

THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE PRAETERNATURAL: AN EMPIRICALLY BASED MODEL OF TRANSPERSONAL EXPERIENCES *

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INTRODUCTION

There have been a number of noteworthy attempts to create meaningful models of altered states of consciousness and their associated altered reality experiences (Clark, 1983; Fischer, 1972; Tart, 1975). Although these models have been somewhat helpful in our attempts to understand the nature and relationship of everyday experience to transpersonal states, they have had a number of important shortcomings. First, they have tended to use pictorial 'maps' of consciousness and/or experiential states without making a clear *empirical link* between diagrammatic representation and experiential fact and, second, these models have not been directly constructed from an empirical data base nor, conversely, have they been tested against empirical evidence. Other attempts have been made to overcome these deficiencies by operationalizing altered state experiences into clear-cut, discrete events and testing them against Tart's model in laboratory controlled settings (Pekala & Levine, 1981-82; Pekala & Wenger, 1983). However, this approach is of little value when we attempt to study transpersonal experiences as they actually happen to people in the 'real world'.

The question remains as to whether there is any way of studying spontaneous transpersonal cases without either 'reducing' them to what they are not, or leaving us to ponder individual occurrences in the absence of a theoretical framework capable of encompassing the whole. Of course, there are numerous religious or quasi-religious interpretations put forward in an attempt to make sense of transpersonal encounters. Some, like that of Wilber (1977), are excellent pieces of scholarship, but require adoption, in part, of a particular religious worldview. Our need, then, is to conceptualize transpersonal experiences in a manner which begins to approach *ontological neutrality*,¹ leaving interpretation to the individual reader.

This paper would like to suggest that this may be possible in the context of an *ontologically neutral methodology*. Such a methodology would attempt to recognize that ontological assumptions (such as the objective empirical reality of science or the divine of many religions) often force the direction of the research and thus pre-draw conclusions. In effect, neutrality requires that we suspend

(“bracket” - Smart, 1973), as far as possible, all assumptions vis-a-vis the ultimate nature of the things and events of our world and *return to the empiricism of our direct experience* (James, 1967).

It has been suggested that a reconceptualization of cognitive theory as an assemblage of “mindbody psychotechnologies” will enable us to more productively conduct research into a variety of phenomena now seen as outside mainstream cognitive science (Roberts, 1989). Effectively, by methodically focussing on what ‘is’ (the collocation of experiential ‘methods’ and ‘qualities’ underpinning transpersonal experiences), it is possible to return to a more detailed and complete and systematic phenomenological description of these occurrences. In this way, as we shall see later in the paper, we may build an ‘experiential picture’ based on a reconstruction from reported occurrences which is capable of defining a given experience without reference to reductionist, metaphysical or altered state of consciousness explanations. These latter explanatory models are hypothetical constructs which are at too great an epistemological distance from the experiences themselves to be directly meaningful. By returning to the experience in itself we can, in effect, map any occurrence, normal or transpersonal, by reference to its intrinsic cognitive, affective, behavioral, and personality mindbody psychotechnology.

By adding those qualities of personality which act as an intentional ‘filter’ in the construction of our experiential worlds, we add an important dimension to the total experiential ‘matrix’. Not only do we obtain a phenomenological picture of experiential quality and its associated triggering mechanisms from the examination of a given experience, but we gain some information vis-a-vis the background ‘set’ which may lead individuals into particular classes of experience (Nelson, 1988). The final descriptive ‘matrix’ can be understood as both creating and defining any awareness, perception, and state experienced or known and thus can be understood as *both cause and description of that experiential state*. This defining matrix can be conceived as an “instrumental description” of praeternatural experience² similar to those descriptions used in quantum physics (Bohr, 1958). Such a description can become the basis for delineating a (psycho)technology of the praeternatural.

In the following sections of this paper a three-dimensional, three-type experiential/personality matrix as a model of the technology of the praeternatural will be developed and the results of an exploratory empirical study employing this conceptual schema will be reported.

MAPPING THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE PRAETERNATURAL

Starting from the above general operationalized notion of human experiential reality, a three dimensional psycho-phenomenological model for mapping the qualities of, processes generative of, and conditions necessary for the occurrence of spontaneous praeternatural experiences can be conceptualized. This model defines, in effect, three broad categories associated with praeternatural occurrences. The first of these dimensions, 'Personality', is represented by the cluster of relevant personality and character factors (e.g., absorption, affectivity, social orientation, arousal, etc. as seen in the Tellegen Differential Personality Questionnaire - Tellegen, 1982) which act as a background filter in both 'active' and 'passive' modes of attention and response.³ This dimension is, thus, an organismic 'set' - an array of background conditions which facilitate the experience but do not necessarily cause it. The importance of personality 'set' as a primary dimension of the generative matrix underpinning praeternatural experiences has been argued by a growing number of researchers (Fischer, 1972; Hay and Morisy, 1978; Hood et al, 1979; Irwin, 1981, 1985; MacPhillamy, 1986; Mathes, 1982; Nelson, 1989b; Spanos and Moretti, 1988; Tellegen and Atkinson, 1974; Thomas and Cooper, 1980). This body of literature is further underscored by a) observations made by anthropologists regarding the personality characteristics sought for apprentice shamans in pre-literate societies (Eliade, 1964; Elkin, 1977), and b) popular belief that certain types of people are more transpersonally attuned.

The second dimension, the 'Operational,' can be understood as the immediate set of methods, procedures, and activities which, against the appropriate personality background, directly trigger the conditions necessary for the production of a given praeternatural experience (Houston & Masters, 1972; Laski, 1961; Tart, 1975). These triggering operations include specific affective and cognitive activities immediately preceding the experience as well as overt behaviors and the effect of the physical surroundings. Thus, this dimension represents the immediate 'setting' or triggering conditions that appear to be *necessary* for the experience to occur. In addition, this set of triggering factors can be both overt and covert in nature. That is, some will be activities in which the percipient has purposely and consciously engaged (such as meditation, concentration and/or social isolation), while others may include the effect of the re-deployment of attentional resources, of which the percipient is not directly aware, arising as a result of the triggering conditions.

Lastly, the 'Phenomenological' dimension represents the experiential form and thus the qualities of the known event as given directly to the here-now awareness of, and reported by, the experient. In

this model one can conceive that these experiential forms also have embedded in them additional sets of causative clusters of ‘Operational’ factors which further add to the defining matrix driving the experience into a stable state comprehensible to the experient as an identifiable experience (Tart, 1975). In this manner the entire three dimensional ‘cluster’ provides the ‘instrumental’ basis for the generation and definition of a particular experience type. Thus, we need to make reference not only to the phenomenal characteristics of an experience in order to define it, but to the ‘set’ and ‘setting’ features as well. This total matrix does not merely define a particular experience, it is the experience itself. From this perspective there is no need to refer to an ontological ‘source’ or ‘base’ outside of our reportable experiential world in order to understand the source of praeternatural events for research purposes.⁴

For the purposes of our examination of praeternatural experience, the phenomenological ‘form’ of the occurrences can be separated into three major categories; Non-praeternatural experiences (N), ‘Perceptual’ experiences (P), and ‘Ontic’ experiences (O) (Nelson, 1989a). The first category needs no elaboration. The second class represents those spontaneous praeternatural encounters in which the perceptual component, whether exteroceptive or interoceptive,⁵ is the primary emphasis. Hence, experiencers do not have to invoke a new ontological framework (such as attributing the experience to the supernatural), distinct from their usual beliefs, in order to comprehend their experiences. This class of experience is often included under the rubric of ‘psychic phenomena’ and may include remote perceptions (traditionally referred to as telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition), out-of-body-experiences, sensing of non-incarnate presences, and the occurrence of viridical-like visions which appear to the recipient to be contiguous with what s/he considers to be the natural world.

‘Ontic’ experiences, on the other hand, give rise to a sense of ontological otherness, or a belief that the encounters spring from a reality beyond that which we usually know, having their origins in a more fundamental ontological source which lies beyond normal, sensate reality (God, the devil, cosmic mind, etc.). The experiences which fall into this category include visions of and encounters with gods, demons and angels, mystical experiences, encounters with the numinous and sacred, near death experiences, and encounters of total loss of ontological certainty (Weltschmerz - D’Aquili, 1982, p. 364). The ‘Ontic’ category is that class of experience most often identified as being transpersonal and is often interpreted as religio-spiritual in nature by experiencers. However, the perceptual and sensory-like components of both ‘Perceptual’ and ‘Ontic’ experiences can be very similar and it seems to be

the “reflexive” (automatic effect of one’s cultural belief system) and “retroactive” (post hoc conscious assignments of meaning) interpretations of experiences which determine how each is understood and classified by the experient. (Moore, 1978; Nelson, 1989a).

If, for example, two different experients each ‘see’ a human-like figure appear before them in a way which can only be understood as a non-ordinary event, one might understand the ‘presence’ as a deceased uncle, whereas the other may believe that the figure is a ‘divine’ visitation. Both, from their descriptions, can be assumed to be having very similar perceptual-like experiences. In the former, however, the perceptual qualities and the continuity of the apparition with the objects and people of one’s day to day ontological world are emphasized whereas, in the latter, ontological otherness is invoked to explain and give meaning to the event.

AN EMPIRICAL EXAMPLE OF THE THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL, THREE-TYPE MODEL

A graphic representation of the three-dimensional, three-type model described above is given in Figure 1. This diagram represents the results of quantitative exploratory research on retrospectively reported spontaneous praeternatural experiences (Nelson, 1988).⁶

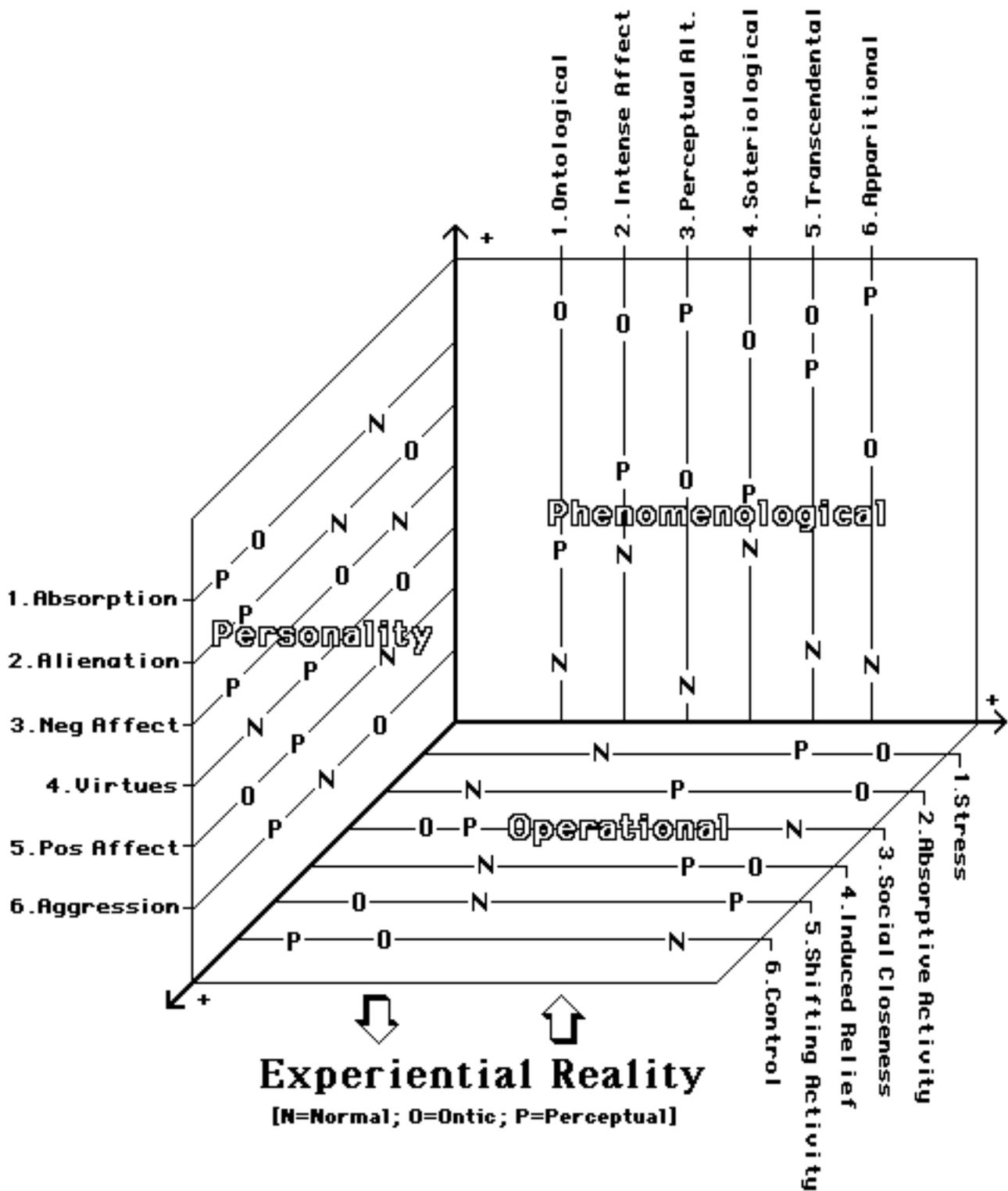


Fig. 1. Representation in 'three dimensional space' of the contribution of Personality, Operational, and Phenomenological factors to the production of Normal (N), Ontic (O), and Perceptual (P) experiences.

The 'Personality' dimension was measured using the Tellegen Differential Personality Inventory (Tellegen, 1982). The primary scales include measures of Well Being, Social Potency, Achievement, Social Closeness, Stress Reaction, Alienation, Aggression, Control vs Impulse, Harmavoidance, Traditionalism, and Absorption. The three affect scales are Positive Affectivity, Negative Affectivity, and Constraint. Only two of the validity scales were used in this study and they are Associative Slips and Unlikely Virtues. Scales and higher order factors which showed statistical significance in their capacity to discriminate N, O, and P experience types are the only ones included in Figure 1.⁷ Since it would be meaningless to assess personality factors against a single experience, the experiencers' life histories of the occurrence of praeternatural experiences were examined in order to determine whether they were primarily 'Ontic' or 'Perceptual' in the type of experiences they generally had. Each subject was then assigned to an appropriate class based on reported life history of praeternatural experiences.

For the other two dimensions a set of retrospective probe statements was employed for each - 33 for the 'Operational' and 39 for the 'Phenomenological'.⁸ These probe statements were focused at a particular experience chosen by the subject for clarity of recall and rated by each on an ordinal scale in terms of the degree of the statement's applicability to the experience under investigation. The probes were drawn from previous informal investigations and clinical experience of the author and a review of the literature (Aaronson, 1967; Bharati, 1976; Bucke, 1966; Hay, 1979; Hood, 1975; Houston and Masters, 1972; Irwin, 1981; James, 1936; Laski, 1961; Metzner, 1980; Murphy and White, 1978; Otto, 1958; Stace, 1960; Tart, 1975).

The data sets thus obtained from the 'Operational' and 'Phenomenological' variables were individually subjected to a principal components analysis (PCA) and these components (for a given experience), together with the relevant personality scales (representing each subject's overall 'style' of experiencing the praeternatural) are graphically represented in Figure 1.⁹ The origin of the three dimensional matrix represents the theoretical minimum possible for each of the factors or scales and the values for each dimension increase in an approximately linear fashion from this origin. The factors comprising the 'Operational' and 'Phenomenological' dimensions are listed in descending order of the amount of variance they each contribute to the PCA's (see Note 9). The N, P, and O experiencers are placed on each of the three dimensions according to the mean value of each type for a given component or scale.¹⁰ The graphic representation thus allows the viewer to observe the relative contributions made by each of the 'Phenomenological' and 'Operational' factors against a backdrop of overall

‘Personality’ orientation for each of the three experience types. A summary of each experience type for each dimension is given in Table 1.

EXPERIENCE DIMENSION

Normal Experiences.

Personality: These experiences are low in Absorption, average in Alienation, low in Negative Affect, high in denial (Unlikely Virtues), low in Positive Affect and average in aggression.

Operational: These experiences are activated by average Stress, low Absorptive Activity, high Social Closeness, average experience of Induced Relief, average occurrence of Shifting Activity and high self- Control.

Phenomenological: These experiences are low in Ontological reorientation, average in Intense Affect, low in Perceptual Alterations, average in Soteriological changes, low in Transcendental quality and low in Apparitional appearances.

Perceptual Experiences.

Personality: These experiences are high in Absorption, high in Alienation, high in Negative Affect, average in denial, high average in Positive Affect and high in aggression.

Operational: These experiences are activated by high Stress, average Absorptive Activity, low Social Closeness, high experience of Induced Relief, high occurrence of Shifting Activity and low self- Control.

Phenomenological: These experiences are low-average in Ontological reorientation, average in Intense Affect, high in Perceptual Alterations, average in Soteriological changes, high in Transcendental quality, and high in Apparitional appearances.

Ontic Experiences.

Personality: These experiences are high in Absorption, low in Alienation, low-average in Negative Affect, low in denial, high in Positive Affect and low in Aggression.

Operational: These experiences are activated by high Stress, high Absorptive Activity, low Social Closeness, high experience of Induced Relief, low occurrence of Shifting activity and low self-Control

Phenomenological: These experiences are high in Ontological reorientation, high in Intense Affect, average in Perceptual Alterations, high in Soteriological changes, high in a Transcendental quality and average in Apparitional appearances.

Table 1.

In this study, for example, O encounters in the ‘Phenomenological’ dimension are characterized by a significantly more frequent experience of being reorientated by an ontological otherness than are either P or N experiences. O experiences also have higher levels of affect associated with them and are accompanied by a greater sense of salvation (Soteriological) than the other types of experience, but are little different than the P types in their ability to generate a sense of the transcendent. However, O encounters fall between P and N experiences in the degree to which they impart unusual alterations

in perception such as waking apparitions which, however, tend to be experienced by P percipients as more intuitional and/or dream-like than usual, veridical waking experiences.

In the 'Operational' dimension the first factor, which represents a background of stressful emotions such as anxiety and/or events such as an emotional shock occurring immediately prior to the onset of the experience, is the most prominent in triggering O type experiences. This factor separates them greatly from normal experiences, but less so from P encounters which also seem to be triggered by a background of ongoing stress. A similar pattern is seen in the fourth 'Operational' factor of 'Induced Relief' which is usually brought about by a sudden change in psychological perspective. This change apparently can be engendered by anything from the receipt of good news, to a sudden and concentrated change of activity, to the ingestion of psycho-active drugs. Although highly absorbed activity, such as the deep concentration of meditation or absorption in a peaceful place, is a significantly more important trigger for P experiences as opposed to N types, O encounters are instigated by this activity to an even greater degree. Both social isolation ('Social Closeness') and loss of a sense of self-control ('Control') separate N experiences from O and P ones, but it appears that activity which is capable of shifting one's deployment of attention ('Shifting Activity') in a unique way is the factor most prominent in discriminating the triggering of O as opposed to P experiences.

Of course, a similar analysis can be made for the 'Personality' dimension of the experient as seen in Figure 1. The most important personality scale in the discrimination of praeternatural experients from non-experients is Absorption, or the ability to enter wholly into experience to the degree that one loses the usual awareness of personal self as separate and distinct (Nelson, 1989b; Tellegen and Atkinson, 1974). Higher levels of positive affect are also associated with both O and P experients as opposed to N types. However, O and P experients are most differentiated by the occurrence of considerably higher levels of alienation and negative affect in the latter. This is in line with another finding in this study that O experients show lower levels of aggression than either P or N types.

The calmer, less anxious and non-alienated O type may be more capable of facing his/her self and therefore demonstrates less denial by showing the least tendency to espouse virtues unlikely to be found in most of us (claiming, for example, to have perfect manners at all times and other similar unlikely traits). On the other hand, it is impossible to tell how much of the personalities of these individuals have been shaped by their encounters with the praeternatural. The primarily O experient may be, as suggested by Maslow (1968) in his discussions of "peak" experiences, more emotionally

resolved in him/her self than individuals who have never had such an experience. It is most likely that the personality types associated with O experiences exist in a reciprocal relationship with those experiences - the personality creates the appropriate 'set' conditions and the experience which follows often shapes and emphasizes those relevant personality characteristics. Of course, this cycle of experience and personality trait development would follow a similar pattern for P and N types as well.

DISCUSSION

It is clear from this preliminary exploratory empirical study that the three dimensional model ('Personality', 'Operational' and 'Phenomenological') being described herein is capable of not only separating classes of experience (O, P and N), but it can provide insights into the nature and mechanisms of these occurrences. For example, one spin-off of applying this model comes when we examine the debate surrounding the nature of mystical experience. There has been considerable disagreement amongst those who have attempted to specify the nature of a mystical experience from the usual phenomenological data alone (Almond, 1982; Happold (1963); James, 1936; Katz, 1978; Smart 1965, 1978; Stace, 1960).¹¹ Argument has often centered on linguistic analysis of the reports of mystics. One difficulty is that phenomenological descriptions such as "ineffable", "noetic", "life transforming" and the like can as easily be used by a teenager to describe her first romantic love. From the preliminary results of applying this model, one can see that the addition of an 'Operational' dimension to a phenomenological description more clearly differentiates mystical from ordinary romantic states on all but Factor 5 ('Shifting Activity' of the 'Operational' dimension) based on a comparison of O and N experience types. Hence, "extroverted" mystical experience, in the phenomenological description as given by Stace (1960), although capable of describing the intensity and power of a teenager's first love as well, is more fully specified and differentiated as an Ontic experience when augmented by the 'Operational' dimension of the proposed model.

The three-dimensional, three-type model allows investigators to create an operationalized definition of experiential states which do not depend for their explanation on an ontological source outside the experiential data base itself. This more complete constellation of characteristics and events maps both the 'forms' and the 'causes' of a subject's experiential world without making the separation between event and cause. Rather, the qualitative description of the experience taken together with 'set' and 'setting' characteristics becomes a total definition of the experience without requiring any

external references. By making the experience or class of experience the center of focus and by operationally specifying it by its characteristics, both phenomenologically and behaviorally, one can explore spontaneous praeternatural experiences without having to solve the problem of epistemological referents either in relation to the empirical world (objective world) or in relation to the supposed experiential ‘container’ of consciousness (subjective world). Rather, one can get on with the job of data collection and analysis.

The application of the kind of multi-dimensional exploratory statistical psychophenomenological method as described in this study opens the possibility of developing a description of these events which is at once both broader and more specific. It is broader in that it allows for an operational analysis which is more than merely a single level of description. It renders a more total and holistic picture of subject and phenomenon while at the same time taking advantage of a multi-subject statistical summary. On the other hand, the model is more specific because, by adding dimensions to the description of a particular type of praeternatural experience, it more accurately pinpoints a given event by providing a more complete definition as given in the resultant map of experiential and behavioral ‘space’. This, of course, eventually will allow us to build experiential maps which are capable of more finely discriminating between praeternatural and ordinary, but unusual experiences. Thus, the approach being advocated here may open the way to providing more finely tuned assessment instruments which will enable the average psychotherapist to separate transpersonal from psychotic states with mystical-like features (Lukoff, 1985).

Of course, the three dimensions delineated in this paper are not in any way a final description. More than advocating this particular model, this paper is attempting to present an overall methodological stance which allows for a synthesis of phenomenological and empirical/statistical research techniques applied in a way which gives primacy to experience. However, in order to make this methodology viable, we must again take the advice of John Stuart Mill who insisted that the “backward state of the (psychological) sciences can only be remedied by applying to them the methods of physical science, duly extended and generalized” (quoted in Mishler, 1979, p. 4). In this case we do not refer to the Newtonian physics of Mill’s time, but rather to the quantum physics of this century.

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NOTES:

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¹Ontological neutrality is an attitude toward our research in which we admit that we do not yet know what is 'ultimately' real. In other words, we assume an open view towards making any final ascriptions of 'meaning' and 'truth' because we realize that not all the 'data' is in yet, nor is it likely ever to be.

²Praeternatural experiences are operationally defined as that class of reported experiential events which are given as responses to either the catch-all questions of Hay (1979) and others or the more specific categories of Nelson (1989a) and, further, by the criterion of having the quality of 'supernatural' givenness as defined by Hultkrantz (1983). He posits a notion of the 'supernatural' as a quality which makes certain events in human life appear to differ sharply from 'normal' perceptions. These praeternatural occurrences are motivated by belief in the possibility of the 'supernatural', viz., they are intentional acts arising from a 'will to believe'.

The experiences in question appear to fall within ten general categories: 1) encounters with God, 2) introvertive and extrovertive mystical experiences, 3) encounters with the numinous and/or sacred, 4) near death encounters of a 'spirit realm', 5) visionary episodes, 6) sensing of non-corporeal presences, 7) out-of-body-experiences, 8) remote perceptions (pre- and post-cognitions and telepathy), 9) a sudden sense of ontological uncertainty or loss of a sense of 'existential self' and 10) shamanistic-like 'other-world' adventures (Nelson, 1989a).

³The 'active' mode would be the shaping of experience through conscious, directed participation of the experient in the generation of the experiential process. The 'passive' mode would include those automatic filtering capacities of background personality attributes and/or unconscious factors (Broadbent, 1958).

⁴This can be seen as a return to James' *Radical Empiricism* (1967). This position vis-a-vis transpersonal experience does not deal directly with the creation of *meaning or belief*. Such a discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, but not beyond the conceptual power of the model being proposed.

⁵Exteroceptive and interoceptive are terms borrowed from Ludwig (1966) and Tart (1975) and refer to perceptual focus directed toward either the 'outside' world (exteroceptive) or towards the 'inner', subjective world of experience (interoceptive).

⁶A total of 54 males, 66 females with an age range 17-65 years (mean age = 31.3 years, SD = 12.8, median = 28 years) were gathered from a previous survey for this study (Nelson, 1988).

Total number of subjects used in the computation of 'Personality' dimension = 112 (23 non-experients, 39 Ontic, and 50 Perceptual); total for the 'Operational' = 118 (24, 44, and 50); and total for the 'Phenomenological' = 118 (24, 44, and 50).

⁷In the case of all three dimensions the O, P and N experience types appearing in Figure 1 showed significant differences of mean score in one-way ANOVAs where indicated as significant in the text. Multivariate Discriminant Function Analysis was also applied to each set of components for a particular dimension and this technique was able to successfully separate the O, P and N experience types (Nelson, 1988).

⁸An example of an 'Operational' probe statement is:

"At the time of my experience I was lost in my own thoughts." This statement attempts to determine whether the subject was "interoceptively" focused which derives from Tart's (1975) system's theory of ASC production.

An example of a 'Phenomenological' probe is:

"It is impossible to describe my experience in words - it can only be experienced." This one corresponds to James' (1936) category of the "ineffable".

⁹Each of the components of the PCA was extracted using VARIMAX rotation and are roughly defined as follows:

Phenomenological:

1. Ontological - 15.4% (of variance explained) - The variables clustered on this factor indicate that experiencers undergo a major reorientation in ontological beliefs including a sense of life coming to fruition, a major change in fundamental beliefs including a reorientation of one's understanding of the nature of reality, a loss of the fear of death, a loss of worldliness, and/or feelings that one has had some kind of enlightenment experience.
2. Intense Affect - 11.9% - The feelings included on this component can range from intense fear, a sense of impending evil, and/or a belief that one's life has been destroyed to feelings of great peace, love, joy, and/or a sense of salvation.
3. Perceptual Alterations - 9.1% - This component includes perceived alterations of time and space, feelings of merging with things and others, a dream-like quality, feelings of being immortal, seeing 'unnatural' light, and/or experiencing unusual somatic sensations.
4. Soteriological - 11.1% - This factor includes feelings of being purified, a sense of salvation, feelings of awe, joy, and/or peace.
5. Transcendental - 4.6% - On this factor is clustered experiencers' responses indicating that their encounter was ineffable, they were passive at the time, their experiences transcended their usual sense of reality, and/or it was pervaded by a sense of numinosity and feelings of unity.
6. Apparitional - 4.6% - This factor includes a strong sense that the experience was an apparition and included a passive, intuitional, and/or dream-like quality.

Operational:

1. Stress - 13.6% - This component includes negative affect from an emotional shock prior to the experience in question and/or prolonged unhappiness, anxiety, annoyance, and/or anger prior to the event which precipitated intense introspective problem solving in which the percipient was engaged at the time.
2. Absorptive Activity - 9.6% - This includes concentrative activities such as meditation, listening to music or other sounds intently, concentrating visually on an object or place, and/or being lost in a reverie of feelings all leading to a sense of inner quiet.
3. Social Closeness - 7.3% - This is a measure of social closeness or distance at the time of the experience and included whether one was socializing, talking, engaging in sexual activity, and/or actively solving an external problem at the time.
4. Induced Relief - 6.8% - This factor represents the intrusion of some influence which causes an abrupt alteration in affect state such as relief from suffering (physical or emotional), ingestion of psycho-active drugs, receiving a physical shock, partaking in an unusual diet, and engaging in unusual physical activity.
5. Shifting Activity - 6.8% - Loaded on this component are enjoyable activities which are capable of causing a shift in the percipient's perspective.
6. Control - 6.9% - This factor represents the experiencers' feelings of being in or out of control.

¹⁰Although the means for O and P experience types were calculated for the PCA factors shown in Figure 1, only approximations from the raw data were made for the N types because there were too few (24) to calculate a meaningful PCA.

¹¹James (1936), for example, lists five primary phenomenological characteristics which he feels define a mystical experience uniquely: 1) Transience; 2) Noeticity; 3) Passivity; 4) Ineffability; 5) Transcendence. Stace (1960) adds the categories of "introvertive" and "extrovertive" to the types of mystical experience one encounters, while Katz (1978) claims that mystical states are actually linguistic categories which do not represent experiences universal across cultures and religions.