

Non-ordinary and Transcendent Experiences: Transpersonal Aspects of Consciousness

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I'll begin this presentation with three quotations from one of my favorite philosopher-psychologists, William James.

The great field for new discoveries . . . is always the unclassified residuum. Round about the accredited and orderly facts of every science there ever floats a sort of dust-cloud of exceptional observations Any one will renovate his science who will steadily look after the irregular phenomena. And when the science is renewed, its new formulas often have more of the voice of the exceptions in them than of what were supposed to be the rules. (James, 1890/1956, pp. 299-300)

Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness . . . is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. (James, 1902/1985, p. 388)

The individual . . . is . . . in at least possible touch with something higher . . . a better part of him, even though it may be but a most helpless germ. . . . He becomes conscious that this higher part is conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with. (James, 1902/1985, p. 508)

My aim will be to show that by addressing the three features to which James alerts us—the unclassified residuum of exceptions or anomalies, other forms of consciousness, and a MORE that is both beyond and within us—we may arrive at a more complete apprehension and understanding not only of consciousness, but also of our very nature, as humans, and of the nature of the world at large.

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Before beginning, I should note that I feel no discomfort in citing these century-old thoughts of William James. I do not think wisdom has an expiration date. I do think that the thoughts of those writing long ago are rich, wise, powerful, and useful for us, even today, especially when those thoughts addressed subjective experiences, and human experience in general.

Let me also mention a metaphor that might be useful, throughout this discussion. Usually, we operate within a relatively narrow band of functioning. In our research projects, our education, and life in general, we tend to take in experiences using one eye (our conventional sensory systems, but with a special emphasis on words), process our experiences and materials using one brain (rationally and analytically), and express ourselves using one mouth (again, with a nearly exclusive emphasis on words). Given the rich panorama of content and experiences that nature makes available to us, would it not be advantageous to expand the range of our functioning, so that we begin to see with multiple eyes; process, consider, and evaluate using multiple brains, and speak with multiple mouths? It is toward such a pluralism of means of knowing, being, and expression that James' admonitions point us.

Three Faces of the MORE

As individuals, small and large groups, organizations, and global/ecological/planetary communities and entities, we are dynamic movement, ever engaged in a process of *becoming*. A snapshot of where and how we are, at any given moment, could reveal three aspects of this becoming. Let us call these our *knowing*, our *being*, and our *doing*. Ongoing changes in these three facets would also constitute dimensions of becoming.

Knowing describes our current states or conditions of *awareness*. We are what we know, and we know what we are. Our knowings contain and involve values, priorities, and meanings. An important complement to this knowing is our *unknowing*.

Being could be described as synonymous with our *nature*. Aspects of this are our identity and our course of development, along with the current and ever-changing relationships that exist within and among us. Here, too, we find values, priorities, and meanings.

Doing describes our modes of *expression*—how we influence and serve others and the world at large. We are what we do, and we do what we are. Here, once again, we find values, priorities, and meanings.

The dance of these three aspects may constitute what we are, as persons. We share some of these aspects with others, and some of these are uniquely our own. In this personal dance, we identify with our values, and we value that with which we

identify. Our attention, our intentions, our values, and our identity typically are relatively local and constrained in and by more familiar, conventional forms.

But now and then, we are shaken out of our familiar, business-as-usual modes by some of these exceptions, these anomalies, these inhabitants of the unclassified residuum to which William James called our attention. These events and experiences suggest that there is more to us and to the world than we had previously apprehended within our narrower band of functioning. These extraordinary experiences provide intimations of, and can serve as pathways toward, the More.

These unusual experiences have been given many names—*supernatural* or *paranormal* experiences being, perhaps, the most frequent of these. James himself referred to these exceptional experiences as *white crows*, reminding us that “if you wish to upset the law that all crows are black, you must not seek to show that no crows are; it is enough if you prove one single crow to be white” (1890/1969, p. 41). In 1919, the irrepressible gadfly journalist Charles Fort used an equally picturesque phrase, *damned facts*, to describe similar recalcitrant exceptions and embarrassments to the received science of his day (Fort, 1941). More recently, sociologist James McClenon (1994) has called such experiences, simply, *wondrous events*. Researcher Rhea White (1997) has suggested the term *exceptional human experiences* to describe many of these. Often—and, I believe, unfortunately, because the term suggests that these are not normal or natural—these are called *anomalous experiences* (e.g., Cardena, Lynn, & Krippner, 2000; Reed, 1988; Zusne & Jones, 1989). For this presentation, I’ve chosen to call them *non-ordinary and transcendent experiences*—non-ordinary because of their relative rarity and unfamiliarity, and transcendent because they go beyond our conventional understanding of ourselves and of the world and because, under special circumstances, such experiences can trigger transformative changes in us, and working with such experiences can allow us to transcend what we were before they visited us.

These non-ordinary and transcendent experiences can extend the range of our functioning in each of the three areas of knowing, being, and doing, providing glimpses of three aspects or faces of the MORE. The growing field of transpersonal psychology acknowledges that experiences such as these can help us recognize that there is more to us than is revealed by psychology’s usual emphasis on our individual egos, and our egoic modes of awareness and egoic modes of control. Transpersonal psychology explores ways in which our knowing, being, expressing, and relating to one another and to the world can be informed by, and more fully grounded in, this More of which we are usually only incompletely and transiently aware. The fields of parapsychology, consciousness studies, and mystical studies—along with developments in certain areas of physics and the other natural sciences—are assisting in our increasing recognition of the More. They are doing this by providing carefully assembled empirical foundations for certain transpersonal claims and by suggesting carefully crafted

explanatory models and theories through which we can better understand and make sense of these unfamiliar experiences. Disciplined inquiry, within each of these approaches, is providing not only increasing evidence for the existence of these unusual experiences, but also indications of their range, limits, and potential practical uses. For the remainder of this presentation, I will highlight some of the main features of what has been learned about these expanded and extended ways of knowing, being, and doing, drawing frequently upon my own investigations in these areas, carried out over the past three decades.

More Ways of Knowing: Direct Knowing

Alternative ways of knowing can be placed along a spectrum of familiarity. At one end of this spectrum are the extremely familiar forms of knowing that occur when we are awake, aware, and in what we consider our ordinary state of consciousness. Sources for this knowing include sensory information from and about the outer world, information about the internal conditions of our bodies, and an awareness—usually deliberate—of our cognitive experiences: our thoughts, memories, expectations, and images. Along with these are our familiar feelings and emotions. Each of these, in turn, is experienced along its own continuum of definiteness and intensity—from clear, distinct, and dramatic experiences (e.g., the image of these words on the computer monitor before me) to less formed, fuzzier content (e.g., the seed-like beginnings of thoughts I am hoping to form and communicate).

Also familiar are the forms of awareness that arise during other forms of consciousness such as profound relaxation, daydreams or reverie, nocturnal dreams, and the hypnagogic and hypnopompic twilight states that occur as we transition from waking to sleep. In these, the contents, qualities, and natures of the knowings change. Content may be more or less vivid, but what is experienced seems to become less determined by our regular knowledge and expectations, and less subject to egoic control. The knowings arise in a spontaneous fashion that suggests that something beyond or larger than the usual “me” is involved in their production. Terms such as “the unconscious” (Ellenberger, 1970) and the “subliminal self” (Myers, 1903/1961) have been coined to describe the features of these less familiar forms of knowing. Thirty years ago, psychologist Wilson Van Dusen (1972) referred to them, simply and picturesquely, as *The Other Me*. These forms of knowing shade into related forms with names such as tacit knowing, intuition, and intimation. Initially within the purview of poets, philosophers, psychiatrists, and clinical psychologists, these processes are gaining increasing prominence in contemporary cognitive studies (e.g., the “cognitive unconscious” and “emotional unconscious” of Kihlstrom, 1987, and Kihlstrom, Mulvaney, Tobias, & Tobis, 2000) and neuropsychology (Damasio, 1994). Already, even these familiar experiences begin to indicate encounters with other ways of knowing—with a More of which we previously were unaware.

At the other end of the spectrum are less familiar forms of knowing such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition—names for instances in which The Other Me seems to be feeding us or reflecting to us information from distant places and distant times beyond the reach of our conventional senses and rational inferences, and beyond the range of our normally construed identities. These unusual and not well understood forms of direct knowing that defy the usual impediments of distance, shields, and time have provided the subject matter for the disciplines of psychical research and parapsychology.

Originally having the meaning of feeling (more literally, suffering) at a distance, *telepathy* is now understood as accurate, direct knowledge of the mental content or subjective experiences of another person, typically at a distance—a kind of mind-to-mind communication or interaction. An example would be my accurate discernment of a pain in the left thumb experienced, right now, by someone in the back row of this meeting room.

Initially having the meaning, among the French, of clear or distant seeing, *clairvoyance* is now described as accurate, direct knowledge of some objective event—again, usually at a distance; this is a kind of mind-to-object communication or interaction. An historical example of clairvoyance is an incident involving the 18th century scientist-turned-mystic, Emanuel Swedenborg. The following abbreviated account of this well-known episode is taken from Wilson Van Dusen's (1974) book, *The Presence of Other Worlds: The Psychological/Spiritual Findings of Emanuel Swedenborg*. This account is based on Tafel (1890), which, in turn, is informed by a letter of the eminent German philosopher, Immanuel Kant.

On July 17, 1759, Swedenborg and fifteen others were guests of the prominent merchant William Castle in Gothenberg at his fine home on Canal Street. At six in the evening Swedenborg appeared quite pale and alarmed. When asked what was wrong, he described a fire burning at that moment in Stockholm, three hundred miles away. He paced in and out of the house evidently agitated by the fire. His detailed description and evident sincerity upset the guests, many of whom were from Stockholm. Swedenborg described exactly where the fire was burning, where it had started, and when, and was dismayed to see a friend's house already in ashes. The next day, Sunday, the governor, having heard of the incident, asked to see Swedenborg and received a detailed report. The news spread through the city. Two days after the fire, messengers arrived and confirmed every detail as Swedenborg had reported it, including when and how it started, what it burned, and where and when it was contained. There were several separate reports of this incident that agreed on essentials. Even the German philosopher Immanuel Kant was impressed and sent his own agent to check the details. (p. 141)

Today, clairvoyance is studied quite effectively in the context of what is called “remote viewing,” under well-controlled laboratory conditions. Quite ordinary persons have been found to be able to accurately describe, often in fine and impressive detail, a wide range of distant physical objects and architectural and geographical sites, in situations in which the target sites have been selected on the basis of a truly random process, and in which such descriptions cannot be accounted for on the basis of conventional sensory information, rational inference, or coincidence.

I’ll present one of countless examples of successful remote viewing that I have witnessed, over the years, in my own laboratory. I pick this particular example because the remote viewer in this case was a skeptical physiologist who had no place for such phenomena in her model of how the world worked, yet she was open enough to give the experiment a try. The remote viewer was located in a closed and locked room, 20 meters away from the similarly closed and locked target room, in which an object had been randomly selected from a large pool of objects and hidden in a box. The full, unedited transcript of the percipient’s imagery is as follows: “A doll, blond hair, pink dress, with a little apron. Nothing else, except a dark glass (brownish, bluish) free-form ashtray. Doll image is the most persistent, no movement, very static image.” The target object that had been randomly selected for this session, without the [conventional] knowledge of the percipient, was a small, bone china doll with blond hair, a bonnet, and a pink and blue dress. The correspondence is obvious. Even the “miss”—mention of the glass ashtray—is suggestive of the material of which the target doll is constructed. There is even an indirect, latent correspondence between bone china and the mentioned ashtray, because bone china is made with an admixture of the white residue (bone ash) of oxidized bones.

In *precognition*, we find instances of accurate knowledge of future events that, according to our conventional view of time, have not yet occurred and that could not have been predicted on the basis of rational inference, nor accounted for on the basis of chance coincidence. I’ll illustrate precognition from some of my own personal experiences. Three decades ago, I was teaching an undergraduate parapsychology course in a university. Whenever it was time to discuss a new paranormal topic, I found myself having just those experiences, for a period of about a week or two. Once I had had direct personal experiences of what I was to teach, the series of experiences went away, having, I think, served their purpose in helping me understand what I was teaching at a deeper, embodied level. When the course topic was precognition, I found myself having precognitive dreams for a period of about two weeks. During that period, my last dream of the early morning would be relevant to something I would hear on the radio (not a clock radio) about 20 minutes after awakening. For example, I dreamt I was on a tall mountain in Japan; I swept my index finger through the air, and when I looked at my finger, I found it was covered with black soot. Twenty minutes later, the radio broadcast news of unusually severe air pollution in Tokyo. Another example: I

dreamt of a monkey or ape what was a trapeze catcher in an aerial act. Twenty minutes later, on the radio, there was a morning comedy routine in which one character was describing his cousin who was outside the door. The cousin was described as being short, hairy all over, with long arms that dangled, apelike, down to the ground; the cousin's occupation was trapeze catcher in an aerial act. As well as occurring in such spontaneous situations, such future-telling correspondences have been observed hundreds of times, in numerous well-controlled laboratory experiments.

Although these processes of telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition have been noticed and recorded throughout history, their existence, to some, remains controversial. Alternative explanations and critiques of such phenomena have been made, again, throughout history, by skeptics and counter-advocates of such claims. For me, these phenomena are real. I base this judgment upon my own experiences of them, my observations of their occurrence in my own laboratory under well-controlled conditions, similar observations by colleagues whose work I know and trust, and from my careful examination of nearly twelve decades of published scientific reports on such phenomena. I think a reasonable and balanced approach to judging claims about these processes would be to examine carefully and dispassionately the published primary reports, read the critics' arguments, read the counterarguments to these, recall your own—and others'—lived experiences of similar incidents, and then draw conclusions based upon the fullest possible amounts of evidence and argument. To assist in such an investigation, information in the following sources will be helpful: Broughton (1991); Krippner, (1977-1994); Kurtz (1985); Radin (1997); Targ, Schlitz, and Irwin (2000), and Wolman (1977).

I mention these three paranormal modes of knowing because, to me, the fact that we are able to access information at a distance, through space and through time, suggests that in some subtle and profound manner, we are interconnected with and can access those remote places, times, and their content. These potentials and abilities already suggest that we are More than we might previously have thought. In addition to providing access to known realms of information and events in novel ways, perhaps these same additional modes of knowing can provide access to *different realms*, as well. Such possibilities have scarcely been explored by contemporary researchers. I think this can be an exciting and fruitful field for future research.

More Ways of Doing: Direct Mental Influence

Just as there are alternative ways of knowing that progressively reveal aspects of the More or of the awareness capabilities of The Other Me, so too, there are alternative ways of doing—of influencing others and the world at large—that provide glimpses of still other aspects of the More and of the action capabilities of The Other Me.

Our most common ways of influencing others and the world about us are through our muscular actions and the various signals we send to others through our words and bodily expressions. We recognize that our thoughts and visions of future, meaningful goals can also have profound influences in the outer world, but only to the extent that those thoughts, visions, and expectations can be expressed and communicated to others through words and bodily actions. There is, however, an accumulating body of evidence that, under special conditions, we may be able to influence others, and the biological and physical world as well, directly, through our conscious processes of attention and intention. Such direct mental interactions with the world have been called instances of telekinesis or psychokinesis (“mind over matter”).

Although large scale occurrences of psychokinesis (e.g., movements or deformations of objects) are rare, and their very existence controversial, there is a very substantial and growing database of evidence in support of real psychokinetic influences upon more subtle, flexible, and freely variable processes such as randomly behaving physical systems driven by radioactive decay or the random thermal noise of electronic components, random mechanical systems such as bouncing dice, and the quasi-random biological and physiological activities of living cells or intact organisms. In our own laboratory investigations over the years, we have found that ordinary people are able to influence, mentally and at a distance, the activities of target systems such as electronic random generators, the behaviors of small animals, the rate of destruction (hemolysis) of human red blood cells, the physiological activities of distant persons, and the ability of distant persons’ to concentrate or focus their attention. Accessible reviews of much of this work can be found in Radin (1997).

As examples of this research, I’ll describe briefly our studies of intentional influences on the physiological activity of remotely situated persons. In many experiments—and these have since been replicated elsewhere by independent investigators—we have found that it is possible for one person to mentally influence the ongoing autonomic nervous system activity of another person, at a distant location. The distant person’s physiological state is indexed by objectively recorded electrodermal activity (the electrical activity of the skin, which, reflects sympathetic nervous system activity and, in turn, the person’s state of bodily, emotional, and mental arousal or quietude). Other physiological activities have been monitored in other experiments. This ongoing activity is recorded, by computer, during randomly interspersed influence and non-influence periods. During the influence periods, the influencer in a distant, closed room directs attention toward the remote person and attempts to induce in that remote person either calmness or activation or no change (for control periods). Outcomes are objectively assessed and statistically analyzed. A wide range of persons are able to mentally influence the physiological activities of other persons, at a distance, and without conventional means, using specific intentional and attentional strategies. Successful influencers produce the desired bodily states in themselves, using self-regulation, along with an intention and expectation that this state be

mimicked in the remote person. They also imagine and visualize the remote person in situations that would produce the desired bodily conditions (e.g., imaging the remote person quietly relaxing in a pleasant, comfortable place for inducing calmness; imagining the remote person engaged in strenuous physical activity, for inducing activation and arousal). The influencers accompany these mental strategies with firm yet effortless “wishes” for the remote person to respond appropriately.

A novel, and quite interesting, aspect was added to some of these experiments—an element of time-displacement. These experiments were arranged so that, instead of influencing the remote person in “real time,” the influencers attempted to influence the remote persons’ pre-recorded physiological activities—that is, they attempted to have their mental influences act “backward in time.” These, and similar time-displaced intentional influences (studied by others), can be just as successful as concurrent, real-time remote intentional influences. Thus, intentions may play active roles in influencing the physical world, not only across space, but, apparently, across time as well. It is important to point out a subtle distinction. In these experiments, one does not “change” the past; it is not the case that something happens in the past and then “unhappens” when the later intentional endeavor occurs. Rather, what is influenced appears to be the initial likelihood (probability) that something has happened in the first place. Human intentions appear to be able to swerve or bias the initial seed moments of development of occurrences, not only in the present, but in the past, as well. We will consider this work, further, in a later section of this paper. These real-time and time-displaced experiments are described in detail in two recent publications (Braud, 2000; Schlitz & Braud, 1997).

A personal, larger-scale instance of what appears to be unconscious psychokinesis occurred many years ago when, in the context of thinking about unfinished business involving firing someone, I reached to a closed folder of safety matches and the matches within the closed folder spontaneously burst into flames. Here, I believe, some aspect of The Other Me that is able to do such things was able to convert a thought about personnel firing in objectively observable, physical fire. Similar large-scale, spontaneous forms of psychokinesis have been observed through the centuries; often, these have been given the unfortunate name of *poltergeist* activities. This German-derived name suggests the mischievous activity of noisy or rambunctious spirits. The phenomena themselves, however, may well be the outcomes of unconscious, psychokinetic influences of the living persons around whom these anomalous physical phenomena tend to occur and recur.

Psychokinetic or direct mental influences may also appear in the more beneficent forms of anomalous healings—distant, mental, psychic, or spiritual healings. In such cases, mixed in with other possibilities such as placebo reactions, spontaneous remissions, inaccurate initial and final diagnoses, coincidence, conventional self-healing, and even possible electromagnetic or other energetic

influences (in cases of close contact forms of healing such as therapeutic touch, Reiki, or other forms of “subtle energy” work), there could be an efficacious component of direct, psychokinetic influence by the practitioner upon the biochemical and physiological systems of the person being healed. Psychokinetic or direct mental influences may also be present in successful cases of intercessory prayer or of healing affirmations by self or others.

Taken together, these instances of direct and remote mental influences would seem to require some form of subtle yet profound interconnectedness shared by the influencer and what is influenced—whether the latter be another person, another living organism, or an “inanimate” system. Just as, in much more familiar forms, my own intentions can bring about changes in my own bodymind (e.g., voluntary movements, memories, images, physiological changes), these direct mental influence incidents begin to make sense if I consider the influenced systems to be, somehow, extensions of myself that also may respond appropriately to my intentions, under special circumstances. This greater me is suggested well by the Iroquois notion of the *long body* (which includes not only the individual but other people as well; see Aanstoos, 1986) and by the French philosopher Henri Bergson’s (1935) concept of *our large body*, which he conceived as co-extensive with our consciousness, comprising all that we perceive, reaching even to the stars. This view aligns itself well with the concept of *Mind At Large*, found in Bergson, as well as in many subscribers to the perennial philosophy, throughout the ages.

More Ways of Being: Exceptional Human Experiences

The abilities and experiences mentioned above suggest additional ways of knowing and doing, two Mores that provide directions in which we can extend our apprehension of our selves and the reaches of our consciousness—two dimensions in which we need to extend our concepts and theories so that they can more adequately and faithfully address the given data. There is yet a third direction or dimension for expansion—alternative ways of being, ways of being that reflect the More that we are, but often ignore. Three clusters of research and theory require us to examine much more closely the nature of our selves, our consciousness, and our very identity. These three areas are studies of human psycho-spiritual development, studies of phenomena suggestive of our survival of bodily death and of an afterlife, and studies of what have come to be called exceptional human experiences.

Many theories or models have been developed to help us understand the time course, process, and nature of human development. Some of these models have focused upon specific aspects of development—physical, cognitive, emotional, social, moral, faith or spirituality. Others are more ambitious and attempt to describe the ontogenetic and phylogenetic developments of consciousness itself. Most of these models address familiar and conventionally understood aspects of human functioning. Occasionally, however, a theorist expands the range of what

had previously been considered and begins to address less familiar qualities and capacities. Thus, certain theorists have begun to explore the farther reaches of human experience, in their developmental models. Some of these venture into territories of the More and describe self-transcendent and unitive stages of development. Some have even suggested stages of existence before birth (pre- and peri-natal aspects) and after death. Deserving of special mention, in these contexts, are theories and models that have been proposed by Evelyn Underhill (1911/1969), Carl Jung (e.g, 1959), Michael Washburn (1988, 1994), Ken Wilber (1980, 2000), Stanislav Grof (1975, 1985, 1988), Kenneth Ring (1984, 1992), Jenny Wade (1996), and Hillevi Ruumet (1997). These various models are informed by and incorporate findings suggestive of extended and expanded ways of being and becoming. Closely aligned with these Western models, and often going beyond them, are presentations of stages of human psychospiritual development that can be found in various esoteric, spiritual, and wisdom traditions.

Afterdeath or *survival research* addresses findings that suggest that some aspect of human personality might survive the death of the physical body. This is the more controversial branch of psychical research and parapsychology that concerns itself with such phenomena as apparitions of the dead, hauntings, some poltergeist occurrences, mediumistic communications, mediumistic physical phenomena, out-of-body experiences, near-death experiences, and reports suggestive of past lives and reincarnation. Research in these areas not only addresses the reality status of these possible indicators of discarnate survival but also necessitates a careful reexamination of who and what we are even while we are living. If something survives, what might that something be, and in which ways might that something exist within us or as part of us—and, hence, a crucial facet of our identity, nature, and being—as we carry on, in this life, as living, conscious entities? If there is something more than our body and brain that might survive the death of the body and of the brain, than that More is a part of our present being that deserves serious attention in our considerations of our nature and potentials, as human beings.

I will not even attempt to review the vast body of research and thinking that characterize this field. I will simply say that a great deal of very curious, and a goodly amount of very impressive, evidence has been collected and marshaled in favor of the afterlife or discarnate survival hypothesis. As the always present counterpoint to this hypothesis is the view that, perhaps, the findings might be explained, more parsimoniously, by forms of psychic functioning in the living persons involved in the various instances, rather than communications or actions of the ostensible discarnate entities. If the accuracy or validity of survival evidence can be determined, then records for such checking must exist in some form, and those very records might be being accessed via telepathy, clairvoyance, or precognition, even unconsciously, by persons involved in the studied episodes, with a resultant mimicking of discarnate persistence or action. This is commonly referred to as the super psi or super ESP hypothesis. If physical phenomena

attributable to the discarnate occur, could those phenomena be produced through deliberate or spontaneous psychokinesis or direct mental influence on the part of the living? It is difficult or impossible to determine which of these alternative explanations is the more valid one. At best, judgments might be made, on a case by case basis, as to the more satisfactory of the two proffered explanations for the findings at hand. Those wishing to look more carefully into this fascinating area of study can consult the reference volumes mentioned earlier, as well as additional works by Doore (1990), Murphy (1992), Griffin (1997), Tart (1997), Greyson (2000), and Mills and Lynn (2000).

The third area relevant to the More that we are can be summarized in the context of a system of classification and interpretation proposed by Rhea White (1997). White coined the term *exceptional human experiences* (EHEs) to bring together large sets of experiences that previously had been considered in relative isolation from one another. White and her co-researcher Suzanne Brown (White, 1998) have identified approximately 200 exceptional experiences categories and have organized these into nine classes: mystical and unitive experiences, psychological experiences, encounter experiences, unusual death-related experiences, peak experiences, exceptional human performance/feats experiences, healing experiences, desolation/nadir experiences, and dissociative experiences. I'll paraphrase Rhea White's thoughts about each of these EHE classes.

Mystical and unitive experiences are those in which there is a strong sense of greater connection, sometimes amounting to union, with the divine, other people, other life forms, objects, surroundings, or the universe itself. Often, this is accompanied by a sense of ecstasy or of being outside of one's skin-encapsulated individual ego or self identity. Related to this would be the *pure consciousness event* that Robert Forman has studied extensively (Forman, 1990, 1999). Forman defines the pure consciousness event as "a wakeful though contentless (nonintentional) consciousness" (1990, p. 8), and considers this a form of introvertive mysticism (Stace, 1960).

Psychical experiences are those in which we learn about or influence the world through means other than the conventionally recognized senses, motor systems, or their mechanical extensions, or rational inference, in cases in which chance coincidence has been ruled out. The major forms of psychical experiences—telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis—were discussed earlier.

Encounter experiences are those in which the experiencer is confronted with something that is actually there but is awesome and wondrous (such as a glorious mountain peak or a curious event such as grandfather's clock stopping at the moment of his distant death) or something that is not supposed to be there (such as a Marian apparition or a UFO). These could also include encounters with angelic beings or mythical beings. These experiences could be described as encounters with realms or beings that seem alien or other.

Unusual death related experiences include near-death experiences, strange experiences associated with the moment of death (such as clocks stopping or pictures of the deceased falling at the moment of their deaths), apparitions of the dead, and various apparent communications with the dead.

Peak experiences are both related to, yet different from, mystical experiences. They are self-actualizing moments in which one experiences, more closely than usual, all that one can be. They typically are short-lived, yet profound, and are accompanied by a sense of enhanced perception, appreciation, or understanding. One may feel lifted out of oneself, in the flow of things, self-fulfilled, engaged in optimal functioning, and filled with highest happiness. These experiences can be triggered by the beauty and majesty of the natural world, by great music or art, by witnessing noble acts, but also by experiences of the tragic aspects of life.

Exceptional human performances/feats are activities that extend the limits of what a given person has been accustomed to doing, or activities beyond what persons as a whole had been doing. These are ways in which we go beyond previously experienced or understood capabilities; often, these elicit feelings of awe and wonder. Examples include exceptional sports or athletic performances, outstanding musical performances, unusual feats of strength or stamina, and so on. This class also would include the extraordinary abilities displayed by precocious geniuses and by savants.

Healing experiences include instances of recovery, cure, or enhancement of physical, psychological, or spiritual well-being beyond what is usually experienced or expected on the basis of conventional medical or psychological knowledge.

Desolation/nadir experiences are those of profound feelings of isolation and experiences of loss of meaning, satisfaction, or well-being, which, nonetheless may be triggers for peak experiences or may be preludes or steps in one's overall development or movement toward their opposites—the peak experiences of wholeness, joy, and rich connection. Desolation or nadir (the lowest point or trough of feelings or affect) experiences often are associated with disasters and life-threatening circumstances. These are contacts with the depths of self—complements to the heights of self experienced in peak experiences.

Dissociation experiences are those in which one feels, knows, or acts in ways that seem apart from, detached from, or disconnected from one's usual conscious awareness, actions, or self-identity. One feels an Other to oneself.

Stanislav Grof (1972, 1975, 1988) has offered his own cartography of exceptional experiences, based on his extensive observations of the experiential worlds of persons undergoing LSD psychotherapy and holotropic breathwork, as well as those occurring more spontaneously. Grof has called these, simply, *transpersonal*

experiences, by which he means experiences involving “an expansion or extension of consciousness beyond the usual ego boundaries and the limitations of time and space” (1972, p. 49). Grof’s cartography addresses the following unusual experiences: temporal expansions of consciousness—which include perinatal experiences (cosmic unity, cosmic engulfment, “no exit” or hell experiences, death-rebirth struggles, and death-rebirth experiences), embryonal and fetal experiences, ancestral experiences, collective and racial experiences, phylogenetic (evolutionary) experiences, “past incarnation” experiences, precognition, clairvoyance and “time travels”; spatial expansions of consciousness—which include ego transcendence in interpersonal relations, identification with other persons, group identification and group consciousness, animal identification, plant identification, oneness with life and all creation, consciousness of inorganic matter, planetary consciousness, extra-planetary consciousness, out-of-body experiences, traveling clairvoyance, “space travels,” and telepathy; spatial construction of consciousness (organ, tissue, and cellular consciousness); and experiential extension or expansion beyond the framework of “objective reality”—including spiritistic and mediumistic experiences, experiences of encounters with supra-human spiritual entities, experiences of other universes and encounters with their inhabitants, archetypal experiences, experiences of encounter with blissful and wrathful deities, activation of the charkas and arousal of the serpent power (kundalini), consciousness of the universal mind, and the supracosmic and metacosmic void. I’ve provided this detailed listing to indicate the great range of experiences that have been repeatedly observed. Recently, Jenny Wade (2000) has reported that many of the experiences listed above can occur during sexual activities, and others have found that similar experiences have been associated with a great variety of triggers and circumstances. Each of these experiences is an encounter with an Other (another being or another realm)—with one of a great variety of Mores.

In all of the above—the extended developmental characteristics, the afterlife intimations, and the exceptional human experiences—one can dismiss the experiences as mere anomalies or curiosities, ignore them, or even suppress them or attempt to explain them away because of their unusual, unfamiliar nature. On the other hand, if one honors such experiences, and begins to work with and attempt to understand them, the experiences can reveal heretofore unrecognized and unacknowledged aspects of oneself—one’s larger nature, identity, and potentials—and transformative changes (profound, pervasive, and persistent changes in one’s being) can occur, allowing one to recognize and express More of oneself than was previously realized or appreciated.

Comments can be added in the context of mystical and unitive experiences—comments that also are relevant to what was mentioned in the earlier section on additional modes of knowing. From a consideration of mystical experiences, we have learned of the existence of a possible contentless form of consciousness that has been well-described by Robert Forman (1990, 1999). He has called this the *pure consciousness event*.

Huston Smith (2001) recently provided this interesting suggestion about pure consciousness:

The image on a television screen provides an analogy The television lights up its screen, and the film in the video we are watching modifies that light so as to produce any one of an infinite number of images. These images are like the perceptions, sensations, dreams, memories, thoughts, and feelings that we consciously experience—we might think of them as the *contents* of consciousness. The light itself, without which no images would be possible, corresponds to pure consciousness. We know that the images on the screen are composed of this light, but we are not usually aware of the light itself. Our attention is caught up in the images that appear and the stories they tell. In much the same way, we know we are conscious, but normally we are aware only of the many different experiences, thoughts, and feelings that consciousness presents us with. Consciousness proper—pure consciousness, consciousness with no images imposed upon it—is the common property of us all. When (in introspection or meditation) we detect *pure* consciousness, we have every reason to think that what I experience is identical with what you experience in that state. . . . For at that level, we are down to what consciousness *is*, namely infinite potential—receptive to any content that might be imposed on it. (pp. 264-265)

Related to this, but perhaps not exactly the same, are the various forms of *unknowing* described by practitioners of apophatic or negative forms of mystical contemplation. This *via negativa*—apophatic or negative way—emphasizes contentless, still, silent, voided, dark, desolate form of consciousness or being as a way of emptying oneself so as to be passively infused with another, more ultimate reality. Akin to the emptiness (*sunyata*) of Buddhist doctrine, variations of this experience of nothingness or unknowing appear in the experiences and teachings of the Neo-Platonist, Plotinus, and in a long and venerable stream of Christian mystical contemplation represented by such figures as the Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, the anonymous author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, Meister Eckhart, and John of the Cross. These empty forms of consciousness cannot be ignored in the cataloging of the varieties of human consciousness. These provide still further indications of the Mores that we might know or uncover in our being and becoming.

Implications of Non-ordinary and Transcendent Experiences

Taken as a group, these non-ordinary and transcendent experiences—these additional modes of knowing, doing, and being—address each of the points made in the three quotes from William James with which I began this presentation. These are parts of the residuum of human experiences that are relatively

unfamiliar, not well understood, and seem to depart from the usual rules of knowing, being, and doing. They illustrate additional forms of consciousness in which different content may be apprehended or familiar content apprehended in different ways, or in which there may no content at all. The experiences can provide evidence of a More, beyond the usual view of our nature and capabilities, with which we can relate in very real ways.

Perhaps we can learn most about the presence and nature of these nonordinary and transcendent experiences by experiencing them directly, ourselves. In addition to these subjective appreciations, the experiences are associated with objective correlates or outcomes—fruits of their occurrence—that are also available to others. These fruits include concomitant variations of one’s bodily, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational activities; potentially significant life changes and transformations; and, in the case of the psychical experiences, verifiable indications of the nonlocal forms of knowledge and influence that they permit.

These experiences can serve useful functions. They can provide trustworthy indications that there is more to life and to ourselves than is commonly recognized, they can provide confirmations or affirmations of decisions and life choices, and they can indicate the subtle yet profound ways in which we are interconnected—with different aspects of ourselves, with others, with other sentient life forms, and with all of nature.

Although we are far from an understanding of the nature and workings of these experiences, we have learned much about the conditions that appear to foster them and impede them. They are most likely to occur under conditions when they are most needed or serve to fulfill needs in ourselves and other that are not readily satisfied in conventional ways. They also tend to occur most readily when our more familiar forms of knowing, being, and doing are compromised or in abeyance—when our attention is freed, spontaneously or deliberately, from its usual preoccupation with sensory, emotional, or cognitive content; when there is a decline in our usual egoic structure, egoic expectations, and egoic control. Our usual attention to, and emphasis of, our individual egos, bodies, brains, and “normal” states of consciousness serve, in the terminology of the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1935), as *reducing valves* that prevent our access to a larger range of reality or to the greater extensiveness of our *larger body* (or our *long body*, as conceived in the Iroquois and other American Indian traditions; see Aanstoos, 1986). When these reducing valves are compromised—when, in the words of William Blake, “the doors of perception [are] cleansed” (1790/1977, p. 188)—access to a greater expanse of reality becomes possible. Our usual, up close, worm’s-eye appreciation of things is replaced by a wider-ranging, bird’s-eye view.

The psychical experiences of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis offer extreme case opportunities for observing the powers of these

alternative modes of knowing and influencing. Especially in controlled laboratory instances, alternative communication and influence channels can be eliminated, and we can learn what can be accomplished through these experiences, in their purest forms. These human abilities provide what is perhaps the clearest indications of the reach or extent of consciousness and of the active role that consciousness may play in the physical world.

Many models or theories have been advanced in attempts to explain how consciousness is able to know and influence events that appear to be distant in space and time. These models can be summarized in three categories: *transmission* models, *reorganization* models, and *holonomic* models.

The transmission models assume that information or energy is transferred from point to point—from a sender to a receiver—carried by some form of mediator through some sort of channel. An early form of this model was the mental radio analogy. Just as intelligence could be conveyed electromagnetically from a transmitter to a receiver, so too, perhaps, psychic knowledge or influence could be similarly transmitted and received. [It is not well known that a major instrument of modern neuroscience, the electroencephalograph or brain-wave device, was invented by the German scientist Hans Berger, in 1924, in an attempt to detect and measure weak electromagnetic emanations of the human brain that he believed might be the carriers of telepathic communication (see Brazier, 1961; Roll, 1960).] Many hypothetical carriers have been proposed for these psychic transmissions, including electromagnetic waves, neutrinos, tachyons, and so on. The latest contender is extremely low frequency (ELF) radiation. All such transmission models face serious difficulties in explaining the operating characteristics of psychic effects—their reach over great distances, our inability to shield or amplify these effects, their great acuity or discriminating power, difficulties in encoding and decoding any “signals” that might be involved, and—most of all—their apparent disregard of usual temporal constraints.

In *reorganization* models, nothing is posited to be transmitted from point to point. Rather, the “noise,” randomness, or disorder already present at one site (the “target” in cases of psychokinesis or the human brain or whatever constitutes human mental processes in cases of telepathy, clairvoyance, or precognition) is reorganized in a manner that matches the high degree of structure or organization present at another site (the influencer’s strong and focused intentions in cases of psychokinesis or the well-structured target event in cases of telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition). In such cases, the desired goal outcome (either knowledge or physical influence) would be reconstructed out of raw materials already available at the site of action, in a manner analogous to resonance, but without the typical mediators of familiar forms of resonance. The challenges facing such models are determinations of what precisely “feeds” the reorganization process at the restructured end and what precisely specifies the particular form the reorganization will take.

In the third class of models, which could be called *holonomic* or *correspondence* models, nothing is either transmitted or reorganized. All information is already present throughout all parts of all systems, in some implicate or potential form, in a manner not unlike the complex interference patterns in which information is represented in a hologram. This is an attentional deployment model, in which what appears to be the accessing of new information is really a case of knowing or remembering where and how to look within ourselves for knowledge that already is present. The problem then becomes one of accessing or reading out information that is already available at all points, specifying the grounds or fields that make all of this possible, and accounting for creation of novelty within such a system. How do the *intended* read-outs or effects occur at some particular time, as opposed to a vast number of alternative possibilities?

The second and third classes of models call to mind similar statements found in Jung's concept of synchronicity, in Leibnitz's monadology in which "monads have no windows" but nonetheless perfectly mirror one another, and in the ancient Hermetic maxim, "As it is above, so it is below." Contemporary parallels are Bohm's implicate and explicate realities and Shel Drake's morphogenetic fields. A wonderful and wonderfully concise poetic statement of this model is presented in the following quatrain of the 13th-century Persian mystical poet Jelaluddin Rumi (1984):

I've heard it said there's a window that opens
from one mind to another,
but if there's no wall, there's no need
for fitting the window, or the latch. (p. 10)

We can glimpse essential aspects of the holonomic model in this passage from the writings of the neo-Platonist, Plotinus (205-270):

We are left wondering whence it came, from within or without;
and when it has gone, we say, "it was here. Yet no; it was beyond!"
but we ought not to question whence; there is no whence, no
coming or going in place; now it is seen and now not seen. We
must not run after it, but fit ourselves for the vision and then wait
tranquilly for its appearance, as the eye waits on the rising of the
sun, which in its own time appears above the horizon—out of the
ocean, as the poets say—and gives itself to our sight. (Fifth
Ennead, V, 8)

Still another flavor of this holonomic view is suggested by the Buddhist principle of *trishna* or *tanha* (*desire* or *thirst*), as presented by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1962). According to Suzuki, the early Buddhist view of *trishna*, of thirst or desire, as a cause of suffering (as *duhkha* is usually translated, although a more accurate translation might be *dissatisfaction* or *unsatisfactoriness*), and therefore something to be eliminated, was not sufficiently deep or complete. Later Buddhists realized that *trishna* is the basis of existence, existence itself, and even preceded existence. *Trishna*,

according to Suzuki, is the first principle of making things come into existence; it takes form through its will to assert and express itself; it is inexhaustible and takes an infinite variety of forms.

When we really see into ourselves, *trishna* will bare itself before itself in us. . . . When we see the lilies of the field and observe that they are more gloriously arrayed than Solomon in his day, is this not because in our *trishna* there is something participating in the *trishna* of the flower? Otherwise, we could never appreciate them. When we follow the fowls of the air and think of their being utterly free from care or worry, is this not because the pulse of our *trishna* beats in unison with the *trishna* of the fowls? If this were not the case, how could we ever come to the understanding of those creatures? Even when Nature is regarded as hostile, there must be something in it which calls out this feeling in us—which is to say, Nature partakes of (human) *trishna*. . . . The atom certainly has its *trishna*, and it is this *trishna* that enables [us] to express it in a mathematical formula. . . . *Trishna* lies in us not as one of the factors constituting our consciousness, but it is our being itself. It is I; it is you; it is the cat; it is the tree; it is the rock; it is the snow; it is the atom. (pp. 94-95)

If we adjudge the transmission model inadequate in accounting for all of the empirical findings regarding direct conscious influence (in psychokinesis) and direct knowing (in telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition), and we gravitate instead toward the reorganization or holonomic models, it becomes impossible to escape certain major implications or conclusions regarding consciousness. One of these is that mind or consciousness can do things that the brain or other physical organ cannot do: It can access nonlocal intelligence and can have nonlocal effects. This at once implies that mind or consciousness is more than brain and more than an epiphenomenon of brain, and that consciousness or mind itself may be nonlocal, extending throughout space and time. This implies a profound and extensive *interconnectedness* between mind and body, among all people, and, indeed, among all of Nature's "ten thousand things." This, in turn, is rich in ethical and ecological implications for our relations with and treatment of one another and the environment. The findings involving psychical functioning in general, but especially those involving psychokinesis, point to the conclusion that there is indeed a goal-directed or teleonomic principle in Nature that complements Nature's familiar deterministic principles, and that such a principle is of great importance in the functioning of consciousness.

Another implication is that the contents of consciousness (our thoughts and images) may not only reflect our bodily conditions but may importantly influence our bodies as well, and that these influences may extend to influencing the bodies, emotions, cognitions, and behaviors of others, and also of larger social processes, and these influences may result in either benefit or harm. Numerous potential practical applications of these processes come to mind. These include possibilities of direct

and remote mental diagnosis, distant healing, true preventive medicine through retroactive intentional influences, alternative and exotic communication possibilities, and so on. Extrapolating even further, direct physical and biological influences of consciousness could play important roles in guiding the course of evolution. The possibilities of direct psychological and social influences also have important implications for the issues of free will and determinism.

In the realm of science, if the consciousness of the investigator can interact, even more directly than we have heretofore recognized, with what is studied, it becomes unclear which findings and laws of Nature are discovered and which are in some way created by a single investigator or by consensus by teams of investigators who share a particular focus of attention or intention. Further, we are reminded that it is impossible to study or to understand any thing or process in isolation, but only in relation to a vast field of multiple interactions that include that thing or process as merely one node or aspect of an extremely intricate and extended web or network.

A scientific worldview that does not comprehend consciousness and the full range of its possibilities is incomplete. We do not yet know the extent to which additions or changes in that worldview will be necessary in order to encompass the range of consciousness phenomena. We do know that the conventional scientific method is adequate to capture at least some of these phenomena; we know this because, at least some percentage of the time, experiments on direct knowing and direct conscious influence of remote systems do in fact succeed. However, the fact that often such experiments do not succeed, combined with the peculiar operating characteristics and other features of the effects we are studying, suggests that perhaps conventional scientific methods alone can never grasp consciousness completely and that there are important limitations of those methods themselves. Our challenge is to find complementary methods and approaches that are perhaps more appropriate to the subject matter and thereby create a new and more adequate science of consciousness.

Scientific studies of consciousness are now exploring and confirming views and principles that were initially proposed in other areas such as religion, philosophy, spirituality, and certain meditative and mystical traditions. This is only to be expected if these are alternative pathways to the same, adequate understandings.

Consilience, Participation, and Transcendence

The theme of this conference is: “Towards a Consilient Model for Knowing: Consciousness and the Participatory Worldview.” To the extent that certain manifestations and influences of consciousness are nonlocal, and to the extent that the consciousness processes of all of us may directly influence not only ourselves, but each other, and even the world at large, this surely embeds us in a rich and complex system to which each of us directly contributes and in which we each play an active and important *participatory* role.

The findings and thoughts I have just presented also illustrate the concept of *consilience*. This term was coined by the British polymath and (what we would today call a) philosopher of science, William Whewell (1794-1866) in his 1840 publication, *Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences*. For Whewell, *consilience of inductions* occurred when an induction obtained from one class of facts coincided with an induction obtained from a different class of facts. This consilience was one of several tests of the validity of the theory in which it occurred. Consilience means, literally, “to leap with” or “to jump together.” In an explanatory surprise, two or more sets of inductions jump together and are seen to be importantly interrelated.

The various nonordinary and transcendent experiences reviewed in this presentation illustrate consilience in that these apparently distinct sets of experiences may, in fact, arise from or be manifestations of common features of interconnectedness and nonlocality that characterize consciousness and, perhaps, the world at large. Here, we have several lines of evidence leading to the same conclusion and theoretical interpretation. These experiences also illustrate another form of consilience—the features ascribed to these experiences by scholars in several diverse disciplines are remarkably similar.

William Whewell was fond of coining new words. In addition to consilience, he invented the words *ion*, *anode*, and *cathode* for the British chemist and physicist Michael Faraday. At the British Association’s meeting in Cambridge in June, 1833, Whewell coined the term *scientist* for those who had previously been called natural philosophers. He did this at the request of his mentor, the British poet and champion of the imagination, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Coleridge (1772-1834) himself was fond of coining new terms—some of the more interesting of these being the first English use (in 1818) of *existential* in its modern sense and the term *psycho-somatic*. Another word he is said to have coined is *self-realization* (Lockridge, 1977, p. 149). This term is relevant to the issues at hand in that we realize more of our self as we recognize and honor these additional aspects, these Mores, of our potentials for knowing, doing, and being. In recognizing and functioning out of these expanded facets of self, we can better realize and appreciate (in both senses of both of these words) the self’s very nature.

In my title, I used the terms *transcendent* and *transpersonal*. Typically—and I have done this even in this presentation—the *beyond* meaning of *trans* is emphasized. But *trans* has at least two additional meanings: *across* and *through*. It is important that these aspects, too, be emphasized when we consider nonordinary experiences and more expansive views of consciousness. When we transcend something, we need not leave it behind. Rather, we can expand to encompass more than before, but we can continue to include and honor what was previously there. Indeed, it may have been but a quirk or limitation of our attention and imagination that we have simply ignored a wholeness that is already present. Transcendence may be a recognition or remembering of aspects already present but ignored. So, too, the term *transpersonal* often is used to address those aspects of our development, identity, values, and

capabilities that seem beyond the ambit of our personality. The *across* and *through* meanings of *trans* remind us that we can not only extend ourselves to these transpersonal qualities and potentials, but we can also interconnect, include, and integrate them with and within our personality so that we can realize and appreciate the full extent of who we are and who we always were.

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