

**NON-ORDINARY EXPERIENCES OF  
CONSCIOUSNESS: EXPRESSIONS OF OUR TRUE  
NATURE**

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## **Aims of this work**

- Breaking a series of taboos about many experiences considered impossible or simple suggestions and/or hallucinations caused by alterations of the neurological or psychological functioning.
- To know these experiences with reference to the evidence obtained from scientific research conducted at international level and by our Science of Consciousness Research Group of the Department of General Psychology of the University of Padua, Italy in collaboration with EvanLab of Florence, Italy, directed by Luciano Pederzoli.
- For those who experience one or more of these experiences, do not feel particularly different, let alone mentally dysfunctional and be able to talk about them without fear.
- For those who have not yet experienced them, do not be afraid, but know them to help those who are experiencing them.
- For all of us, as a minimum, to continue to discuss a series of phenomena with 'knowledge of the facts' and not with prejudices or preconceptions like "I believe / I do not believe".

## Non-ordinary experiences of Consciousness: definition and epistemological framework

Cardeña, Lynn and Krippner (2004, 2014) introduced the concept of *Anomalous Experiences* (AE), to emphasize the fact that they are uncommon, inconstant and divergent from the axioms, theories and facts considered plausible. The acronym AE differs from ASC (*Altered States of Consciousness*), because AEs, such as synesthesias, are not the expression of pathological facts or alterations in the state of consciousness, although they may partially overlap with them; in AEs meditation and hypnosis are not contemplated, because the latter may or may not give rise to unusual experiences in relation to their conduction. EAs therefore include a number of experiences that are better defined than ASCs because of their non-pathological nature, whose study must be focused on the meaning of experiences from the first-person perspective (1PP).

Subsequently, the term *Non-Ordinary Mental Expressions - or Experiences -*, NOME (Cardeña & Facco, 2015; Facco, 2014; Facco, Agrillo, & Greyson, 2015) was introduced, which become such when they are lived individually, and include a broader set of experiences, including both non-pathological ASCs and EAs in a single set. The term non-ordinary avoids any prejudice or implicit idea of abnormality or apparent and suspected strangeness and instead emphasizes the diversity of these conditions with respect to what is conventionally admitted; the concept expressed by the NOMEs therefore emphasizes the epistemological and metaphysical nature<sup>1</sup> of the questions raised by their description and study, a problem that is at the basis of the study of consciousness and the Self (Facco & Fracas, 2018; Facco, Lucangeli, & Tressoldi, 2017; Facco, Al . Khafaji, & Tressoldi, 2019). In the chapter of NOME, hypnosis and meditation are reintroduced (discarded by AE), because they are not ordinary faculties of the mind in the Western cultural climate inherited from the 20th century;

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<sup>1</sup> Metaphysics is a complex discipline, including both the search for the first principles and supersensible reality in the religious sphere and, in secular thought, ontology, i.e. the science of being and general principles (e.g. concepts such as substance, causality and purpose); these constitute the cornerstones of scientific reasoning, such as the definition of universals (without which laws cannot be formulated) and of details, the properties of objects and their nature.

There is also a clear *trait d'union* between hypnosis, meditation, mystical experiences, NDEs, deathbed visions (*End of Life Experiences*, ELE) and reminiscences of previous lives, which can occur spontaneously or be evoked both in hypnosis and meditation (Facco, 2014; Facco, 2010, 2017, 2018; Facco et al., 2015). This last aspect makes it not only plausible, but also necessary to bring together very different and apparently incompatible experiences under one roof, necessary to understand their formal analogies, possible common elements and meanings and the mental processes underlying them. In the following work we will illustrate the NOME and the main possible conditions that may favour or induce them; they are only a first provisional outline and subject to further changes. For example, mystical experiences can be cataphatic or apophatic (Forman, 1998). The former have explicit religious content, including images belonging to specific confessions, while the latter are characterized by a state of mind without images, which is therefore independent of any specific theological or confessional vision; these experiences and states of mind that are non-conceptual and devoid of images therefore have elements similar or common to different cultures, such as, for example, the *tabula rasa* of Meister Eckhart in the Christian mystical tradition, the state of *turīya* in the Vedic tradition and the mental emptiness in Zen, and also include the meditation techniques that give access to them (Facco, 2014; Facco, 2017; Facco, Lucangeli, & Tressoldi, 2018). At the same time, from a positivist psychiatric perspective, mystical experiences can be seen, albeit questionably, as mere hallucinations, while the content of transcendent tonality of Near Death Experiences (NDE) can make them partially superimposable on cataphatic mystical experiences.

Finally, experiences of an apophatic or even cataphatic type can take place both in meditation and hypnosis, two techniques that have many unexpected common aspects (Facco, 2014; Facco, 2017); on the phenomenological level a *trait d'union* between hypnosis and NDE is observable, while OBE can be easily induced into hypnosis (Facco, 2012, 2018; Facco, Casiglia, et al., 2019). Hypnosis and meditation have been included both as NOME and as induction factors, because they include both the induction procedure that allows them to be realized and the hypnotic and meditative states themselves (Barnier & Nash, 2008; Facco, Testoni, et al., 2017).

Among the NOME, will also include the superior states of consciousness, a topic of great interest

for physiology and psychology, but neglected and not understood by the empirical and materialistic approach. The subject is of crucial importance because it intimately concerns the nature of the Self and the pursuit of its highest realization, a problem with a long tradition that ranges from East to West, from the borders of prehistory to modern philosophy and psychology. The problem of the Self must be examined with a metaphilosophical approach extended to Western and Eastern philosophy (Facco, 2014; Facco, Al Khafaji, et al., 2019) and must include:

- a) the role of meditation and the concept of enlightenment in Eastern philosophies;
- b) the meaning of wisdom, a virtue of the pre-Socratic (perhaps) irretrievably lost;
- c) the role of Greek mysteries in higher knowledge and the experience of *epoptéia*, well described by Aristotle (Eudemus, fr. 10, quoted by Scarpi, 2012);
- d) shamanic vision and rituality;
- e) William James' concept of the spiritual Self and his personal experience with nitrous oxide (James, 1958);
- (f) the expansion or enlargement of the Self (Arieti, 1967; Russell, 1912);
- (g) the superconscious of Assagioli (1988).

Here too, as for other NOME, the access to the higher state can be spontaneous, facilitated by psychotropic, transient, or persistent, to the point of becoming a new stable condition when pursued with a long and appropriate philosophical-experiential training (e.g. meditation).

## Epistemological and metaphysical aspects

Different NOME, such as visions, prophecies, NDEs, mystical experiences, are suggestive of a different and wider reality than the one conventionally admitted by the currently dominant *weltanschauung* (worldview), which seems to be beyond the physical one admitted by classical thought and materialistic monism dominant in science. If none of them constitutes proof neither of otherworldly life nor of reincarnation, on the other hand, no vision, whether dualist or monist, can provide demonstrations for or against them, making them all equally possible, while their plausibility depends strictly on the axioms and theories adopted at

any given moment in history. Some NOME (especially those of parapsychological tonality) appear incompatible with the Cartesian separation between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, with determinism and with the location principle of classical physics. It should be noted, however, that these are all metaphysical positions based on unproven axioms. Galileo founded the new sciences based on a mathematical-geometric apriorism in the conviction that in so doing "*cognition lurks divine objective certainty*" (Galilei, 1897, p. 82), while Newton introduced the concept of universal time and space without defining them as founding elements of nature and "*well-known to all*" by experience (Newton, 1726, pp. 104-105).

The concept of absolute space and time, together with the naive realism that permeated science, disintegrated into 20th century physics. The location principle has survived in Einstein's physics, but quantum physics has also undermined this principle, observing phenomena such as *entanglement and* admitting the possibility of quantum teleportation and the hypothesis of superluminal velocities (Fracas, 2017; Musser, 2019). It must also be borne in mind that the physical universe is the greatest and most concrete mystery before our eyes:

- a) About 95% of the known universe is made up of matter and dark energy of which we know nothing;
- b) the observed universe is delimited by the cosmological horizon and nothing we can know about the possible physical reality beyond this horizon;
- c) the universe model posed by Poincaré's conjecture foresees that it is topologically a 3-sphere with four dimensions, while the string theory in quantum physics (not yet demonstrated) hypothesizes up to 26 possible spatial dimensions (Facco & Fracas, 2018).

It is therefore necessary to maintain a profound humility and the Socratic awareness of knowing that we do not know, which is essential to maintain a correct open-mindedness and not to reject a priori anything that goes beyond the axioms and theories we

have adopted and the very little that we believe we know based on them.

The probable existence of spatial dimensions beyond the three perceived by our sense organs makes plausible the hypothesis that what is considered 'transcendent' from the classical dualistic perspective – only because it is inaccessible to human perception – can be reduced to an anthropocentric naivety: perhaps it is easier to realize that we are blind to the physical spatial dimensions beyond the third, rather than consider the invisible as belonging to hypothetical other non-physical worlds. Similarly, quantum teleportation and, if possible, superluminal velocities, allow the transmission of information at speeds higher than the speed of light with the paradoxical result of reversing the usual cause and effect relationship and knowing events that in another reference system belong to the future. Therefore, as the history of scientific revolutions teaches us, it would not be surprising if phenomena today considered implausible and belonging to the uncertain world of parapsychology turned out to be completely real. As Schopenhauer wisely stated, "*truth is born as a paradox and dies as the obvious*".

NOME are a universal phenomenon of the human mind, present in all cultures since prehistoric times: they are the result of its still elusive physiology and its relationship with the world in the superhuman effort to probe the great, unsolved mystery of the meaning of life and death in the geometry of an equally mysterious space-time. It is the unresolved but fundamental philosophical-religious-scientific problem of humanity. The understanding of NOME requires an interdisciplinary approach, including neuroscience, philosophy, anthropology and physics: as facts, they are undeniable, while their interpretation has profound epistemological and metaphysical implications, which cannot be properly addressed or resolved within the limits of a rigid and limited materialist and reductionist monist approach. Their phenomenology is therefore a challenge to the dominant paradigm in science; they propose again the

dilemma of the mind-brain-body-reality relationship and the exquisitely metaphysical problem of knowledge, in the definition and dialectic between *truth-reality* and *falsehood-illusion* (Facco & Fracas, 2018, chap. 3-4; Testoni, Facco, & Perelda, 2017).

## **Non-Ordinary Perceptions of Consciousness**

### **Hearing voices**

*"The preeminent voice, among others, would belong to Herminius, a groom who claims to be indebted to me in a previous life and who, in gratitude, acts as my spirit guide."*

*"These entities, often dead (even animals) 'transmit' messages to me in the form of images (luminous figures) and thoughts. They don't appear at particular moments but suddenly, especially when I feel more receptive. The otherworldly spirit belongs to a non-negative world, where there is no judgment, and it manifests itself so that I can be a go-between with a person, sometimes even a stranger."*

Here are two simple examples of a very varied phenomenology, but which has in common the experience of hearing voices that speak directly to the subject who perceives them as distinct from his/her mental contents. As it is easy to imagine, such experiences are rarely experienced in a non-traumatic way from an emotional and interpretative point of view, especially if they appear in a healthy situation. However, even under conditions of clear mental disorder, e.g. schizophrenia, dissociative personality disorder, etc., it is still possible to have such experiences even if the genesis of these phenomena is not always clear.

Luckily, since the 1980s, this type of experiences has been systematically studied in the population without mental disorders in order to understand their frequency,

characteristics and, above all, how to help people who were experiencing them in order to manage them, reducing the risks of becoming a cause of disorder or serious mental discomfort (Salvini and Stecca, 2013; Holt & Tickle, 2014; Iudici, Quarato, & Neri, 2019). A great contribution in this sense has been made by the ‘voice listeners’ themselves, who, together with other mental health professionals - in particular the Dutch psychiatrist Marius Romme - have encouraged mutual-help and direct information meetings that have now become an international ‘Hearing Voices Movement’ that includes many initiatives, such as the ‘Hearing Voices Network’ ([www.hearing-voices.org](http://www.hearing-voices.org)) and for Italy [www.sentirelevoci.it](http://www.sentirelevoci.it)

## Seeing presences

*"I had the cat in front of me looking at me, and suddenly we both turned to the door of the room. There was a man with dark hair and black eyes looking at me. The thing that struck me the most this time, compared to the other experiences I had, is that it was in the flesh: the other times it was in an ethereal, let's say impalpable form. The cat started chasing him, and the man turned around and left. The doors and windows were closed, it was evening after dinner in autumn/winter. He hit me because he was real flesh and blood, so much so that I thought he was a thief. He had a stern look, but not aggressive."*

*"I was asleep; I wake up suddenly and sit on the bed (I never do), I turn to the right and see this little being with round eyes looking at me and smiling, very small body compared to the head and the round head, the very small nose, they looked like two dots. As soon as I saw him and we looked into each other's eyes, I felt I was going back to sleep and I fell asleep. After this meeting I spent a week with a peace of mind I've never felt before."*  
Interviews collected by Dr. Giada Righetti

While experiences of this kind are not uncommon in people who are experiencing a recent bereavement of a loved one (Cooper,

Roe and Mitchell, 2017), it is interesting to see that they can be experienced by people who do not have this kind of experience and are obviously not in psychological or physical situations that can foster illusions of this kind (Badcock, Dehon, & Larøi, 2017).

## Communication with non-incarnated entities

The desire and practices to communicate with people who have concluded their life experience in this dimension seem to go back to the origins of humanity and probably developed in parallel with religious, spiritual or simply cultural beliefs that suggest a continuity of existence after the death of the physical body.

In her review of the different forms of communication after death, Julie Beishel (Julie Beischel, 2019), distinguishes between spontaneous, facilitated, assisted and requested forms of communication.

The spontaneous ones are just those that appear without a precise intention, but with a simple desire for this to happen. Those facilitated and required are instead experiences sought through particular techniques, for example the use of psychostimulants, equipment or other tools that are supposed to facilitate communication with disembodied entities. Perhaps the best known are those of voice recording, also known by the terms psychophony or metaphony or instrumental transcommunication. Unfortunately, there is still no documented evidence of the effectiveness and effects of these techniques.

On the other hand, the study of assisted communication through mediums, or at least people who believe they have this ability, has accumulated interesting evidence in recent years. Julia Beischel and Mark Boccuzzi, heads of the Windbridge Research Center in Arizona - USA, which aims to study death and what happens afterwards, are undoubtedly the main authors who have tried to verify the correctness of the information

provided by the mediums without it being derived directly or indirectly from the applicants, their knowledge or conventional sources, such as the internet (Beischel & Zingrone, 2015; Julie Beischel, Boccuzzi, Biuso, & Rock, 2015; Julie Beischel, Mosher, & Boccuzzi, 2017).

The results of their investigations confirm that some (not all) of the mediums studied by them have unconventional access to information about the deceased.

To date, it is not yet clear whether they can access them through telepathic contact with applicants or whether they draw them from a sort of universal memory in which all individual experiences are stored.

The only Italian attempt to repeat this kind of investigation is the one made by Fernando Sinesio for his thesis in psychology at the University of Genoa. The results, narrated in a pleasant way in the book 'Al di là del conosciuto (Beyond the Known), 'Un soffio di Luce' editions, confirm that the three mediums who voluntarily agreed to put themselves to the test, which is already an attitude of professional correctness, were able to obtain exact information about deceased people without obtaining it from applicants, those who knew them or any other conventional source of information.

Are we therefore able to argue that it is possible to communicate with deceased people? Even if most gifted mediums say so, it must first be convincingly demonstrated that the information received was provided by a disembodied entity and not collected through a mental connection with those who knew them in their earthly life experience, or collected by a kind of universal memory that preserves all individual experiences.

Some information that may be provided by non-incarnated entities is supported by information gathered by seeing and hearing and perhaps talking to these entities, although no such controlled studies have been conducted so far.

## Channeling

Another type of communication with non-incarnate entities is through channelers, i.e. people who make voice and body available to communicate information transmitted by these entities, which may include both deceased persons and beings who have not had an earthly experience.

Leaving aside the history of these phenomena, which also goes back to the dawn of religions and cultures - just think of the prophets of the Old Testament or the communication with spirits, which are present in many cultures - recent scientific research tries to understand both the origin of this information, to distinguish whether it comes from the channeler, even if it is attributed to an external entity, or rather from an external intelligent source.

To distinguish the source of this information, the first thing is to ascertain whether it can be derived from the knowledge, even forgotten, of the channeler. Unfortunately, if the channeling experiences are documented only by those who experience them, the judgement about the source of the information remains only with those who read it, perhaps knowing the cultural level or interests of the channeler. For example, if the channeler reports receiving messages from an angel or an entity from another planet, it is necessary to verify whether this information could be derived from its religious-spiritual or alien knowledge.

Unfortunately, this kind of control has not yet been the subject of scientific research, so our advice to those who read what has been communicated by the channelers is to rely on the sense and personal value of the content transmitted, without absolutely believing that it is sent by external entities.

A step forward in checking the source of the information received from the channelers was made by the Hypno-Channelings research program conducted by Luciano Pederzoli and his collaborators, whose results for the moment have been described in the article by

Pederzoli, Prati, Resti, Del Carlo, & Tressoldi (2018). In summary, the potential channeler is first induced into a hypnotic state by an experienced hypnotist and then into a state of consciousness outside the body (see also paragraph: Experiences of consciousness outside the body). In this condition of consciousness it has been possible to come into contact with entities that have declared that they are not part of the human race and conduct interviews directed by the hypnotist, precisely through the voice of the channeler. Again, what is collected from these interviews may derive from the mental contents of the channeler or even the hypnotist, although for now it is not clear how the mental contents of the latter can be communicated through the voice of the channeler.

To check these sources, it was necessary to ask for information that neither the channeler nor the hypnotist knew. With these controls it was possible to collect information on a wide variety of topics, from life after death to the characteristics of the different bodies that make up our identity, from the characteristics of physics in other dimensions to how we can experience change in a timeless dimension, etc.

Here is a short excerpt from the interviews with the entity "Him", which can be read in full in "Contents of the interviews with Him" available at [www.evanlab.org](http://www.evanlab.org):

*"L.P. asks how long, after the extinction of the Physical Body and the Subtle Body, our identity that can be contacted by mediums persists. He also asks how long he can be contacted while he is processing the next incarnation. "He" specifies that these are two different situations. In the former, the Subtle Body is sometimes not well 'synchronized', especially with the passage represented by death, and both a better synchrony and a period of re-elaboration of the experience acquired in life just ended, before the possible subsequent incarnation, would be desirable. Rather frequently the Subtle Body remains, however, after the death of the Physical Body. According to "He" it is an anomaly, because it shouldn't happen, but that is a temporal*

*phase of quite easy contact: you contact the Subtle Body. When there is a strong emotionality on the part of loved ones, the Subtle Body is influenced by it and finds it difficult to disappear".*

*"Speaking of waves, the question is asked about the physical support of electromagnetic waves, as is water for sea waves or air for acoustic waves. "He" makes it clear that space is not empty: it can be said that it is full of something that can be called 'ether' a matter-non-matter always in motion, in which waves are not really waves, but things that are created, disappear and recreate themselves to disappear again. Something to do with the continuous creation of virtual particles and antiparticles (particle failures) that immediately erase each other, characteristic of the so-called 'quantum vacuum'. The wave is a summation of a very high number of microphenomena of appearance/disappearance".*

Obviously it is not enough what has been collected so far by Pederzoli and collaborators to affirm that it is possible to communicate with entities of other realities, however the Hypno-Channeling procedure can be applied by other researchers interested in this type of phenomena. For example Helané Wahbeh is conducting a similar research program on canalization at the Institute of Noetic Sciences at Petaluma in California, also studying the physiological effects on channelers (Wahbeh, Carpenter, & Radin, 2018; Wahbeh, Cannard, Okonsky, & Delorme, 2019; Wahbeh & Radin, 2018).

## **Transpersonal Experiences**

Unlike contact with disembodied entities described in the previous paragraphs, in the case of transpersonal experiences - also called mystical or spiritual experiences - a direct contact or union with a primary spiritual principle is referred to, which, depending on one's interpretative models, can be called God, Brahman, Allah or any other name. Here is an extract of a modern case studied by Facco, Lucangeli, & Tressoldi, (2019):

*"We are essences/essences of love Almost reunited with the whole thing.*

*... I feel myself a current that has flowed and passed through.*

*We are all reflected in the same light...*

*Acknowledgement of being a spirit... And*

*I see my outline of semi-opaque light superimposed on the outline of full light in which we are immersed...*

*I see silhouette Me in the Whole's silhouette And I mean Spiritual Peace...*

*... And I mean what is to be understood of us individual cells of the same spirit...*

*In each one is imprinted the DNA of the Spirit... but each one lives to accomplish more than herself...*

*And I mean... ...each one of them completing themselves and the life of the entire organism...*

*...and as I pray I see my unfinished body thinning as the Essence of God's Imagination Similarity expands... ”.*

Here is what Federico Faggin (2019) described in his autobiography:

*"When I went back to bed, as I waited in silence to fall asleep again, I felt a powerful charge of love energy emanating from my chest, that I had never felt before.*

*This feeling was clearly love, but a love so intense and so incredibly fulfilling that it outweighed any idea or experience of mine about the nature of love. I perceived it as a wide beam of white, glittering, vivid, blissful light bursting from my heart with incredible strength. Even more incredible was to experience that the source of that love was me!*

*Suddenly that light exploded and filled the entire room and then expanded to embrace the entire universe with the same white splendor. Then I knew without a shadow of a doubt that this was the 'substance' of which everything that exists is made. It was what created the universe from itself. To my great surprise, I recognized that light was me! The whole experience lasted perhaps less than a minute and changed me forever. ”*

For the most part these experiences are spontaneous, as in the cases just described, but they can also derive from practices that have the direct purpose of experiencing these experiences, such as through meditation practices of the kind described by Chen, Qi, Hood, & Watson, (2011) or by controlled intake of particular psychotropic substances, such as psilocybin (Griffiths, Richards, Johnson, McCann, & Jesse, 2008) or ayahuasca (Bresnick & Levin, 2006; Trichter, Klimo, & Krippner, 2009).

Regarding the use of psychotropic substances to achieve mystical experiences, our opinion is that these practices must be used within the cultural and spiritual contexts from which they derive, for example the Brazilian religion Santo Daime. Any artificial short cut to induce spiritual experiences involves more risks than benefits (dos Santos, Bouso, & Hallak, 2017).

## **Experiences of consciousness outside the body**

To experience, in non-traumatic conditions, a state of consciousness comparable, if not superior, to that typical of waking, seeing one's body from above is an experience that, according to some surveys in English-speaking countries, is reported by an average of about 9% of respondents (Alvarado, 2015). Rarely these experiences are voluntary and for this reason the scientific investigation on the physiological and phenomenological characteristics are rather scarce (Carruthers, 2015; Smith & Messier, 2014).

This limitation has been addressed with the HypnOBE research program lead by Luciano Pederzoli and collaborators. As has been partly described above regarding the Hypno-Channeling procedure, with particularly suitable participants (Pederzoli & Tressoldi, 2018) it is possible to induce a state of consciousness outside the body through hypnotic inductions. The great advantage of this procedure is that, once the subject reports that he or she has reached this particular state of consciousness, it is possible to interview

him or her directly to understand if and what differences are perceived with respect to the ordinary state of consciousness. Through this technique it was possible to investigate differences in vision, for example:

*"I see it [an object] a little bit all at the same time, then, as I think about going through it, I see the inside too. The body sees in three dimensions, while in this state I intuit all its essence, including all the information about the object. ", about how one moves from one place to another, for example: "I do not perceive any sense of movement from one place to another, but a sort of immediate displacement with the Psychic Body", about how the sense of time is experienced, for example: "It is as if time had stopped. I feel really good. I can move right, left, above and below in a non-concrete space that seems to be infinite. I can also go to another space, darker and more concrete, and move there as I like."*

Current results on phenomenological aspects obtained by this research program are described in the following research articles: De Foe, Al Khafaji, Pederzoli, Prati, & Tressoldi (2017); Tressoldi et al., (2014, 2015), while some data about the neurophysiological correlates are described by Facco, Casiglia et al. (2019).

## **Near-Death Experiences**

Among the experiences of consciousness outside the body, certainly the most well-known and extraordinary are the so-called *Near-Death Experiences* (NDE).

These experiences are usually spontaneous, but at the same time they are elicited in a non-specific way by a long series of events that have in common a critical physical state, in which NDE is closely related to loss of consciousness, as in cardiac arrest or severe psychological distress, in which NDE-like experiences can occur (Charland-Verville et al., 2014; Facco & Agrillo, 2012).

Their main characteristics are well known and can be summarized as follows (not always in this order):

- an experience of being outside of the physical body;
- see the whole life like a movie, but simultaneously;
- experience of great peace and well-being, immersed in a light that emanates a feeling similar to love, but much more intense; meeting with deceased relatives and/or beings of light;
- a passage through a tunnel that ends in a dimension where every visual and auditory perception seems accentuated;
- an arrive at a limit with an experience or feeling that someone inform that this is a passage with no return;
- a return to the physical body with a clear awareness that it was not a dream, a hallucination, but a real experience;
- An indelible memory and lifelong positive permanent effects on the meaning of physical life and death.

The interpretation of NDEs and OBEs as equivalent to temporal lobe epilepsy (Britton & Bootzin, 2004) is unfounded: recent studies show that there is no correlation between OBEs included in NDEs and epileptiform abnormalities (Greyson, Fountain, Derr, & Broshek, 2014).

In the strenuous defense of the materialistic monist vision, NDEs and religious visions have sometimes been equated to psychiatric disorders (Mobbs & Watt, 2011), inadvertently endorsing erroneous syllogisms to deny the possibility of authentic and meaningful religious experiences. The argument in support of the materialistic interpretation limited to neurobiological aspects is mostly the following:

- (a) there are NDEs and religious experiences;
- (b) psychiatric pathology can give rise to hallucinations and religious delusions;
- (c) ergo, NDEs and religious visions are an expression of brain dysfunction.

However, such an interpretation remains a hypothesis completely devoid of consistency, since it is a syllogism equivalent to the following classic example:

- a) forks have four teeth;
- b) my grandfather has four teeth;
- c) ergo, my grandfather is a fork.

The strenuous defense of the materialistic monist position in the philosophy of mind [position metaphysically self-contradictory and, if based on the classical conception of matter, even physically obsolete (Facco & Fracas, 2018, p. 108)], has sometimes led to strongly prejudicial and dogmatic arguments (Bunge, 2007).

An alternative way to study this kind of experience without having to wait for people to experience traumatic events that take them a step closer to the end of their lives, was conceived by Luciano Pederzoli. This author has once again used hypnosis to study the death experience of people who wanted to relive experiences from previous lives. Applying this type of technique, called HypnoDeath, to 36 people who reported experiences of 44 deaths, the most interesting result is that the experiences reported by these people had the same characteristics, although in smaller numbers, as those reported by those who experienced a real NDE (Pederzoli, De Stefano, & Tressoldi, 2019).

## Previous life experiences

While the possibility of experiencing different lives in this dimension, and therefore reincarnation<sup>2</sup>, is considered a certain fact according to some philosophical-religious traditions such as Tibetan Buddhism or Hinduism, scientific research tries to verify, possibly without prejudice as for all other experiences, if there is evidence in favour of these beliefs.

Trying to interview both children and adults who reported to remember episodes from

previous lives, but above all trying to verify their reliability, which is difficult if not almost impossible when they refer to lives far away in time, due to the difficulty of finding evidence in favour, there is evidence that seems to support this possibility. Matlok's recent book (Matlok, 2019), plus some research articles on individual cases documented in detail (Masayuki, 2017; Tucker, 2016), seem to support the reality of this kind of experience.

## Presentiments and Precognitions

According to the Merriam-Webster vocabulary, the meaning of presentiment is: "*... a more or less obscure, vague, indefinite sensation of what might happen*". When we talk about sensation we are therefore talking about both physiological aspects, such as heartbeat, constriction of stomach muscles, etc., and emotions. As far as non-ordinary experiences of presentiment are concerned, we will refer only to those that cannot derive from more or less conscious reasoning processes and therefore from expectations that derive from prior knowledge. For example, if we periodically pass through a road where there are dangerous intersections, we may have a feeling that someone is entering our lane, but the previous experience, even if we only partially remember it, favours this expectation. Different is the case of walking along a familiar path where nothing dangerous has ever happened and experiencing a vague emotion of discomfort more or less conscious and then verify that a ledge has fallen a little further ahead. In this case, how did our body anticipate this rare and unpredictable event?

Although this anticipation of random future events is considered impossible, studying the physiological reactions a few seconds before the appearance of pleasant or unpleasant information, for example the vision of a car accident or a gun shooting us in the face, sufficient evidence has accumulated on the existence of this phenomenon (Duggan & Tressoldi, 2018; Mossbridge, Tressoldi, &

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<sup>2</sup> <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reincarnazione>

Utts, 2012) While waiting for technological developments to be applied to driving, for example - see the article "*Driving with intuition*" by Duma et al., 2017 - or to assist us in decisions that may pose a danger to our physical integrity, our advice is to go along with them, even if they often manage to change our behaviour almost automatically without us noticing, for example by turning right instead of left or braking to avoid an accident.

As far as precognitions are concerned, the substantial difference with presentiments is that those who have this experience are aware of it and are therefore able to translate it into words and concepts.

For example:

*"I was 15 and it was Sunday. I was in the bathroom, and I was about to get in and out (it was 9am). At one point, a voice behind me told me to come out later. It hit me very hard, I looked back, obviously nobody. After 15 minutes, my grandfather's desperate screams from the ground floor. He was feeling sick while my grandmother was passed out. I stepped in immediately, diagnosed a poisoning from the furnace, and saved their lives. If I had gone out at the usual time, they would have died." Or: "I happened to have to go at all costs to a company where they had suffered several thefts. I wanted to go that Wednesday for no reason, they indulged me and I saw where they were coming in the next time. I worked on the energy level blocking the entrance and that night at 01.20 the burglar alarm rang, but the thieves couldn't get in."*

Is it possible to study these kinds of phenomena in a scientific way? Of course it is possible. For example, Storm and collaborators (2017) summarized in a quantitative way 50 studies aimed to verify the ability to perceive information related to a particular image, while dreaming even if it was chosen after the awakening. The results clearly demonstrate that the identification rate of the correct images is higher than the chance. Why not 100%? Because like all phenomena, not just the non-ordinary ones,

there are strong individual differences that change according to the context in which the phenomenon takes place and perhaps much more that at present prevents us from understanding in detail the laws that govern them.

## Seeing at a distance

Seeing at a distance or 'Remote Viewing', a very popular term if you look for information on the internet, is the ability to collect in an unconventional but voluntary and conscious way - unlike precognitions - information about objects, people, places, regardless of distance and time and any barriers that may mask them. Put like that, theoretically there would be no limit to the collection of present, past or future information.

Is that right?

Let us see an example, well described by Stephan Schwartz (2018), which refers to information provided for the capture of Saddam Hussein.

*"POSITION: Saddam will be found underneath an ordinary looking house. It is on the outskirts of a small village"; "Near Tikrit"; "The house is part of a small complex"; "Delimited on one side by a dirt road and, at the back, by a nearby river"; "The house can be identified because it has a large tree growing at both ends and has a strange kind of partial second floor above the front door".*

Here is the image of the place where Saddam Hussein was captured released by the U.S. Department of Defense, where you can recognize many details described during the remote viewing by a group of experts in this technique.



It is clear that an example like this is not enough to establish whether this phenomenon is real. What, then, is the scientific evidence gathered so far to demonstrate the reality?

A first series of results refers to what is popularly known as one of the most famous projects that used this technique for US intelligence purposes, the Star Gate project, which lasted from 1972 to 1995. Before referring to the information on the internet, starting from Wikipedia, we recommend reading the materials produced by Ed May, a physicist who has directed this project for many years. You can start with a summary presented by Marwaha and May, (2017) and then continue with three rather substantial volumes, entitled: Volume 1: Remote Viewing (1972-1984); Volume 2: Remote Viewing (1985-1995); Volume 4: Operational Remote Viewing: Memorandums and Reports. All these volumes have been published since 2017 and so, before we come to summary positive or negative assessments, perhaps we should read them.

From the point of view of statistical control, the report written by Jessica Utts in 1996 (Utts, 1996), who was president of the American Statistical Association, leaves no doubt "*Using the standards applied to any other area of science, it is concluded that psychic functioning has been well established.*

Is this data enough to convince us that this human ability is real? Probably not, but at least the hypothesis remains open that particularly gifted people, using particular techniques in ideal environmental and mental conditions, can sometimes obtain information in a voluntary but not ordinary way.

Provocatively, then, one might ask: "But with this technique was it possible to find archaeological finds?" The answer is yes, and one of the best documented cases is the one described by Stephan Schwartz for the recovery of the American brig Leander, sunk in 1834 while en route between the island of Cuba and Boston (Schwartz & De Mattei, 2000).

Even more provocatively you might ask: "But if you can also collect information about future events, why not use it to invest money knowing in advance where it is best to do so?" Although there is not much evidence, we recommend reading some positive examples from the use of distance vision techniques for this purpose (Kolodziejzyk, 2013; Smith, Laham, & Moddel, 2014). Of course, negative examples have also been reported (Katz, Grgć, & Fendley, 2018) and who knows how many others have not been disclosed through scientific articles.

Finally you might ask: "But then why not use these techniques for police investigations?" As far as we know, these techniques are used both in Italy and abroad, however the taboo that arises from the lack of information on these human capabilities limits the dissemination of the results obtained.

Is it possible to learn this kind of skill if you are by nature particularly gifted? We believe that this skill can be learned and improved just like all other mental or manual skills: memory, meditation, attention, playing an instrument, etc. Obviously, there will always be someone who will make less effort and improve easily, while others will get modest results even after years of hard exercise.

In any case, our suggestion is simple: if you want to explore and experience all the potential of your mind, always try with humility, patience and commitment.

For example, to train your distance vision skills we recommend that you practice the free training offered by Julia Mossbridge on this website

<https://thepremonitioncode.com/tester/index.php>

or with others offered for free, or almost free, by experts with documented experience. Avoid without delay those who ask for hundreds or thousands of euros or dollars guaranteeing a profit.

## **Interaction at a distance between mind and mind**

Is the interaction at a distance between mind and mind equivalent to telepathy? Basically yes, although it is always necessary to specify what information is shared between the two minds without any possibility that it can be shared in a conventional way.

For example, it is one thing to try to ensure that the partner with whom you are mentally connected correctly and consciously identifies the image you are seeing, but another thing is the fact that physiological signals that are generated for example by the brain activity of one partner can also be detected in the brain activity of the other partner without the latter being aware of it. In summary, it is necessary to distinguish between interactions that require awareness of shared information and those that do not. As far as the experimental study of information that requires conscious recognition is concerned, at the end of 2018 there were 128 studies that could be freely consulted for independent analysis (Tressoldi, 2018), which used the Ganzfeld technique, which basically seeks to maximize the sensory and visual isolation of the partner in charge of identifying what the other member of the couple saw or heard. It is clear from all these studies that isolated partners are able to identify what their partner saw or heard with an average percentage about 7% higher than the chance level, obviously with large individual differences.

On the contrary, under conditions of sensory non-isolation and asking to identify the target by forced choice, i.e. choosing between different options without trying to describe what is perceived, this percentage is reduced to less than 1%, so very close to the chance level.

In summary, under controlled experimental conditions of sensory isolation and allowing you to freely describe what you perceive, there is no doubt that you can identify what your partner saw or heard. Although there is no summary of the scientific evidence yet, there are indications that the degree of mental and emotional relationship between the two

partners may facilitate this sharing of information.

As regards the sharing of information in an unconscious way, even if the scientific evidence is minor, there is evidence that, for example, differentiated alterations of EEG activity induced by visual and/or auditory stimulation in a member of the couple can be detected in the EEG activity of the isolated partner at a distance, generating a kind of mental telecommunication similar to the Morse code (Bilucaglia, Pederzoli, Giroldini, Prati, Tressoldi, 2019; Giroldini et al Tressoldi et al., 2014), 2016; Giroldini, Pederzoli, Bilucaglia, Prati, & Tressoldi, 2018; Tressoldi et al., 2014)

This evidence clearly indicates that improving the signal-to-noise ratio with special processing algorithms can open up fascinating applications of a new type of telecommunications, the mental ones.

Broadcast or share? It will not have escaped someone that we have tried as much as possible to talk about sharing information from one mind to another, avoiding talking about ‘transmitter’ and ‘receiver’ even though this is done in many parts of the cited literature. Considering that this type of telecommunications is not based on the laws of electromagnetism that regulate all the forms of technological telecommunications we know, we think it is more prudent to talk about ‘sharing’ information at a distance, because there are some attempts to interpret this type of telecommunications as a mental form of entanglement, one of the most surprising phenomena observed in quantum physics<sup>3</sup>, whereby two or more particles that have global values in common, can remain in correlation with each other even when separated by very large distances.

While waiting for precise measures on the ‘correlation’ between the mental information of the two, or more, partners, for the moment we prefer to think about a sharing and not a real transmission of mental information.

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[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entanglement\\_quantistico](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entanglement_quantistico)

# Non-ordinary Interactions of Consciousness

## Non-ordinary interactions on human behavior

Surely the most spectacular effects on the behavior of human beings are those obtained from the so-called ‘Maharishi effect’, named after Maharishi Mahesh<sup>4</sup> - an Indian yogi who brought transcendental meditation to the West and facilitated the creation of the Maharishi University<sup>5</sup>, which offers degree courses from physics to computer science, all inspired by the teachings of this spiritual master.

The Maharishi effect consists in positively and indirectly modifying the behavior and negative events of a population through the application of transcendental meditation by a number of meditators equal to about the square root of 1% of this population. If, for example, the population is about one million people, a number of meditators equal to the square root of 10.000 would be sufficient, i.e. 100 people. To understand the origin of this formula, it is necessary to refer to a theoretical model based on the physics of quantum fields of Hagelin, (1987).

The deep meditative state reached simultaneously by meditators would create a field of psychophysical coherence for the entire population, reducing the number of negative events, such as assaults, rapes, road accidents, etc.

Empirical support for this theory has been found in more than 50 studies (Cavanaugh & Dillbeck, 2017; Dillbeck & Cavanaugh, 2016, 2017; Orme-Johnson, W., & Oates, 2009).

## Non-ordinary health interactions

The best known effects of remote interaction on physical or mental health are those described in the studies that refer to ‘Remote Healing’ and ‘Intercessory Prayer’. The

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<sup>4</sup> [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharishi\\_Mahesh\\_Yogi](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharishi_Mahesh_Yogi)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.mum.edu>

difference depends only on the cultural and theoretical model referred to: a mental-energy model, for example, derived from Reiki<sup>6</sup> practices, in which the intention of healing is understood as a direct relationship between practitioners and patients, or a religious model, in which the intention of healing is understood as an indirect relationship through prayer to high spiritual entities, such as Jesus Christ or other saints believed to be able to act.

Given the difficulty in conducting controlled clinical trials that can also take into account the effects of placebo, there is little evidence to support the effects of these remote interactions.

The only meta-analyses available (Astin, Harkness, & Ernst, 2000; Hodge, 2007; Masters, Spielmann, & Goodson, 2006) give, as expected, contradictory results, given the variety of therapeutic approaches and the many types of healing goals, ranging from heart and kidney problems, etc. to mental ones, such as psychiatric disorders, etc. The study of the effects of these healing intentions on animals, which are presumably less influenced by expectations and therefore by the placebo effect, are quite interesting. For example, William Bengston and collaborators (Bengston, 2007, 2012; Beseme, Bengston, Radin, Turner, & McMichael, 2018), were able to demonstrate the healing of lab rats that had been injected with lethal cancer cells, exercising simple mental techniques centered on the intention to heal and a mental connection to the animals to be healed, without any direct contact.

## Non-ordinary interactions on organic compounds

In contrast to mental interaction with human health, studies that have investigated conscious mental interaction at a distance on the growth of organic material, such as plant seeds and cell cultures, are more consistent. In the last meta-analysis, presented by Roe,

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<sup>6</sup> <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reiki>

Sonnex, & Roxburgh (2014), 49 of these experiments were analyzed.

An interesting development in this field is the possibility to ‘activate’ certain materials, such as cotton, which, when put in contact with diseased cells even after a long time, can facilitate their healing.

A recent example of this effect is documented by (Beseme et al., 2018). Among other applications of mental interaction on biological materials, it was also investigated whether the effects of food and drink on the consumer could be positively influenced.

For example Radin, Hayssen, & Walsh, (2007) e, Shiah & Radin, (2013) showed that chocolate and tea samples to which a group of meditators had sent the intention to induce positive emotions and psychophysical well-being on those who had consumed them, actually produced these effects, compared to identical samples to which this intention had not been sent.

## **Non-ordinary interactions on electronic equipment**

Studies on mental interaction on electronic equipment, in particular on random number generators, date back as far as the 1930s (Duggan, 2019). The latest quantitative synthesis of more than 300 studies was carried out by Bösch, Steinkamp, & Boller (2006).

The latest developments in this line of research on the one hand try to better understand the role of the mind in the influence of subatomic particles such as photons (Radin, Michel, & Delorme, 2016; Radin, Michel, Johnston, & Delorme, 2013; Tressoldi, Pederzoli, Matteoli, Prati, & Kruth, 2016), on the other hand they try to demonstrate the possibility of constructing mentally controlled electronic equipment. For example Tressoldi, Pederzoli, & Melloni, (2015) have created a prototype of this type that they have named ‘MindSwitch’ also visible in this video:

<https://youtu.be/-W6SZ1fKFeY>.

A recent study by Tressoldi, Pederzoli, Prati, & Semenzato, (2019), demonstrated its

feasibility with a new version, with relative software, which is described so that it can be freely reproduced in:

<https://github.com/tressoldi/MindSwitch>.

For those who want to practice independently, the MindMatterTrainer software is also available free of charge on this site: <https://github.com/tressoldi/MindMatterTrainer>

## **Conclusions**

Have we described all possible non-ordinary experiences of consciousness? Definitely not. For example, we have not described the so called ‘materializations’ of objects, described during mediumship sessions as a means of communication of discarnate entities or as demonstration of the power of the mind by particularly gifted people. Furthermore, we have not talked about the so-called Poltergeist experiences<sup>7</sup>, which consist in the contactless displacement, or inexplicable breakage, of macroscopic objects. The only problem with these types of phenomena is their unpredictability and, for the moment, the difficulty of studying them in such a way as to allow a better understanding of their characteristics and nature, which is essential for a scientific approach.

What do the non-ordinary experiences presented in this paper tell us about our mind and, in essence, about "Who we really are?" Surely our mental capacities are much broader than those determined by the simple functioning of the brain and our sense organs. Secondly, they confront us with a serious revision of the hypothesis that the ability to make conscious experiences and use our mind derives only from our biology, obeying the laws of classical physics. Third, they offer us a great opportunity to unify domains of our existence, physical, mental and transpersonal or spiritual, which are often considered separate, and finally they offer us great opportunities to experience "Who We Really Are".

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<sup>7</sup> <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poltergeist>

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