

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present this WCPRR Special Issue, dedicated to the presentations by the Italian Institute of Transcultural Mental, discussed at the 5th WACP World Congress, in New York, 2018.

From the First World Congress “Current perspectives on research and clinical issues in cultural psychiatry around the world” (Pechino, China, 2006), to the Congress in Norcia “Cultural brain and living society” (Norcia, Italy, 2009), the WACP has always been interested, among other things, in the role of religion in the pathogenesis and pathoplasticity of some mental disease.

This topic was extensively discussed at the II WCPP Congress in Norcia. The Congress opening was a presentation titled "Norcia and the Benedictine Monachus-Medicus", that drew the history of the relations between the Scuola Chirurgica di Preci, a surgery school dating back to the Middle Ages, and the Abbey of San Benedetto da Norcia, in the VI Century D.C.

Saint Benedict as patron saint of the European continent, with his motto “Ora et Labora”, inspired the construction of the first libraries. “Ora et Labora” represents the strong synergy, between the use of medicinal herbs and the experimental method in medicine, at that time.

The same synergy between human sciences and medical sciences, was the foundation of the approach that led the WACP to the study of the relation between mental health, religion, and spirituality.

The 3rd WACP Congress “Mental capital, mental disorder, resilience and wellbeing through the life course”, in London (UK) 2012, hosted a workshop on these topics in St. Paul’s Cathedral. The 4th WACP Congress “**Global challenges & cultural psychiatry. Natural disasters, conflict, insecurity, migration and spirituality**”, in Puerto Vallarta (Mexico) 2015, started with a Pre-congress with the title “The Realm of the Supernatural: biopsychocultural study on cross-cultural phenomena connected with the persistence of beliefs and behaviours on magic and the divine in the XXI century”.

The pre-congress of the 5th WACP Congress “**Achieving global mental health equity. Making cultural psychiatry count**”, New York (USA) 2018, hosted a Plenary Session that talked of: “**The persistence of God, spirituality and the supernatural: cultural psychiatry and mental health**”.

The presentations of the Plenary Session are conceived as one coherent discourse. The concepts that are introduced in the Plenary, are extensively explained in the NY Congress and in the Key Lecture of Prof. Bartocci: "**The cultural construction of the Western conception of the sacred: pathoplastic and pathogenetic consequences**", and finally discussed in the Symposium "**Psychological climate, cultural delusions and the new pathologies of the West**". The presentations discussed in the Plenary Session, Key Lecture and in the Symposium, have already been published in Italian and English, in the *Rivista di Psichiatria e Psicoterapia Culturale* (Cultural Psychiatry and Psychotherapy Journal, www.psiculturale.it). We are grateful to the WCPRR Editor in Chief, Mario Braakman, for having invited us as Guest Editors in this number, where we gladly share this material with the WCPRR readers.

This work introduces the new topic of Cultural Delusions to Cultural Psychiatry. These are culturally or sub-culturally shared beliefs that are indemonstrable, unverifiable, unchangeable despite the very poor adherence to (or even dissociation from) reality, and cultural structures encouraging the radicalisation of extreme forms of detachment that can be followed by delusions in the strict sense, as described by the psychiatric clinic.

It is not only for scientific reasons, but also for emotional ones, that we are glad to present this WCPRR number. Prof. Bartocci was Editor in Chief when the WCPRR was founded, and Dr De Luca held this position before Mario Braakman whom we thank again, and we send our best wishes for the organization of the 6th WACP Congress in Rotterdam (Netherlands) 2021.

Goffredo Bartocci,
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