

Social Correlates of Transcendental Experiences

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This paper focuses on what can variously be called the ecstatic, transcendental, or mystical experience. It is our contention that study of such experiences allows us to focus on that feeling state which differentiates religion from all other social institutions. We suggest that the unique significance of religion in society is not its role as a certain kind of professional career, social action movement, or economic political establishment. In addition, we state that the type of feeling states which are characteristic of religion can also be found in other, more secular, aesthetic environments. To the extent that this is true, religion is more similar to art than it is to politics.

In this particular study we found that persons do have ecstatic-transcendental experiences, that they occur both within the religious environment and within more secular environments, and that the differences between the resultant experiences are less qualitative in nature than they are a product of the environment in which they occur. Thus, aesthetic experiences are described and utilized using secular referents, while religious experiences are described and utilized using formal religious referents. At the same time, there is some evidence that the very existence of the ecstatic-transcendental experience even if it is in a secular environment demands the construction of some social institution for its protection. Such a re-institutionalization can be seen in the drug user's attempt to surround himself with ritual.

Ecstatic, transcendental, or mystical experiences are logically a part of a society's religious orientation. However, indifference or a certain lack of curiosity have limited the sociology of religion to the study of formal religious institutions and their impact and interaction with the rest of society. This narrow definition of "religion" has enabled the development of highly stylized and simplistic models of religion's function in society in the tradition of the laboratory experiment, but has prevented the exploration of less visible aspects of whatever the

society may label as "religious." Sociologists have emphasized the ways in which religious institutions are like political and economic institutions. They have not focused on what is unique in religious behavior, nor on how the religious institution differs from other social institutions. These two criticisms are part of the very basic question of what makes individual religious behavior, religious groups, and religious institutions different from other behavior, groups, and institutions. Conversely, what makes religious behavior and religious groups

similar to other behavior, groups, and institutions? It is our contention that most studies have focused on the similarities which exist between religious groups and other formal institutions. In so doing, they have ignored both the unique qualities of religious behavior and groups, and the possible parallels which may exist between these qualities and certain informal aspects of other social behavior.

In confronting essentially the same issue, Charles Glock and Rodney Stark (1965) recently stated that religion has five dimensions: the experiential dimension, the ideological dimension, the ritualistic dimension, the intellectual dimension, the consequential dimension.¹ In studying religion, sociologists, according to Glock and Stark, have focused on that type of religious institution which is both formally organized and differentiated from the society. Consequently, sociologists have neglected those groups that have neither, or only one, of these characteristics. Studies have also tended to emphasize what Glock and Stark call the ritualistic and consequential dimensions of religious commitment, and have ignored the experiential, ideological, and intellectual dimensions.

¹ "The *experiential dimension* gives recognition to the fact that all religions have certain expectations, however imprecisely they may be stated, that the religious person will at one time or another achieve direct knowledge of ultimate reality or will experience religious emotion The *ideological dimension* is constituted . . . by expectations that the religious person will hold to certain beliefs The *ritualistic dimension* encompasses the specifically religious practices expected of religious adherents The *intellectual dimension* has to do with the expectation that the religious person will be informed and knowledgeable about the basic tenets of his faith and its sacred scriptures The *consequential dimension* . . . is different in kind from the first four. It encompasses the secular effects of religious belief, practice, experience, and knowledge on the individual." (Glock and Stark, 1965: 20-21)

The experiential dimension as discussed by Glock and Stark gives recognition to the individual's (or group's) demand for contact with ultimate reality. There are four ways in which this dimension may be expressed: through concern, cognition, trust and faith, and fear. An important aspect of this element of religion is the mystical or transcendental experience.

The present study investigates this element of religion—the mystical or transcendental experience. However, while it is our contention that it is this part of religion that makes religion qualitatively different from the social institutions with which it has generally been compared, we also maintain that this type of human experience is not limited to an exclusively religious environment. Rather, we maintain that such experiences occur in both religious and secular environments.

The description of the experiential dimension of religion given by Glock and Stark is qualitatively similar to what Maslow (1962) calls the "peak experience," and to what Marghanita Laski (1962) calls an "ecstasy" experience. The only difference between these three authors is in terms of the context in which they place the experiences. Neither Maslow nor Miss Laski place the experience in an exclusively religious environment. Rather they maintain that such experiences occur in widely differing circumstances.

Abraham Maslow stresses the importance of peak experiences, and gives numerous descriptions of their occurrence. During the period of the peak experience or "being-cognition," "the experience or the object tends to be seen as a whole, as a complete unit, detached from relations, from possible usefulness, from expediency, and from purpose" (Maslow, 1962:647). The experience enables the greater detachment of the

individual from his environment, and enhances his perception. It is a self-validating, self-justifying moment which carries its own intrinsic value, and is characterized by a definite disorientation in time and space. The experience can either cause the whole world to be seen as a unity, or it can cause one small part of the world to be seen for the moment as the entire world. Dichotomies, polarities and conflicts are fused and resolved, and fears, anxieties, and inhibitions are temporarily lost.

While Maslow has described ecstatic experiences, Marghanita Laski, an English novelist, has done some research on ecstatic experiences through an informal sampling and data collection technique. Using friends as subjects, Miss Laski found that a sizeable number of British intellectuals had experienced what she calls an ecstasy experience. Utilizing both interviews, and content analysis of various literary and theological texts, Miss Laski attempts to classify ecstasy experiences according to the situation or environment in which they were released ("triggers"), and the resultant feeling which they produce. Common triggers were found to be natural scenery, sexual love, childbirth, exercise, movement, religion, art, scientific or exact knowledge, poetic knowledge, creative insight, and recollection-introspection. Feelings generated by the experience were classified in three ways: 1) feelings of loss, 2) feelings of gain, and 3) quasi-physical feelings. It is assumed that the ecstasy experience described by Miss Laski is very similar to those which have been described by religious mystics. For the present study it is well to stress two of her findings:

a) Ecstatic experiences are widespread, differ in degree, and can be identified by means of simple questionnaire techniques.

b) "Triggers" (events which seem to

cause the experience) cover a range of phenomena, and are not limited to traditional religious discipline; aesthetic or intellectual experiences and some emotionally charged situations seem to be especially potent.

The evidence cited both by Laski and Maslow clearly implies that the *feelings* which Glock and Stark indicate help differentiate religious institutions from other social institutions can be found in a variety of contexts and are not limited to the strictly religious environment. Thus, the study of such feelings, regardless of the context in which they occur, can give us insight into the meaning of current religion as a range of emotion or feelings rather than as a professional career, a social action movement, an economic or political establishment, or as a set of quaint eating customs. In other words, we are stating that religion is not just an institution among other social institutions. It cannot be exhaustively described using the vocabulary of institutional definition. Rather, religion has elements of formal institutional structure, but it also has elements of something more ephemeral whose formal structure is less clearly understood and thus is frequently lumped in some catch-all-category such as "art," or "emotion," or "statistical error."

Consequently, this study directs itself toward an examination of the ecstatic-transcendental experience on the premise that insight into such experiences may help to clarify the above, less structured category of behavior. We will seek to answer three questions. First, how prevalent are ecstatic, mystical or transcendental experiences? Second, how do such experiences differ in terms of the context in which they occur? For this study we will distinguish between only two types of contexts. The first context is the strictly religious context suggested by Glock and Stark, and the second

context is the aesthetic context suggested by Laski. Miss Laski's concept of triggering devices will be used to define and isolate the situation and events which seem to cause experiences. And third, do persons who have these experiences in a religious context differ from persons who have these experiences in an aesthetic context, in both contexts, or in neither context? In particular, it would be relevant to know whether religious and/or aesthetic experiences are closely related with membership in groups that are less well integrated into the total society. Earlier work has indicated that this may be true (Bourque and Back, 1968).

DEFINITION

For the purpose of this study, the ecstatic or transcendental experience is defined as an expansion of consciousness, or the entrance into the new level of consciousness. It is a state in which the individual temporarily loses his identification as an isolated individual power and merges with an external self or power which to all practical intents encompasses what he defines as the totality of the universe. The experience may manifest itself in both psychological and physiological ways. After a sensation of timelessness, or a loss of body awareness will be involved. At other times, the individual will suddenly feel he understands the meaning of life or why the world is the way it is. Ideas or objects which generally seem to be in conflict or incompatible will suddenly appear to be complementary or mutually supportive (Van Der Leeuw, 1938; Maslow, 1962).

The causes or triggers of transcendental-ecstatic phenomena are quite varied, ranging from sexual intercourse to some small object in nature such as a flower. After the trigger is the result of a chance encounter with a painting, a person, or

a phrase of music, but it is possible to deliberately seek such experiences through concentration, exercise, drugs, or other devices. The phenomenon itself is probably quite brief, but an afterglow sensation may exist for quite sometime. Whether ecstatic experiences cause any appreciable changes in the individual's life is probably dependent on the intensity of the experience as well as on other factors.

METHOD

The sample used in this study was made of 1,608 interviews which were weighted to obtain an N of 3,518. The weighted sample of 1,910 cases was compiled by duplicating the data of the interviewees according to a formula based on the proportion of time they indicated they spent at home. (For explanation of the weighting process, see Percy, 1960.) The sample was collected by the Gallup Organization as part of their regular poll, and was drawn from the entire United States.

Interview Schedule. Questions for the Gallup survey were obtained from two sources: 1) a pilot study in which college students were used as subjects, and 2) a Gallup Poll which was run in 1962. Twenty-six items, some from the Glock and Stark study, some adapted from the experiences reported by Laski, and some developed by the investigators were given to two hundred and fifty-four students in three different college level institutions. This study indicated that ecstatic experiences occur frequently, are not necessarily connected with observably deviant behavior, and may differ according to the social position of the respondent.

Persons of lower socio-economic status and of more restricted backgrounds tend to have experiences which are triggered by religious phenomena and are de-

scribed as part of a religious context; persons with higher socio-economic status and a more cosmopolitan orientation tend to have experiences which are triggered by aesthetic phenomena such as beauty in nature, art, or music. However, due to the restricted nature of this sample, it was decided that the stronger questions in this battery should be directed toward a more representative and random sample population. Three questions from this earlier study were selected for use in the interviews reported in this paper. The three questions were:

1) Have you ever seen or heard anything so beautiful that it made you indescribably happy or sad?

2) Would you say that you have ever had a religious or mystical experience—that is, a moment of sudden religious insight or awakening?

3) IF YES TO 1 OR 2: How would you describe the way you felt (about the most important experience)? (PROBE) What did the experience convey to (tell) you? Did the experience affect your life in anyway? (INTERVIEWER: RECORD WHETHER RESPONDENT REF'S TO Q.1 or Q.2.) Question one is a composite of two questions in the prior study. Question two is an attempt to form a composite question from four questions in the prior study and is a direct repeat of a question used in a 1962 Gallup Poll. The third question was designed to ascertain the motivations or situations triggering the ecstatic-transcendental experiences.

Both demographic and public opinion variables are available within the Gallup sample data. Demographic variables which are considered particularly relevant and of interest for this study are age, geographic area of residence, size of place of residence, educational level, occupational affiliation, annual income,

religious affiliation, political affiliation, marital status, and sex.

RESULTS

Three problems are discussed in this paper: 1) how prevalent are ecstatic, transcendental, or mystical experiences; 2) how similar or different are the two types of experiences, aesthetic and religious, which were defined in this study in terms of: a) what causes them (trigger), b) how the individual feels during them, c) how frequent they are, and d) the effect the experience had on the individual's life; and 3) what are the differences between persons who have only religious experiences, persons who have both experiences, and persons who have neither experience. The results will be presented according to the order of inquiries.

Problem One: Prevalence. In Table 1, we see that a substantial proportion of the subjects answer positively to either question one or two. It was determined that the responses were valid and were essentially consistent. Consequently, we assume that ecstatic-transcendental experiences are relatively common and that they can be studied. In addition, it was found that persons who answer positively to either question one or two can be differentiated from persons who do not answer either question, and that they most often are educated women who live in the Southern United States. However, the relationship when expressed this way is not particularly strong. Further analysis indicates that much more significant differences exist between the two groups—religious and aesthetic—defined by the two questions. These differences which exist both in descriptions of the experiences and in the social-demographic characteristics of the respondents, will be discussed below (problem three).

TABLE 1
POPULATION SUBGROUPS

Religious Question	Aesthetic Question		Total	%
Would you say that you have ever had a "religious or mystical experience"—that is, a moment of sudden religious insight or awakening?	Have you ever seen or heard anything so beautiful that it made you indescribably happy or sad?			
	Yes	No, or Don't Know		
Yes	Group One N = 793 % = 22.5	Group Two N = 326 % = 43.3	1,119	31.8
No, or Don't know	Group Three N = 872 % = 24.9	Group Four N = 1,527 % = 43.3	2,399	68.2
Total %	1,665 47.3	1,853 52.6	3,518	

Problem Two: Content and Context. In Tables 2 and 3, it is seen that certain descriptive differences and similarities exist between experiences which occur in a religious context and those which occur in secular-aesthetic context. Descriptions of the experiences as made in reaction to question three were content analyzed and coded into four categories: 1) the triggering device, 2) the individual's description of his feelings during the experience, 3) the frequency of experiences, and 4) the effect of the experience on the individual's life. Although there is a characteristic descriptive pattern for all the experiences, it was found that there are definite distinctions in the patterns presented by persons who answered question one, the aesthetic question, as opposed to those who answered question two, the religious question. Persons who have aesthetic experiences cite aesthetic triggers such as art and music and most often have positive, expansive, somewhat physical feelings or

a feeling of peace, or a feeling of a truth being revealed during the period that the experience is taking place. The religious group, in contrast, cite specifically religious triggers, and are much more likely to experience a revelational feeling of renewal or cleansing. In addition, the religious group more often reports that they had a single experience that significantly changed the pattern of their life.

Yet, while differences in description exist between the two types of experiences, the distinctions are not so severe as to allow us to positively conclude that the two experiences are qualitatively different. The differences which exist are primarily in the context from which they arise and in the utilization which is made of them. Religious triggers in a religious environment occur only once and are considered significant by the individual. Aesthetic experiences spring from aesthetic triggers in a secular environment, occur more frequently, and are considered less significant by the individual.

TABLE 2
INDIVIDUAL'S DESCRIPTIONS OF FEELING STATES DURING THE DURATION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Actual Feeling State During the Experience as Described to Q.3.	Type of Experience				Total n
	Aesthetic		Religious		
	n	%	n	%	
Description					
negative experience feelings of loss or fear*	113	14.2	20	2.5	133
physical expansion or contraction	176	23.1	89	11.3	265
indescribable	98	12.3	55	7.0	153
peace	154	19.3	63	8.0	217
power, presence of supernatural	39	4.9	157	20.0	196
renewal	74	9.3	122	15.5	196
revelation of some truth	137	17.2	275	35.0	412
nostalgia	5	.6	5	.6	10
Total Number of "Yes" Answers with De- scriptions	796	100.0	786	100.0	1,582
Total Number of "Yes" Answers with no De- scriptions	859	51.6	330	29.5	1,189
Total Number of "Yes" Answers	1,655		1,116		2,771
Total Number of "No" Answers to Question 1 or Question 2 (from Table 1)	1,853		2,399		

* Similar to those described as "feelings of loss" by Marghanita Laski (1962).

In contrast, descriptions given of how the individual felt during the actual experience are much less differentiated between the two experience types. While some differences exist in description between aesthetic and religious experiences, the overlap is so great that it leads us to conclude that the two experiences are *not* qualitatively different

in the feeling states which exist. Rather, the differences which do exist in description of the feeling at the time of the experience, the frequency of the experiences, the significance of the experience to the individual, and particularly in the triggering situation are a product of differences in social position of the respondent and in his social utilization of the

experience rather than a qualitative distinction between two feeling states.

Problem Three: Social Characteristics. Table 1 shows that the population can be divided into four groups: 1) those who have only religious experiences, 2) those who have only aesthetic experiences, 3) those who have both experiences, and 4) those who have neither experience. Multiple discriminant analysis was used to determine whether this

sample population can be legitimately divided into these four groups, and to determine which of the ten socio-economic variables, either alone or in combination, best predict or explain the distinctions between these four groups. Using the ten socio-economic variables available, multiple discriminant analysis constructs composite variables or vectors which maximally distinguish between predetermined groups such as those

TABLE 3
INDIVIDUAL'S DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION (TRIGGER)
CAUSING THE EXPERIENCE

Situation or Trigger cited by Respondent in Q.3 as causing the experience	Type of Experience				Total n
	Aesthetic		Religious		
	n	%	n	%	
Aesthetic Situation	359	47.2	23	4.1	382
Interactions with People	126	16.6	33	5.9	159
Occupation or Environment	20	2.6	7	1.3	27
Church Service, Prayer, or Dream	71	9.3	376	67.4	447
Death, Accident, or Patriotic Event	178	23.4	99	17.7	277
State of Mind: Result of Situational Harassment	6	.8	12	2.2	18
Change, or Desire for Change	0	0.0	8	1.4	8
Total Number of "Yes" Questions with De- scriptions	760	100.0	558	100.0	1,318
Total Number of "Yes" Answers with no Descriptions	905	54.4	561	50.1	1,466
Total Number of "Yes" Answers	1,665		1,119		2,784
Total Number of "No" Answers to Question 1 or Question 2 (from Table 1)	1,853		2,399		

given in Table 1. Anywhere from one to ten of the ten given variables can be considered of interest in a single vector, and as many as three vectors can be considered significant in an analysis which utilized four groups. (See Cooley and Lohnes, 1962; Jones and Bock, 1960; Rettig, 1964).

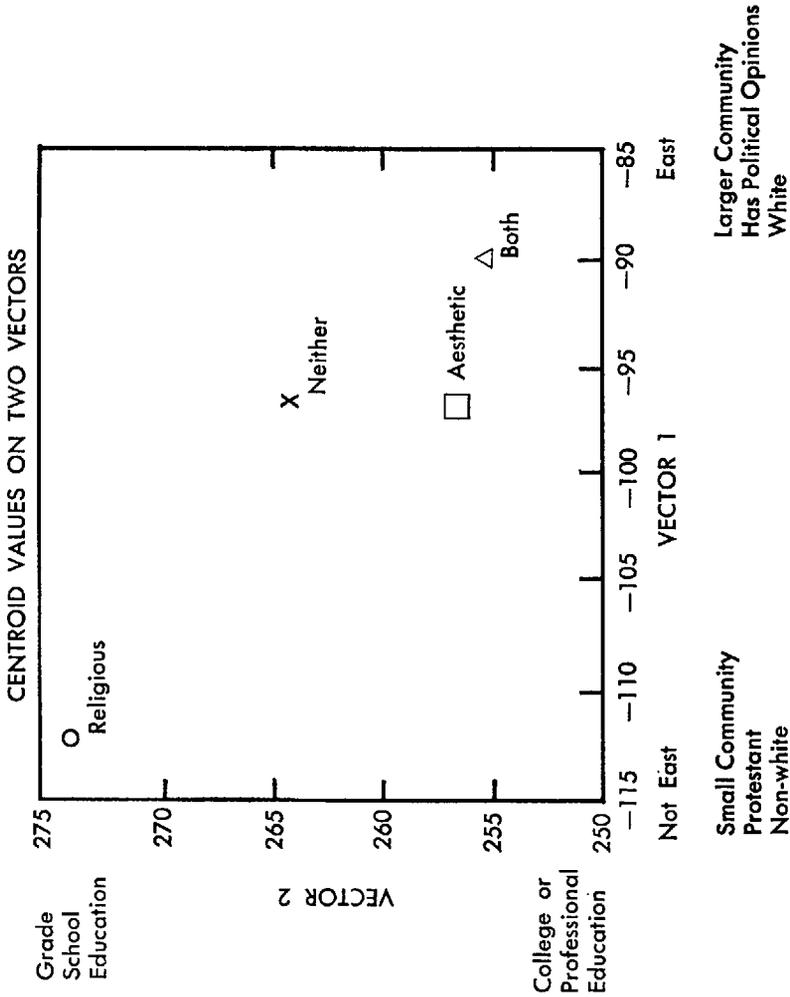
In this particular analysis, only two vectors are considered of sufficient interest to warrant discussion and each of the two vectors is heavily dominated by one variable. Vector 1 in Graph 1 is heavily dominated by variations in place-of-residence and thus, is labeled a Residence Vector. We find that residence in larger communities in the Eastern United States and the prevalence of political opinions differentiates persons and groups on the high end of Vector 1 from those on the low end. Vector 2 in Graph 1 is heavily dominated by variations in level of education and, thus, is labeled an Education Vector. We find that low educational levels and older ages differentiate persons on the high end of Vector 2 from those on the low end.²

As a result of the multiple discriminant analysis, it is seen that persons who have only religious experiences are clearly the "most different" group in the population (Graph 1). This group is also the smallest of the four groups (Table 1). The two vectors which define the position of the religious group are primarily comprised of two variables, education and residence, which in other analyses have consistently been found to be related with the occurrence of ecstatic-

transcendental experiences. The placement of the religious group, particularly on the education vector, indicates an association between religious ecstatic-transcendental experiences and lower socioeconomic status. In this analysis, persons who have religious experiences have a low level of education. At the same time, this analysis strengthens the distinction previously found between the religious experience and the aesthetic experience. It was anticipated that persons who had aesthetic and religious experiences would combine the social characteristics of persons who have only aesthetic experiences. Instead, we find that persons who have no experiences, aesthetic experiences, or both experiences, appear to be much closer to each other in terms of their social characteristics than any one of these three groups is to the persons who have religious experiences. Yet, we have also stated above that there are some distinctions between persons who have any kind of experience, and persons who have no experiences, and that the content of the two experiences are not mutually exclusive.

With the amount of information which we have available, it appears that the aesthetic ecstatic-transcendental experiences occur among a group which society often seems to characterize as acceptably middle class, well educated, white residents of the suburbs. In contrast, religious ecstatic-transcendental experiences appear to occur most frequently among those whom society has ignored, namely the poorly educated, older, rural, Negro populations. The aesthetic group is not substantially distinct in its characteristics from the population as a whole or from persons who have no ecstatic-transcendental experiences. Thus, it appears that the aesthetic ecstatic-transcendental experience may be a more accepted form of an experience which is essentially similar in content to the religious ecsta-

² Results obtained from multiple discriminant analysis should be viewed with caution when it is used to describe data in a sample population which has been weighted in the way this one was. However, in this particular analysis, the results as presented here were supported by a number of other forms of analysis, and the format of the multiple discriminant analysis was considered the most succinct method for presenting the data. (Bourque, 1967)



Older Ages
Democratic Party

Younger Ages
Approves of Johnson as
President

Not East
Small Community
Protestant
Non-white

East
Larger Community
Has Political Opinions
White

Legend
 Vector 1: Region of Residence,
 Size of Community, Race, Religion,
 Political Opinions
 Vector 2: Level of Education,
 Age, Political Party, Attitude
 Toward Johnson

tic-transcendental experience. In other words, if one has an ecstatic experience and describes it as an aesthetic experience without attaching too much importance to it, no one will pay much attention to you or it. However, in most areas of the United States, if one has the same experience and describes it as a religious experience, others may look somewhat askance at both you and it.

Consequently, it seems that persons who have both aesthetic and religious experiences are somewhat confused. We know that there are certain sociological similarities between persons who have aesthetic experiences and persons who have religious experiences. We know that there are certain similarities in the content of the two experiences. Yet, at the same time, we find that the social characteristics of persons who have both experiences are like those of persons who have only aesthetic experiences. Thus, it seems quite possible that aesthetic and religious experiences are actually the same experience which is described in different ways by different socio-economic groups.

DISCUSSION

Although we cannot definitely state that aesthetic and religious experiences are essentially the same experience defined in different ways, the weight of the data would suggest that social position as defined by place of residence, level of education, and race of the respondent explains more of the variance between the two experiences than do qualitative distinctions in their content. If social position does define the experience, the evidence would suggest that within the next generation the proportion of respondents reporting religious ecstatic-transcendental experiences will decline. At the beginning of this paper, it was suggested that there would be two types of ecstatic-transcendental experiences, one

an aesthetic experience and one a religious experience. It was proposed that these two experiences might be differently motivated and differently utilized, and that persons having them might differ quite radically from persons who had no experiences. While it is true that there are some differences between the experiencers and the nonexperiencers, what appears to be more clear, is that the social characteristics of the two experiencing groups are more different from each other than either one of them is from the rest of the population.

However, if we further complicate our conceptualization by adding the group of persons who reported having both aesthetic and religious ecstatic-transcendental experiences, we find that in demographic and social characteristics, this group is similar to the group having only aesthetic experiences. In terms of content of the experiences themselves, this same group is much more similar to the group that reported only religious experiences. Increasingly then, it appears that some kind of change or transition is occurring in the definition and utilization of ecstatic-transcendental experiences.

The fact that persons having both types of experiences combine characteristics of both of the other two ecstatic-transcendental groups, leads us to believe that they may be a transitional group. While the fundamental religious experience has been an integral part of rural Protestant culture for many years, it is likely that it is part of a fading culture. People are leaving the rural areas and going to the cities. Religion in general is involved in a good bit of change, and the pressure of the ecumenical movement and the demands of changing values in a highly mobile population may well forecast the end of the small sect. The most logical place for such groups to linger is in the white and Negro semi-

rural south where lack of available occupations, money, and educational facilities has slowed the process of change. Data in this study support this idea in that persons who report religious experiences are southerners who have low incomes, low levels of education, and strong Protestant-Baptist religious affiliations. In addition, the pretests showed that persons who have religious experiences think that the influence of religion is declining, and, indeed, the religion with which they are familiar is declining. Thus, in a sense, the groups reporting such religious experiences are living beyond their time.

The group which reports both types of experiences are likely persons who were exposed to such environments as children, but have moved out, becoming upwardly mobile, and widening their context of experience. Their external attributes are more like those of the social norm, but they still identify their experiences and describe them in the language of their parents.

The group which has only aesthetic experiences are either further removed from these environments, or they may, in light of the fact that they tend to be younger than the population as a whole, be redeveloping a language and acceptance for an experience that is essentially the same as the religious experience. Eventually, this could involve wide acceptance of a "new" definition of "religious experience." We recall that even though the triggering situations differed significantly for the two situations, there was a good deal of overlap in the descriptions of the experiences. Persons who had religious experiences were more inclined to say they had had a single, revelational experience which affected their lives, but persons who had aesthetic experiences also reported revelational experiences, and a majority reported

single experiences that affected their lives.

Consequently, it would appear that the social norm has, until recently, been against having such experiences—surely, there is, until recently, no language outside theology with which to describe them. However, there has also been a past tradition of ecstatic-transcendental experiences which is associated with some forms of Protestant Christianity, and, though not a part of legitimate, institutionalized society, has been a viable part of existence for certain segments of the society. As this culture has disappeared, so has the experience along with the language which identifies and describes it. After a dormant period, the experience has been re-absorbed into the society and assigned a new language and a less rigid structure. Where once the experience was of necessity part of a specifically religious context, the individual now appears to be freer to choose his own time and place, although there would still appear to be some social restrictions on what is or is not acceptable as a source of stimulation.

Currently, it appears that there are also some demands to re-institutionalize the entire experience in a prescribed ritual. The development of drug and hippie cults with their sharply identified "mod" dress and characteristic "psychedelic" language seems to be only another attempt to institutionalize methods of obtaining ecstatic-transcendental experiences changes in level of consciousness. However, why such groups are evolving, whether drug experiences do have similarities to non-drug induced ecstatic-transcendental experiences, and why a demand for control of ecstatic-transcendental experiences is always made, both by the experiencing groups and the external society, is quite beyond the realm of this study.

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