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Editors' Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

This volume of the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* (IJTS) is the first under our editorial leadership and the first produced under the new sponsorship of Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center in San Francisco, USA. Effective with this issue, we are instituting some changes in the journal's format. In particular, in addition to regular articles, we are including a special section that contains articles focused on a common topic of relevance to transpersonal studies. As well, we are including a reader's commentary section to serve as a forum for readers to respond to articles appearing in IJTS and/or issues of broader interest to transpersonal studies.

The regular articles in this edition start out with a piece by Roger Walsh entitled "Entheogens: True or False?" This examines the ongoing debate whether psychedelic substances can lead to genuine mystical experiences. It is followed by Charles D. Laughlin and C. Jason Throop's "Experience, Culture, and Reality: The Significance of Fisher Information for Understanding the Relationship Between Alternative States of Consciousness and the Structures of Reality." This examines how alternative states of consciousness are used in religions, from the perspective of Fisher information theory, to adapt to transcendental reality. Next, Harry Hunt, in "Gnostic Dilemmas in Western Psychologies of Spirituality," explores how early Gnosticism is related to naturalistic psychologies of spirituality as well as contemporary psychological approaches to the numinous and transpersonal.

Evgeny Torchinov's article, "Mysticism and Its Cultural Expression: An Inquiry into the Description of Mystical Experience and its Ontological and Epistemological Nature," examines how cultural differences relate to mystical experience, such as whether this is a universal, and unitary, phenomenon or whether its multiplicity of expressions and descriptions imply otherwise. Allan Combs and Stanley Krippner present, in "Process, Structure, and Form: An Evolutionary Transpersonal Psychology of Consciousness," a dynamical systems view of consciousness's evolution based on complexity theory. The last of this issue's regular articles is by Steven Taylor, "Primal Spirituality and the Onto/Phylo Fallacy: A Critique of the Claim That Primal Peoples Were/Are Less Spiritually and Socially Developed Than Modern Humans." It challenges the notion that the human species shares the same basic developmental pattern

with individuals, specifically as this implies that primal peoples are less advanced spiritually, morally, and socially than those more culturally modern. These six articles share in addressing important aspects of culture related to transpersonal studies befitting of an international journal.

The next group of articles focuses on the special topic of transpersonal (integral) approaches to depression. These papers are a collection of pieces from a number of scholars and clinicians affiliated with the European Transpersonal Psychology Association (ETPA). They include Laura Boggio Gilot's "Integral Approach in Transpersonal Psychotherapy," Marc-Alain Descamps' "Spirituality of Depression," Jaime Llinas Llabrés' "Clinical Depression: A Transpersonal Point of View," Manuel García Barroso's "Depression: Clinical Definition and Case Histories," and Dinu Stefan Teodorescu's "An Integral Perspective on Depression." More is said about this theme in the later introduction to this special topic.

In the last article, under the "Reader's Commentary" section, Axel Randrup writes "The Perennial Philosophy." Specifically, he explores the belief that there is a common core or similarity to all spiritual and mystical experiences that is invariant across cultures and time.

At this time, we want to express our appreciation to Philippe L. Gross and S. I. Shapiro, our editorial predecessors, who spent endless hours nurturing the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* over many years and without whose loving attention this journal would not still exist. In addition, we want to express sadness for the passing of Evgeny Torchinov. We consider it a profound privilege to publish an article by this major transpersonal thinker posthumously. Finally, we want to express our excitement that this issue is only the first of many to come under our editorial direction and our hope that the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* will grow as a worthy vehicle for bringing transpersonal considerations into the greater consciousness of which we all partake.

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