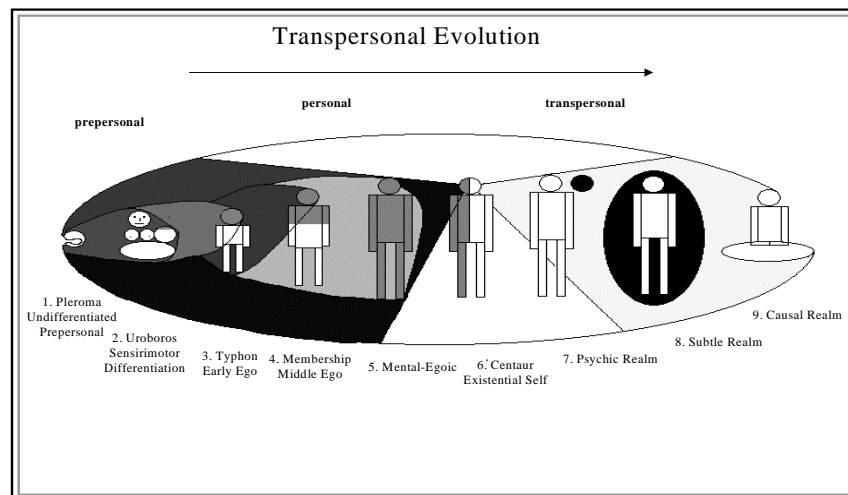
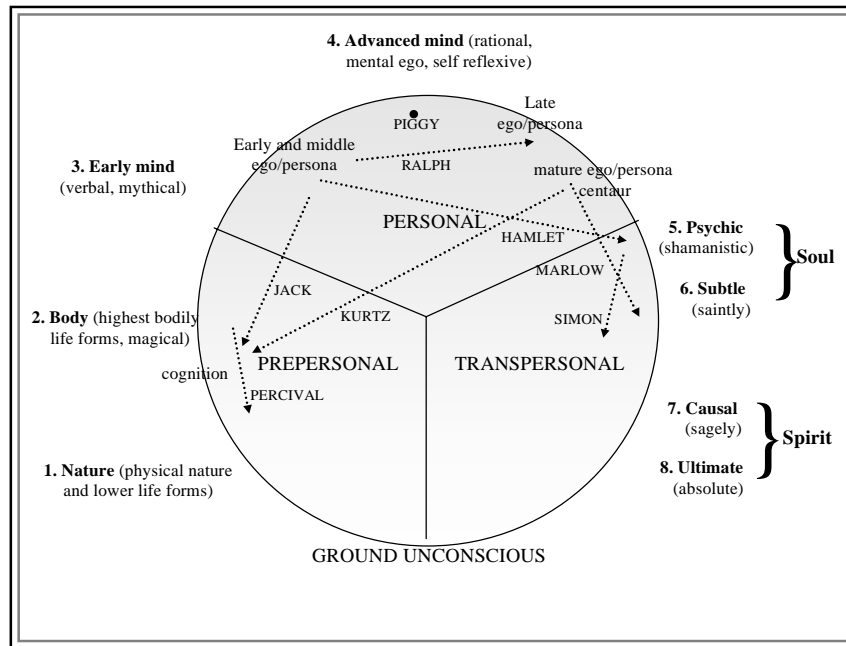


TRANSPERSONAL LITERATURE



JOSEPH MARRABLE

This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree at Murdoch University 2003.

I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not been previously submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

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ABSTRACT

What do you get if you apply Ken Wilber's theories of transpersonal psychological development within human consciousness to William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* or Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, or Shakespeare's *Hamlet*? Can they provide a clear interpretative tool in order to uncover the intentional or unintentional aspects of consciousness development contained within them? Do these literary texts reveal a coherent quest for knowledge of human consciousness, the nature of good and evil, and the ineffable question of spirit? Is there a case for presenting a transpersonal perspective of literature in order to expound the theories of this psychological discipline? Can literary texts provide materials that are unique to that art form and can be explicated by knowledge of transpersonal psychology? Is there an evolutionary motion, which is not necessarily historically chronological but nonetheless displays a developmental map of human consciousness across literary works? In other words, can we see a hierarchical framework along the lines of consciousness development as proposed by Ken Wilber, that suggests a movement up the evolutionary ladder of consciousness from *Lord of the Flies* to *Hamlet* and beyond? Can we counter oppose *Lord of the Flies* and *Hamlet*, suggesting that the first is a fable of regression to transpersonal evil within a cultural community and the second sees Hamlet attempt to avoid this path in order to move toward the transcendence of ego and self, within the individual? If this is so then we should be able to plot both paths relative to the models

of development traced in Wilber's theories and interpret the texts according to this framework. What is the relationship between transpersonal aspects of consciousness and literature? And what are the effects upon the cultural consciousness of human evolution that literature has had so much to inform? How do the literary works of individuals inform the cultural consciousness and transcend the age in which they are written? Equally we should be able to test the theories with the aid of some texts of literature – especially those works which are of, and about consciousness. What does this mean to the literary interpretation of these texts? How does it differ from other interpretations? What are the pitfalls and what disclaimers need to be put in place? Is the difference between the notion of a transpersonal evil and a transpersonal good simply a matter of individual moral choice?

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the preparation of this thesis, thanks go especially to my supervisor and friend, Professor John Frodsham, who has continued to provide insight, encouragement and wisdom not only for this thesis but also during my entire undergraduate degree and honours program. He shared a wealth of knowledge in literature, psychology and life which provided many valuable materials for this project and represents the very best in teaching.

My dear friend and colleague, Dr. Dave Morgan, who persuaded me to carry on my academic studies rather than hang out in bars, deserves my utmost gratitude. He has proved to be one of the clearest and most generous thinkers I have known, with an encyclopedic knowledge of literature – especially ‘pulp’ novels, film, and getting through difficult times. His editing and comment have been invaluable.

Thanks go to my family for their specific and general support in all sorts of ways during my research – Patricia, Tim, Clare, Steve and Rupert.

Thanks also go to Sarah Blacklock for early research assistance.

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SURVEY OF THE FIELD

Since its inception in the late sixties in America, transpersonal psychology has sustained a dedicated school of academics, theorists and practitioners and introduced a unique approach to psychology in general. Therefore it can be said to have enough pedigree and credence to clearly render many valuable, even essential insights into literary interpretation. Having studied comparative literature and transpersonal psychology, it became clear that a synthesis of these two schools would provide a fruitful ground on which to examine the concept of transpersonal developmental consciousness within the literary landscape. There has long been a tradition of psychological readings of literary texts and figures within them. Writers too, use psychological disorders, syndromes, neuroses, and psychoses to convey a notion of ‘realism’ to their characters and scenarios, and literary critics are often guided by psychological theories to aid their given analyses. Therefore transpersonal psychological interpretation must offer something in the way of criticism, analysis or commentary and eventually, therefore, some sort of evaluation.

The practice of using psychology as one of the determinants in the analysis of a text seems either lauded or maligned, depending on the point of view of the critic, the ‘fashionability’ of the particular theory, i.e., Freudian, Jungian, Lacanian, and the approach and politics of the reader. Yet it must not be understood that criticism of

literature marks a simple division, where psychologists support psychological and psychoanalytic appraisals of literature on the one hand, while on the other literary critics and theorists condemn such practices. The terrain is not so easily mapped and happily, as a result, there is scope for a web of theorists and commentators made up of both academics with a literary background and those with a foundation in psychology. Many, in fact, appear to have feet secure in both camps and there are also those who acknowledge no particular kinship with either.

As the thesis unfolds, we will find innumerable occasions of just how close some of the readings and interpretations are between literary critics and those of psychologists, oftentimes seemingly unaware of their mutual findings. Yet, rather than representing a problem for the idea of a transpersonal psychological reading of literature, it provides a convenient viewpoint, because of the integral and holistic approach of this discipline. One of the major tasks of this thesis is to bring a synthesis to these disparate, yet fraternal, claims and attempt to frame them under the umbrella of transpersonal literary interpretation. This is not to suggest that these schools of thought are necessarily at odds with one another. To the contrary, it could be simply, as the transpersonal psychologist, Ronald S. Valle believes is the case with the current climate of psychology, that “most thinkers and practitioners within one tradition are simply unfamiliar with the literature of the other,”¹

Certainly, my research indicates that there are very few sustained accounts of transpersonal psychological readings of literature to date.

¹ Valle, Ronald S. and Steen Halling. *Existential and Phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology*. New York: Plenum Press, 1989, p.255.

It is true, that the current trend in the humanities is to move away from such efforts to comprehend texts by using the methodology of psychological approaches to literature, and this may indeed account for a dearth in such material. However, the barrenness of the environment was surprising. Later in the research, I found a similar astonishment expressed in William Kerrigan's preface to *Hamlet's Perfection* who informs us that he was "not prepared for the shocking decadence of *Hamlet* criticism from the 1980s." Kerrigan claims that "self-canonizing" and "theory-driven criticism" might see the first generation of critics in two hundred years to refuse the challenge of Shakespeare.² His book, he tells us, is born of a sorrow that this generation of literary intellectuals have contributed so little to the elucidation of *Hamlet*. And yet we will see that although this is somewhat true, those few contemporary critics, who did tackle it, offered accounts of the play which seemed to contain many transpersonal undertones. However, while they may be familiar with transpersonal psychology this was also true of some earlier critics who predate that school. Nevertheless, none of the critics used the language, terms and structures of transpersonal psychology to explicate the text. This was also the case with the critics who tackled the other literary texts included in the thesis – William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In realising that transpersonal psychology would provide a valuable tool for the interpretation of some of the psychological aspects within given works, I then had to determine the literary texts I would examine.

² Kerrigan William. *Hamlet's Perfection*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1994, p.3-5.

Once I began to study the psychological and literary theorists who inhabit these pages, it became remarkably clear that many of the writers who were not initially considered for their adherence to transpersonal models, showed surprising similarities in their conclusions both at the micro and macro level, particularly when considering *Hamlet*. Indeed, the more I read the more apparent it became that the fictitious Danish prince had done as much to inform psychology over the years as any single patient or therapist. As one psychoanalyst has observed: “more has been written of Hamlet than of any doctor who ever lived.”³ There are a number of psychoanalytic works which were of particular significance when tackling the *Hamlet* chapters, and chief among these was Kurt Robert Eissler’s *Discourse on Hamlet and HAMLET: A Psychoanalytic Inquiry*. Eissler’s work is well regarded in the field and continually referenced by other psychoanalysts who deal with *Hamlet*. His book offered not only an acute analysis of the play but also demonstrated a voice that, while keenly critical, was generous and magnanimous. Avi Erlich’s insightful *Hamlet’s Absent Father* and John Russell’s *Hamlet and Narcissus*, also provided a great number of psychoanalytic insights and supporting evidences for this thesis.

It was the sheer force and volume of the material which surrounded *Hamlet* that necessitated the eventual expansion of my investigation from one, into two chapters. One of the reasons was that it became apparent during the research process that *Hamlet* acted as a kind of historical barometer for the study of psychology. In fact the play appears in so many psychological texts either simply as a metaphor or in quotation, but more often than not as the example *par excellence*, quite ironically, of a conscious,

³ Bynum, W.F. and Michael Neve. ‘Hamlet on the Couch,’ in *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry Volume 1*, ‘People and Ideas,’ edited by W. F. Bynum, Roy Porter, and Michael Sheppard. London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1985, p.290.

psychological being. This inevitably made the claims far more ambitious than at first imagined, i.e. that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has been a primary forger of modern thought and I found that I was far from alone in this belief. It therefore became an imperative to see *Hamlet* as testing the authenticity of transpersonal psychology's claims as well as to produce a transpersonal literary interpretation of the play. When it comes to the literary criticism that *Hamlet* has attracted there are no superlatives to cover the length and breadth of material stretching across the decades. It becomes obvious very quickly that the choice of material must be highly selective and as effective as possible, since there is such an enormous wealth of comment about the prince. I tried to maximise the representation therefore, between some of the best-known *Hamlet* scholars, such as Dover Wilson, Harold Goddard, Harold Bloom, L. C. Knights, et al., as well as to represent more recent views to add something of a contemporary view of the play that might best conform to the ideas contained in transpersonal psychology. For instance, Marvin Rosenberg's compendium, *The Masks of Hamlet*, is a thorough investigation of the various renditions of Hamlet on stage and screen incorporating many sources of criticism and interpretations with some key concepts relevant to the thesis, especially the concept of Hamlet's perceived transformation. It is worth noting that this is a relatively recent Hamlet study, published in 1992, and therefore reflects more clearly current readings of the play, which perhaps are of more interest to the topic of the thesis. Of particular importance was *Hamlet in Japan*, edited by Yoshiko Ueno, that contained some fascinating insights from Japanese and western scholars, including readings linked to the 'Zen' component in the play. And we will see that Zen has a particular bearing on the works of our major theorist, Ken Wilber.

I hope to show the background to the historical literary criticism of the play, with some of the points of consensus as well as introduce more recent and speculative analysis. In so doing, the attempt will be to present the broadest, most holistic approach that is practicable within the scope of the thesis.

The selective reading process involved the combing of theoretical texts for traces of the transpersonal while closely reading the literary texts in order to translate the imagery into some theoretically-based shape. In examining other theories, I sought to frame them either in the context of the transpersonal, or to dismiss them using the theories of transpersonal psychology. I was keen to include as many of the more salient interpretations in terms of the macro-arguments, because well-honed arguments of interpretation represent the very evolution and development of the study of literature itself. To find fault with any established interpretations would almost run counter to my argument, as the whole premise of transpersonal psychology is an integral and holistic approach and therefore is a whole that is part of a greater whole, *ad infinitum*.

While this allows for a great compass and expansive understanding of literary analysis it in no way means that *all* interpretations are good. Although there are many ways of looking at the text *Hamlet*, it is not a play about cooking – *Titus Andronicus* perhaps – but not *Hamlet*. Wilber tells us that “the statement “*Hamlet* is about the joys of war” is a false statement – it is a bad interpretation, it is wrong” because, he argues, it can be thoroughly rejected by a community of scholars who have read and interpreted the play. He insists that this process of rejection is no different from the scientific method of performing an injunction and having the empirical data ratified by “a

community of the adequate.”⁴ It is therefore of great benefit when presenting an interpretation based on a broad-spectrum approach, to be able to justify claims from as many varying fields and disciplines as is possible and this is what I have tried to accomplish.

In the preface to *Up From Eden*, Wilber asks the reader: “Did you not write this book, and countless others like it, simply to remind you who you are?” And it was this provocative notion that all we read is already vaguely familiar to us, that drew my attention to the fact that transpersonal psychology may be a valuable tool for interpretation.

As a result, I concluded my honours thesis on Robert Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* with a chapter based on a transpersonal reading of aspects in that icon of popular culture. Pirsig’s book, I should say, was itself instrumental in introducing me to certain ways of looking at the world. Wilber’s suggestion that what we experience, we have experienced before, encouraged me to ask: Is it then possible that this experience is actually informed by the books we read? In other words, is it possible that there is a way of examining a distillation of all that we read, even the whole history of books? Can we find some way of psychologically mapping the irregularities and anomalies, not just in interpersonal relationships, but also with the individual development of anyone’s perception of what their consciousness actually is made up of – including the books they find edifying? This may be too abstract a concept but it does seem that only transpersonal psychology would allow for such a speculation in the first place.

⁴ Wilber, Ken. *The Eye of Spirit*. Boston : Shambhala, 1997, p.18.

This is one of the reasons I chose transpersonal psychology as a subject of study and it is strengthened by the fact that the approach seems to fit so well with some of the experiences which critics have with their interaction with texts. And in many cases, the approach itself seems to have come before the psychology – it simply needed a school to formalise it. This may be because this is true of developmental psychology in general. For instance, you have to get to the stage of Jean Piaget’s ‘Formal Operational Thinking’ in order to understand that concept itself. For only at the stage of Formal Operational Thinking and beyond are we provided with the tools to think about thinking. This means that there needs to be an evolution of thought to enable us to think about thought itself. Or, there needs to be an evolution in consciousness in order for us to have the concept of an evolution of consciousness. As Wilber puts it in *Eye to Eye*: “The very power of logic lies in its transcendence of sensory objects (as Piaget has demonstrated, formal operational thinking or rational logic operates *upon*, and thus transcends, concrete and sensorimotor experience).”⁵

This idea must have some bearing on what we read and how we read it. When we read, we re-create the literary concept for ourselves, albeit within a given context. If we see a McDonald’s ‘drive-thru’ sign for instance and understand that phrase and are aware of the process involved, it cannot be interpreted in an infinite amount of ways. There are lateral ways of interpreting it. We could argue that there is an insidious content to the way that they are advertising out in the road. We could make a whole political thesis out of the phrase drive-thru. But essentially as we do that we will be moving away from the simple concept of ‘drive-thru’. We will have to expand the environment around the phrase in order to tackle the greater themes and the macrocosm

⁵ Wilber, Ken. *Eye to Eye*. Boston : Shambhala, 1996, p.8.

that surrounds them. But the sign itself is very hard to misinterpret. It doesn't mean – “Drive through without stopping.” The phrase means that there is the facility for you to stay in your car and order your food. Drive-thru entails stopping in this context. It does not have a myriad of alternative meanings, but it does have a myriad of contexts where its meaning is mediated. And this is, of course true of all literature as well. This point though is at odds with many of the literary theories that were so popular during my undergraduate degree in a post-structuralist theoretical climate. While I understood what these theorists were getting at, generally, I tended to think that they were saying a lot to convey very little. Moreover, they seemed more interested in immersing themselves in the nuts and bolts of language rather than literature, and it has long been my opinion that the literature we choose to read is exactly what emancipates us from the tyranny of language. This thesis is therefore not overly concerned with many fields in literary theory. There will be no deliberation on what constitutes the differences between the new criticism, reader-response, existentialism, feminism, structuralism, post-structuralism or post, post-post or proto-postmodernism, etc., but rather a reliance on contemporary holistic, integral and transpersonal models. Ken Wilber, when examining literary theory, talks of the “constitutive nature of interpretations,” and warns that context “means ‘constraints,’ not chaos,” suggesting a degree of limitation to literary analysis. He concludes that the examination of a work of art is “the evoking and elucidating” of a highlighted context, looking at “the total web of evidence.”⁶ The context of this thesis then, is that it seeks to interpret texts in specific ways relevant to a particularly Wilberian psychological perspective, while relying on the web of evidence already gathered by former literary scholars. We must also be aware of the

⁶ Wilber, Ken. *The Eye of Spirit*. Boston : Shambhala, 1997, p.128-133.

psychological and literary equivalents of Heisenberg's 'uncertainty principle' as well as the rigours and confines of a formatted academic thesis.

Importantly, as my major theorist, Wilber's lucid, stimulating, and often amusing style is immediately accessible to someone with a literary background. His works provide an enormous synthesis of psychological and philosophical theories, encompassing a vast array of ideas. And since he is concerned with the evolution of consciousness, Wilber is acutely aware of the processes involved in the communication of an essentially developmental argument. If his argument did not expand and incorporate, thereby sometimes superseding previously held beliefs, Wilber himself could hardly be developing in the way in which his conviction to transpersonal evolution dictates. In the words of Robert Romanyshyn and Brian Whalen, this serves for psychology in general: "the discipline of psychology changes as the world does. In this sense, we would say that the discipline of psychology must be rewritten in every age."⁷ It therefore follows that psychological interpretation of literary texts is destined to follow suit.

Wilber is the largest figure in the world of transpersonal psychology. In fact it is his first book, *The Spectrum of Consciousness*, published in 1974, that is attributed with the wide scale interest in the transpersonal movement. This place was cemented with the publication of the sister volumes: *The Atman Project* and *Up from Eden*, published in 1977, where the author presented his most penetrating insights and cohesive philosophies into transpersonal developmental consciousness. Each volume attempts to map the spectrum of consciousness, one ontogenetically, and the other phylogenetically.

⁷ Romanyshyn, Robert D. and Brian J. Whalen. 'Psychology and the Attitude of Science' in *Existential and Phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology*, ed. Ronald S. Valle and Steen Halling. New York: Plenum Press, 1989, p.131.

The Atman Project charts the progress, structures and stages of consciousness within the individual, from infant, through adolescence and onto individuated states of transcendence during meditation. *Up from Eden* charts the corresponding journey that the human species has made up the phylogenetic ladder from the dawn of time to the present day and tries to assess the way in which future generations will continue to make transitions towards higher levels of a collective, cultural consciousness. According to Wilber, both the individual consciousness and the culture in which it is shaped are driven by the rise toward a spiritual dimension, super/god-consciousness, or Atman. *The Atman Project* sees that this drive is forever being translated into humankind's efforts to understand and transcend death while forever realising the futility of temporal bodily existence and an ever-present separate self-sense and accompanying death-terror. It is important for this thesis that the reader understand the way in which Wilber views the relationship between the individual and the cultural context that individuals find themselves in. That is the individual who transcends the culture will be the one that has insights which transcend that context and it is for this reason that ontogenetic evolution precedes phylogenetic advance, although there is obviously a complicated interplay of this relationship. In commenting on *The Atman Project* and *Up from Eden* in a later work, Wilber admits that there was some controversy about his ideas of evolution. However, he reports that while he has refined some of the categories, he still "stands strongly behind the main conclusions of those early books; indeed, subsequent research has made them even more, not less plausible."⁸ It is for this reason, and the fact that these two books carry much of the central themes of his work, that they will determine the main theoretical schema for my

⁸ Wilber. *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality*. Boston : Shambhala, 2000, p.596.

literary analysis. However, there are also inclusions of relevant material from some of Wilber's other works as well, including *Eye to Eye*, *The Eye of Spirit*, *A Brief History of Everything*, *The Marriage of Sense and Soul* and the 800-page *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality*, the first in a planned trilogy entitled *Kosmos*.

Wilber draws heavily on earlier theorists clearly synthesising many ideas before providing his own unique contributions to the debates. Because he tackles so much material, traversing many fields, he relies on writings from across a wide range of disciplines and resources. For mythology, for example, he cites the works of Joseph Campbell, while for developmental psychology he relies on Jean Piaget a great deal to bolster his own views on the developmental psychology of children. Generally, he subsumes the psychologies of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung among others, in order that they fit his hierarchy of consciousness development, but when he does so it is always with clarity and fairness and always with a particular regard for referencing. It is due to this that he tends to arrive at conclusions which are made up of many perspectives and for this reason I will quote directly from Wilber, using his bias and phrasing, rather than the original source, whenever possible. This is in order that we can expedite matters for the concerns of this thesis without reiterating the work already done by Wilber. However a certain amount of shore work will need to be done in order to represent the crux of his ideas so that they may be understood in relation to the aims of this thesis. I have attempted to consolidate his broad range of ideas in chapter one and provide a brief overview of Wilber's transpersonal psychological models.

Added to this are the contributions from the various schools of psychology that predate the transpersonal discipline and as Wilber is careful to point out, their findings still have much relevance, especially to the personal realms. Freud's ideas for instance,

are still the main source that Wilber uses to establish arguments concerning the ego, id and superego as well as libidinal drives, the psycho-sexual realms, dreams and early psychotherapy. What Wilber does is use Freud's works to underpin what he regards as the lower realms of the conscious and subconscious self within the framework of the transpersonal model, but he stresses that he is "no fan of Freud beyond the lower levels."⁹

Equally, Carl Jung's theories play an important role with regard to the archetypes, symbolism and the archaic in general. Abraham Maslow, ostensibly the father of transpersonal psychology, also has an important bearing on the development of Wilber's own theories. His texts, *Toward a Psychology of Being* and *The Further Reaches of Human Nature*, are of a profound significance to humanistic psychology in particular, as well as psychology in its entirety and were of great support during the research in helping me to understand the routes of transpersonal psychology. This was also the case with Charles Tart's *Transpersonal Psychologies*, although the essays therein do not represent anything like the coherence and latitude of Wilber's own works.

In choosing the literary texts, I wanted works which were firstly, well known and readily accessible so that the reader could concentrate on the methodology applied to their interpretation and secondly, books which displayed subject matter relevant to the transpersonal literary field. William Golding's haunting tale, *Lord of the Flies*, was triggered by the idea of devolution, or human regression and what Wilber would attribute to the pathologies of failed transcendence. An earlier stage of the thesis was a deliberation on the idea that presented the evolutionary genesis of a work. I remembered that there was a famous film of Golding's book as well as a subsequent

⁹ Wilber, Ken. *Up from Eden*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1996. p.251n.

documentary of the filmmaking process and a reunion of the actors entitled *Time Flies*. This seemed to draw a parallel with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the film *Apocalypse Now* (a thinly disguised adaptation), and the documentary *Hearts of Darkness*, which chronicles Francis Ford Coppola's creation. True, one book dealt with schoolboys, the other with colonists in Africa, but the thematic was extremely similar.

I was thrilled by this seemingly close development and the more I contemplated the themes of the two books, with their similar offspring, the more I decided they dealt with identical subject matter. Furthermore, of particular interest to a transpersonal study was the continuing investigation of the material, *as it evolved* by making films about the books and then documentaries about the films. This snowballing or more descriptively, Russian-doll effect was fascinating in light of the idea of transpersonal development. I wanted to show eventually, for instance, that the actor, Thomas Gaman, who played Simon in Peter Brook's well-regarded adaptation, was actually a trans-persona of Simon, the character in the book. That is, that he had incorporated some of the traits of the person he portrayed in the cinematic interpretation of Golding's book. But this proved to be a study that would move rapidly away from the literature and lean heavily towards the details of the psychology, making the aims of the thesis far too ambitious. Moreover, it seemed it would need the kind of commitment involved in the making of the television series *7Up*, which spans the lifetimes of its subjects as they have grown-up from seven onwards, and re-acquaints the viewer with the material every seven years.

I was however gratified, that my initial assumption about the transpersonal nature in acting a role spilling into real life, was confirmed by Thomas Gaman, about playing Simon. He kindly sent me an e-mail confirming that he did feel he had been profoundly

affected by his personal involvement with the film and had absorbed some of the nature of Golding's character. Mr Gaman is currently a freelance forester in California, and anyone familiar with Simon's affinity with nature will surely see the significance in that. In his own words:

I am proud of my role as Simon, and always have been. A third of a century has intervened, but I will never deny that the character is part of me, and that the experience went on to build other parts which you cannot so easily see ... In *Lord of the Flies* I related really to nobody in particular, my role provided a connection between the boys and the natural world. In my real life perhaps, this had an impact on me – I went on to become a forester and today this is still my profession, and perhaps a link to my life as Simon.

All this could be ascribed to the skill of Peter Brook's casting, but that fact alone would make him something of a visionary, not at all out of place with some of the areas of interest to studies in transpersonality. As Mr Gaman points out:

Peter Brook managed to see the essential raw material of personality in small boys, and to exaggerate these traits to unfold the story of *Lord of the Flies* on film in 90 minutes, speaking through our eyes with a script drawn verbatim from Golding's book.

Perhaps the idea of Peter Brook exaggerating existing raw persona in order to unfold Golding's story was as near as I would get to a transpersonal reading from the film, so I decided to devote myself entirely to the literature.

Lord of the Flies was "an instant classic"¹⁰ and has been a perennial choice on school and university curricula around the world almost since it was first published in 1954. The fact that this fable is used time and again for the purposes of teaching in schools

¹⁰ Niven, Alastair. *York Notes on Lord of the Flies*. Harlow: Longman, 1980, p.5.

prompts me to suggest that teachers choose it as a means for catharsis in classes. The psychology of this alone is fascinating. And a fable “normally illustrates a fundamental aspect of human behaviour which might otherwise be explained only in a work of great complexity.”¹¹ This makes Golding’s story of manifold interest to exploration by the complex models of transpersonal psychology.

As the research continued, I was unsurprised to learn that *Lord of the Flies* was in fact often compared with *Heart of Darkness*. I was however amazed by Golding’s claim that he had never read Conrad’s story. But this in itself seems to lend some credence to the transpersonal idea of a perennial theme that shapes part of the evolution of the human species, a part of the collective unconscious, an example of synchronicity, at the very least of common interests. For these reasons there is a deliberate sense of a conflation when I consider the texts of Golding and Conrad. The reader will see that I conveniently see Ralph and Marlow as representative of each other in many ways, Ralph as the boy and Marlow, the adult man.

This was so that I could approach the topic of regression and how it affected both children and adults with a view to seeing how differently the outcomes were between the respective ages and also how the different authors dealt with their similar themes. The reason for all these threads and conglomeration of ideas is that my studies are anchored in comparative literature, so if at times there seems to be a coagulate of these two texts, it is by way of comparing them against the backdrop of Wilber’s theories and models.

My research also included exploration of transpersonal psychology on the internet and initially provided me with much-needed introductions, overviews and important

¹¹ Niven. p.35.

texts, including the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. Yet as the research process continued, I was forced to conclude that as a research tool the web has some major pitfalls. As a simple example of the complexities, it is impossible to keep up with the numerous threads of discussion that appear on the official Ken Wilber web site alone. So while this is a limitation to the way in which the thesis will be mapped, I do not feel that this is necessarily a disadvantage. As with a generalised query to a search engine on the internet, you can have far too much material and information. I hope to be more specific about the examination in question and by outlining my literary favouritism from the beginning, I hope to be able to direct attention to the specifics of the thesis.

A CAUTIONARY NOTE ON THE INTERNET AS A RESOURCE

As a relatively new phenomenon in the area of communication, the internet, like all forms of information sources, must initially be regarded with a great deal of concern, particularly from a purely academic viewpoint. As I said, I have found it to be a useful addition to my sources and was very enthusiastic and optimistic about the amount of information that I would be able to glean, read and download from the net. There was the added bonus of being able to do this at almost any hour of the day or night and from the comfort and privacy of my own home. But gradually over a period of about two years, starting from the conclusion of my honours thesis, I realised that in fact, the resources themselves and the material obtained from them were open to a great deal of questioning. Some of these points are listed below.

Firstly, many of the articles were badly written with glaring spelling and grammatical errors, sloppy or no referencing, poorly defined quotes, wild claims and unsound

conclusions. There was a great deal of repetition of material and essays and articles that often abounded with passionate, subjective opinion not supported by any other material. This presented manifold problems in relation to editing, sourcing material, selective reading and accuracy. It raised the kind of question: “Can I entirely believe ‘Ben Wilker’ from Wisconsin that Einstein really said what is quoted?” And, if it is not well referenced then there follows the nightmare of finding corroborative evidence or the original source.

Secondly, the net tends to deliver too much information at once and in such a random way as to make research impenetrably difficult or else repetitive, if not impossible. Typing into a search engine anything to do with Shakespeare delivers something in the order of 6,000,000 hits – which do you check? which do you leave? The problem with too much information at once is that the time and energy spent sifting the material becomes exponential and there is a very serious problem of a mental overload where real frustration develops instead of creativity and learning. In addition to this referencing sites can be time consuming and difficult and download times can be tedious and there is the possibility of technical faults, forcing the user to start again.

Thirdly, the material which does seem pertinent and relevant in some way, seems to find its way into the thesis with remarkable rapidity, without careful consideration and perusal of ideas. Key terms and quotes can just be cut and pasted into the desired chapter without the material actually being analysed and inculcated.

Fourthly, the people who are interesting and seem to have something new to say, are either promoting a product or sale of a book anyway, so inevitably you end up at the library or bookstore.

Fifthly, and perhaps a point which is only now coming to light, is that many sites are simply not maintained and are therefore not kept up to date. The initial enthusiasm of private individuals who were willing to devote hundreds of hours designing their own websites, replying to requests and engaging new material is waning rapidly since most of them have a living to make. Therefore only paid employees and professionals are in a position to keep up with the increasing demands upon the sites. The result of this is that the internet, like everything else, is fuelled primarily by the corporate sector, who use it to advertise their goods or as a way to farm out the bureaucracy and paperwork to the consumer. The greatest example of this is online banking which is free, whereas over the counter transactions are charged. Eventually I decided I was in a position to take advice from Plato:

Their trust in writing, produced by external characters which are no part of themselves, will discourage the use of their own memory within them. You have invented an elixir, not of memory, but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise. – *Phaedrus* (274D-275B)¹²

In summary of my points, I decided to reference only material contained within authorised published texts in order to avoid the above-mentioned pitfalls. I would also like to note here, in the survey of the field, that American spellings have been kept when used in quotations.

¹² Fowler, H. N. *Phaedrus*. London: William Heinemann, 1926.