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Editors' Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

This volume of the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* includes an eclectic group of writings from a variety of areas within transpersonal studies. The issue's first article is "Nondualism and the Divine Domain" by Burton Daniels. Ken Wilber's theory of nondualism is compared and contrasted with an alternative perspective as taught by Adi Da. When explicated this way, serious differences between the two accounts become strikingly clear, providing a thought-provoking journey addressing what is perhaps both the most important and esoteric aspect of transpersonal studies, namely what can be said about ultimate nondual enlightenment.

Next, Harald Walach writes in "Higher Self–Spark of the Mind–Summit of the Soul: Early History of an Important Concept of Transpersonal Psychology in the West" about the historical origins of the notion of the higher Self as introduced by Roberto Assagioli in psychosynthesis. This notion has origins stemming from antiquity, especially through the neo-Platonic tradition. The importance of transpersonal psychologists understanding the traditional roots for many of the field's core concepts is emphasized, as well as is the need for achieving theoretical and scientific integration based on such concepts.

In "The Myth of Nature and the Nature of Myth: Becoming Transparent to Transcendence," Dennis Patrick Slattery compares Joseph Campbell's writings on mythology with the poetry of John Keats. He discusses the power of language, especially poetry, to access the transcendent, arguing that mythology and poetry can realign consciousness toward greater transpersonal insight and understanding.

In "Myth, Archetype and the Neutral Mask: Actor Training and Transformation in Light of the Work of Joseph Campbell and Stanislav Grof," Ashley Wain

explores actor training using the "neutral mask" from a transpersonal perspective based on the works of Joseph Campbell and Stanislav Grof. The mask is discussed as a transformative vehicle and as a way to study myths and archetypes.

Steve Taylor, in the "The Sources of Higher States of Consciousness," argues that higher states of consciousness can result from either disruption of normal homeostasis or intensification of consciousness-energy. He concludes that only the second type can lead to long-term changes in positively integrating higher states of consciousness.

Next is "Fear No Spirits: A Pilgrim's Journey through the Brazilian Churches of Ayahuasca," by Robert Tindall. His delightful telling of experiences within various religious traditions using ayahuasca in Brazil brings these experiences near to the reader's imagination.

Following this, Adam J. Rock explores one of the most fundamental of metaphysical debates in his paper, "Why Does the Universe Exist? An Advaita Vedantic Perspective." He distinguishes between *a priori* and *a posteriori* propositions in addressing this question, the latter approach being supported experientially through altered states of consciousness. The insights derived are quite different from those usually debated.

Transpersonal psychology remains a vibrant force in the world, as exemplified by the 2005 European Transpersonal Association conference on "Human Consciousness and Human Values in an Interconnected World." This volume's special topics section highlights six of the approximately 70 offerings at that conference. Glenn Hartelius has selected, compiled, and edited presentations from Vladimir Maykov on Russian transpersonalism, Jason Wright on the narrative approach to self-image, Vitor Rodriguez on psy-

chic attack, Mark Burno on spiritual culture, Rupert Tower on the shadow in organizations, and Tanna Jakubowicz on the transpersonal basis of taking action in the world. Together, these present an array of innovative transpersonal work happening within the European community on transpersonal themes.

Finally, we are pleased to offer a reader's comment in the form of a poem-story from Kidder Smith, titled "A Love Letter." The interface between the spiritual and the carnal is playfully celebrated in questioning the amalgam of two during love-making, as "who is who is who?"

As the third volume of the *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* under our editorship goes to press, we want to thank Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center for its sponsorship, our reviewers who have worked diligently in providing guidance in the selection of articles, as well as our board members for their continuing support.

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