we also have to be prepared to look somewhere else. I’m going to be confessional several times in these ramblings. So, I should make the first of these confessions: One of the reasons that I argue for omni-disciplined practice is because I myself am completely undisciplined. I have no practice, and I cannot find anything that is

not interesting. I'm an academic. Now, I have tried to talk this way to the members of the Council for Healing, to which I've been a representative for a few years now, and they keep pointing out to me that education is healing. So, I do have a practice. I should acknowledge that. I'm formally the representative to the Council for Healing for education. What is healing about education? Learning is transformative. What is healing? It's transformation. What we're really about, both as students and as healers, is learning how to transform ourselves, so that we are better at sharing our efforts to support transformation for others.

## SEEING

This need to change ourselves – if we are to help others transform themselves – this need is why we have to look both inward and outward at the same time. However, looking both ways at once can cause an ambiguous situation. Consider the famous figure/ground gestalt image of a goblet, with the outline creating two faces in profile (see Figure 2). This is a classic image of the perceptual distinction between figure and ground. The expectation is that a person will see either the goblet or the faces, depending on what they “read” as the figure and the ground. But we can see both as figure and as ground at the same moment, if we adjust our gaze. I expect that every single person observing this image is fully capable of seeing both faces and the goblet at the same time, or you wouldn't have found your way here to see it.

Consider another ambiguous figure: “My Wife and My Mother-in-Law” (see Figure 3). This is my favorite of the ambiguous



*Figure 2. Face/goblet illusion, a figure/ground gestalt publicized by Danish psychologist Edgar Rubin in 1915*

images, because it is so integral: essentially, it represents the virgin and the crone. The exercise that Christine Page presents, of the alchemy of transformations, being both the virgin and the crone, tells us how important this ambiguity is.

I want to explore for a moment some of the details of perceptual ambiguity. For this I'll be very academic – I'm going to turn to an authority, one of my favorites: Hermann Von Helmholtz. Helmholtz is the scholar who had the articulate insight to show us that perception is similar to problem solving. He also gave us the mathematical description of the first law of thermodynamics, the conservation of energy. As Dean Radin illustrated yesterday, we can see what we're prepared to see. We can solve the puzzles we are prepared to solve. And bistable figures like “My Wife and My Mother-in-Law” are often touted in textbooks as the prime example of how top-down influences



Figure 3. "My Wife and My Mother-in-Law" by British cartoonist W.E. Hill, from the American humor magazine Puck, Nov. 1915.

shape perception. Pre-existing knowledge shapes perception, expectations from higher brain centers, where so-called *perceptual tokens* such as "young" or "old" are encoded. But perceptual assessments are also dynamic. If all perceptual assessments relied only on top-down processes, they'd be too slow for survival. What we have, in addition, are bottom-up processes and sideways processes, all working together to provide perception.

Vilayanur Ramachandran and Diane Rogers-Ramachandran have demonstrated these multidimensional perceptual processes.<sup>3</sup> They have shown that bottom-up, hard-wired processes also establish perception, such as the edge detectors and hue detectors

in the retina of the eye, used for seeing contours, surfaces, motion and depth.

It must be remembered that ambiguity does not require cleverly contrived images. Ambiguity is the rule, rather than the exception, and it is usually decided by bottom-up and also co-existing "sideways" cues that exploit built-in knowledge of the visual world. This type of knowledge is wired into the neural circuitry of the visual system, deployed to eliminate millions of false solutions for interpreting what is observed – knowledge of surfaces, contours, depth, motion, illumination, etc., but not entire objects, such as goblets and faces. (Although we have seen evidence that faces are very special objects, with entire pre-established templates for recognition). Perception is embodied in multiple ways. This fact is one of the reasons we have to study the body.

## WHERE HEALING HAPPENS

Knowledge has many deep dimensions. Some of these dimensions are embedded in the tissues and cells, and some of these dimensions are also far, far afield from the flesh, especially if we understand Dean Radin's researches correctly. Dean's aptly titled presentation "Superpowers and the Stubborn Illusion of Separation" is included in this issue of the journal. He has explored "the nature of the mind's eye and its interaction with physical systems distant in space and time." As Dean has demonstrated, and continues to demonstrate, perception is not merely embodied – it's also distributed.

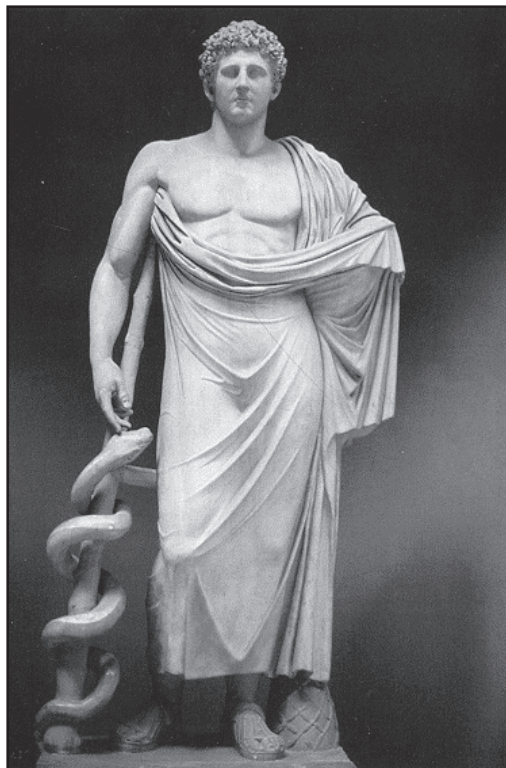
So we have to look inward and outward at the same time. Is that hard to do? No, it is not hard, it is the way we operate. This is the easy part! To be! What is puzzling is how to think, how to know, and how to share with somebody else the experiences that we discover in our being. So that's what I am playing with here, how to know about being, because that's what academics do. We are especially seeking to deeply understand the ancient traditions about subtle energies that have given us the name of ISSSEEM.

### **ISSSEEM – WHERE HEALING HAPPENS**

This is the International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine. What's the first S in that name? Society. What does society mean? A community. We must have a community, because we require all the disciplines of knowing. Obviously no one of us can know all the disciplines alone. That's why we have a society, to bring our knowledge together. What does a society do? It studies, it explores. This society explores where healing happens. Where is embodied experience? We know it's not merely embodied, because we experience things that appear to be outside ourselves. So we're immediately working with several central dichotomies. These dichotomies are useful – they're mappings. They can be traps also, but they can be bridges.

### **RESOLVING DICHOTOMIES**

What kind of dichotomies do we have? We have interior or exterior, subjective or objective. We have also have analogy and metaphor. This is one dichotomy we tripped over in the very first gathering in the



*Figure 4. Asclepius, Greek God of medicine and healing*

four days of this conference, when Brian Greene tried to stipulate that an analogy was legitimate, because it leads to precision, and a metaphor is not legitimate because it is fuzzy. But at a meta-level, both analogy and metaphor are models, and I want to emphasize the reality that metaphor is often more precise than analogy; when there are more dimensions in play than our bookkeeping can attend. This is the healing power of poetry.

What I believe our project at ISSSEEM is about, is not only marrying all the healing traditions of all the world – but also in

reviving the deep healing tradition from the Mediterranean world that we've lost in much of our approach to medicine, and that is the healing power of poetry. I propose that we are living in the remnants of Mediterranean culture, because it has fragmented and fallen all apart as it has spread all over the world and dominated other cultures in the world. I propose that we have only remnants of Mediterranean culture because we have lost many aspects of its roots. I believe we are reviving the Greek Asclepian healing tradition, where the holistic being of the person goes into the sacred temple space and enjoys all of the creative and restorative processes that can possibly be brought to bear for them.

Now, I warned you this wasn't going to be linear. I'm not going to get to the Asclepian healing temples until way at the end. What I'm going to do is try to go back through some of this labyrinthine process by which we've lost Asclepius (see Figure 4). We lost him, and maybe that was appropriate, because we need to get out of deep patriarchal habits. We've kept his daughter Hygeia, because we all know how important hygiene is (see Figure 5). We haven't lost any of this – it's in us – we simply may not know which pieces we're looking at any particular moment – so it's all delightful rediscovery.

### **OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE**

We need to play deeply with some puzzling distinctions, even deeper than analogy and metaphor. To my mind, objectivity and subjectivity are probably the most important, because this distinction keeps us from noticing that it is inadequate. The



*Figure 5. Hygeia, daughter of Asclepius, Greek Goddess of health*

simple distinction between objective and subjective doesn't give us intersubjectivity. The concept of intersubjectivity, a sharing of cognitive and emotional states by two or more individuals, is essential for understanding our dynamic relations of being. The emphasis on empathy in philosophical phenomenology proposes these shared understandings as the basis by which objective observations are constructed. In my sense of it, intersubjectivity is where healing happens. This is healing, in the sense of not just our own healing (our own

personal transformation) – but also our endeavor to aid. Because it has to happen in that common place, we must find that place.

### **POSITIVISM MISSED COMPASSION**

Where is compassion? That's a fun question. Because the western European traditions decided we couldn't manage it, we went into a positivistic perspective where we wanted absolutely reliable knowledge, so we would not make a mistake. As proposed by August Comte, positive knowledge must be clear, logical and tested. That's a noble endeavor; just don't get trapped into thinking that because it's clear, logical and tested that it's adequate. After several centuries of working toward absolutely reliable knowledge, we have demonstrated that the world is too complex for these reducing methods. So, many academic scholars have said, okay, we don't have positive knowledge, but we can have logically positive knowledge if we constrain it to only those things that behave well. That got us the philosophy of logical positivism, which eventually devolved into a philosophy of language solely. So we have many academics today who say that the only things that are well enough behaved to study are texts! It's important to study texts. I'm a historian, so I respect texts. The usual definition is that without texts, you don't have history. I'm going to try to show that we do have history beyond texts.

We've been beating up on Harvard at this meeting. Larry Dossey provided a careful and sound critique of Herbert Benson's attempt to study the health benefits of prayer. (See Larry's presentation in this

journal issue.) From his review of healing studies, Larry has proposed a temporary moratorium, because the research methods have usually been inadequate. We need to refine our approaches. I agree, and later in my presentation will offer an example of a rich research protocol presented at this conference by Melinda Connor.

I'm going to beat up on Harvard again. I recommend Anne Harrington's recently published and masterful book *The Cure Within: A History of Mind-Body Medicine*. Anne is the chair of the History of Science Department at Harvard. I want to honor Anne's work, but also to describe what the first of my graduate students who went to her book discovered. Anne has taken this approach – and it's an appropriate approach – that what she finds in the history of mind/body medicine is the stories that we tell ourselves. Anne surveys the contemplative traditions. She presents Herbert Benson's work on the relaxation response, his research on Transcendental Meditation, and his meetings with the Dalai Lama. But Anne gives only a cursory coverage of biofeedback and voluntary control studies. Having made this criticism, I especially want to honor Anne because she showed the Dalai Lama something recently.

If you have not yet read the Dalai Lama's book, *The Universe in a Single Atom: The Convergence of Science and Spirituality*, I recommend it. (I need to thank Elizabeth Chandler for showing me this beautiful book.) The fourteenth Dalai Lama is reflecting on the 24 years of his bi-annual meetings in Dharamsala with western



scientists, and his writing is brilliant. Here is his description of Anne Harrington's astute discussion of pathological psychology at the Dharamsala meetings. "In one of the mind and life conferences in Dharamsala, the Harvard historian Anne Harrington made a memorable presentation on how, and to some extent why, scientific investigation of human behavior has so far failed to develop any systematic understanding of the powerful emotion of compassion, at least in modern psychology, compared with the tremendous amount of attention paid to negative emotions such as aggression, anger, and fear. Relatively little examination has been made of more positive emotions such as compassion and altruism. This emphasis may have arisen because the principal motive in modern psychology has been to understand human pathologies for therapeutic purposes. However, I do feel that it is unacceptable to reject altruism on the ground that selfless acts do not fit into the current biological understanding of life, or are simply re-definable as expressions of the self-interest of the species. This stance is contrary to the very spirit of scientific inquiry. As I understand it, the scientific approach is not to modify the empirical facts to fit one's theory; rather, the theory must be adapted to fit the results of empirical inquiry. Otherwise it would be like trying to reshape one's feet to fit the shoes."<sup>5</sup>

But what is empirical inquiry? As we noted in the panel discussion with the ACEP Board members, appropriate research methods are required. (See the panel discussion in this issue of the journal.) What methods? Science. I want to convince you

that science is not merely reductive materialism. I want to convince you that every human being breathes science. If we don't have knowledge, we don't make our way. So what is science? It is established investigation or knowledge, as contrary to mere opinion. That's what it means; that's all the word science means. It means: don't give me your opinion, think together with me about it. *Be together* with me about it. *Be seriously together* with me about it.

### FEAR OF ERROR

So what happened with our scientific pursuits? How did we get materialist reductionism? Loraine Daston has a beautiful paper about how this happened, entitled "Fear and Loathing of the Imagination in Science," published in *Daedalus* in 1998.<sup>6</sup> It's a fear of error, and Daston details how it is that we got the discourse we had in the late 19th century, coming out of the interaction between the highly successful mechanical philosophers and the poets.

The poets knew that knowledge comes from inspiration. The mechanical philosophers knew it in the beginning too. Read Rene Descartes on method – but read from the beginning to the end – don't skip to the middle. Also read Descartes on humanity – his *Treatise on Man*. He hid this book when he heard about the abuse that Galileo was catching. So Descartes' *Treatise on Man* was published posthumously. In the beginning of that book, Descartes says he is not talking about us. He is talking about machines, automata that are sufficiently like us that it's useful to think about those

processes. What was Descartes' mechanical philosophy? It was the proposition that if we think about forces and the way forces work, it will be useful. And Descartes develops a very powerful analytic tool: he marries algebra and geometry – and you all know how analytical geometry works. You can represent curves with itty-bitty triangles, and it's an adequate representation. Where does that eventually get us after a few centuries? String theory – which in fact does all the bookkeeping and accounting for every single degree of freedom that we've been able to get out of all the debris that we can create by smashing things together as hard as we can. Physicists hope that we might in fact see how physics at these deep layers really works, when the Large Hadron Collider begins smashing things even harder.

I make those jokes, because I respect and study the physical sciences. I love Brian Greene's ability to explain the most abstruse things, in clear understandable terms, as he did at the beginning of this conference four days ago. I envy Brian his pedagogic abilities. But I don't envy his tendency to think that there are some things that aren't interesting.

There is great power in thinking mechanically, in thinking about matter in motion. Descartes explained the rainbow! He understood the geometry of the refraction and reflection inside the drops. He understood how it is we get the secondary rainbow: that light can take two paths through the raindrop. This is beautiful work, but again what Descartes did was offer hypotheses. His followers have taken them

as answers. I caution us all to beware of taking hypotheses for answers.

I want to thank Jim Oschman for introducing me to T.C. Chamberlin. In Jim's first book, *Energy Medicine, The Scientific Basis*, he quotes from Chamberlin's article, "Studies for Students. The Method of Multiple Working Hypotheses," in the *Journal of Geology* in 1897.<sup>7</sup> Chamberlin cautions: "The moment one has offered an original explanation for a phenomenon which seems satisfactory, that moment affection for his intellectual child springs into existence, and as the explanation grows into a definite theory his parental affections cluster about his offspring and it grows more and more dear to him."<sup>8</sup> Chamberlin advises us to always entertain multiple hypotheses. And when we consider Chamberlin's wisdom, we can see why it is that oftentimes a change of mind is actually a change of heart.

## DEEPER INTO THE BODY

Jim Oschman has shown us the multiple ways by which we are re-learning the body. He talked about some of this during the discussion panel with ACEP this morning. We're fruitfully using additional mechanical metaphors – oftentimes now these are electromagnetic mechanical – but the kinds of things that Brian Greene and his physical science colleagues know how to describe very precisely. Now we are turning to subtle processes going on in the body. In previous studies of biochemistry, we missed many of these subtle processes, because we thought we were studying thermodynamics – we thought we were studying the power of

energy. Now we are studying subtle information exchanges, using very little energy. From the old thermodynamic hypotheses, very subtle signals (such as Thornton Streeter and Claude Swanson and I talked about in our workshop on Friday), should not be affecting a noisy hot body – but these signals do affect the body. There are a myriad of signaling systems happening in the body all the time. Jim Oschman has masterfully demonstrated some of the most recent understanding that we have developed.

We're just on the threshold of these deeper understandings of the subtle energetics, but at the same time we've known it all along – and we do know – and the traditions have this understanding expressed in many practices. Felicitas Goodman has found full-body mudras, represented in human artifacts – artistic renderings through the entire span of the record of humanity – and they're transcultural.<sup>9</sup>

These body postures are somehow biological; you don't have to have the knowledge of the culture or the practice of the discipline for these body postures to launch you into a targeted altered state – what the postures were intended to precipitate. Goodman's research at the University of Indiana demonstrated that these techniques are trans-cultural.<sup>10,11</sup> If you are willing to go into a trance, and you have adopted a healing posture, or a divinatory posture, or a posture that will take you voyaging with the outer beings, you will report experiences that have these intended kinds of archetypal structure. We know about many of the

classical systems, although I beg to differ with the comment during the panel session that “everybody understands acupuncture.” I understand what was meant by that statement during the panel discussion: acupuncture is the one thing that is absolutely unavoidable on the street in this rediscovery of ancient human techniques. Awareness of the chakras is almost as common. Thirty years ago if you would say the word chakras to somebody, there was a chance they might know the concept, but today most people have some awareness of chakras.

## MULTIMODAL STUDIES

We have continuing research being accomplished, studying very subtle effects at Holos University Graduate Seminary and Energy Medicine University, using multimodal assessment, to show a more rich understanding of these processes. An example is the dissertation by Muriel Agnes: *Toward an Integral Energy Medicine Model for Understanding the Vascular Autonomic Signal*.<sup>12</sup> What Muriel wanted to do was examine the consistency across a number of assessments using the Vascular Autonomic Signal, to see if there really is consistency, or if using the VAS is only an intuition in the moment. She was able to clearly demonstrate consistent and useful assessment using the VAS, across 58 body areas identified by the 35 participants.

I have chosen to talk about the VAS because it's a good illustration of the horse I'm trying to ride: intersubjectivity. I was taught as a Boy Scout not to take a pulse with my thumb, because my thumb has a pulse – but

with the VAS, as Paul Nogier developed it, that's the way you do it.<sup>13,14</sup> Lay your thumb along the person's radial artery, and feel the changes in the pulse. To me, that looks like intersubjectivity. It seems to be like two pulses talking to each other.

## ENERGY BODIES

The chakras have become known in the West partly through the work of the Theosophical Society, and I want to acknowledge and honor the Vedic tradition especially as it comes into ISSSEEM through those Theosophical roots. We are multicultural. We are multidimensional. Much of our discourse about energy bodies, and clairvoyant vision of energy bodies, comes from these Vedic and Theosophical roots. Recall C. W. Leadbeater's early 20th century illustrations of the chakras and aura in various states.<sup>15,16</sup> Rosalyn Bruyer and Anodea Judith follow in Leadbeater's tradition.<sup>17,18,19,20</sup>

I wish somebody would replicate Valerie Hunt's work in *Infinite Mind*.<sup>21</sup> Hunt had Rosalyn Bruyere and some of her colleagues observing the colors at the chakras, and Hunt correlated the clairvoyant observations with signal patterns in the "noise" of electromyographic recordings – as that technology was available in the 1960's. Hunt identified some highly ordered processes in the background noise: not only domains, i.e. frequency ranges, but also signatures – characteristic wave forms. Again, Hunt's measurements have not been replicated, but people do work with clairvoyant observations.

Barbara Brennan's school teaches healing practice using their clairvoyant observations. Two doctoral research studies at Holos University have focused on the Brennan school methods. Sandra Egli did *A Study of Consistency in Hara Assessments Using the Brennan Healing Science Model* in 2002. In the subtle energy model of Brennan Healing Science (BHS), the hara is conceived as the dimension of intentionality that holds the human body in material manifestation. Healing the hara is considered especially powerful for healing the auric field, and thereby healing the physical body.

Sixteen healers trained in the BHS methods intuitively assessed the hara of fifteen individuals, previously unknown to the healers. The healers used a standardized assessment form, and their responses were analyzed for consistency. In the 204 assessments, 16 healers with 15 subjects, the cross-correlation between assessments showed significant agreement. All of this work is on the Holos University website – the full text – where you can find the statistical details, if those are useful to you. Egli's comparisons found more agreement on the high and low ends of the evaluation scales, which is not surprising. It makes intuitive sense that the subjects with the most different looking haras would result in more agreement among the ratings.

For my interests in this discussion, Ginni Selle's earlier study is more fun.<sup>23</sup> She looked at the ability for self-actualization to be assisted by studying at the Brennan school. Sandra Egli's study is useful. It demonstrates reliability effects – old paradigm. Ginni

Selle's study, however, was looking at what happens to the people as they learn to do healing work. Using the Personal Orientation Inventory, a well-validated psycho-spiritual evaluation measure, Selle found that after four years of studying the Brennan methods, the graduates were shown to be more self-actualized on the POI scales than were entering freshman. The POI also provides for assessing self-reliability. Selle found that the entering freshmen students were less inflated than were the graduates. I expect the graduates learned to see themselves more clearly after longer experience with healing practice. I'd like to see Selle's study repeated as a follow-up on both of those two populations.

### **ENERGY MEDICINE**

ISSSEEM studies subtle energies and energy medicine. What is energy medicine? We don't know – it's all over the place – so we're plucking at threads in this beautiful tapestry. And here is one of my favorite studies. It was one of the first Holos demonstrations of distance healing effects. Sandra Davis used John Veltheim's Body Talk System, for distant healing with captive, traumatized tropical birds.<sup>24</sup> This was a double-blind study of distant healing. Davis was in Saskatchewan; the birds were in North Carolina. She used a human surrogate. The bird caregivers knew something was happening – they sent photographs of the birds somewhere, but that was all they knew. The caregivers were previously tracking the health and the behavior of the birds, so Davis was able to analyze changes in that data set without changing the activity of the care givers. With minimal disruption in an

ongoing set of observations, Davis found robust statistical evidence of the benefits in the group of birds who were treated.

I mentioned during the panel discussion that I wanted to talk about Geneie Everett's study *The Healing Potential of Altered States of Consciousness*.<sup>25</sup> Everett wanted to tease out some of the multiple dimensions from these experiences people have with healing. She used the Phenomena of Consciousness Inventory. She also used a linguistic inquiry word count, to automate processing the descriptions of peoples' experiences. These are descriptions of memory recall, with its attendant weaknesses. But this automated linguistic assessment system can analyze 72 dimensions in the language we use. Everett also constructed a pilot questionnaire to investigate the experienced locus of control. Do people experience these healings as a gift, or as an accomplishment? So Everett was triangulating this data from the reported experiences of healing, statistically quantifying the phenomena of consciousness, and investigating the linguistic descriptions of the healing, while honoring the personal subjective experience above all else, because Everett was using a transpersonal approach.

### **TRANSPERSONAL RESEARCH**

For innovation in transpersonal research, I recommend the work of Bill Braud.<sup>26a,26b</sup> Braud proposes an integral research approach, acknowledging pluralistic ways of knowing, being and doing. I especially like Bill's work, because he's following one of my favorite teachers, William James. Braud's methods are informed by the radical empiri-

cism of William James, and by recent developments in natural science, psychology, human sciences, philosophy, philosophy of science, parapsychology, spirituality, and transpersonal studies. You can see why I propose an omni-disciplined approach. We need a little help from our friends, all of our friends. As the Native American healers say: all of our relations, the two-legged, the four-legged, the swimmers and the flyers, and the slithering earth dwellers.

William James coined the concept of radical empiricism at the end of his life. Many people are familiar with *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, the Gifford lectures, given at the University of Edinburgh in 1901 and 1902.<sup>27</sup> James took a very open-minded, open-hearted, and pragmatic approach to spiritual experience. What did he say? He doesn't have direct access to another's experience. How does he come to understand it? All he has is what he is told by the person who has the revelation. But without direct access to the revelation itself, he needs something more. James had already begun to develop the philosophical approach he would soon call Pragmatism. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* he proposes to look at the pragmatic effect any revelation has in the life of the person who experienced it. If it looks like this person's life has flowered – has improved – then he must take the experience seriously as the person describes it.

A decade later, after having published his book *Pragmatism* in 1907, James went deeper into the puzzle of knowledge and he concluded that pragmatism is not enough –

what can get us closer to immediate being?<sup>28</sup> Here James turns to his long-standing thesis that there is not a monistic universe. Unity is an illusion – the only practical, pragmatic approach is to take a pluralistic attitude toward being.

James gave the last public lectures of his life at Manchester College, published as *A Pluralistic Universe* in 1910.<sup>29</sup> His discourse was a criticism of the current state of philosophy. Idealistic monism, one of the philosophical roots of our materialist reductionism a hundred years later, was in vogue among the philosophers. James asked, how do we break out of that habit of thought? He turned especially to Gustav Fechner and Henri Bergson. Fechner, a pioneer of physiological psychology and psychophysics, was also a proponent of panpsychism. James says of Fechner, “For him the abstract lived in the concrete, and the hidden motive of all he did was to bring what he called the *daylight view* of the world into ever greater evidence, that daylight view being this, that the whole universe in its different spans and wave-lengths, exclusions and envelopments, is everywhere alive and conscious.” Fechner had this experience, and he articulated it in more than one book.<sup>30,31,32</sup>

Only esoteric philosophers and historians of science go back and read Fechner. But Elmer Green read him very carefully, because Elmer also was refining the psychophysics when he was doing his doctorate in Chicago. Elmer settled an argument between Fechner and Stephenson.<sup>33</sup> Fechner had proposed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the relationship

between the physical intensity of a white light and the perceived intensity was a logarithmic function.<sup>34</sup> A hundred years later, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, S. S. Stevens asserted the relation was a power function. Elmer resolved this dispute by noticing that Stevens had not managed the stimulus over time in the same way as Fechner. When time was properly managed, both in the experimental stimuli and in the equations, Green showed that both Fechner and Stevens were correct, with appropriate conditions. These issues are too fine-grained for the time we have available today, but I want to point out that all of these are threads of thought in a tapestry that's so interwoven I'm just plucking at some beautiful threads.

### EXPERIENCE AND TIME

In *A Pluralistic Universe*, Williams James explains that Henri Bergson's description of experience, and especially Bergson's observations on duration in experience, were what led him "personally to renounce the intellectualist method and the current notion that logic is an adequate measure of what can and cannot be."<sup>35,36</sup> "Get at the expanding centre of a human character, the *élan vital*. . . as Bergson calls it, by living sympathy, and at a stroke you see how it makes those who see it from without interpret it in such diverse ways." Does James turn back and forth too many times? I warned you this was not going to be linear.

James continues, "What really exists, is not things made, but things in the making." "Reality falls in passing into conceptual analysis; it mounts in living its own undivided life – it buds and bourgeons,

changes and creates." So James, at the end of his life, participated in a radical breach with intellectualism. "No matter what the content of the universe may be, if you only allow that it is *many* everywhere and always, that nothing real escapes from having an environment; so far from defeating its rationality, as the absolutists so unanimously pretend, you leave it in possession of the maximum amount of rationality practically attainable by our minds. Your relations with it, intellectual, emotional, and active, remain fluent and congruous with your own nature's chief demands." "Things are 'with' one another in many ways, but nothing includes everything, or dominates over everything. The word 'and' trails along after every sentence. Something always escapes." "Thus does foreignness get banished from our world, and far more so when we take the system of it pluralistically than when we take it monistically. We are indeed internal parts of God and not external creations, on any possible reading of the panpsychic system."<sup>29</sup>

### FORWARD IN TIME

Henri Bergson revised conventional notions of time. He links us back to William James, and he links us forward to next year's conference. I told you this was not going to be linear – I'm being Janus, and looking forward to next year's meeting. Mae-Wan Ho is coming next year. She is one of Jim Oschman's close colleagues, a woman who has seen deeper into the body than I can even imagine. At the end of her book, *The Rainbow and the Worm*, Mae-Wan Ho also turns to Henri Bergson. After her extended discussion of living crystalline consciousness



Figure 6. *Jack in the Pulpit*

– the embodied processes of consciousness  
– she notes that “Bergson emphasizes the need for introspection in order to recover the quality of experience. . . . He distinguishes two different selves, one the external projection of the other, inner self, into its spatial or social representation. The inner self is reached by deep introspection, which leads us to grasp our inner states as living things, constantly *becoming*.”<sup>37</sup>

Mae-Wan Ho, with Bergson, brings us back to the Dalai Lama. *In The Universe in a Single Atom*, the Dalai Lama reminds us that in his traditions they have very disciplined understandings of the interiority, and that in collaboration, we are now ready to talk both the interior and the exterior.

“Because of this indivisibility of consciousness and energy, there is a profoundly intimate correlation between the elements within our bodies and the natural elements in the outside world. This subtle connection can be discerned by individuals who have gained a certain level of perception.”

He acknowledges that the Buddhists were paying a lot of attention to experience in its immediacy, but they were a little sloppy about details of the exterior world, such as atoms. The West was paying attention to atoms, while the Tibetans were attending to very finely tuned states of being. “The 15th century Tibetan thinker Taktsang Lotsawa conducted an experiment upon himself and found a total concordance between his personal experience of changes that naturally occur in one’s breathing pattern and those described in the Kalachakra tantra during a celestial event like solar or lunar eclipse.”<sup>5</sup>

This is how naturally tuned we actually are. And some in our community have more finely tuned themselves intentionally. The flowers I’ve been showing you, such as Figure 6, are from Elizabeth Chandler. Liz showed these and many more in her workshop on preparing flower essences during this conference. How does Liz Chandler interact with the flowers? She tells us that she has been teaching and practicing yoga for decades. She has also been practicing LaHoChi, a hands-on healing practice, combined with decades of work as an herbalist. Those multiple perspectives lead her into such an intimate interaction with her worlds that the devas and the elementals come into her practice.



She has articulated what these healing contributions are in the book she offered to our community this weekend.<sup>38</sup>

### TRANSCENDING LIMITATIONS

Forty years ago, Charles Tart said we need state-specific sciences, and he revisited that proposition a couple of years ago, during his response to receiving the Abraham Maslow Award.<sup>39</sup> We are ready to do this work. Historically, psychology attempted to become a science of mind, but failed for various reasons. As Tart cataloged the stumbling blocks, they included 1) the apparent barrier between objective and subjective data, 2) ignoring of individual differences, 3) experimenter bias, 4) culture boundedness, 5) insufficient training of observers, and 6) a limited, material physical view of reality. Larry Dossey remarked on some of these same limitations in his review of healing research at this conference. We need more sophistication in research protocols; methods that respect and can represent the unique character of being.

As Charles Tart reflected, “Early introspectionists wanted an objective science, they wanted to get at the basic elements of mind, just as chemists had discovered the elements of matter. I believe they overlooked the realities of important individual differences between introspective observers, so they were averaging apples and oranges, coming up with ‘standard’ elements that differed too much from what actually happened in people’s mental processes. They committed the error that [Gunther] Stent called premature parsimony.”<sup>39</sup>

“Humanistic and transpersonal psychology have a major advantage here, because we not only respect, we often treasure the individuality of the people we work with. We will study each apple and orange in detail, as it were, instead of mashing it all into mush. An excellent survey of the wide range of transpersonal research methods can be found in Braud and Anderson.”<sup>26,39</sup>

### A DYNAMIC APPROACH

I want to celebrate what Melinda Connor presented here at this conference. She has been doing this rich multimodal research for years, in her Optimal Healing Research Program, at the Laboratory for Advances in Consciousness and Health, University of Arizona. Connor is developing a dynamic, multi-causal complex systems perspective.

Melinda is using Beverly Rubik’s concept of the biofield, and she is articulating the dimensions she can observe. She proposes that a partial list of biofield components includes:

- 1) Gas Emissions from the skin
- 2) Gasses being drawn into the skin
- 3) Magnetic fields extending past the surface of the body, created by the organs
- 4) Electrical flow over the nervous system and fields created by any nerve plexus.
- 5) Heat being generated by cellular processes
- 6) Oscillation of the waters in the body

Her empirical testing has included:

- 1) Biophoton Imaging
- 2) Triaxial ELF Magnetic Field Meter
- 3) GDV – gas discharge visualization
- 4) EEG – electroencephalography
- 5) EKG – electrocardiogram

- 6) Broadcast Frequency Counter
- 7) Gamma and X-ray detectors

For studying interior experience, Connor has used these types of State-Trait Testing:

- 1) Marlowe – Crown
- 2) International Personality Item Pool
- 3) Arizona Integrative Outcome Scale
- 4) Paranormal Belief Scale
- 5) Daily Spiritual Experiences
- 6) Global Mood Scale
- 7) Openness to Spiritual Beliefs Scale
- 8) The Tellagen Absorption Scale

Connor’s evaluative and exploratory tests have included:

- 1) Questionnaire on the Energy Healers’ lived experience.
- 2) EEG on “States of Being”
- 3) Homeopathy – reading the waters of the remedy
- 4) IQ Testing – WAIS III

Her first study with these methods included seventeen Usui Reiki Practitioners. A second study included various forms of practice: five Bruyere, five Brennan, two Resonance Modulation, two Reconnection, and one Natural Healer.

Melinda Connor has one of the most multidimensional minds among us. Dawson Church in his introduction this morning accused me of having a multidimensional mind – I can’t hold a candle to Melinda. She experiences all these things at once and organizes them. If you didn’t see her presentation on Friday, seek her out. As I said, she’s been doing this for years. The multidimensional ways in which she assesses

the experience and the results are delightful: she explores the interior beings of the healers – the interior relations of the healers and the process that they’re working with. This is just lovely work.

## AN INTEGRAL PERSPECTIVE

Both my call for omni-disciplined perspectives, and my proposition that intersubjective processes resolve the objective/subject dichotomies share much common ground with Ken Wilber’s integral methods. His recent attempt at a comprehensive theory of subtle energies is obligatory reading for any serious researcher.<sup>40</sup>

Ken’s foreword “An Integral Vision of Healing,” in *Consciousness & Healing: Integral Approaches to Mind-Body Medicine*, is a masterful description of healing with compassion in an intersubjective process. This collection of state-of-the-art perspectives by sixty-one leaders in the field, edited by Marilyn Schlitz, Tina Amorok, and Marc Marcozzi for the Institute of Noetic Sciences, is a fine demonstration of how we create a community of effort.<sup>41</sup>

Ken’s foreword adroitly details the essence of an integral healing practice. “Body and mind and spirit are operating in self and culture and nature, and thus health and healing, sickness and wholeness, are all bound up in a multidimensional tapestry that cannot be cut into without loss.” “An integrally informed medical practice changes the practitioners first; they can then decide which of the treatments – conventional, alternative, complementary, and/or

holistic – they wish to utilize, individually and collectively when practicing medicine with integrity.” “The crucial ingredient in any integral medical practice is not the integral medical bag itself – with all the conventional pills, and the orthodox surgery, and the subtle energy medicine, and the acupuncture needles – but the holder of that bag.” “The one thing that will have changed in adopting an integral approach is their own awareness, their own consciousness, their own map of human possibilities – this map that has dramatically expanded from organic interventions to caring for a human being in all of his or her extraordinary richness across an entire spectrum that runs from dust to deity, from dirt to divinity, even from here and now.”

Ken describes practicing with integrity. And I want to announce that we’re succeeding in opening these larger views into the wider world! The National Academy of Sciences Institutes of Medicine reported in 2005 that the key thing needed to understand alternative and complementary medicine was a revision of the science – to use appropriate science, not reducing the observation to finite single variables.<sup>42</sup> Their sense of appropriate science is still fairly narrow – they’re a bit stuck on provings, rather than on beings. Still, this progress is wonderful.

Analytic science is useful, in its place. Descartes is useful – and he warned us not to be fooled by our models. As the Buddhists say: don’t look at my fingertip, look at the moon.

## RETURN TO THE TEMPLE

I believe we are reviving the spirit of healing, returning to the Asclepian temple. In the temple, the healing culmination is in the dream. All of the Muses were summoned in support of healing, with music, dance, and poetry. Every Asclepian temple included an amphitheatre. Greek poetry, Greek theatre, Greek tragedy, Greek comedy, all were offered in support of healing.

[music plays . . .]

In ancient days, Krishna told Arjuna: “Greater than any material sacrifice is the sacrifice born of knowledge – so the culmination of all work is wisdom.”

In our time, the poet Leonard Cohen advises us in *Anthem*, this heart-rending cautionary song:

*“Give up your perfect offering. There is a crack,  
a crack in everything.  
That’s how the light gets in. That’s how the  
light gets in.”*

[music continues . . . .]

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**CORRESPONDENCE:** Bernard Williams • berneyw@ku.edu

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