

## **Fundamentals of a Transcendental Psychology**

*(Translation of: Grundlegung einer transzendentalen Psychologie)*

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### ***Abstract***

*Beginning with Friedrich Schleiermacher's "Rede über die Religion" this essays tries to track down traces of spiritual experiences in contemporary science. Neither psychology (psychology of religion) nor theology devote themselves to the examination of religious experience and thus rejecting a serious consideration of Schleiermacher's approach or the analogous theory of William James. Hence, they are conducting their research not under the axiom of the existence and relevance of transcendence, but under the axiom of the exclusion of transcendence. The article criticises this approach as insufficient for an adequate comprehension of spiritual phenomena and briefly characterises the endeavour of the transpersonal psychology to deal with transcendence differently. But even there transcendence is not regarded in the genuine way of the spiritual traditions, which is why the article suggests introducing a new, transcendental-psychological paradigm to the humanities which takes transcendence and spirituality seriously in their own way.*

**Keywords:** Transcendental psychology, transpersonal psychology, comparative religion, psychology of religion, theology

### **Backgrounds in the history of science**

In his second speech about religion of 1799 Friedrich Schleiermacher writes about the miracle as an origin-like form of expression of the religious: "What is then a miracle! Say me, in which language – I do not talk, of course, about those which have originated like ours after the decline of all religion – one calls them something different than a sign, an indication? And thus all those expressions mean nothing, as the immediate relation of an appearance to the infinite, the universe; does this exclude, however that there is not one as immediate on the limited and to nature? Miracle is only the religious name for occurrence, which all, also the most natural one, as soon as it is suited to the fact that the religious view of it can be the ruling one, is a miracle. To me all is a miracle and in your sense only this is a miracle, namely something inexplicable and strange, what is none in mine. Ever more religiously you would be, you would see the more miracles everywhere,

and every quarrelling to and fro about single occurrences, whether they earn to be called so, gives me only the painful impression how poor and paltry the religious sense of the arguing is" (Schleiermacher 2002/1799, 117-118; translated by me). In this short passage from Schleiermacher's early work the sense of all we want to call in future a *transcendental psychology* reveals itself in nuce. In order to gain a better understanding of Schleiermacher's theory, we have to take a closer look at his statements.

Schleiermacher's concern is the proof that religion is not identical with the established dogma of an ecclesiastical institution, but arises from the ever individual, but universal laws experiences of the individual obey. His sensational anew differentiation separates between religion as a teaching, a Christian or non-Christian single religion - and RELIGION as underlying all single religions in the experience of the person (i.e. the God-related being) who has the ability to gain access to that cosmic mystery which reveals itself in him or her. Another aspect which belongs to this category of direct experienced religiosity is the miracle. We may translate Schleiermacher's concept of the miracle safely with "spiritual experience", i.e., the way how people experience the divine directly and which may be found in all religious comparisons. On the basis of these source findings, Schleiermacher starts with the question regarding the meaning of the miracle within religious consciousness. No, this religious consciousness has nothing in common with the language of theologians, with the „childish operations of metaphysicians and moralists in religion" (Schleiermacher 2002/1799, 117; translated by me) which are nothing else than an intellectual alienation of the original experience.

While the reflexive theological language hides the numinous instead of retaining the miracle in its only descriptively detectable force, it is for him about the language of the pretheological person, i.e., the person who experiences the divine, as it reveals itself in himself, unfeigned and directly. If we go back to this original meaning of the miraculous, i.e., the time before RELIGION was divided into single religions, the miracle shows itself to us as a sign, an indication. But a sign of what? A sign of the cryptic presence of the divine in the universe, which is in fact so cryptic that a collision with scientific knowledge is not possible and not even conceivable. The divine appears only as an indication which one needs to recognise, perceive, feel, must feel in that religious basic feeling which Schleiermacher describes as a religious feeling of supernatural provenance.

The next key word in the passage cited at the beginning reads "relation". For Schleiermacher's "miracle" is synonymous with grasping, a relation between an occurrence and "to the infinite, the universe". However, the latter terms are used by him to avoid the theological concept of God. Obviously Schleiermacher sees the meaning of the miracle in a reference function of the worldly on otherworldly, hence the existence and the being manner of the otherworldly are reflected in the worldly occurrence. Such a transcendental reference is possible because the divine affects the person, the situations of his or her everyday life, the natural existence, and this effect only must be recognised to understand that and in which manner there is a divine. The revelation of the Bible - in Protestantism traditionally the only decisive authority for the constitution of a "miracle", the spiritual experience - becomes therefore incredibly secondary compared with the direct revelation in personal experience.

However, even this relation to transcendence does not exclude that at the same time a relation with the immanent which comes from the numinous occurrence. The latter one can be described and be understood by physics, the psychology, the natural sciences in general. An occurrence may appear to us as originating from a natural cause and nevertheless be a miracle. This double character is always the case, according to young Schleiermacher. In his view, there is a distinction between the deeply religious from the poor and miserable believer, i.e., the last is not able to grasp the usual miracle, hence the relation between the everyday, the natural on the one hand, and the divine on the other hand. Then the claim to explanation of the natural sciences is directed always only upon the outside of the same phenomenon whose inside is of divine spirit. Like an admonition to our modern psychology to understand the person from its spiritual source and not as a neuro-psychological mechanism, we should understand Schleiermacher's question: "Why does your practise forget by working outwardly and on the universe at the end, actually, always to form the human being itself? Because you oppose it to the universe and do not receive it as a part of the same and as something saint from the hand of the religion" (Schleiermacher 2002/1799, 53; translated by me).

100 years after Schleiermacher the relation is reflected between the sign and the signified in a research discipline which is known by the name semiotics. The American philosopher Charles Sander Peirce is beside Ferdinand de Saussure known as one of their founders. For Peirce every realisation, not only the linguistic one, as it was decisive for de Saussure, is conveyed by signs which give meaning to the perceived sign in one's own mind as secondary signs. Theologically Peirce argues at the same time that God does exist as an object of experience - not as an object of faith (cf. Barrera in 2008), since the immediate experience of a numinous quality can be interpreted by no other sign in the mind of the experiencer as appropriately as by the cipher of the divine. Because all people can find the traces of God in case of an unprejudiced consideration in themselves, the assumption is justified that this internal sign corresponds to a reality of the divine (Peirce in 1908). Even if Peirce has not carried out a transcendental sign theory, he has at least considered its possibility.

Peirce was a teacher as well as friend of his congenial colleague William James and influenced his famous philosophy decisively. James was interested in the question of religious experience for personal reasons. Without referring to Schleiermacher, he describes in his Gifford Lectures of 1900-1902 (published as "The Varieties of Religious Experience") cases of spiritual experience which he interprets as forms of expression of the original religiousness, belonging to manhood before all religion. As well as Peirce William James comes from a radical empiricism, radicalised relating to Hume, according to which only the directly experienced has to be considered as reality. Thus the reality of the transcendent also, and exclusively appears in the empiric experience of the individual. Since this experience is the immediate, the real which constitutes the core of every religion, while "philosophical and theological formulae are secondary products, comparable to translations of a text into another language" (James 1997, 426).

Secondly James again shares with Pierce a radical pragmatic concept of truth, in which truth is only decidable in the practical consequences of a realisation for the individual and the collective. Accordingly religious concepts must also prove themselves in their consequences for the whole if they want to be held for true: "... our empiric criterion: *You should recognise them by their fruits*"; he cites the evangelist Matthew (James 1997, 53) and thereby declares a strictly empiric criterion for the correctness of religious views. Thought it out, it should be possible according to him to get to a "*science of religions*" which tests the truth of religious theorems in observable experience data and he hopes, "... that an impartial science of religions might sift out from the midst of their discrepancies a common body of doctrine which she might also formulate in terms to which physical science need not object" (489, chapter XX).

When James (1997, 53) claims that the religious has to be judged on the basis of its fruits (subjective and intersubjective action results), not its roots (causality), he also turns against a medical materialism which tries to reduce religious phenomena to causal terms from psychopathology or neurophysiology (cf. James 1997, 382, chapter XV). In addition to that, he implicitly outlines a methodological programme, according to which not the conditions for religious experience may be searched in factors beyond religion (as in modern psychology of religion), but rather the effects of the transcendent on the remaining areas of life are of note. This presupposes the perceptible religious, the „immanent transcendent“, as a causal factor, while transcendence is ignored in investigations of the psychology of religion conceptually and is treated methodically like a dependent variable or like an interfering variable which plays a role only in the perception of the investigation objects. The purely subjective experience of transcendence itself (the unspecific feeling of a presence in the room, the unexpected solacement or conversion of which James speaks, for example) is almost ruled out as a factor in such research methodology.

Just as Schleiermacher's rediscovery of the revelation of the divine in the individual, James' Varieties were revolutionary as well. Indeed, not the thought that the transcendent manifests itself in natural manner, in terms of a *theologia naturalis*, was James' original product: the divine realisation by the experience of the individual already came back into favour since Schleiermacher's days – James presented his Varieties within the Gifford Lectures which had been brought to life in 1888 by Adam lord Gifford with the aim to "promote and diffuse the study of Natural Theology in the widest sense of the term – in other words, the knowledge of God". Nevertheless, James went one step further by propagating to be able to reach to a metatheory of the divine, transcending all single religion and all contradictions to the natural sciences, by the scientific – i.e. psychological – study of the religious experience.

What could be more radical than wanting to make the tools for a metareligion by using the recently formed academic discipline of psychology which differed from the single religions by the fact that their statements would stand academically tested and, therefore, in harmony with the enlightened world view? What could be more appropriate, than continuing the idea of Schleiermacher that the single religion was only an intellectual "superstructure" compared with the true religious expression in the individual, by researching manifestations of the transcendent with the methods of the contemporary

psychological system instead of holding them simply for given (or in case of the critic: to negate them)? It was this research on what determines the experience of God in the life of the person here and now which James worried about and which should become his legacy whose lawful heirs did not appear till this day.

Since then the revolutionary aspect in Jamesian psychology of religions has never been transformed into a research program *sui generis* in the context of psychology, just as in comparative religious studies or theology. In the case of Schleiermacher the turn from theology to the comparative study of religions and from biblical to personal revelation, however, has been recognised and appreciated by his mental successors, but led also to strong antithetic reactions which called the Protestant theologians successfully „back to the Bible“. The reasons for the fact that Schleiermacher's individual religion as well as James' *science of religions* hardly ever mattered in the intellectual history of the 20th century can be briefly characterised as follows:

Within at least the Protestant theology the dualistic teaching decisively promoted by Karl Barth, i.e., the theological world being irreconcilable in opposition to the socially shared world (the Barthian variant of deism), rejected, against Schleiermacher, the direct revelation of God in the individual here and now as not being an object of theological discourse. Before that, one already had argued in Protestant theology about the relevance of the psychology of religion for the establishment of faith (cf. the disputes in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 1907-1917, e.g., Vorbrodt, 1908, and Wobbermin, 1917, towards Scheel, 1907). Here again, the party had won which attempted to immunise theology against the attack of natural sciences. It was in fact the same strategy, which was later used by Barth to defend theology against the inquiries of the believers („Where was God?“) after both world wars: Theology has nothing to do with the reality here and now - a little bit (however, only a little bit) toughly worded - it feeds itself and is based on another reality alone: on the biblical revelation and its announced kingdom of God. Such a trend towards negating religious experience of course exists in Catholicism as well, for example: the dominance of the ecclesiastical teaching over undogmatic mysticism post limits to its - compared with Protestantism - opener position on the miraculous.

Another winner in the realm of psychology was the view that faith and knowledge are not compatible in *one* science, thus cementing the schism between religion and psychology from the psychological side as well. It was just Théodore Flournoy (1903), a friend and student of William James, who coined in this sense an axiom for the psychology of religion (than just being in its constitutional phase): the *principle of the exclusion of transcendence*. The subsequent effect was nothing but a betrayal on the Jamesian idea. Still today its exigency is expressed by the psychology of religion (cf. Zwingmann & Moosbrugger 2004): The religious psychology “has to leave the *objective* aspect - the question whether objective validity falls to certain religious convictions or whether single forms of prayer, meditation and service are desirable - to the critical-normative reflexion of ethics, religious philosophy and theology...” (Grom 2007, 13; translated by me). The advantage: Methodology and programme of the psychology of religion integrate themselves free of contradiction into the mainstream psychology (cf. the studies in Zwingmann & Moos-

brugger 2004) and do not get into conflict with the religious institutions who also vehemently adhere to the fact that psychology of religion does not have to interfere with their very own business. However, this is diametrically opposed to the spirit and intention of the Jamesian Gifford Lectures and underwent a correction only at the end of the 1960s in that newly emerging movement which is called transpersonal psychology.

## **The beginning of a psychology of the religious experience**

Historically the term “transpersonal” originated in the humanistic psychology of the late 1960s (cf. Vich 1988). Against the main stream psychology, oriented to deficit, a group around Abraham Maslow – among them Stanislav Grof, Anthony Sutich and Viktor Frankl – went on the search to “B(eing)-Values”, qualities which represented the highest human potential and discovered spirituality as such a growth component. Probably coined by Grof (cf. Grof 2005), but published for the first time by Sutich (Sutich 1968) the term “transpersonal” could be defined as a relation of the human being transcending its person. The first definition of the new movement was provided by Sutich (1968): „ ... the scientific study and responsible implementation of becoming, individual and species-wide meta-needs, ultimate values, unitive consciousness, peak experiences, B values, ecstasy, mystical experience, awe, being, self-actualisation, essence, bliss, wonder, ultimate meaning, transcendence of the self, Spirit, oneness, cosmic awareness, individual and species-wide synergy, at most interstaff encounter, sacralization of everyday life, transcendental phenomena, cosmic selfhumor and playfulness; at most sensory awareness, responsiveness and expression”. Lajoie & Shapiro (1992) in an extensive examination evaluated 36 other definitions of transpersonal psychology in which the most different varieties are accentuated. The five most often used definitions concerned: *states of consciousness; highest or ultimate potential; beyond ego or staff self; transcendence; and spiritual*.

The relation to the established religions, nevertheless, was unclear from the outset, being equipped – at least in the concepts “transcendence” and “spiritually”, the fourth-most and fifth-most frequent namings within Lajoie & Shapiro (1992) – with a common intersection. Transcendence, can be defined, according to Duden (2000) „a) beyond the experience, the tangible; the hereafter; b) transgression of the borders of experience, the consciousness, the life on earth“. Such meaning state as well as activity, is particularly negatively determined by its non-affiliation to this world on the one hand and to a lower part positively determined by the resonating connotation “beyond” (instead of “under”) this world, thus resulting in a valency of higher quality. The term is more neutral in respect to different religious systems than resembling terms such as „the divine“ or even “God” and corresponds possibly to the term “numinosum”, which was coined at beginning of the 20th century by Rudolf Otto, the later successor of Schleiermacher and scholar of comparative religion.

As soon as the dimension of transcendence moves in the centre of the transpersonal-psychological approach, it is necessary to clarify whether psychology and religion will

compete against each other or not. Exactly in this regard, transpersonal psychology was often accused by religious as well as scientific institutions of being a (pseudo-)esoteric substitute for religion. Today, however, certain parts of the transpersonal psychology avoid this field of conflict and define themselves, in accordance with the scientific dominance paradigm, absolutely lacking any religious affiliation, as the psychology of the human consciousness par excellence (thus Belschner 2005) or of the changed consciousness. As a consequence, the spiritual traditions and their knowledge seem to be nothing but a research object within the methodology of the dominance paradigm and the specific peculiarity of the spiritual experience becomes an epiphenomenon of the altered or not altered state of consciousness. Such a reduction of transcendence, the “other-worldly”, on a life on earth is extremely appealing in a time which is not able to make a distinction any more between depth and surface, which sees no difference between “yoga” and “pregnant gymnastics”, which takes “tantra” for a sexual stimulation technique and thus creating a new linguistic convention within such superficial definitions become true.

However, spirituality is not reducible to a meditative high-altitude flight which appears in psychometrical or neuroscientific investigations as a measurable peak experience. Spirituality is occupied with something, that exceeds manhood by definition and does not stuck in it. Who mistakes both, has completely failed to understand their spiritual traditions, i.e., their knowledge which has been preserved for millenniums. However, this is the risk of a transpersonal psychology as a worldly surrogate religion of the human consciousness. Therefore, I suggest a different expression for a psychology of the human dimension of transcendence and I would like to call this special form of transpersonal psychology *transcendental* psychology. This should not to be equated with the Kantian term “transcendental”, although I use the expression by analogy with Kant.

Immanuel Kant called *transcendental philosophy* the investigation of the ultimate conditions under which human cognition takes place (the conditions of the possibility of cognition per se; cf. Kant 1781/1974). However, the term transcendental has a much longer history of concept and belongs to a different idiomatic field than “transcendent”. While the latter, as an adjective to transcendence, refers to what takes place beyond our usual sensory perception, “transcendental” refers more to what points to transcendence, what strives to it and manifests itself as its sign in the world. In conclusion, it derives from there as well as from the Kantian concept and bearing this in mind I would call transcendental psychology *the psychological investigation of the conditions of the possibility for the experience of transcendence whereby the life-worldly relevance and existence of transcendence is assumed as given* (cf. e.g., Harnack 2010). Thus is believed that transcendental psychology follows an axiom which contains in this respect - like every axiom - a value-containing pre-decision process of the scientist, while it states: The concerning scholar does research on the basis of and with the conditions of the acceptance that transcendence does not only exist, but also demonstrates itself to be relevant in our world and operates in the life of the individual.

In fact, every scientific project follows an implicit or explicit axiom and the concept of a scientific character of reflection, controlling the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, orientates itself by three axiomatic claims intertwined into each other: scientific propositions (except from theologians and philosophers) must be distinguished by objectivity, value freedom and materialism. While the objectivity doctrine displays a popular, but hardly realistic idea, being propagated dogmatically since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Daston & Galison 2007), it produces a sort of natural scientific aversion to subjectivity or in other words: at the inside of the individual where all spirituality has, as everybody knows, its place. The programme of a value free science, having been controversial yet several times (cf. Weber 1917; Dahms in 1994), is untenable. Even if the scientific claim may be substantiated, saying that science does not to cling to an ideology, but only to pure facts, out of basic considerations (e.g., basic value loadeness of the research interest; contamination of all facts with constructs) it can principally be realised only in some phases of research, in reality however it seems to be totally unrealistic, as the example of the third axiom of present science shows, i.e., the axiom of materialism. Although many scientists would never explicitly admit, that an ideology like the materialist monism forms the basic idea of their (thus not any more value free!) research, in reality all scientists seem to agree that another than the materialist world view may be permitted for a scientist only in private, but never may “infect” his business. This applies of course above all for the natural sciences, but in reality hardly less for humanities and social sciences. If there are scientists at all believing that their science can be agreed with something different than the materialist monism then they belong to the spearhead of the modern natural sciences, to theoretical physics which already differs from its image, presumed by social scientists and scientists of other disciplines still emulating them. We can suppose vice versa that an ideological programme like the materialist monism determines the research interests and the way and results of actual research so strongly that any other world view has no chance in the scientific community.

If one accuses a science which discloses its axiom, to be prone to ideology, how much more this reproach is valid within a science which does not reflect its ideology at all. If the contemporary natural sciences and social sciences, even some philosophers, taboo every discussion about the materialist monism and with it the institutionalised agnosticism as their unquestioned mental condition, one should rather praise a psychology which frankly pronounces its theoretical condition for its courage. Therefore, the transcendental psychology says frankly that its axiom consists in the acceptance that the transcendent exists in a pragmatically true, so effectual manner - and thereby sets itself consciously in the position of a counterbalance to a materialist science doctrine appearing with an absolutistic claim.

As a consequence, I would like to call the *transcendence axiom* the deliberate taking of a methodical position which makes the existence and relevance of the transcendent the basis of its scientific striving without representing any certain ideology (religion). Thus we join to the partial claim of objectivity and partial value freedom concerning the realisation process of the research. While our research interest and its basic premises are set up

axiomatically as value containing by the acceptance of the existence of transcendence, we want to state about the value of a single spiritual tradition, religion or world view only as a result, not as a precondition of our research. Since what brings the individual closer to transcendence, how it presents itself, what it consists of, that is the focus of our concern and research. This is an eminently psychological question because in the individual and his or her experience the empiric material is found to answer it. Therefore, transcendental psychology is an academically educated psychology which eludes the materialist basic paradigm.

### **Religion as experience and experience as religion**

Above all the monotheistic religions consider themselves as the centre of a Ptolemaic universe in which there is no central truth but their own and even the divine sun is spinning around them. While those religions which carry out a polytheistic diversifications of the divine perceive themselves always in competition to their religious environment (cf. Assmann 2006), it seems reasonable for monotheism to superordinate their own position as without competition above all others. Therefore, the theologian John Hick (1973) spoke of the need of a Copernican revolution in Christian theology of the religions. Not, therefore, Christianity (or Islam or whoever) can claim for themselves to be the central star of the religious world order as one believed for centuries, but the role of the central sun which all religions orbit in an equal round dance is due to God alone. This nice picture is worth it to become the leitmotiv of the new transcendental psychology, i.e., in succession of William James: the study of the sun, which can not take place directly, in those *rays of sunshine* which shine on each of its planets. As long as our eyes are not able to remain in consideration of the sun longer than a moment, and as long as, on the other hand, on each of its planets not only sunlight, but also much dark matter is to be found, as long we must look for the purest *rays of sunshine* on each of these planets.

Thus transcendental psychology carries out a farther shift in relation to any psychology of religion or comparative religious studies: It is this Jamesian *science of religions* in an eminently spiritual sense. Since it sticks to the fact that the internal (esoteric) traditions of the religions endeavour to cultivate and to understand the relation between individual and transcendence for millenniums and, therefore, in their richness offer enough material which the modern researcher still has to reflect in its empiric and theoretical dimension. Neither, however, transcendental psychology is normative science, like the religions in which knowledge increase always means just the new interpretation of the already marked out terrain; nor does it try to pretend a ostensible (however, in reality untenable) objectivity free of evaluation, how the psychology of religion and comparative religion; but what proves itself from the experience of the spiritual traditions and turns out to be true in the individual's search for the divine, this is their object.

What now is that divine, transcendent, numinous in our research paradigm? We can equate the divine with the theoretical variables or the research-leading construct in the classical social-scientific methodology. We endeavour to understand the divine, while we

look for natural and provoked (or artificially produced) operationalisations of it. Natural operationalisations are all spontaneous spiritual experiences. We can call provoked operationalisations such incidents where we have initiated the religious experience with the help of our human forces, like meditation, trance or other consciousness-alternating agents. But we should make clear that we do not mistake the operationalisation for the theoretical construct. The religious experience bears a relation to that what should make it explicable and understandable for us, it is not identical with it.

Besides, we must watch out for wrong operationalisations. This can be wrong operationalisations in terms of contents being inseparable from correct ones, because we would need exactly the knowledge of the construct for their separation. This problem also is well known in social sciences. Just think of the difficulty defining intelligence “properly”: Does social intelligence, “cunning” and higher (spiritual) intuition belong to intelligence or only the usually measured academic success factors? Much more important is, however, that we choose the operationalisations formally appropriate to the contents. This is - under conditions of the axiom of transcendence - not the case if the religious experience is made the dependent variable of another process, what corresponds to the standard research methodology of psychology of religion: What (kind of emotional experience, cognitive attitude change, internal conflict) has brought that person suddenly converting from being an atheist to a believing Christian? Through what (on account of which infantile attachment patterns) has got one person a personal and another person an abstract image of God? All these questions get stuck hopelessly in the old, materialist paradigm, because they do not recognise the existence and relevance of the numinous as an independently active and powerful dimension, but merely investigate the processes in the individual psyche.

And since we are, regarding the divine, concerned with a research object following other laws than an appendix or the social behaviour in traffic jams, we must be ready to think anew in a very fundamental manner: We must be receptive to astonishing patterns and correlation matrixes, for connections where our old materialist world view let suppose none. We must also be ready to adjust our well established research methods to these new requirements. This is not natural, because one could state, the new, transcendental-psychological research was not as exact as the old, materialist ones, as it is said about all - partially - qualitative research methods. But this depends on the respective definition of an exact statement. As a warning example we should regard the pseudo-, i.e. over-precision with which verbal exams are evaluated in some academic subjects: on comma places exactly, although according to social psychology it is indubitable that reliability and objectivity of verbal exams can hardly reach the precision of a full mark. Therefore, it is of no use for anybody to be able to present a very exact (reliable) investigation about the effect of the divine (for example, in the case of faith-healing) which does not illustrate (validly) the actually operating laws. The problem is known in all social sciences as the reliability-validity-dilemma and therefore nothing special for our research project. But it is more significant here to avoid the replacement of validity in favour of the putatively more important reliability because this would destroy transcendence itself. For example, it will be of no use if we want to carry out real experiments with our reli-

gious experiences if they obviously can not be produced by human beings and therefore resist an experimental design, at least in their basic nature. Nevertheless, by the analysis of clusters, correlations and other patterns we can discover the unknown sufficiently – apart from the philosophical considerations that our critical mind is able to add.

Because we can deliver a judgement with our mind, it is, following the old western tradition (so with Thomas Aquinas), an indispensable and legitimate tool for spiritual recognition. Therefore, the transcendental psychology needs at the same time with its acknowledgement of the spiritual traditions the connection to a scientific tradition like that of academic psychology. Real scientific thinking is based on criteria for what can be accepted as correct, and not only on assertions. These criteria are intersubjectively testable, debatable and follow cultural conventions (like the acceptance of the bivalent, Aristotelian logic as one most basic of these conventions). There might be differing opinions about the ubiquitous validity of these conventions, but the mere fact that a common objective of discourse is opened by them, within which a valid statement can be distinguished from an invalid assertion, makes it reasonable not to renounce scientific rationality.

To be able to investigate the transcendent empirically with methods being as well scientific as adequate to the object, we need material which we find in the experience of individuals whose unusual experiences refer to a different reality than the materialist one. We can collect these reports, systematise and evaluate them even quantitatively, i.e. comparatively as it has happened with the many reports sent to the Alister Hardy Archive in Lampeter, Wales. In addition, we can ascertain systematic patterns which form an intersubjective category out of a subjective experience. If we find out that people show common structures in their transcendental experiences in different cultures beside all cultural shaping (cf. McClenon 1994), we can relieve the individual of the reproach „to pretend something“ and ask for the meaning of these interindividual patterns. This attempt is still in its infancy and is not developed systematically enough to grow up into its own research paradigm. To set up, however, a new transcendental research paradigm, following Kuhn (1962) it does not require more than a number of obvious anomalies of the old paradigm, as already given, until the new paradigm can start its triumphal procession with the biological extinction of the old generation of scientists. We seem to be not far from it.

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