

# The Transcendence of Art, Science and Therapy

Toward a New Ontology of Art Therapy

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Although it may seem as if the individual in today's world has little power,  
the truth is that only we have the power to transform our situation:

There is no one else.

Suzi Gablik

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## Paradise lost in the fog

Has not everything we live through, hope for, reflect upon, basically to do with our "Original Sin", the involuntary expulsion from paradise? All of our lives started in paradise; and very deep inside us, there where our Self hides, we know that we still reside in paradise, that we were never really expelled from it, that we have only lost conscious memory of it. Thick layers of fog have engulfed the island called paradise and our memory is left with fuzzy pictures and fractal pieces of a felling. Paradise has been transformed into an unreachable, utopian far-off world. Yet the *yearning for paradise*, as Eugen Drewermann<sup>1</sup> calls it, has stayed deeply entrenched within us. Deeply buried in our cell-memory we hold a vague hope that it still exists. After all, it cannot be that the world as it presents itself, this amalgamation of hell like properties, is all we can hope for?!

In order to console ourselves, we have developed our human potentials so brilliantly so that we create our own artificial paradises, our own virtual realities, our own virtual worlds. The shadow side of this is that in so doing we increasingly lose contact with the basic reality, our environment, our nurturing nature, the reality of being. Yet, paradoxically, here lies our opportunity, because, when a reality no longer exists we urgently need to create a new one, "When the human mind is cut off from the so-called physical world it has the remarkable ability to create its own world", says Michael Talbot. The human being is a complex system, highly adaptable, highly flexible and therefore very creative in nature. That is what I want to talk about.

Basically, earth provides us with everything we need for living, and that at no extra cost. For each phase and every need, we are catered for, whether on a spiritual, material, mental or economic level. Behind the facades of the artificial paradise we create, earth has remained beautiful. Yet, this naturally given beauty we can't see any longer; we do no longer take notice of it or have the time to do so. As with most things in our lives, we do not take much notice of the ordinary, the core of things. We have become incapable to associate self-critically, creatively and differentially with our environment. We quickly get used to

what is simply there, undemanding, wanting nothing from us, not pressuring us. Sometimes we take these things for granted and on top of it (mis-) use them for our goals. The ordinary has lost its beauty, its charm and special appeal, its singular or exclusive nature, and thereby also its protection. It is not worth protecting because it got lost amid the generality of our perception. How would it be if we stopped breathing? Luckily for us our vegetative nervous system provides this function automatically, if it were left up to us we would probably forbid it or misuse it for commercial purposes. That this thought is not so far off the track, was shown for instance by the young Italian artist Piero Manzoni (1933-1963) who sold his bottled breath as *fiato d'artista* (breath of an artist,) and even went one step further selling his blood as the blood of an artist (*sangue d'artista*).

In the new still lies the hope of hidden treasures. The discovery of left overs from the lost paradise, even if only in fractal or atomic portions seems possible, is desired and even driven toward. We are constantly in search of the paradise lost in the fog. This search, already psychotic within itself, and expressed in yearning after the new, for even more refined sources of stimulation, is imbued in our system, systematised within us. Our world functions almost exclusively like that. To escape this odyssey stricken by blindness and to be redeemed from this viscous circle, we need incidents of catalytic dimensions and the help of specially gifted human beings like a photographer, an activist, a poet, a physicist, a painter, a sculptor or a biologist. Providing they have the special talent of transcendence in them, these human beings have the gift of perceiving the world through unusual eyes, speak sense, and to depict it accordingly. Generally we revere such people and their creative crafts. Our innermost is affected and touched by such work. We become sensitive toward the ordinary of this world in a magical and unconscious way. In most cases this new sensitivity cannot be put in words because it is filled with emotions or full of equations or visions, which cannot be understood by the (still) ordinary human being. The critics of art and science take on this difficult task of translation with ultra clever and well- chosen words which ultimately better serve the intellect of the critic or scientist than the immanent emotions of the common citizen struggling for explanations.

Because paradise, which we do not perceive as such, lies so nicely endowed before our very eyes (and our urges), we believe that it is simply there for the taking, to be used by us. Based on this belief we create our world, which is not quite like paradise. In reality, however, earth is a paradise, here to make us happy, joyous and content, to feed and protect us, with no price tag or receipt attached to it. This earthly paradise is here to remind us, that we should and could co-ordinate and attune our being with the existing, that we can align our knowledge and abilities with our inherent wisdom, and that we can live in freedom because of our inherent consciousness of the unity of everything; most important of all, that we can live our lives with love towards everything especially ourselves.

Male and female artists have the gift of reminding us that we do live in a paradise and that the inability to grasp this represents our hell. Art, just like the sciences, which I do not want to separate from art, can, depending on direction, intention and consciousness, re-unite worlds or divide them" it can make us go through hell or make us sense paradise. Both art and science have the gift of making the invisible visible, of magnifying the visible, of making the visible disappear. In short, art and science have magical powers. Most people react in a dual way, seeing it as something to be highly admired but also to be frightened of. Within the visual arts craftsmanship has, and here I go along with Ernst Gombrich, primarily to do with the creation of pictures. We need the mastering of a technique, the organisation of space and the magic of sense-creation (which should not be confused with meaning) to create a work of art. Only out of the synergy of these three energies can a work of art emerge as an ontology.

Art transcends the perceptible and the tangible. It is not for society or the collective to make art but the individual. It is the individual who can create paradise or hell. Society has in the past paid enough homage to the individualistic and it is now time for individualism to serve society. If we as a society want to have a future then the individualistic has to be accessible to society e.g. we all need to develop a social, global and ecological consciousness. In this sense art and science have to evolve toward a social consciousness. The transformation of global systems such as human society begins with the transformation within the economy, politics, sport, entertainment and all other aspects of life, including art therapy. This transformation is based on the awakening of its immanent parts. These immanent parts are you and me! It is a question of where WE want to go, how WE prepare the history of tomorrow, what WE leave for the generations to come. What future does earth and we, its inhabitants, have? The saying that the whole cannot be explained through its parts, but only exists because of its components, is to be taken literally here. Suzi Gablik poses at the beginning of her excellent book on the re-enchantment of art a highly justified question:

"The question is no longer how did we get here, and why? but, where can we possibly go, and how?" This question of aim-formulation and aimconsciousness is the key question in any creative activity, including art therapy, because a creative activity can only be creative if it advances, if it transforms the existing. That is in its nature. To formulate afresh these aims, to question and optimise them can not be accomplished by one single creative activity. It is no longer a question of singularity but of community, globality. For this we need connections and networks for which we only have historical knowledge and reference. The Greeks, for example, saw no division between art, science, philosophy and religion. Their almost forgotten but efficient ways of working together, dialogue and exchanging of knowledge could be a model for us today. In this sense we are today seeing a reconciliation between science, art, spirituality and psychology which will not bring forth a unified theory but rather the awakening and emergence of a solidarity toward one another. This is the paradigm of our time.

## **I embrace thee**

A paradigm is the dominant world outlook and ideology of the majority of people within a region, nation, race or scientific discipline. In the old paradigm, according to the historian of science Thomas S. Kuhn, there was a silent agreement in which knowledge and values were accepted unquestioningly. In the new paradigm, however, values are being questioned, norms challenged and the harmony of existing systems are being severely, even irreconcilably disturbed. A new paradigm, according to Kuhn, begins with a crisis and this crisis we have everywhere, in front of our doorsteps, or even behind it.

The new paradigm in the sciences was initiated mainly by two facts: On the one hand by a general weariness with existing technical, material and social circumstances; on the other hand by our ability to create a technology and to accumulate a knowledge which, for the first time in the history of human kind, can eradicate all forms of life on this planet and eliminate all that grew over millions of years into a reasonably well balanced, self-organising community. These facts have led to the birth of a new philosophy, a quantum-philosophy as advocated by C.F. von Weizsäcker, E. Schrödinger or D.C. Cassidy, which involves a consciousness that sees itself only as a mere particle within a greater consciousness. That this kind of consciousness found widespread acceptance is mainly due to modern physics or some of its most prominent and best advocates. Amongst this rather small group within the scientific intelligentsia one came to understand that with classical, scientific research methods alone one would not get any further, that one had reached limits which were insurmountable. This intelligentsia was and is still searching for new partners and helpers in quest for hidden truths in our universe. The physicists found partners amongst others, in the philosophies of Krishnamurti and David Bohm, in the arts (through Heisenberg, Schrödinger) or in general spirituality (by Einstein, Sheldrake).

This kind of fraternity corresponds to the classic picture of science, where art, philosophy, astronomy and alchemy jointly searched for truth. Here it's important to cite Heraclitus, Plato and Pythagoras with their respective cosmologies and philosophies. It is only since the new age, since René Descartes proclaimed in the 17th century "I think, therefore I am" (cogito, ergo sum), and thus brought about duality in our thinking and actions, that the roads of the truth-seekers have become divided. A re-union, a rediscovery of shared forces is now in full progress. We are in the middle of an upheaval of unforeseen proportions which neither sciences, psychologies nor art therapies can avoid. "The transformation we are experiencing", says physicist Fritjof Capra, "now may well be more dramatic than any of the previous ones, because the rate of change in our age is faster than ever before, because the changes are more extensive, involving the entire globe, and because several major transitions are coinciding." He goes on to point out that the transformations that take place are of such magnitude and depth that they cannot be prevented and we should welcome them as a possibility to escape "mummification, agony

and collapse of our system". Furthermore, he gives us a task, namely the need for us to prepare ourselves, to re-examine our premises, our values and our conceptual models.

A new way of perceiving our world goes hand in hand with a new consciousness which has to develop and unfold along with all human disciplines. To reach this we need new methods with which we can prepare consciousness for such great changes without putting it in a state of shock or throwing it into a catatonic state. Transpersonal Psychology is pointing to such methods with its consciousness-expanding methods.

The formation of synergies is one of the main characteristics of the new paradigm. The aim is no longer that a single scientific and humanistic disciplines should associate but far more that their deep structures should complement each other. Through his work on surface- and deep-structures, Ken Wilber has presented us with some applicable possibilities by recognising essential similarities in pinpointing to the deep structures of natural and humanistic sciences, art and spirituality. "I discover the following aspects: Curiosity, love, belief, will and creativity. These five characteristics can be found in all areas of human research, not always in the same quantity, but still recognisable as a deep structure. Curiosity is the will-powered force of natural and humanistic sciences. Love and belief are the omnipresent quint-essence of any spirituality. Will makes us capable of action and gives us power. And with creativity we bond and transform wisdom, knowledge and consciousness. In the still current paradigm these five characteristics have become alien to each other. The relationship, the deep structure is overlooked and its inherent power therefore not utilised."

Art, psychology and science represent vision, psyche and ratio in our human search for understanding. In reality, however, science is trying to discover its truth through rational means; its far-reaching discoveries extend in many subtle ways into our lives, though not touching the spirit of it. Psychology, which also regards itself as a scientific method, tries to get to the bottom of the psyche via the same rational methods. Its results, however, are not satisfying, are often not verifiable and therefore find only a small degree of application and acceptance in everyday life. Art has turned away from truth-seeking and yielded to narcissism and self-representation. It thereby signed a working contract, took a job at the ministry of culture and is now paid by the arts commission.

### **Quantum Consciousness**

Is it not strange to see how we as individuals and as a society more and more acquire a fractal, even a tunnel vision? Maybe it is a protective mechanism which makes us see the world in small units. We create our own little worlds in which we feel comfortable and in which we can move without too much friction; we create our own precise little paradises. That which is outside our paradise frightens us, is fearsome and represents a threat.

Because of misguided education, including self-education, we have acquired and become accustomed to fractal vision. Our perception is analytical and reductionist to the point of no

longer being able to connect to the whole, the overall complexity or what one also calls simplicity. Our fractal vision is not just simply directed in one direction but has acquired multi-dimensional scales in many directions. If we look at a fractal picture ( see picture x ) for example, we only see the overall pattern and are not able to see the underlying matrix of self-similar fractals. It was Benoit Mandelbrot, the French mathematician, who made us aware of the fact that our world is made up of self-similar items, that within a complex and intricate overall pattern lies a very simple core-element, known as the Mandelbrot set. This core element is not just present within one isolated item but is present in the whole of nature. Furthermore, he pointed out that we do not know the real extent of a given reference picture such as a landscape or the coast of England, that we can never really know its overall dimensions, its length, What he is saying is that the only thing we can really be sure of and know is the core element or the process governing the pattern of assembly. The rest is up to chaos and its many forms of being. Thus to know the rest means to come to terms with chaos. For us it means that our fractal vision, which impairs our vision of the world, must yield to a more complex and overall vision. This is in no way contradictory to Ken Wilber's discussion of deep structures as compared to overall structures. As much as Mandelbrot, Wilber is pointing to our governing principles of perception, saying these principles should not necessarily lead to tunnel vision but rather to a multi-dimensional, complex and flexible world- and self-perception.

Here we come to the crucial question of consciousness. I have said little about consciousness so far. It is a vast and, in my view, as yet only marginally charted field. Research and experimentation with consciousness has led to two major fields, that of subjective belief systems such as religion, philosophy and psychology and that of objective belief systems such as chemistry, biology, neurology and neuropsychology. Some advances have been made on understanding how consciousness works and how it affects us. There are techniques on how to recognise it, how to access and expand it. But little is said about its whereabouts. Science and psychology alike are trying to locate it. Why? Is it really necessary to know where something is in order to work with it? Does its value increase with location? According to the uncertainty principle of Heisenberg, we are anyway only able to perceive one kind of consciousness when we see it. The other side or sides of it stay hidden from our view. "When the universe as a whole seeks to know itself, through the medium of the human mind, some aspects of that universe must remain unknown" says Wilber, In addition the fact that I think cannot point to a location of consciousness within myself because sometimes there is something that thinks through me and I wonder where that thought came from. Maybe it is the universe thinking through me but it could just as well be my neighbour. The thought that we are not the masters of our own thoughts and actions is one of the most hideous and outrageous thoughts. Human beings believe that their consciousness is the guarantee that they are unique, not just in this world but in all the worlds of the universe. This erroneous thought is being challenged by the new paradigm. Then there is no way we will find a particular spot where consciousness is hiding, Consciousness, which, for reasons of comprehension I generally divide into the following three main categories, the unconscious,

the conscious and the hyperconscious (the latter term I use in my lectures, which equates with the Higher Self), is everywhere. It is within the atom as well as within the bones and hormones, and part of my consciousness is also within nature and the universe. This latter though has been ignored by many. My personal consciousness is within everything, as much as everybody else's consciousness is within everything; together we make up the conscious world or universe that is. Teilhard de Chardin pointed to this in his works, especially in his Hymn of the Universe, where he sees God's presence in every thing be it river or being. If, rather than trying to find a location where we can look at consciousness, we tried to see and feel it in the ever-present, detached from our own ego self and from dogmatic and restricting belief-systems, we could see it without personal distortion and thus discover its true identity. Consciousness is something felt by every-one and yet belongs to no-one. It's essence is in the individual as much as in the universal. In his Transpersonal Band Therapy model Ken Wilber transcends the individual through archetypal awareness where the focus is no longer bound by only the self. "Once this process quickens" he says, "the individual is no longer exclusively identified with just his separate-self sense and hence is no longer exclusively tied to his purely personal problems. In a sense he can start to let go of his fears and anxieties, depressions and obsessions, and begin to view them with the same clarity and impartiality with which one might view clouds floating through the sky or waters rushing in a stream." "But the fact that he can comprehensively look at them means that he has ceased using them as something with which to look at, and this distorts reality." Consciousness is a tool with which we can master our reality. The more we bring our kind of knowledge into it the more we are prone to misuse this tool. The less we intervene with it, the more we leave it alone, the more it can flow through us and make us aware of its presence. And we can make ourselves receptive by opening up to it. This is not just a goal for transpersonal therapy but also a guide to the tools to be used and to the ethics involved.

### **The consciousness of the me in the thou or Eco-Consciousness**

I can state roughly who I am and where I dwell and sometimes even what I am doing; at least I believe this to be true in the narrower context of my personal world. As soon as I step out of my well-organised, carefully balanced and adapted habitat, However, the planks under my feet begin to shake. it's not that I do not know what the planks of my environment look like but by ignoring their origin and neglecting to inform myself about their quality I lose my connection with them. The planks of my environment no longer support me, sometimes they even turn against me. I have cut myself off from the natural flow of the ecological system. I am no longer a natural part of it. I have become its enemy. And it fights back.

Ecology is an issue which can't be avoided today. it's all around us, whether it's the cutting down of the rain forest or the erosion of the ozone layer, genetic vegetables or the energy wasted by transport systems. But all of this begins, and this is most important, not out there in the world but right inside each and every one of us! If we want to survive as a species we need to become conscious of ourselves first! Not as a race or a species, but as an individual, a single person. The first questions must be addressed to ourselves! The first answers we have

to give to ourselves! Ultimately, if we do not accept and shoulder responsibility, we will be among the first ones to go. Is it not a crazy time we live in? It is the first time in the history of humankind that we have the opportunity to either destroy all life on planet earth or to advance to a higher, previously un-experienced level of good living.

If we take this idea one step further then my neighbour is also a part of me, We are intricately connected, We are part of a complex web of circumstances and reciprocal processes. Whatever I do to myself I also do to my neighbour, because my state of being influences my inter-connectedness with my surrounding and therefore influences whoever crosses my path. This calls for a high level of consciousness on my part and a lot of responsibility. Chaos and complexity are at work here too.

The consequences of such a philosophy are that all I do has to be done with a social consciousness, My work cannot be disconnected from that nor can my private life. Does this frighten you? Do you feel that your freedom is being curtailed? Does the idea make you feel uncomfortable, rebellious or angry? I would be very surprised if this was not the case. Our society has for such a long time fought everything that impinges upon our personal freedom. We have become accustomed to do whatever we want, in which ever way we desire. And look where it has brought us. It is high time that we reconsider our deeds and our longings and that we look at where we are heading towards. The new paradigm is pointing to radical changes; political, professional, private and social changes as well as spiritual awareness. In all these fields we have to become more responsible. Politically this means in a way becoming anarchists, which originally meant each individual taking on such a level of conscious social and political responsibility that no police or state control would be necessary. In social terms it means that we see ourselves as an integral part of the whole of society not just a member of a particular class or race. In spiritual terms we need to understand and feel that we are and have within us potentials of a higher consciousness, that we are not just inhabitants of this earth but of the universe. And we need to understand and value the spiritual and social value of our work as artist or art therapists. Suzi Gablik pin points that when she says: "My sense is that what we will be seeing over the next few decades is art that is essentially social and purposeful, art that rejects the myths of neutrality and autonomy. The subtext of social responsibility in our aesthetic models and the challenge of the future will be to transcend the disconnectedness and separation of the aesthetic from the social that existed within modernism."

The new world is all about the reconciliation of opposites, whether within ourselves, society, religion or business. The new paradigm is heading towards not one philosophy for everything like science and particularly physics tries to make us believe, or even Ken Wilber is trying to summarize up, instead it is heading towards a philosophy containing and embracing many. If there is to be a single philosophy, then it will have to be one umbrella under which we all have a place. The paradox and the irreconcilable do not exclude one another but complement each other and thus bring forth something more powerful than anything which could have been brought about by one side alone. The new paradigm is all

about strength and healing power gained through collective efforts. It is a respectful and conscious dealing with chaotic forces bringing forth powerful agents that are working for the benefit of all. "It would seem", says Gablik, "that a single philosophy no longer accurately represents our culture, which is more accurately revealed right now in the interplay of its opposing tendencies; this means dancing through some of the most conspicuous contradictions in the present scene and considering opposite points of view."

### **Quantum-World or There where the world is still okay, despite being upside down.**

It is no big deal to go to the movies nowadays. All we have to do is to decide on the film we want to see, buy a ticket, get some almost obligatory refreshments, take a seat and await the movie in comfort. The thing that is coming our way is a virtual reality. We hope to be taken out of our ordinary world and into another, hopefully not yet experienced one. Consciously we know that the world we are being taken to is not the real world. And yet it can seem so real, it can engulf and entrance us so much that we are no longer able to discern between realities. Time and space have ceased to exist. Time flies by unnoticed and we are usually only reminded of it by the lights coming on to tell us that it is time to go home. Within these temporary fantasy worlds we find the space to apparently escape the ordinary, the repetitive, that which usually dulls us into de-pression. TV and other multi-media toys do exactly that, they are drugs which make us forget, they are our escape to fantasy islands, and we have to do little ourselves. Our creativity is not challenged at all, our consciousness not activated. Both creativity and consciousness cannot expand because they cannot experience their actual state of being. This is a stale mate, a hovering in a vacuum, actually it is a form of non-existence. And here entropy sets in. We need the flow of things, that which Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls "the most enjoyable experience", that which gives us the feeling of "being carried away by a current, everything moving smoothly without effort". We need to be in touch with our creativity, our consciousness, it is a prerequisite for a healthy life.

All that what we take for granted nowadays, all the facilities that render our lives so comfortably took many years of development. Experiments with the *laterna magica*, with moving pictures and beautifully written science fiction stories advanced along with respective technology. We have come a long way from the first dream workshops to the visionary and mind-puzzling virtual realities. The latter was only possible through the development of highly advanced and refined technology, like computers and the scientific understanding underlying it. The world we knew no longer exists, definitely not as sole reference to reality. It is possible to create any kind of world we want and we can make it look astonishingly real as Steven Spielberg's films prove so well. "Computer graphic visualisation of mathematical models has greatly amplified the social transformation we are witnessing, as they've made models visible to the world at large." says the mathematician Ralph Abraham. Even emotions and feelings can be triggered through elaborate techniques and tools such as the Eye-Phone or Data-Glove and Data- Suit. Scientists maintain that virtual realities can be measured and controlled more accurately and efficiently than the real

world. The real world of science is located in Cyberspace where the impossible is predicted and constructed, where a walk on Mars is just as feasible as a meander through the arteries of the heart. The brain, neuroscientists say, is nothing more than a body organ. "The subject of phenomenology has become the object of manipulation", says chemist Klaus Bachmann, This fact triggers a lot of ethical, philosophical and other issues, which I have no place to follow up in this paper. We are at the edge of new human territories; we are not far from creating a cloned human being. In cyberspace the meeting points with other beings is infinite, the crossing of species endless and the quality and the content of the meetings unlimited.

Where did all of this stem from, where are the roots of these mega mind-shifting events? In every culture and their mythological stories there is Chaos as the mother / father of everything. Out of it, mostly without conception, the world is born. Chaos is the big cosmic yawn of the Greeks, the all embracing and touching Dharmakaya in Buddhist teaching, the friction between Ying and Yang of the Chinese and the spirit-filled uncontrollable forces of nature for the cave man. Chaos has, at least in our western culture, traditionally been regarded as meaning uncontrollable disorder. Chaos is frightening for us because it does not yelled to our every wish. We have no real command over it. Yet chaos is based on harmony and flexibility. Nature is based on Chaos. Without it there would not be this vast and colourful variety of species, flowers, trees and animals. Within every individual flower, animal or human being there is a particular Chaos at work, comparable in some ways with each other, yet different, peculiar and special in every single being. Within every Chaos there is a hidden pattern, like the fractal geometry discovered by Mandelbrot. Each pattern is unique and the slightest change or input can irretrievably change the whole pattern. Chaos is highly sensitive to changes in its environment and within its system. Once Chaos is set in motion the outcome cannot be predicted, although mathematicians speak of a deterministic Chaos because of the exactness of the data at the onset of Chaos. Yet, nothing is pre-determined as a matter of fact. "In practice", says Paul Davies, the physicist, "determinism is a myth,"

Chaos is a very complex system at work. It,9 very the force lies within its complexity. Chaos is but a prerequisite for complexity. It is the complexity of things that make life possible. Within a complex world there is stability because the system can not be changed that easily. You take one branch of a tree away and the tree will still function and do its work; similarly if you take away one tree from a forest, the forest will still function. A complex System is very creative, it will find a solution to a given problem. Changes are even welcome because they accelerate growth, health and the survival of the species. Complexity also means variety and thus communication and interconnectedness. If there were only one kind of tree in our world we would have eliminated it long ago with our way of living, Fortunately nature has retained its chaotic nature. Whenever man is trying to interfere, to control this natural Chaos, he kills the very life essence within it. Man is only capable of creating a man-made Chaos which he cannot control, but which, in contrast to nature, fights back against him.

That kind of Chaos is unmanageable, it goes out of control because we have lost the ability to see, use and comprehend things in their greater context.

In order to understand the new paradigm we have to understand Chaos and complexity, and this not just in theory but in its applicable probabilities. Science and the new technologies, as well as our understanding of the world, are intrinsically connected. Basically we are completely free to think and believe what we want, at least that's what we think and believe. Science, especially since the time of Newton and Descartes, has ruled our brain exclusively. And because we identify ourselves with our brain, "I think, therefore I am" as postulated by Descartes, it has ruled our very being. It is exactly here where we have to start cutting the ties if we want to move toward a new paradigm. Linear thinking has been the order of the day in the past. In future we also ought to integrate Chaos in our thinking. "Where Chaos begins, classical science stops." said James Gleick. Chaos is a potential that has always been around us, we have made use of it extensively but unfortunately always unconsciously. It is time to do it consciously.

Chaos is all about higher levels of communication, transmission, interconnectedness, psycho-neuronal-networking, interactivity, sustainability, paradoxes and complexity. It is what Piero Onori calls "the dealing with the unpredictable". Dealing with chaos means trying to manage inherently random movements, seeing the order within the stochastic system and making use of it. Every stage of this undertaking is a very difficult task but, if successful, promises that we can achieve, and gain chaos-competence. Onori transfers and applies chaos-competence on all levels of economy, from higher management to the logistics of a potato transport. This reminds us of the work of shamans and healers who go into other worlds to meet the unpredictable, and by facing the unpredictable gain knowledge to solve what was impossible beforehand. Unpredictability and impossibility are not amongst the vocabulary of the women and men travelling the realms of the unknown.

### **Chaos and Art Therapy**

What, you may ask, have the introduction of Chaos and Complexity, of Parallel Worlds and Virtual Realities within the sciences even within our language brought to transpersonal thinking and in particular to transpersonal art therapy? To put it in one sentence: The conscious transcendence of paradoxes, of excluding principles, of linear thinking and, most of all, of a complex self.

Using chaos in therapy means giving power (importance) to the individuals complexity and at the same time being aware of the fact that even a low and weak input can cause a tremendous and maybe irreversible outcome. However, if the individuals complexity has been made accessible to hm/her beforehand then any change in the system, even a strong input, can not cause the system to fall apart. Quite the contrary: The change which will occur will cause the system to find more solutions, to be more creative and thus more sustainable. Solutions will be found which come from the very core of the individual. There

are no better means to restore somebody's health than through his own resources. In surgery, if body parts have to be replaced, then the first place one looks for a replacement is the body itself. If no replacement can be found one looks for a substitute organ in another family member and if that is also not possible then in someone with the same blood group. Completely foreign objects are often rejected and can cause death instead of new life and health. Even initial compatibility does not guarantee success. Only the body's own system can come close to a guarantee. A system is always looking for homeostasis and will reject all that is a threat to this.

Chaotic systems are best observed at their edges. Edges present contact points to neighbouring systems (see fig.1). They also means that chaos has to be observed in relation to its environment. These adjoining systems do not live to be chaotic themselves. In the most extreme case they can be of the strictest order. In such a case, two opposing forces clash and the friction area around the edge is the melting pot, the hot-spot where all the action is. If two extremes meet, and if none overrides the other, the systems are in equilibrium (a term used in thermodynamics). In our case, when chaos and order are in perfect balance we have a stable equilibrium. To be far from equilibrium would mean either to go towards order or towards chaos. Now it is not always desirable to be in balance because to be in balance can also mean that we are content with the existing, with what and how things are. In such instances no development is possible, necessary or desirable. Nobel prize winner Ilya Prigogine points it out very clearly by saying: "The remarkable feature is that when we move from equilibrium to far-from-equilibrium conditions, we move away from the repetitive and universal to the specific and unique. Indeed, the laws of equilibrium are universal". To be out of balance can also mean that we move towards our ego-self, that we have to leave the collective and move towards the individual. In doing this we may make experiences for the collective thus adding to the collective experience. The fact is that we are far from equilibrium for most of the time. In most instances we are off balance, maybe not much, not so much that we feel its undesired effects but we are off balance just the same, not in tune as we say. When the effect can be felt, then we are usually in trouble, become ill or lose control. That is the point where we have the opportunity to learn our lessons, challenge our limits and expand our visions. Life near equilibrium behaves in a repetitive way and creativity is at it's lowest point. Far from equilibrium, however, creativity most active and at its best, every thing is on the move and the emergence of unique patterns and rhythms endless. In order to know our equilibrium - if that is still desirable - we must study both extreme states, that of chaos and that of order. Art has always been a commuter between these frontiers. Admittedly these journeys are not without dangers and many casualties can be named. Art therapy has to be concerned with a safe and healthy journey, thus creating an equilibrium, a stability based on movement, based on oscillation, based on life. Chaos and Order have to serve homeostasis.

## Quo vadis, Art Therapy?

Art therapy is a creative activity and has, I maintain, ultimately nothing to do with art. It also has nothing to do with psychology and definitely nothing to do with psychiatry. That it should have these links are outdated and no longer sustainable concepts. Art therapy will only be able to maintain its position within a psycho-social caring system if it can develop and enfold a therapeutic model which is based on an independent theory and practice. Because of this, it is so immanently important that first of all we succeed in breaking completely with inherited concepts. Only when we are free from linear, traditional and deep-rooted working and thinking methods, can new models and approaches be discovered toward a well-founded theory and practice. That kind of working area is not contained by conventional boundaries but breaks them in a fundamental way, thus expanding the field of art therapy to all areas of human existence. Through such un-preconceived, undaunted and somehow "naive" approaches new territories can be explored and experienced. The main characteristic of an art therapy, which is newly orienting itself, is its creativity. Creativity has the potential and power to transform feeling, thinking and behaviour and thus to couple amplify or even eliminate or eradicate certain inherent elements.

What art therapy needs is a new orientation in the sense of networking with science, philosophy and society (politics, culture, economy) and with this I mean sciences which are oriented towards global and ecological thinking. Nowadays it is impossible and senseless to exercise in singular combat or to demand special treatment when being in isolation or seclusion like a hermit. Global networking is not just a temporary headline but an ecological necessity. It is not a matter of avoiding world destruction through atomic power or heaps of waste, the really important issue is to develop and reinstate humanistic values which make life worth living. And we can only accomplish this through and with an overall ecological and renewable system. Gaia consciousness (Rosak / Lovelock / Bateson) has become an unavoidable fact in each and every scientific and economic discipline, from the physicist to the philosopher, from the artist to the carpenter, from the care-taker to the farmer. Only with the development of an ecological consciousness within every human being can humanity as a species survive. Within this context James Hillmann is advocating an eco-psychology in which the human being again checks his/her identity and tries to bring it into harmony with the environment. "An individual's harmony", says Hillman, "with his or her 'own deep self requires not merely a journey to the interior but a harmonising with the environmental world. The deepest self cannot be confined to 'in here' because we can't be sure it is not also or even entirely 'out there,'"

Right here at this bifurcation point, where all of humanity is addressed, art therapy can, with its creative and mainly non-verbal methods fulfil a very important task. If art therapy does not align itself exclusively with psychology, psychiatry and para-medicine, as it has done so far, but instead aligns with physics, mathematics, sociology and ecology, then it has a real chance of really serving human kind, and this should be its goal. The knowledge of the proximity of all things, renders my existence more meaningful. I am part of what makes the other, without the other I am not what I am right now, and without me the other is not

what he/she is at the moment. Systemic being does not exclude but connects. As a whole we are a community bound by fate - and the whole does not stop at my door-step.

Let me restate and emphasise my basic view. I am not concerned with the construction of a new theory or the defence of some isolated and/or obsolete knowledge, vegetating in rigid norms and belief systems, but intensely with the unfolding of a dialogue which establishes new values which correspond to the new paradigm and a new understanding of art therapy.

### **Art therapy, your face looks different in the mirror of the new paradigm!**

The ontology of such an approach lies within synergetic complexity which primarily includes rather than excludes. This may not be new because one can pre-suppose that an art therapy which concerns itself with the basic phenomena of both art and therapy does not become simpler but rather more complex. Art therapy with a transpersonal orientation is not just open toward the new paradigm but represents it. Such an art therapy unites within the paradoxical and behaves in a chaotic manner, This in turn brings forth a complexity which is in no way comparable with the established understandings of complexity. Dimensions are combined which are in themselves endless and inconceivable. It is therefore impossible to order or envision a picture or any other intellectual or scientific formula which would do justice to such a multi-dimensionality. An approach toward the complexity of a paradigmatic and transpersonally oriented art therapy is only possible over a synergetic bridge. This bridge connects aestheticism, science, consciousness, Self, earth, the universe and spirituality in an open, self-regulating and self-regenerating system. Within such an open system entropy is only relatively present and if present, is recognised as such, is transformed and transcended. It is exactly here where the intrinsic art therapeutic approach can manifest itself in the emerging age.

Art therapy as I understand it, is miles away from a dogmatism hiding behind subtle value- and belief-concepts. Art therapy has the capacity to access core-elements of the human being without having to adhere to restricting norms. With this I do not want to say that some norms are not of value because what I am saying here is a norm in itself too. One should, however, be cautious in using norms which do not correspond to one's own visions, feelings and emotional levels. Not having to follow a norm frees me on the one hand but also gives me the responsibility to look for new guidelines, to search and recognise new limits and to develop capacities in order to take action. The same holds true for Gaia consciousness in which I do not only have to develop a new norm for myself but have also to try to extend them on to my entire environment. What I want to say with this is that every art therapist has to develop his/her own norm or theory. Old theories can be a starting aid and should be accepted as such. If art therapy really wants to make use of its inherent potentials then it has to act on the basis of the human complexity. Its complexity should be even bigger, even

more encompassing, even more chaotic, in order not to merely encompass the complexity of one single human being or group but that of the entire humanity itself - this, however, I believe to be an impossible, even an utopian idea. Yet, talking earlier about cyberspace, we came to the edge of just such a possibility. Cyberspace and computer-animated virtual realities are comparable with the virtual realities of imagination, visions, dreams and fantasies. It is here in this time and space-less zone where art therapy meets the challenge of transforming its outlooks. In cyberspace everything is possible, every connection, all the constructions and outrageous normalities and abnormalities of the human psyche, I advocate healing in cyberspace, healing through computers whether they are of technical origin or of human nature!

Transpersonal art therapy tries to be free of value and judgement. This is only possible if values are recognised and judgements have been made. In the sense of scientific understanding this means that art therapy has to concern itself with theories and practicalities which correspond to generally accepted norms. It should even be one of its main tasks to thoroughly study different theories and practices, to arrive at an insights of its own. To acquire knowledge is one of the essential parts of a transpersonally oriented education or training. The main part of such an education is, however, the wise application or transcendence of such knowledge. In developing of an individual theory, the art therapist learns to recognise coherences, to see limits and to stake out territories for himself as well as for his counterpart in therapy. To seek those limits is also to seek working along the borderlines and this leads to self actualisation, transcendence and higher consciousness. And because those borders are endless within art therapeutic work, in a sense we can say they are not limited or "repelled by our stratosphere". One cannot convey through words the experiences one makes nor translate them in any other way. Francis Vaughan puts it eloquently: "Transpersonal experiences always involve an expansion of consciousness beyond the ordinary limitations of time and space and ego boundaries. The reality of these experiences is apprehended intuitively. One can try to describe them verbally or in writing, but the experience itself remains ineffable. There are no words which can fully describe this direct contact with reality, where the usual defences are willingly surrendered."

This represents a real problem. Yet, that which represents a problem simultaneously also points to new possibilities. What cannot be described by words, should not be described or even rationalised. The emotions which are inherent in any experience are not lost when we do not talk about them, when they do not have to be rationalised. This contradicts some basic assumptions of psychotherapeutic work which implies that bringing out a feeling into our world of secondary processes means the content can be looked at and be better understood. Between talking and not talking, between one view and the other lies the potential, the opportunity for art therapy. Feelings and emotions can be intermediary stored in creative mediums. This colour-, form-, sound- filled intermediary storage does not have to be talked about or worked at but it can at the right moment be brought to the surface and be reviewed. Just by looking at them the inherent energies are reawakened. They can, if this is desired, be verbally or kinaesthetically dealt with.

For too long art therapy has courted popular psychotherapeutic methods. Words became ever so important. Scientific methods became a prerequisite for the right to exist; only like that could art therapy be representable and sellable. Maybe this was unavoidable in the first phase of its existence. Not longer. The elementary premises of a transpersonal art therapy are the honouring of silence and the respect of boundaries. The work with and in silence, with what emerges out of silence, what comes into being out of the endless depths of the unconscious, what appears in the light through sheer will and effort, that is healing work. The respect of human limits, be they individual or collective, let us recognise borders and allows us to work on these borders. We constantly work along the borders - we are frontier commuters. The work with borders brings us near the core elements of life, which are situated where chaos and order meet. It is here where life happens. Here life is at its most active, most alive, most productive. On the one side total chaos is lurking, disintegration into the endless movement of being. On the other side total stagnation waits, complete motionlessness, rigidity, constant immobility thus a catatonic state results. Within the extreme states of order and chaos or birth and death life is unfolding. In the patterns emerging between them life unfolds (see fig.2), This concept of enfoldment and unfoldment is being borrowed from physicist David Bohm. The closer we get to the meeting point of these two seemingly threatening extremes the stronger we can feel life running through us. Between the extremities of birth and death lies life as an invigorating force.

Unfortunately most human beings see themselves squeezed between birth and death, because they believe these to be the absolute, unavoidable and ultimate facts. As soon as birth and death can be perceived as states of consciousness which repeat themselves throughout life, and are not rigid concepts, then the human being is freed from these narrowing, paralysing and illness provoking ties. Birth and death are then no longer end products but potential transformation processes in which there is a death before birth and a birth after death. In art therapy this means that to work alongside the borders constitutes a respectful approaching and handling of the borders of the lives of every one concerned. It is a respectful working from the very place each human being is occupying within the time-space continuum and it is a gentle handling of the complex borders emerging from that same state of being.

Transpersonal art therapy accepts borders as a means of protection and necessary fences which in certain cases need to be removed but in all cases need to be looked at. One cannot surmount borders if one cannot see, feel, sense or somehow perceive them. Through the perception of limits consciousness can access its own natural potentials, be forced to use its natural resources and thus actualise, amplify and employ them. Art therapy is concerned with the removal of alien characteristics within the human being at the same time strengthening and rendering potent what is naturally inherent in the individual. And here we have one of the many dangers of therapy in general: Where the line between what is being suppressed and what is being empowered can often no longer be drawn. Are the potentials of the therapist or the energies of the client drained or is it that the energies of the

therapist are being projected on to the client? A question of transference and counter transference you may say. This is true but we have to know these powers and use them wisely. In art therapy we concern ourselves in general with the empowering of people and in transpersonal art therapy we want to empower the whole being, including the higher self. Yet, the higher self can only be included when the limits of our own self-awareness are being penetrated and then transcended and expanded on to a global and even cosmic level. This approach does not necessarily have to be a spiritual one. It can quite calmly orientate itself on the epistemology or latest scientific discoveries of physicists like Bohm, biologists like Sheldrake, mathematicians like Abraham, artists like Kandinsky or the computer-animated virtual reality created by Magnenat.

If we want to get away from our worldly concepts and seek to integrate the spiritual without losing the cognitively and rationally gained, we have to incorporate the spiritual into our lives processes in a way such as the *Philosophia Perennis* is advocating. The spiritual does not have to be equated with the godly. It is emotional wisdom or emotional intelligence which lets us know and experience that besides the physical and the psyche there is still something else which connects us to the universe, with that part of us which is endless, unlimited by dimensions and impregnated by wisdom. We are constantly being torn between space-time and space-time-lessness, the tangible and the intangible, the conceivable and the inconceivable. This state of being is in itself already schizophrenic and leads inevitably to disharmony. Now the psyche which should and can lift this schizophrenia nowadays no longer knows where it belongs. Its alliance tends more toward the physical than the spiritual. The higher self, the god spirit, the universal is being disclaimed. "The body is always in time, the spirit is always timeless and the psyche is an amphibious creature compelled by the laws of man's being to associate itself to some extent with the body, but capable, if so desires, of experiencing and being identified with spirit and, through its spirit, with the divine ground. The spirit remains always what it eternally is, but man is so constituted that his psyche cannot always remain identified with spirit," says Aldous Huxley. Transpersonal art therapy tries to bridge this chasm and heal it. It tries to let psyche live its amphibian characteristics. A healthy psyche needs to be able to move about freely in between the physical-material and the mental-spiritual. A free flow guarantees the balance, the power and the self-awareness which is necessary to master this life. How else are we able to deal with new research discoveries which turn our picture of the world upside down, which relativizes our very existence and cast doubt on our uniqueness? The discovery of parallel universes by the German scientist Friedrich von Humboldt and the simultaneous discovery of the same universe by German computer specialists, both unaware of each other, is just such a world transforming event which is being ignored by most media and definitely gone un-noticed by most people. I do not want to discuss here why this is so. Many hints were given long before the official discovery. Therefore we cannot say that we were surprised by these events. The hints came from the scientific side, from people like Fred Alan Wolf, physicist and author of the parallel universe, or from shamans as described by anthropologist Carlos Castaneda (who went through an initiation himself which meant to travel between parallel worlds).

### **Art therapy and the new world(s) - a summary**

Within the very concept of art therapy lies the healing effect of imagination, visions, feelings and dreams. In other words, art therapy is constantly dealing with parallel worlds and virtual realities. To be more exact, the very source of art therapy comes from parallel worlds and universes and from virtual realities. And if it is true, as scientists insist upon, that virtual realities are better measured and controlled than the real world, then art therapy could be a highly efficient agent in the measuring and managing of realities. If we acknowledge this fact and also believe in the wisdom and knowledge of the new sciences, then we have a completely new working basis for art therapy. Art therapy was forced and has struggled for a long time to gain recognition amongst the so-called scientific (and academic) world to which psychology apparently belongs and to acquire a strong scientific base for itself. Well, with the tools outlined here, it can no longer say it doesn't have it. It will be the privilege of transpersonal art therapy to pave the way. Because within transpersonal theory many prerequisites for understanding and integrating of new sciences, which also deal with altered states of consciousness and sustainability, already exist. Art therapy, with its interest and willingness to include the theory of the new paradigm in its credo, can find in transpersonal psychology a most compatible and supportive companion. However, art therapy within the transpersonal realm can no longer pretend to be the ally of psychology, psychotherapy, religion and art. Transpersonal art therapy is connected with social- and natural science, with computers and businesses, with ecology and politics, with the habitat of the rhinoceros as well as with the bowel movement of Buddha.

I have tried to give a general introduction and share my understanding of the new paradigm and its bearings on the theoretical framework of transpersonal psychology. There is much to be learned from the many levels of complexity which penetrate all levels of life. My approach to this complexity has been somewhat academic, meaning that I chose to shed light on the subject by thinking about it, posing questions and finding answers. The other approach, the practical one could unfortunately not be dealt with here. However, I hope to have given many hints and pointers to bridge the themes and aspects of theory with the practical sides of transpersonal art therapy. I myself make ample use of the theories mentioned above in my therapeutic work and lecturing activities (Picture xx and ii are examples). I have extensively talked about the inter-connectedness of everything but it stands to reason that a theory can never stand on its own, that there must also be life experience. Only in the vividness of life, where my tears meet my laughter and my soul meets yours, can my thoughts meet my action and thus bring forth healing. Basically I have talked about the responsibility of the individual, whether in science, art, psychology or self. It is up to us to make the difference and to bring forth the flow of healing creativity.

Let me conclude this short essay with the following remarks: I have said that art therapy has nothing to do with art, psychology and psychiatry - I should also have said that art therapy

has nothing to do with art therapy. Art therapy cannot be described by a label. It is far too chaotic, complex and multi-dimensional to be merely that. Our society loves labels because labels create an identity and through an identity we create separation, hierarchies, values, and judgements. We falsely believe that through labels we can grasp the world. With labels we have separated ourselves not just from the world but from ourselves as well. The name art therapy stands for many things and yet for nothing at all. Through the understanding of chaos and complexity, through walking the multi-coloured, multi-dimensional, creative web of fantasy and visions, the process called art therapy maybe managed, maybe understood. However, art therapy is (but) one of our (un-labeled) roads to paradise.

### **Appendix (this may be deleted)**

The few colour pictures I used are creations and expressions of work between myself and clients. I did purposely not indulge in trying to give you an explanation to their emergence. This was not the aim of this paper. The evidence that they exist is enough. Their existence shows that communication took place and that there are really no words needed to explain what actually happened. The process itself is the healing agent. The action during the act of making is the healing touch. So much I would like to say: Chaos was at work all the time and the complexity of the dimensions reached was felt and expressed. There is no chaos, no madness in the world - there is only us humans perceiving it as such. The integrity of the individual was respected and the consciousness of self and of a greater connectedness established. I abstained from giving a case study or a recipe for possible working actions. My aim was to give a theoretical framework embedded within the new paradigm. Everybody is invited to reflection and to the creation of new ways in art-psycho-therapy.

And finally, in the deepest analyses of everything, is not all we want to achieve through our many endeavours to see smiling hearts?

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