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Exploring the Features of Spontaneous Psychic Experiences

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Abstract: There is much research left to do in the study of the features of psi experiences. This includes assessing the incidence and range of particular features such as the theme and symbolism of ESP experiences as well as studying features of neglected phenomena such as auras and non-recurrent PK effects. In addition, I discuss ways in which interrelationships between the features can be examined. This includes examining the relationship between (i) dreams (mode of experience) and precognitive experiences (ii) the topic of ESP and the amount of detail in the experience, and (iii) the relationship of veridical elements to the rest of the components of the experiences. Finally, the possible effects that factors such as psychological variables, modes of induction and specific features of the experiences themselves may have on the content of the experience is considered. It is argued that attention to the features of parapsychological experiences will (i) give us a better descriptive sense of psi experiences, (ii) help us to assess empirically claims from folklore and experiential traditions, (iii) increase our understanding of the relationship of particular features and variables with the experience's content, (iv) allow us to develop theoretical models and predictions, (v) help us to address issues such as the possibility that we may be dealing with different phenomena even if surface similarities exist, and (vi) be important for the issue of a differential diagnosis between ESP and delusional experiences.

The exploration of features of psychic phenomena has been of interest since the beginnings of psychical research. Early classics such as *Phantasms of the Living* (Gurney, Myers, & Podmore, 1886), the 'Census of Hallucinations' (Sidgwick, Johnson, Myers, Podmore, & Sidgwick, 1894), and the later work of other pioneers (e.g., Bozzano, 1907) are evidence of this. The features of psi experiences vary according to the claims in question and are not limited to their veridicality. For apparitions, we may talk about how solid or transparent the figure is, how it moves, whether or not it attempts to communicate or engages in seemingly intelligent actions, whether or not it is seen to pass through walls, and what emotional and physical sensations are evoked in the experiencers. For OBEs, we may pay attention to reports of seeing the physical body, travelling to distant locations, or perceiving oneself in a body similar to the physical one. Among the features of ESP experiences that have generally been studied are the type and form of the experience, feelings of conviction, vividness, the meaning of the experience, its theme, and number of details. Irwin (1994) recently reviewed a good part of this literature in the seventh volume of *Advances in Parapsychological Research*. But regardless of the work he discusses I would argue that psychical research has only scratched the surface in the study of the features of parapsychological experiences. In what follows, I will discuss some specific areas and approaches to this problem that deserve further study.

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Incidence and Range of Features

Notwithstanding the long history of the interest in features of spontaneous phenomena, the topic has not generally received systematic attention from parapsychologists as a whole. For example, although much has been written about the features of apparitions (e.g., Green & McCreery, 1975; Haraldsson, 1988-1989) we still need to conduct more studies to develop a more reliable profile of characteristics. A problem here is that not all the studies ask the same questions nor probe for similar features, so that the existing data often lack the information necessary to perform analyses. Consequently we tend to over generalize, drawing conclusions that are not fully supported empirically. In addition, we find it difficult to compare qualitative and quantitative studies because of the lack of a common vocabulary. These problems were evident to me as I reviewed the literature on the features of OBEs (Alvarado, 1986) and on haunting apparitions (Alvarado & Zingrone, 1995a).

Nonetheless by combining some studies, there is enough data to support some generalizations. For example, from the days of *Phantasms of the Living* to those of the later case collections of Flammarion (1920-1922 / 1922-1923), Stevenson (1970b) and Piccinini and Rinaldi (1990; Rinaldi & Piccinini, n.d.), death has been a prominent theme in ESP experiences. Stevenson (1970b, p.2) summarizes the results of five case collections conducted in England, Germany, India and the United States that support the importance of death as a theme in ESP manifestations. Other generalizations we may make are the following: that ESP experiences are usually related to the fortunes of human beings and less to material incidents; that ESP experiences appear to involve a variety of sensory modalities, and occur in such forms as dreams, hallucinations and intuitions; and that ESP experiences convey only a few specific details to the percipient (e.g., Green, 1960; Rhine, 1981; Schouten, 1979, 1981, 1982; Stevenson, 1970b).

While most of the work has focused on ESP as it occurs in dreams, intuitions and hallucinations, other phenomena have barely received attention at all. An example is auras. Although much has been written in the popular, occult and experiential literature about the colour and meaning of auras (e.g., Karagulla, 1967), practically no systematic work has been carried out to map the features of this phenomenon. A colleague and I recently published a questionnaire designed to explore such aspects of auras as color, movement, distance from the body, and shape, among other features. We hope this questionnaire will guide future investigations into the features of this neglected phenomenon (Alvarado & Zingrone, 1994).

Non-recurrent PK (such as the stopping of clocks or the movement of objects that seems to coincide with death) is an example of another phenomenon about which we know little, even though the pioneering work of Bozzano (1923), Rhine (1963), and Piccinini and Rinaldi (1990; Rinaldi & Piccinini, n.d.) has addressed the issue. In the latter, for example, the authors reported that, out of 67 death-related cases, physical effects were reported to occurr in relation to clocks (33%), hanging objects such as pictures (30%), the opening or moving of doors (18%), falling of standing objects (12%), and other effects (7%) (Rinaldi & Piccininni, n.d.).

Although the case collection studies of poltergeists conducted by Biondi and Caratelli (1992), Huesmann and Schriever (1989), Gauld (Gauld & Cornell, 1979), and Roll (1977) have revealed much about features of these cases there is still room for expansion. We could focus on those poltergeist cases in which specific phenomena predominate. In-depth case studies that describe particular phenomena such as stone throwing, apparitions, noises, and fires might change the focus from the general description of many events to a more detailed 'profile' of specific features. In the case of raps or knocks, for example, we might focus on their intensity, range, the places in which they occur, whether they are heard singly or collectively, if they

seem to show intelligence, if they move from place to place or, instead, focus on specific locations.

Particular Features of Phenomena

By studying individual features of parapsychological phenomena we may also be able to do much to confirm observations that were previously, but not consistently, reported in the literature. One lead we may follow is the observations of Stevenson (1970a, 1992) and others (e.g., Palmer, 1979) that some ESP dreams are considered by the experients to be more vivid that non-ESP ones. We might take ideas from folklore, as seen in beliefs about apparitions, omens, second sight, and many other terms and phenomena prevalent in many traditions.

A particularly rich source of ideas can be found in the experiential and occult literature on astral projection, for example. Sylvan Muldoon's account of his own OBEs in his classic book, *The Projection of the Astral Body* (Muldoon & Carrington, 1929), gives the impression that the so-called silver or astral cord is a common feature of the experience. But a review of available studies on the subject show that this feature is nowhere near as common as Muldoon leads us to believe (Alvarado, 1986). More recently, Nancy Zingrone and I found evidence consistent with Muldoon's belief that rapid return to the body is associated with a sensation of shock, what Muldoon referred to as repercussion (Alvarado & Zingrone, 1995b). Work that begins with experiences and beliefs of folk and occult traditions can ultimately serve to demystify some beliefs or to offer support for others.

Symbolic Nature of Phenomena

A variety of studies have addressed the form in which ESP manifests, but most have ignored other possible forms of experience such as somatic ones. An exception to this is L.E. Rhine's (1967) study, summarized in Table 1. In addition, little work has attempted to tackle the problem of symbolic imagery in ESP experiences.

Bozzano (1907) discussed some symbols in general, and Marabini (1957) focused on them from the point of view of the psychology of a single individual. But much more remains to be done on the emergence of psi information, from both an idiographic and nomothetic perspective. For example, are some symbols consistent and particular to specific individuals (e.g., Dommeyer, 1955)? Can their appearance be generalized to the experiences of other individuals? If the experiences are specific to an individual, is it possible to study the life experiences of that individual to try to find the underlying incidents that created the associations and meanings that may have led to the formation and frequent use of such symbols? Stevenson (1963, 1992; Heywood & Stevenson, 1966) has reported cases in which premonitions experienced by some individuals were related to issues relevant to them based on their previous experiences.

Single Case Studies

Current spontaneous case research emphasizes issues of generalization and constancy of findings or lack thereof, across groups and across studies. This emphasis is in line with the attempts of modern behavioral science to understand human beings in their generalities. But one should not ignore the great potential of single case studies to discern the operation of individual psychic functioning. After all, each human being is an exception to the norms science has established in one way or another. Bender's (1966) study of a single precognitive dreamer makes a good case for the influence of life experiences and motivations on the topics featured in the ESP content of the precognitive dream. There is much more we could do to understand those experiences and we would be in a better position to offer advice to experiencers if more attention was paid to their 'psi-individuality.' Any clinician or counsellor can attest to the importance of understanding an individual's unique situation

Table 1
Cases of somatic ESP studied by L.E. Rhine (1967)

Form	Percentage
Localized Pain (N = 120)	71
Part of body:	
Head	21
Limbs	20
Upper body	30
Localized	47
Breathing difficulties	53
Lower body	29
Labour pains	31
Pain in abdomen	23
Backache	23
Cramps	8
Stomach pains	6
Side pains	3
No description	6
General Illness (N = 14)	8
Other Physiological Effects (N = 35)	21
Feeling of falling	17
Overt reaction (e.g., cried, dazed)	11
Heart beat, trembling, paleness	11
Paralysis, numbness	9
Other	51

in order to make sense of their concerns, symptoms or existential dilemmas.This work is important — one may say, essential — even if it cannot be generalized entirely. In addition, we may find psi-individuality can, on occasion, provide clues to more general forms and dynamics of human functioning. So, while a particular symbol, or cluster of them, may be consistent and meaningful only to one individual, by aggregating the case studies of single experiencers, we may eventually begin to understand how such symbols are formed in general. Symbols need not be universal to be informative and generalizable regarding their construction and dynamics.

Qualitative Studies

Similarly, we may argue for the importance of qualitative studies as a complement to the current emphasis on quantification. The qualitative perspective can illuminate such issues as the type of symbols and variety of emotions, imagery and other factors associated with psychic experiences. This approach is sensitive to the intricacies of the phenomenon in that it allows us to tap into the flow of experience, to study its features directly, and to relate it to aspects of the individual's life and social context. As a consequence of such research, we may find ourselves in a position to study how features vary within and between experiences. Examples of this include Gurney's discussion of the devel-

opment of telepathic hallucinations with descriptions of apparitional manifestations of various degrees of organisation (Gurney, Myers, & Podmore, 1886). Stevenson's (1963, 1970b) observations of the imagery prevalent in some spontaneous ESP cases and Bozzano's studies of death-bed visions (1923) and hauntings (1919/1925) based on the description and comparison of specific features of the phenomena such as veridical visions and visual apparitions, respectively, provide other examples of this type of study.

Of course, I am not arguing here for opposing viewpoints or approaches whether idiographic vs. nomothetic or qualitative vs. quantitative. My point is that there is a need to combine both more than has been done in the past while at the same time realizing that each approach has particular advantages and disadvantages. For example, while in the long run quantification is essential to generalize our findings, it is necessary to pay attention to the qualitative to obtain information that may be lost or obscured if we limit ourselves to percentages, *p*-values, and effect sizes. Similar arguments may be offered regarding the idiographic-nomothetic approach.

Interrelationship of Inner Features and Other Variables

Another useful approach to this problem is the study of interrelationship of features of parapsychological experiences. Stevenson's work with precognitive dreams mentioned above is an example of this. Perhaps no one is better known for this approach than Louisa E. Rhine (e.g., 1954, 1963, 1967; for a review see Rhine, 1981). In her studies she found that the form of ESP interacted both with completeness of information as well as with feelings of conviction. Dreams provided a higher rate of conviction than waking experiences. Among those experiences with conviction, intuitive cases were more frequent than dreams. The sense of conviction was also found to be more frequent with cases that conveyed incomplete information and most incomplete cases were intuitions. In addition, in one study Rhine (1954) argued that dreams are more frequently the form of expression of precognitive experiences than of contemporary ESP experiences. Sixty-eight percent of precognitive experiences occurred during dreams, as compared to 35% of contemporary experiences. My analysis of this data shows that these differences are statistically significant ($\chi^2(1) = 364.0$, $p < .0000001$, $Phi = .33$).

Sybo Schouten's work also illustrates the usefulness of this approach. In three studies of ESP experiences Schouten (1979, 1981, 1982) found that percipients of intuition cases had a significantly higher tendency to take action than percipients whose experiences took other forms. The same studies showed that cases with non-serious themes had more details than death-related cases. The latter finding was replicated in an independent study (Rinaldi & Piccinini n.d.). It is important to note that, not only are all these studies of the themes of the experiences independently significant, but the effect sizes of these findings are also comparable in the studies for which enough information was given to calculate effect sizes (Schouten's). That is, Schouten's findings concerning this variable were associated with Cramer's Coefficients of .40 (Schouten 1979), .41 (Schouten 1981), and .35 (Schouten 1982), respectively. The mean coefficient was .39. One hopes that the comparison of future quantitative analyses such as Schouten's are expanded beyond assessments of significant *p* values. The comparison of effect sizes can tell us more about the consistency and magnitude of our studies than just listing confirmatory studies.

Other analyses of the interrelationship of features include Green's (1960) study of different types of ESP and Stevenson's (1970b) study of telepathic impressions.

A feature of particular interest to parapsychologists is veridicality. But little research has been done to see how veridicality modifies the rest of the content of the experience. For example, in all the studies of spontaneous OBEs with veridical elements (Alvarado, 1983), no one has tested the notion that the structure or the

phenomenological content of the experience may vary in any way as a function of the presence or absence of veridical observations. Similar notions could be tested with apparitional cases in which veridical information is conveyed or in which apparitions are perceived collectively. Green (1960) examined veridicality — assessed by reading case reports — in relation to such variables as the content of the experience, conviction, and type of ESP. Schriever (1987) contrasted those precognitive dreams reported by a single individual considered to be 'well-matched' to later events to those considered to be 'badly-matched.' The contrasts included such aspects as positive and negative affect, emotional significance, vividness, and liveliness, among others. Only one comparison was significant. A higher proportion of well-matched dreams had realistic dream images (88%) as opposed to the badly-matched dreams (60%).

A variant of this approach is the comparison of cases in terms of such variables as quality and detail of testimony (Alvarado & Zingrone, 1995a; Gauld & Cornell, 1979), ratings of evidentiality (Hart & Collaborators, 1956), and first and second hand cases (Schouten, 1979; Piccinini & Rinaldi, 1990).

Predictive Approaches

In her recent review paper Watt (1994) has reminded us of the importance of making informal or formal predictions in our work with spontaneous cases. A more prediction-oriented exploration of features of parapsychological experiences is necessary to prevent our work from becoming a mere collection of strange occurrences. Such prediction - driven studies will allow us to integrate our findings more effectively with more established knowledge. In the past, the idea of survival of bodily death has inspired much research and more speculation. The classic studies of Sidgwick (1885) and Bozzano (1919/1925) as well as the recent work of myself and a colleague (Alvarado & Zingrone, 1995a) are examples of this. On the other hand, Schouten has attempted to test more naturalistic predictions. For example, in his three studies Schouten (1979, 1981, 1982) tested for a possible explanation to account for the higher frequency of females over males in many case collections. Perhaps women are more sensitive than men to ESP. Schouten noted: 'If females are more sensitive one would expect that they are able to 'see' more details, or to cover larger distances. However, none of these analyses yielded a significant difference between female and male percipients ... ' (Schouten 1983, p.330).

Cross-Cultural Comparisons

The issue of identifying variables that affect the features of psi experiences has important implications for our understanding of these experiences, because a more complete understanding of them will allow us to test particular predictions and explanatory models. For example, it has been argued that culture or beliefs can shape the way psychic phenomena manifest. A more sensitive and interesting measure of this, beyond the usual comparison of reports of basic experiences (e.g., the percentage of reports of dream ESP, or apparitions), would be the systematic comparison of features of experiences collected from different cultures. When I compared two surveys done in India (Chadha, Sahni, & Alvarado, 1987) and in the United States (Palmer, 1979) I found interesting differences that would have been missed if only the incidence of the basic experience were analyzed. Table 2 presents comparisons of OBE features from both studies, showing some differences. Another analysis focused on claims to remember previous lives (Table 3). These comparisons reveal some interesting differences between specific features that may reflect the

Table 2
Comparison of percentage OBE features from India and from the United States

Item	Indian Students (N = 270)	US Students (N = 268)	χ^2	*p*	*Phi*
OBEs	11	25	16.3	.01	.17
More than one	64	82	4.03	.10	.20
Saw physical body	57	62	.32	.99	.06
Travelled	57	27	7.98	.005	.29
ESP	71	12	33.33	.000002	.59
Seen as apparition	43	9	15.55	.0002	.40
Produce at will	57	22	11.01	.002	.34

Note: This data is taken from Chadha, Sahni and Alvarado (1987) and from Palmer's (1979) student sample.

Table 3
Claims of past-life memories among Indian and American college students

Item	India (N = 270)	US (N = 268)
Past-Life Memories	7%	9%
More than one experience	100%	87%
Dream	44%	68%
More than one lifetime	67%	32%*
Famous person	56%	43%
Recalled details	33%	27%
Verified details	33%	5%**

Note: This data is taken from Chadha, Sahni and Alvarado (1987) and from Palmer's (1979) student sample.
* $p = .05$ ** $p = .04$ (Fisher's Exact *P*, 2-t)

cultural milieu in which experiencers live, but that would be missed if we focused only on the incidence of the experience without attention to its content. Although the incidence of the basic claim is similar in both countries, the analysis shows higher percentages in most of the specific features in the Indian cases. Among these, the differences between incidence of claims to remember more than one life and claims to have verified the details of the experience are significant. Because belief in reincarnation is higher in India than in the States it is possible that Indian experiencers are more disposed to take their experiences seriously and thus attempt to verify their memories more often than those experiencers living in the States. Belief may also moderate or mediate the process of obtaining veridical memories and/or the creation of fantasies

about previous lives, and thus affect features such as frequency of lives remembered. Stevenson's (1983, p.9) calculation of the median interval in months between death and rebirth in his cases of the reincarnation type across seven cultures also suggests that beliefs help shape some of the features of the cases.

Psychological Variables

More models of parapsychological experiences could be developed if we related psychological variables to experience features. Irwin has conducted important research along these lines. In a study of ESP he found that a visual coding style was related to the incidence of visual experiences (Irwin, 1979), while his studies of OBEs have related absorption to specific OBE features such as reports of a parasomatic body (Irwin, 1985). Following this line of research we may ask whether higher absorption, dissociation or fantasy proneness scores correlate to specific features, the overall number of features, the ability of an experiencer to have multiple experiences or to control the experience at will. For example, do individuals high on dissociation and fantasy proneness have more complex apparitional sightings? Maybe individuals high on these measures more frequently experience OBEs with 'exotic' features, such as travelling to other dimensions and encountering entities. Many other variables deserve exploration as well, such as demographic, social, cultural and medical ones.

Empirically-Created Typologies

If we study experience features we may be able empirically to create taxonomies or typologies of experiences. We might focus on studies that compare the features of psychic phenomena obtained in different contexts or grouped according to a variety of variables. Hornell Hart's (& Collaborators, 1956) comparison of the characteristics of conscious apparitions of the living to those of the dying and of the dead is an example of this approach, as are the comparisons made by Emily Cook and her colleagues of solved and unsolved reincarnation-type cases (Cook, Pasricha, Samararatne, Maung, & Stevenson, 1983). I studied the features of OBEs in relation to natural and enforced circumstances in which the experience occurred and found no significant differences (Alvarado, 1984). In addition, in a study of hauntings with Nancy Zingrone we found that haunting cases with apparitions had a higher mean number of features than did a group of haunting cases without apparitions (Alvarado & Zingrone, 1995a). The finding suggested to us that the presence of apparitions affects the complexity of content of haunting cases, or at least seems to be an important factor shaping the cases.

The issue of typologies can be further explored through statistical techniques such as cluster analysis. Gauld (Gauld & Cornell, 1979) conducted such an analysis with hauntings and poltergeists as did Greyson (1985) with NDE cases. But techniques such as these are rarely used in parapsychological research. Research along these lines could play an important role in increasing our knowledge of the typology of psychic phenomena empirically rather than, as is usually done in parapsychology, subjectively and impressionistically.

Concluding Remarks

While I have pointed out in this paper that some work has been conducted regarding the study of the features of parapsychological experiences, the problem is that the amount of work conducted is not enough to obtain a clear understanding of our phenomena. Regardless of the important contributions of Bender, Schouten, Rhine and Stevenson, among others, their work remains isolated and in need of expansion and replication. The lack of studies of this sort may be explained in different ways. In some time periods research with spontaneous cases in general has been neglected. Sometimes researchers have been mainly or overly concerned with evidential considerations instead of phenomenological ones. But regardless of the

explanations the fact is that we need to continue to expand on previous work to increase our understanding of these phenomena.

Of course, it is possible that many of the proposed interactions will not be significant, that psychological (or other variables) are not determining factors or that they contribute little to the configuration of the features of the experiences. Instead, these variables may be related to the incidence of the experience itself regardless of its content. In addition, the fact that some apparitions, OBEs and other experiences have a veridical component does not mean that veridicality will necessarily interact with the rest of the features. Using the concept that such ESP mediating vehicles as dreams, intuitions and hallucinations are normal psychological phenomena (e.g., Tyrrell, 1946), for example, it may be possible to conceptualize ESP as a factor that is modified by the mediating vehicle, rather than the other way around. Such a finding would be consistent with studies that show that precognition occurs more frequently in dreams than in other forms of the experience (Rhine, 1954), and that intuition is associated more often with attempts to act on the content of the experience than in hallucinations and dreams (Schouten, 1979, 1981, 1982).

In other words, significant interactions may be found where they are unexpected. The inter-variable relations may be more complex than the examples we have discussed here. Consequently, future studies might use path analysis involving multiple variables, and taking the magnitude of the variables' influence into account (e.g., Hoyle & Smith, 1994).

The work discussed in this paper is important to psychology and to parapsychology for many reasons. These include:

1. *Having a better descriptive sense of the features of psi experiences and their incidence.* The first step in understanding is to describe more clearly the phenomena we study. Such a fine-grained description is a necessary first step towards a meaningful comparison of differing findings. In addition, we may be able to ask questions about the development of features and features-relationships both within and between experiences, thus addressing the issue of the variability.

2. *Assessing popular, experiential and occult ideas about psychic phenomena.* By having more specific understanding of experiences we may be able to evaluate a wide variety of beliefs and to obtain knowledge relevant to experiencers' concerns. These ideas may include the meaning of the experience and its association with a variety of philosophies that have been formed over time around the phenomena.

3. *Understanding the relationship of particular features with each other and to other variables such as psychological variables.* By placing the experience and its features within a psychological context, individually, developmentally and socially, we may be able to develop typologies that have real explanatory and predictive power.

4. *Understanding the phenomena in the context of specific models as opposed to amassing and maintaining collections of interesting, but ambiguous or meaningless relationships.* As argued by Blackmore (1993) with NDEs, by Irwin (1985) with OBEs, and by Schouten (1979) with ESP, the features of experiences can guide progressive research programs based on specific assumptions and predictions, eventually allowing us to integrate spontaneous cases into conventional psychological knowledge. That is, into 'normal' science rather than mantaining spontaneous experiences as a kind of permanent anomaly.

5. *Realizing that some of our experiences may not represent a unitary phenomenon, but that phenomena may have differential causal mechanisms, although surface similarities exist.* For example, Osis (1981) has argued that the cases we classify as apparitions may arise from a variety of different mechanisms. Many if not all parapsychological experiences may also be differentially caused.

6. *Allowing us to differentiate ESP from delusion.* Beginning with Gurney's (Gurney, Myers & Podmore, 1886) writings and continuing to more recent discussions

in the literature (e.g., Coly & McMahon, 1993; Marabini, 1992; West, 1960), there has always been a need to sort out 'real' phenomena from delusion. However, such differentiation has never been addressed systematically nor through specific studies. One way to do this would be to compare a group of, say, veridical auditory hallucinations to auditory hallucinations collected from a group of schizophrenics. Do both groups differ from each other in terms of content, topic and type of auditory stimuli? In addition we could look into other features (e.g. duration, source of information) and into feature clusters. All these factors could also be studied in relation to possible differences between the groups on variables such as developmental issues and the life context of the experiencers.

The study of the features of parapsychological experiences is an open field. Further work in this area can do no less than deepen and broaden spontaneous case research bringing us finally to the day when we can make definitive sense of the experiences that astound, puzzle and frighten millions of people around the world.

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Onderzoek naar kenmerken van paranormale ervaringen

Samenvatting: Er is nog veel onderzoek nodig naar de kenmerken van spontane paranormale ervaringen. Daartoe behoort niet alleen een inschatting van het aantal en het bereik van zaken als het onderwerp en de symboliek van ESP-ervaringen, maar ook onderzoek naar de kenmerken van verwaarloosde verschijnselen als aura's en eenmalige PK-effecten. Ik bespreek ook methoden voor het onderzoeken van interne verbanden tussen de kenmerken, bij voorbeeld de samenhang tussen (I) dromen (soort ervaring) en voorspellingen, (II) het onderwerp van ESP en de mate van detail in een ervaring en (III) tussen later schijnbaar uitkomende elementen en de overige inhoud van een ervaring. Ten slotte behandel ik welke effecten factoren als psychologische variabelen, inductiemethoden en specifieke kenmerken van de ervaringen op zich op de inhoud van zo'n ervaring kunnen hebben. Aandacht voor de kenmerken van paranormale ervaringen stelt ons in staat (I) die ervaringen beter te beschrijven, (II) claims beter empirisch te onderscheiden van folklore en experiëntele tradities, (III) meer begrip te krijgen van het verband tussen bepaalde kenmerken of variabelen en de inhoud van de ervaring, (IV) theoretische modellen en voorspellingen op te stellen, (V) de mogelijkheid te onderkennen dat we met verschillende verschijnselen te maken hebben terwijl ze op het eerste oog veel gelijkenis vertonen en (VI) is tevens belangrijk voor een diagnose over de verschillen tussen ESP en bedrieglijk daarop lijkende ervaringen.

Untersuchung der Merkmale spontaner paranormaler Erfahrungen

Zusammenfassung: Hinsichtlich der Merkmale von Psi-Erfahrungen ist noch viel Forschungsarbeit zu leisten. So besteht weiterhin Klärungsbedarf hinsichtlich der Einschätzung von Häufigkeit und Bandbreite bestimmter Merkmale wie Thema und symbolischer Aussagekraft von ASW-Erfahrungen sowie der Untersuchung von Merkmalen vernachlässigter Erscheinungen wie Auren und spontaner PK-Effekte. Des weiteren diskutiere ich Wege, auf denen Wechselbeziehungen zwischen solchen Merkmalen untersucht werden können. Dies schließt Untersuchungen der Beziehungen zwischen (i) Träumen (Art des Erlebens) und präkognitiven Erfahrungen, (ii) Gegenstand der ASW und Detailvielfalt des Erlebens und (iii) die Beziehung wahrheitsgetreuer mit den übrigen Erlebens-Elementen ein. Schließlich werden die möglichen Auswirkungen betrachtet, die Faktoren wie etwa psychologische Variablen, Induktionsweisen und spezifische Merkmale der Erfahrungen

selbst auf den Inhalt der Erfahrung haben können. Es wird behauptet, daß die Beachtung der Merkmale parapsychologischer Erfahrungen (i) uns bessere Beschreibungsmittel für Psi-Erfahrungen an die Hand gibt, (ii) hilft, Behauptungen aus Folklore und Erlebenstraditionen empirisch zu beurteilen, (iii) unser Verständnis für Beziehungen zwischen bestimmten Erfahrungs-Merkmalen und -Variablen mit den Erfahrungsinhalten erhöht, (iv) uns gestattet, theoretische Modelle und Voraussagen zu entwickeln, (v) uns hilft, Fragen wie die Aufdeckung unterschiedlicher Phänomentypen ungeachtet oberflächlicher Gemeinsamkeiten zu behandeln und (vi) wichtig wird für differentialdiagnostische Unterscheidungen zwischen ASW und trügerischen Erfahrungen.

Explorer les Caractéristiques des Expériences Psychiques Spontanées

Résumé : Il y a encore beaucoup de recherche à faire sur l'étude des caractéristiques des expériences psi. Ceci inclut une évaluation de l'incidence et de la gamme de caractéristiques particulières comme le thème et le symbolisme des expériences ESP aussi bien que l'étude des caractéristiques de phénomènes négligés tels que les auras et les effets PK non-récurrents. De plus, je discute des façons par lesquelles les inter-relations entre caractéristiques peuvent être examinées. Ceci inclut l'examen des relations entre (i) les rêves (mode d'expérience) et les expériences précognitives (ii) le sujet de l'ESP et la quantité de détails dans l'expérience et (iii) la relation des éléments véridiques avec le reste des composantes des expériences. Finalement, les effets possibles que des facteurs tels que les variables psychologiques, modes d'induction et caractéristiques spécifiques des expériences elles-mêmes peuvent avoir sur le contenu de l'expérience sont pris en considération. On soutient qu'une attention à ces caractéristiques des expériences parapsychologiques (i) nous donnera un meilleur sens descriptif des expériences psi, (ii) aidera à évaluer empiriquement les affirmations des traditions folkloriques et expérientielles, (iii) augmentera notre compréhension de la relation qu'entretiennent des caractéristiques et variables particulières avec le contenu de l'expérience vécue, (iv) nous permettra de développer des modèles et prédictions théoriques, (v) nous aidera à aborder des questions telles que la possibilité que nous puissions avoir affaire à différents phénomènes même si des similarités de surface existent et (vi) sera importante pour la question d'un diagnostic différentiel entre ESP et expériences illusoires.

Explorando as Características das Experiências Psi Espontâneas

Resumo: Há muita pesquisa deixada por fazer no estudo das características das experiências psi. Isto inclui a avaliação da incidência e o espectro de características particulares, come o tema e o simbolismo das experiências de ESP, assim come o estudo das características de fenômenos negligenciados, como auras e efeitos PK não recorrentes. Além disso, discuto caminhos nos quais a inter-relação entre as características podem ser examinadas. Isto inclui a exame das relações entre (I) sonhos (modo de experiência) e experiências precognitivas (ii) o tópico da ESP e a quantidade de detalhes da experiência e (iii) a relação de elementos verídicos com o resto de componentes das experiências. Finalmente, os possíveis efeitos que os fatores como as variáveis psicológicas, modos de inução e características específicas das próprias experiências podem ter no conteúdo da experiência são considerados. Discute-se que a atenção às características das experiências parapsicológicas (I) darão um sentido melhor descrito das experiências psi, (ii) ajudarão a avaliar empiricamente as alegações do folclore e das tradições experiênciais, (iii) aumentarão nossa compreensão da relação de características e variáveis particulares com os conteúdos das experiências, (iv) permitirão que desenvolvamos modelos teóricos e previsões, (v) ajudarão a apontar questões tais como a possibilidadede que possamos estar lidando com fenômenos diferentes mesmo que as semelhanças superficiais existam e (vi) serão importantes para a questão de um diagnóstico diferencial entre ESP e experiêcias ilusórias.

Explorando las Características de las Experiencias Psíquicas Espontáneas

Resúmen: Hay mucho que hacer en el estudio de las características de las experiencias psi. Esto incluye la incidencia y la gama de características tales como el tema y el simbolismo de las experiencias de ESP al igual que el estudio de las características de fenómenos olvidados tales como auras y efectos PK no-recurrentes. En adición, se discuten formas en las cuales la interrelación entre características podría ser examinada. Esto incluye examinar las relaciones entre (i) sueños (modalidad de la experiencia) y experiencias precognitivas, (ii) el tema de la ESP y la cantidad de detalles en la experiencia y (iii) la relación entre elementos verídicos y el resto de los componentes de las experiencias. Finalmente, se consideran los posibles efectos de factores tales como variables psicológicas, formas de inducción y características específicas del fenómeno sobre el contenido de las experiencias. Atención a las características de las experiencias parapsicológicas podría (i) darnos una perspectiva descriptiva mejor de las experiencias psi, (ii) ayudarnos a evaluar empíricamente ideas del folklore y de las tradiciones basadas en la experiencia, (iii) aumentar nuestro entendimiento de la relación entre características y variables específicas con el contenido de la experiencia, (iv) ayudarnos a desarrollar modelos teóricos y predicciones, (v) ayudarnos a enfrentar problemas como la posibilidad de que estemos tratando con diferentes fenómenos aún si éstos tienen similaridades superficiales, y (vi) ser importante para el problema de un diagnóstico diferencial entre la ESP y experiencias delusionales.

L'esplorazione degli aspetti delle esperienze psichiche spontanee

Sommario: Restano ancora da fare numerose ricerche su vari aspetti delle esperienze psi, tra le quali definire l'incidenza e l'ampiezza di particolari caratteristiche come il tema e il simbolismo delle esperienze ESP, e studiare l'aspetto di fenomeni trascurati quali l'aura e gli effetti PK sporadici. Viene discusso inoltre in che modo si possono esaminare i rapporti tra le diverse caratteristiche: come ad esempio analizzare il rapporto tra sogni (modalità dell'esperienza) ed esperienze precognitive, tra contenuto dell'ESP e quantità di dettagli dell'esperienza, tra elementi veritieri e restanti componenti delle esperienze. Infine vengono considerati i possibili effetti che fattori quali le variabili psicologiche, il modo di indurre le esperienze e tratti caratteristici, possono avere sul contenuto dell'esperienza. Si sostiene che prestare attenzione agli aspetti delle esperienze parapsicologiche: (a) fornirà un miglior significato descrittivo alle esperienze psi, (b) aiuterà a valutare empiricamente le segnalazioni provenienti dal folclore e dalle tradizioni, (c) aumenterà la comprensione dei rapporti tra particolari caratteristiche e variabili e contenuto dell'esperienza, (d) consentirà di sviluppare modelli teorici e predizioni, (e) aiuterà ad affrontare questioni quali la possibilità che sotto un aspetto analogo si celino fenomeni differenti, (f) sarà importante ai fini di una diagnosi differenziale tra esperienze ESP ed esperienze illusorie o allucinatorie.