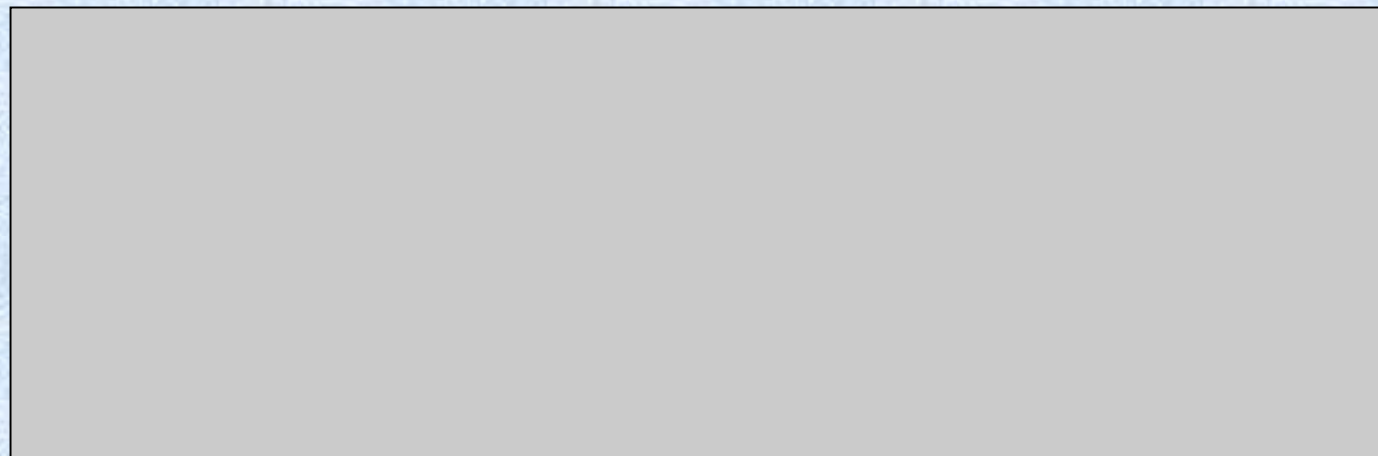


Mystical experiences among astrologers

William Stace's core features of religious experience

(W. T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1960))

1. Unifying vision, all things are one, part of a whole
2. Timeless and spaceless
3. Sense of reality, not subjective but a valid source of knowledge
4. Blessedness, joy, peace and happiness
5. Feeling of the holy, sacred, divine
6. Paradoxical, defies logic
7. Ineffable, can't be described in words
8. Loss of sense of self



Background questions:

Gender differences: female, 85%, male 15%

Age range: 30 to 72 years

Astrological experience: 2 to 30 years

Country of origin: 49% British, the remainder from France, USA, Czech Republic, Argentina, Ukraine, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Belgium, Finland, and Australia

Educational background: 60% were university graduates, of whom 34% had post-graduate qualifications. 30% did not have a university training but had professional qualifications. 10% had finished their education with secondary school.

Religious background: 34% were raised Protestant, 22% Catholic, 19% non-denominational Christian, 16% Jewish, 4% Russian Orthodox, 3% agnostic, and 2% 'other' (spiritualist)

Frequency of mystical experiences: 93% had two or more experiences, 68% stated that their experiences were different from each other

19% of participants stated that they had not spoken of their experiences with anyone before the questionnaire was offered to them; Hay and Heald found 44% of their survey participants had not spoken of their experiences before the survey.

Greeley's list of descriptors of mystical experience are from Andrew M. Greeley, *The Sociology of the Paranormal* (London: Sage, 1975); *Ecstasy: A Way of Knowing* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Spectrum, 1974)

Descriptors of mystical experience

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASTROLOGERS 2006	%
1. A sense of encountering the holy, sacred or divine	63
2. A sense of the unity of everything and my own part in it	63
3. A certainty that all things work out according to a greater plan	63
4. A sense that all the universe is alive and interconnected	59
5. An experience of timelessness	56
6. A great increase in my understanding and knowledge	56
7. A feeling of deep and profound peace	56
8. A sense of intense joy	52
9. A new sense of individual purpose, destiny or meaning	52
10. A sense of tremendous personal expansion	52
11. The sense that my personality has dissolved into something much greater than myself	52
12. A feeling of remembering or recollecting things I have always really known deep down	45
13. A loss of concern about worldly problems	41
14. A sensation of warmth, fire or light	37
15. A sense of my aloneness and uniqueness	37
16. Confidence in my own personal survival	33
17. A conviction that love is the centre of everything	33
18. A sense of the need to contribute to or help others	26
19. A sense of a new life and living in a new world	22
20. A feeling that I couldn't possibly describe what was happening to me	19
21. A sense of alienation	11

GREELEY 1975	%
1. A feeling of deep and profound peace	55
2. A certainty that all things would work out for the good	48
3. Sense of my own need to contribute to others	43
4. A conviction that love is the centre of everything	43
5. Sense of joy and laughter	43
6. An experience of great emotional intensity	38
7. A great increase in my understanding and knowledge	32
8. A sense of the unity of everything and my own part in it	29
9. A sense of a new life and living in a new world	27
10. A confidence in my own personal survival	27
11. A feeling that I couldn't possibly describe what was happening to me	26
12. A sense that all the universe is alive	25
13. The sense that my personality has been taken over by something much more powerful than I am	24
14. A sense of tremendous personal expansion, either psychological or physical	22
15. A sensation of warmth or fire	22
16. A sense of being alone	19
17. A loss of concern about worldly problems	19
18. A sense that I am being bathed in light	14
19. A sense of desolation	8

Triggers for mystical experience

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASTROLOGERS 2006	%
Spiritual exercise	49
Nature	49
Meaningful coincidence	45
Important dream	33
Music	30
Psychotherapy or analysis	30
Creative work	30
Personal crisis or loss	22
Drugs	19
Prayer	19
Concentrated study	19
Sexual experience	19
Falling in love	19
Near-death experience	11
Depression	8
Childbirth	0

GREELEY 1975	%
Listening to music	49
Prayer	48
Beauties of nature such as sunset	45
Moments of quiet reflection	42
Attending church services	41
Listening to sermon	40
Watching little children	34
Reading the Bible	31
Being alone in church	30
Reading a poem or novel	21
Childbirth	20
Sexual lovemaking	18
Your own creative work	17
Looking at a painting	15
Physical exercise	1
Drugs	0

Responses to other questions, including open questions

- 89% of participants felt their experience affected their values and outlook
- 41% of participants felt their experience affected their moral attitudes
- 71% of participants felt there was a relationship between their mystical experience and astrology
- 71% of participants felt that astrology had influenced their religious or spiritual outlook
- 82% of participants felt their mystical experience had influenced their religious or spiritual outlook
- 78% of participants felt their mystical experience had influenced their perception of astrology, deepening their understanding of its 'transformative aspects' and making it 'less formulaic'