A Case Study: The Feminist and Cultural Contribution to Transpersonal Experience

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Abstract

Indeed feminist spirituality belongs to the woman. However, a woman is not automatically attune with feminist spirituality if she is not aware of and open to. This case study presents that man can experience the feminist spirituality when he is open to that spirit. Because of the awareness and openness, the hidden qualities of his anima side is connected and transformed by the feminist spirituality of the participants of this study. Therefore, researcher believe that anyone who is aware of her and his feminist's spiritual qualities can be connected with the spirit within and around that lead toward spiritual integration that bear fruit of transformation.

Key word: *Feminist, spirituality, integration, transpersonal experience.*

Introduction

While studying the textbook, "The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Transpersonal Psychology, edited by Harris L. Friedman and Glenn Hartelius, one of the significant experiences happed to the researcher in the right time. It is not a coincidence experience but a proof on what we called the spiritual connection in daily life for those who are open to it. Researcher has to confess that what is presented about Feminist and Cultural Contribution to Transpersonal Psychology, by Christine Brooks, Kendra Ford, and Anne Huffman is taken place with the researcher. This is the main reason for presenting this case study.

To begin this case study, allow the researcher to explain the personal point of view on feminist spirituality and its context. Researcher believes that the feminist spirituality is not only belongs to the women but men as well. Taking of C. G. Jung point of view on animus and anima as integrative human component, researcher believe feminist spirituality take place in men as well. Men can develop feminist spirituality when he is aware of his hidden qualities from his anima side in his way of spiritual searching. In contrary a woman is not automatically attune with feminist spirituality by nature. In fact, many women are not spiritually feminist in the sense that, they are not aware of and not knowing this spiritual quality within themselves and working it out like some significant women in the society. Cultural issues still become a hinder for them to develop, even they are aware of it. Man has more opportunity supported by culture but still very much depend on the person who are aware of this spiritual giftedness and let it grow and shape his life. Therefore, it is clear for the researcher that this feminist spiritual qualities are within everybody, men and women. Anyone who is aware of her and his feminist's spiritual qualities can grow toward spiritual integration. She or he can be easily enfolded by the feminine spirituality and be led by it toward the fullness of her or his transformation. This profound experience happen to the researcher while studying this textbook of transpersonal psychology.

Feminist and Cultural Contribution to Transpersonal Psychology

Before presenting this case study, the researcher needs to present some of the

important ideas on the Feminist and Cultural Contribution to Transpersonal Psychology. Building on the recent participatory turn Ferrer, (2002) Ferrer & Sherman, (2008) influencing transpersonal studies, feminist Fernandes, (2003), interconncetional Crenshaw, (1991), or Cultural Markus & Kitamaya (2003) dialectical frames afford new vantage points through which spiritual and exceptional human experience are view within cultural context Brooks, (2010). In particularly, Ferrer & Sherman (2008), drawing on decades of feminist postmodern theological and religion studies scholarship, centralized embodied, immanent experience of sacred and the divine. They noted that "postmodern feminism replaces a masculinized, discarenate, and supposedly universal and autonomous mental ego with a gendered, embodied, situated and participatory inter-subjective self as the agent engaged in religious pursuits" (p.13). In this view, locations of identity are taken as central to spiritual experiences, or multilocal transpersonal events (Ferrer, 2002). "This participation engages human beings in the activity called participatory knowing, that is a multidimensional access to reality that can involve not only the creative power of the mind, but also the body, the heart, and the soul" (Ferrer, 2002, p.3).

Mainstream psychology as a whole, including feminist psychology, recently arrived at a juncture of readiness to address spiritual needs in psychology research and practice. Fernandes (2003) noted "wariness" (p. 9) of mainstream feminist to embrace spirituality in public life and a lack of a cross-pollination related to this subject area in women's studies and feminist psychology in both academic and practice. In an attempt to address the challenge, Fernandes introduced the possibility of a "spiritualized feminism" as a way for feminist to begin approaching their public and personal lives from a spiritual location to enhance sustainable social change. Fernandes urged feminist to develop more compassion and humility in their daily lives and establish a disidentified self in order to effectively create long lasting social transformation. One such approach to activism is through a consciousness of interconnectedness of all things, which Starhawk (1982) called "immanence-the awareness of the world and everything in it as alive, dynamic, interdependent, and interacting, infused with the moving energies; a living being, a waving dance" (p.177). To create long lasting spiritual transformation, one must approach activism from a place of humility and compassion, and receptivity to the outcome of such activism. Fernades (2003) states, compassion and humility must be understood not just as feelings or even ideas but as actual practice, practice that are necessary component of this transformative social activism (p.59). The integration of transpersonal psychology with feminist psychology prompted her to establish a deeper personal meaning within the two fields and ground the intersection within her own identity in order to heal herself and be of service to her community. A crucial component of womanist thought is that a womanist "loves the spirit" (Holiday, 2010, p.103). To this end, Holiday argued, transpersonalism and womanism have natural affinity as school of thought since both disciplines value spirituality as a key component if human experience. Feminist and cultural psychologies contributed to the transpersonal discipline by creating a nexus of socially constructed views of spiritual experiences. Introducing the feminist research methods that underscore the value of subjectivity and qualitative approaches in

research, the researcher become both inside and outside the research. It include in the experimental, singular and plural, and within the construct of the intended research sees oneself and others, allowing fully for the contextual ideas of cultural and situation specific research as rich data rather than bias.

There are two research methods developed within the transpersonal field and influenced by feminist concept; intuitive inquiry and organic inquiry. Intuitive Inquiry (II) brings the compassionate heart to scientific inquiry and a renewed intentionally to the sciences (Anderson, 1998). Whereas Organic Inquiry (OI) is a quantitative, spiritual based and feminist-oriented method of study, which honors research as sacred and interconnected, Clements (2004). Organic Inquiry is based upon five principles of the sacred, the personal, the chthonic (in the earth), the relational and the transformative (Clements et al., 1998). The intersections of feminist and cultural lenses are evident in OI. A core purpose of the method is to integrate psychological and spiritual understanding into research, honoring the process of all the people involved; researcher, the researched, and the consumer of the research. OI emphasizes and invited transformation of heart and mind as well as providing information (Clements, 2011). As Andreson and Braus (2011) noted, in addition to information, research can provide opportunities for transformation. Such transformation takes place because people experience of importance, meaningful, and sometimes profound change in attitudes and view of oneself and of the world at large. This experience can occur in the researcher or scholar; other participants, including colleagues and research participants; the reader or audience of the report; and even in the society or culture in which the research or scholar is situated. In the forms in which research is typically is conducted, transformative changes sometimes may occur as spontaneous, unintended side effect or aftereffect of a research project.

As said before, while studying this textbook, researcher was working on the research about "Role of Spirituality in Healing Service, a comparative study of professional healers". Researcher was in the stage of finding the participants on this study. Between hundred professional healers gathered by that time, researcher considered nine of them as special participants. Demographically there are two men and seven women. The ages of these participants are from 37 to 79 years old. Four of them are from United States of America, and another five are from India, Malaysia, Singapore, Oceania and Shout Africa. There are five shamans, three psychiatrics, two charismatic and one counselor. One of the shamans is psychiatric as well, and another psychiatric is charismatic as well. They are considered important because they were not only answering the questionnaires but also give their comment for the same interest in the role of spirituality in healing profession. This spiritual relation we have affirmed what Ferrer said, "This participation engages human beings in the activity called participatory knowing, that is a multidimensional access to reality that can involve not only the creative power of the mind, but also the body, the heart, and the soul" (Ferrer, 2002, p.3).

Transpersonal Experience

From these nine important participants, three of them have affected the transformation within the researcher because of the power of their feminist spirituality. It is interesting to notice that organic inquiry, spiritual based and feminist-oriented method of study honors their research as sacred and

interconnected. The researcher did honor the present research as sacred and value the interconnection the researcher has with these three significant participants. With them, researcher experience the five characteristics of Organic Inquiry with the different degree in each person such as sacredness, personal connection, the chthonic (in the earth), the spiritual relational and the transformation (Clements et al., 1998). These three are from United State of America and considered shamanic as their group of faith since shaman is not a religion. The oldest is 79 years old with the profession as shaman and psychiatric, as well as writer. The second one is 58 years old shaman and social activist as well as writers. The youngest is 37 years old shaman who loves what she is doing. Researcher will present the spiritual connection with each of them that affect the transformation.

The spiritual relation with the first person happened when researcher red her first book, Journeying, where Shamanism and Psychology Meet, Gagan (1998). In the spiritual searching on the area or transpersonal psychology, bring about the spiritual encounter with the writer while reading her book above. The psyche of her writing connects the inner self of the researcher, illuminates and create the sense of awesome. As sign of the gratitude for the new perspective, insight, and spiritual awakening, researcher wrote her to express the sense of gratitude. The deeper communication took place between both as we shared our life story and journey of spiritual searching. In order to have more shaman participants in dissertation project, she referred the researcher to her shaman group website where the researcher than connecting with many more shaman. The deep sharing on our gifts as writers confirmed us of having spirituality in our writing profession. The compassionate of writing can bring transformation for the writer as well as reader if both are connected spiritually and honored the writing as sacred. This experience affirmed by Fernades (2003) who said, the integration of transpersonal psychology with feminist psychology prompted her to establish a deeper personal meaning within the two fields and ground the intersection within her own identity in order to heal herself and be of service to her community. The same connection happened to the researcher when reading her second book, Grow up your Ego, ten scientifically validated stages to emotional and spiritual maturity Gagan (2015). Researcher believe that this second book, translated to some Indian languages will reach out and connect more readers, men and women who are open to be connected with the spirit of Gatan in her writings and be transformed.

The transforming experience with the second participant happened when the researcher was reading this article, feminist and cultural contribution to the Transpersonal Psychology. Researcher was reflecting on the organic inquiry when the communication from this powerful participant, Lenore Norrgard, came after some clarification researcher has asked due to two unanswered items. Researcher had explained the intention behind the two statements in order to have her answer but unexpectedly researcher received her profound reason for not answering those two items. She also sent two of her articles; the interview on her shamanic activism and her own articles on Ritual activism she had conducted in Wessington DC. Researcher was overwhelmed as well as transformed by her feminist spiritual power; the power of sacred ritual healing that has transformed so many people in saving the social problem. Researcher was so grateful of encountering this influential woman with

ritual activities that continue to transform people and society. In that very moment, between textbook of transpersonal psychology and this particular person, Lenore Norrgard researcher was in the moment of transpersonal experience. While reading her two articles; Ritual and activism; The alchemy of social transformation, (2007) and Jonathan Honvitz talks with Lenore Norrgard about shamanic activism, (2014), researcher experience five principles on Organic Inquiry. Researcher experience the echo or spirit of sacredness of the participants, the radiant of her feminist power as person, grounded in the same mother earth, the spiritual connection within researcher that illuminate and transform. Researcher believe that what this particular experience is the experience of thousands people in Washington DC, trough the sacred healing ritual that unified their souls in a unifying vision of peace, justice, and harmony among human and with earth. The transforming power of her shamanic activities at 2007 still have an echo that overshadow the researcher as the spirit of researcher connect to that moment.

The last transpersonal experience with the youngest participant, Ashley Brothers, and it again happened in the right time as the researcher come to this case study. As she answered the questionnaire, the three items were not yet answer. Researcher wrote back with some explanation, hoping that she will answer after understanding what it means. Unexpectedly researcher received her long explanation on the three items with passion and love. The curiosity about her leads researcher to find who she is. There researcher found her address and website. What a surprise of discovering this young feminist who has developed her mission of healing out of her personal experience of healing from terminal illness. Reading her websites (bonesoftheearth.org) with the healing service she has done, researcher comes to understand her love and passion in her healing service. Reading her two poems; Diamonds in the Rough (2005) and Unbroken (2010) in her website showed me how meaningful her second life that she live out love and passion as well as her conviction on eternity. She has meaningful life after her terminal illness experience, which is very much connected with the same meaningful life after my first project of writing on Death Bring True Life, Journeying with death and dying (2012) Indonesian version. As sign of gratitude and spiritual connection, Researcher also share his own poem on Eternal Me, Kraeng (2017) to her. Her transformation from nearly dead experience is a call for loving compassionate in her healing service. Researcher believe many of her patients experienced this kind of transformation as they are opened to be touched and connected by her feminist spirit as researcher experience in the moment of doing this dissertation project.

Conclusion

As a new beginner in transpersonal psychology, researcher honor this transpersonal study as sacred. During this study, especially in the dissertation project, researcher is connected spiritually with these three significant spiritual feminists. The transpersonal connection and experience with these three prominent women shows that the feminist spirituality is for all, women and men. This transpersonal experience affirmed what Christine Brooks, Kendra Ford, and Anne Huffman presented in Feminist and Cultural Contribution to Transpersonal Psychology. Transpersonal experience can take place when both parties are opened and moved in connection. What they have contributed for the transformation trough their writing, social

activism and healing service is taken place in a distance with the researcher also. What is happening to the researcher is a concrete example of contribution of the Feminist and Cultural Contribution to transpersonal psychology, a transformation of human and earth.

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