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Empirical Study of Frontier Topics

- **1976:** Michael Murphy inaugurated The Transformation Project to systematically study extraordinary bodily transformations that occur in such areas as religious practice, mind-assisted healing, biofeedback, sensory isolation, sports, acupuncture, physical therapy and mental illness.
- **1982:** Esalen sponsored a four-week interdisciplinary training program on "Paranormal Intelligence: Explorations of the Limits of Human Capacities." Its focus areas included: 1) Paranormal experience and abilities 2) Modern parapsychological research 3) Psychosis: Disease or spiritual emergency? and 4) New approaches to self-exploration. Leaders: Christina and Stanislav Grof, Fritjof Capra, Rupert Sheldrake, Russell Targ
- **1981-1987:** seven invitational conferences on "Psychic Research." Participants: Charles Tart, Russell Targ, Keith Harary, Helmut Schmidt, Daniel Benor, Herbert Benson, William Braud, Marilyn Schlitz, Jacob Zigelboim, Alyce Green, Elmer Green, Stephan Schwartz, Rand DeMattei, Janet Quinn, Bernard Grad, Charles Spence, Ed Brame, Nancy Lunney, Michael Murphy, David Deamer, Bruce Pomeranz, and Lynn Trainor. As a result of the first meeting on Time and Psi, the Parapsychological Association held a symposium on the subject with many of the same participants, providing the nucleus for a ninety-minute BBC television program, "The Case of ESP."
- **1983-1984:** two invitational conferences on the "Scientific Investigation of Subtle Energies" convened by George Leonard. Participants: Fred Lorenz, Charles Tart, Chris Cullander, Tod Mikuriya, Julian Isaacs, Bernard Grad, and Tim Scully.
- **1987:** invitational conference on "Science and the Transpersonal," designed to explore issues relating to the development of scientific methodologies, styles and concepts which accept and adequately address

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the implications of a transpersonal realm.

Participants: Julian Isaacs, Charles Honorton, Rex Stanford, Michael Murphy, Stuart Twemlow, Rowena Pattee, Ruthann Corwin, Charles Tart, Rachel Bagby, Rodger S. Jones, Shinzen Young, Arthur Hastings, and Michael Harner.

- **1987:** conference on "New Directions in Biological Research and Evolutionary Theory," led by David Deamer, a prominent origins-of-life researcher.
- **1988-1995:** seven conferences on "New Directions in Meditation Research," convened by Tom Hurley and co-sponsored by the Institute of Noetic Sciences. Participants: Joan Borysenko, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Daniel Brown, Beverly Rubik, Roger Walsh, Frances Vaughan, Elmer Green, Stanley Krippner, Charles Tart, Willis Harman, Charles Alexander, Etzel Cardena, Michael Washburn, Stephen LaBerge, Kenneth Pelletier, Ron Kurtz, Michael Murphy, Steve Donovan, and Michael Mahoney.
- **1992:** publication of *The Future of the Body*, Michael Murphy's comprehensive scholarly guide to metanormal abilities and a wide range of extraordinary human experiences. This volume was the fruit of work begun in 1976 with *The Transformation Project* and continued through invitational conferences and scholarly exchanges.
- **1993-1998:** conference series on "Direct Mental and Healing Interactions," which then became "Distant Mental Influences on Living Systems," convened by Marilyn Schlitz and co-sponsored with the Institute of Noetic Sciences. Participants: William Braud, Sharon Thom, Richard Bierman, Dean Radin, Stephen Braude, Deborah Delaney, Robert Morris, Bruce Pomeranz, Helmut Schmidt, Richard Wiseman, Dennis Stillings, Elisabeth Targ, Fr. Sean O'Laoire, Ellen Levine, and Garret Young.
- **1996:** publication of the scholarly resource book *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation: A Review of Contemporary Research with a Comprehensive Bibliography: 1931-1996*, by Michael Murphy and Steve Donovan, updated by Eugene Taylor. This remains the most complete survey of empirical research into the effects of meditation.
- **1998:** invited conference on "The Survival of Bodily Death," gathered leading researchers in the fields of reincarnation, near-death, out-of-body, channeling, mediumship, multiple personality, and cross-cultural

studies to address the empirical evidence for some form of survival of bodily death. Participants: Adam Crabtree, Bruce Greyson, Michael Grosso, Arthur Hastings, Emily Kelly, Ed Kelly, Sukie Miller, Michael Murphy, and Charles Tart. Summary of proceedings at www.esalenctr.org.

- **1999:** invited conference on "Subtle Energies and the Uncharted Realms of Mind," brought into collaboration researchers studying telepathy, precognition, subtle energies, martial arts, lucid dreaming, remote viewing, and distant mental healing. Participants: Kathy Dalton, Bernard Grad, Wayne Jonas, Mary Ellen Klee, Stephen Laberge, George Leonard, Fred Luskin, Roger Nelson, Dean Radin, Beverly Rubik, Marilyn Schlitz, and Russell Targ. Summary of proceedings at www.esalenctr.org.

Physics and Consciousness

- **1974:** public lecture for Esalen San Francisco by Nick Herbert on "Physics, Consciousness, and Psychic Phenomena."
- **1976:** Esalen and the Physics Consciousness Research Group of San Francisco conduct a month-long invited conference on the conceptual gaps and possibilities in theoretical physics and the relevance of modern physical thought for consciousness transformation on the planet. Participants: Jack Sarfatti, Saul-Paul Sirag, Michael Murphy, Fred Alan Wolf, Nick Herbert, Peter Flessel, Ralph Abraham, Michael Karnov, and John King
- **1976-1988:** eleven annual invited conferences on "Quantum Physics and the Nature of Reality" convened by Nick Herbert. Special attention was devoted to Bell's Theorem and its implications. Participants: Gary Zukav, Charles Brandon, Nick Herbert, Ariadna Chernavska, John Clauser, Ralph Abraham, Saul-Paul Sirag, Bernard d'Espagnat, and Henry Stapp.
- **1979:** Gary Zukav published *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, which explored the implications and origins of quantum physics for a popular audience, and won the American Book Award for Science. It was partially inspired by the Esalen conferences
- **1987:** Nick Herbert published a popular science book *Quantum Reality: Beyond the New Physics*, inspired partially by Esalen work and subsequently published *Elemental Mind : Human Consciousness and the New*

Physics to expand these ideas further.

Sports Psychology

- **1972:** Michael Murphy, co-founder of Esalen, published *Golf in the Kingdom*, destined to become one of the classic works on the inner game of sports.
- **1973:** Esalen created the Esalen Sports Center, designed to foster an orientation to sports beyond mere competition and physical activity. Former professional football player David Meggyesy, Bob Kriegel, a group leader and sports coach, and Mike Spino, an innovative running coach, joined with Michael Murphy to build programs that saw sports as vehicles for self-development and avenues to a higher nature. The first weekend program was so successful that Esalen launched a two-week summer program. Prominent faculty: Stewart Brand, Judith Aston, John Brodie, Tim Galway, George Leonard, Stanley Keleman, Dave Meggyesy, Eleanor Metheny, Dan Millman, Robert Nadeau, Mike Murphy, Al Huang, Will Schutz, Jack Scott, Mike and Dyveke Spino.
- **April 15, 1973:** New York Times article on the Esalen Sports Center stated that, "Such is the clout generated by Esalen that the occasion may be to a change in sports what the storming of the Bastille was to the French Revolution."
- **1975:** George Leonard published *The Ultimate Athlete*, which presented a theoretical framework for the kind of work the Sports Center was fostering.
- **1976:** the Esalen Sports Center began a six-month program in mind/body development, coordinated by Mike Spino, featuring running, meditation, yoga, and other disciplines.
- **1978:** Michael Murphy and Rhea White published *In the Zone: Transcendent Experience in Sports*, the most comprehensive scholarly effort to date on metanormal experience in sport.
- **1993:** Esalen hosted a major conference at Stanford University, entitled "Toward the Further Reaches of Sport Psychology," in which prominent coaches, athletes, and sport psychologists from the former Soviet republics and the United States discussed current trends in theoretical and applied sport psychology.

Integral Practice

- **1983:** George Leonard gave the first of three Leonard Energy Trainings at Esalen, a rigorous eight-week integral program of physical, mental and spiritual disciplines.
- **1992:** George Leonard and Michael Murphy initiated a two-year experimental class in what they called Integral Transformative Practice (ITP), which combined meditation, imaging, affirmations, intellectual study, physical discipline, nutrition, and group work to create a comprehensive program for development. This experiment led to the publication of Leonard and Murphy's *The Life We Are Given* in 1995 and to the creation of numerous ITP groups in the U.S. and overseas. (web site: www.itp-life.com)

Environmental Studies

- **1966:** Gerard Haigh and William Zielonka led a workshop entitled "Man in Confrontation with Nature" to explore how modern humans distance themselves from the natural world and how best to remedy this separation.
- **1968:** Ralph Metzner led a series of dialogues on ecology and psychology at the Esalen San Francisco center.
- **1971:** lecture by Alan Watts and Lynn White on the "Ecological Crisis" at the Esalen San Francisco center, a lecture which inaugurated a joint effort by Esalen and Friends of the Earth to develop a psycho-ecological approach to human problems.
- **1987:** invitational conference on "Thinking About Biotechnology: Environment, Public Health, Social Priorities," convened by Walter Truett Anderson.
- **1990:** invitational conference on "Tropical Ethno-Medicine," gathering botanists, phytochemists, ethnologists, and ecologists working to preserve and understand rain forest plants with healing and psychotherapeutic potential.
- **1991:** invitational conference on "Ecological Transformation," bringing together environmentalists and activists to explore the confluence of ecological, cultural, and personal transformation, with a focus on a local project.

- **1993-4:** two conferences, convened by Theodore Roszak, on "Ecopsychology: Theory and Practice" which helped create a new field of inquiry. Participants: Charlene Spretnak, James Hillman, Mary Gomes, Allen Kanner, Sharon Thom, Margot McLean, Lane and Sarah Conn, Ellen Cole, Carl Anthony, Chellis Glendinning, Laura Sewall, Betty Roszak, Leslie Gray, John Seed, Elizabeth Ann Bragg, Dolores LaChapelle, Claire Greensfelder, Robert Greenway, Jeanette Armstrong, Steven Harper, Alan Hunt Badiner, Harold Gilliam, Steve Beck, Danile Moses, Renee Soule, and Jerry Mander. These conferences resulted in the publication of Ecopsychology, considered the defining work for the nascent field, and indirectly contributed to the formation of the first Department of Ecopsychology at Hayward State University.
- **1995:** conference on "Sustainability Consciousness," designed to forge relationships between activists, journalists, scientists, artists, business people, and educators, to encourage ecological thinking, and to weave together issues of sustainability, spirituality, and systems theory. Participants: Ralph Abraham, Rebecca Adamson, Andra Akers, Carl Anthony, Allan Hunt Badiner, Andrew Beath, Steve Beck, Mirabai Bush, Andre Carothers, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Christina Desser, Mark Dowie, Barbara Dudley, Joan Halifax, Paul Hawken, Mark Hertsgaard, Bill Joy, Joshua Karliner, Jay Michael Levin, Amory Lovins, Terence McKenna, Miguel A. Reynal, Catherine Sneed, Betsy Taylor, and Nina Wise.
- **1995:** conference on "The Business of Restoration," convened to envision the vital role business will play in the restoration of the Earth. Participants: Christina Desser, Allan Hunt Badiner, James Thornton, Steve Beck, Paul Hawken, Joshua Karliner, Amory Lovins, William McDonough, Elizabeth Pinchot, Gifford Pinchot, Artemis Joukowsky, Ted Halstead, Tamotsu Yamaguchi, Michael Stewart, Laurance Allen, Anita Roddick, Michael Totten, Daniel Ellsberg, Elisabet Sahtouris, Vandana Shiva, William Irwin Thompson, James Thornton, Will Keepin, and Lester Brown.

Alternative Views and Approaches to Psychosis

- **1962:** Richard Price co-founded Esalen with a strong

personal commitment to finding ways to deal with psychosis that were more humane than the prevalent practices of institutionalization, medication, and electroshock.

- **1968:** series of workshops and seminars entitled *The Value of Psychotic Experience*, designed to integrate and extend the theories of John Perry, R. D. Laing, Fritz Perls, and Kazimierz Dabrowski.
- **1969:** Esalen launched the Agnews Project, a three-year study of alternative approaches to psychosis, in a California State mental hospital, drawing expertise from Esalen faculty and methods and with support from the National Institute of Mental Health and the California Department of Health. Dr. Julian Silverman, an eminent research psychologist from the National Institute of Mental Health, headed the program, which had three main objectives: 1) Identify, via neurophysiological lab techniques, those individuals who go through psychotic experiences and emerge as better integrated personalities. 2) Develop a unique therapeutic milieu, including encounter groups and didactic seminars, where certain patients are allowed to go through psychosis unmedicated. 3) Revise theories of acute schizophrenic reactions to include the possibility of positive, healing, or problem-solving features of the state as well as the more ominous features.
- **1976:** Stanislav Grof and Joan Halifax-Grof led an Esalen month-long seminar for professionals and advanced students on "Schizophrenia and the Visionary Mind," including guest faculty such as Gregory Bateson, Erik Erikson, Jean Houston, Claudio Naranjo, Kenneth Pelletier, John Perry, Betty Fuller, and Will Schutz. Areas of focus included the biochemical, psychological and cultural variables in schizophrenia, the study of mystical experience, and various techniques for personal self-exploration (e.g. sensory isolation tank, biofeedback, bioenergetic work).
- **1980:** creation of the Spiritual Emergence Network by Stanislav and Christina Grof, with Esalen sponsorship. This organization is a referral and information network which now has a worldwide presence and thousands of members.
- **1981-1988:** seven invitational conferences at Esalen on "Alternatives to Institutional Psychiatric Treatment" convened by Larry Telles.

- **1984:** month-long Esalen seminar for professionals and graduate students on "Spiritual Emergency: Understanding and Treatment of Transpersonal Crises" led by Stanislav and Christina Grof.
- **1987:** invitational conference on "Spiritual Emergence," convened by Stanislav and Christina Grof.

Governance

- **1981-1990:** nine invited conferences on "Appropriate Governance," convened by social psychologist and futures planner Donald Michael, designed to explore the nature of appropriate governance for nations and groups that require both autonomy and increasing independence, with special attention to the viability of heterarchy as an organizing principle. Participants: M. Brian Murphy, Walter Anderson, Donald Michael, Jack Ballard, Patrick Ophuls, Lynton Caldwell, Keith Thompson, James Ogilvy, Jack Fobes, and Elsa Porter.

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