

Editorial

Welcome to our new issue of JSTP!

In the **Science and Essay** section, the following articles await you: The report of psychologist, theologian, and historian, *Bernhard Wegener*, (in German only) on the cultural and religious history of “*laughter*” presents in an encyclopaedic manner a form of emotional expression that really is somehow subversive. Laughter was suspect to some rulers and defenders of the true faith because in it lies the possibility of distancing, of alienation of norms, and of insubordination against what is considered morally correct. *Eckart Ruschmann*, philosopher and psychologist, in “*transcending towards transcendence*” is concerned with the pitfalls in psychology and other sciences of confusing transcendence and pointing towards the transcendent (his article is in German only, but exists in a previous version in English, too; cf. *Implicit Religion*, 14 (4), 421-432). With his differentiation between the metaphysical realm of *transcendence* and the epistemologically accessible sphere of *transcending*, he also provides an important justification for the concept of a “transcendental” (one could also say, transcending) psychology, like in the title of this journal.

The social psychiatrist *Wolfgang Hasselbeck* presents a case report (in German) about a young man, who was introduced to him for psychiatric assessment because of an assumed psychosis, and whom he attested being a credible mystic, instead. Therefore, he asks the fundamental question: “*May a Mystic Get a Legal Guardian?*” The author delineates the case precisely based on detailed file excerpts. From these elaborate casuistics, it becomes clear that the usual appraisal as a “non-viability” caused by psychosis or depression may be plausible, but at the same time exists a profound and veritable religious vocation, so that the before mentioned question should be discussed by a wide community of psychiatric and psychological practitioners.

In the first of his two articles in the **Meditations** section, the editor reflects the difference between a spiritually oriented and a materialistic psychotherapy (“*The limitations of conventional psychotherapy at the limitless horizon of transcendence*”). His second article (“*Quotidian Tantra*”) deals with the compatibility

of every day life and Buddhist tantric methods. *Kshitija D. Kulkarni*, a young Indian woman, describes in the section **Hagia Empeiria** (dedicated to personal spiritual experience) her own way to and with meditation. In a lively language, she depicts what meditation means for her and what benefits she receives from it. The elucidating article (in the **Spirituality Check** section) of the Indian-born scholar *Vanamali Gunturu* about “*Hinduistic Tantra*” revisits the tantric topic of the aforementioned article of the editor (his article is published in German only in this issue, but the author promised to deliver an English version for the next issue). Gunturu is capable of explaining the historical, sociological, and religious-systemic dimensions of Indian Tantra in a comprehensive and comprehensible way. The article of the **Practice Test** series, this time deals with a surprising insight into the possibility of making money from a technique Milton Erickson made famous as “utilizing” everyday phenomena for hypnotic effects.

In the last section (**Commentary & Review**), you firstly find a congress report, in which the editor reports about a conference of the Mind and Life Institute Europe, which under the patronage of the Dalai Lama pursues the idea of bringing natural science and Buddhism into dialogue. The book review section of this issue deals with a youth book, in which the famous figurehead of atheism, *Richard Dawkins*, tries to prove the supremacy of a scientific-materialistic world view over all other systems of explaining the world; with the new and first real *handbook* that explicitly is dedicated to Transpersonal Psychology; with psychotherapist *Josef Rabenbauer*’s attempt to make self-inquiry a subject of a spiritually motivated quest for your own self; and with the newest book of hypnotherapist and consciousness researcher *Georg Milzner* that is aiming at reconciling neuroscience with spirituality.

I wish you a pleasant reading!

Edgar W. Harnack

Editor