THE SELF-EXPANSIVENESS LEVEL FORM: A CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT OF A TRANSPERSONAL CONSTRUCT*

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The development of adequate measures of transpersonal concepts is a major requirement if empirical work is to proceed in the field of transpersonal psychology. The development of such instruments would enable a variety of research projects to be accomplished in such a way that a cumulative benefit could occur due to shared technique. Some may think that the transpersonal area eludes measurement and perhaps all empirical explorations, but it is the position of this paper that such work is possible and desirable. The approach taken to address this need is the construction and validation of an objective self-report instrument, the Self-Expansiveness Level Form.

our objective self-report instrument

In the transpersonal area, conceptual frameworks are usually difficult to make explicit and even harder to operationalize, The strategy used in the present case is that of the psychological cartographer, similar to that of several other transpersonal theorists *(*see Fischer, 1974; Grof, 1975; Ring, 1976). This cartography rests on the metaphor of space and time as defining the self-concept of the individual *(see* Figure 1). The spatial dimension has been described previously (Sampson, 1978) as a way of approaching self-conception by delineating an internal and external locus of identity. The temporal dimension has been employed by Shostrum (1963)

defining the self-concept

A CARTOGRAPHY OF SELF-CONCEPTION, INCLUDING LEVELS OF SELF-EXPANSIVENESS
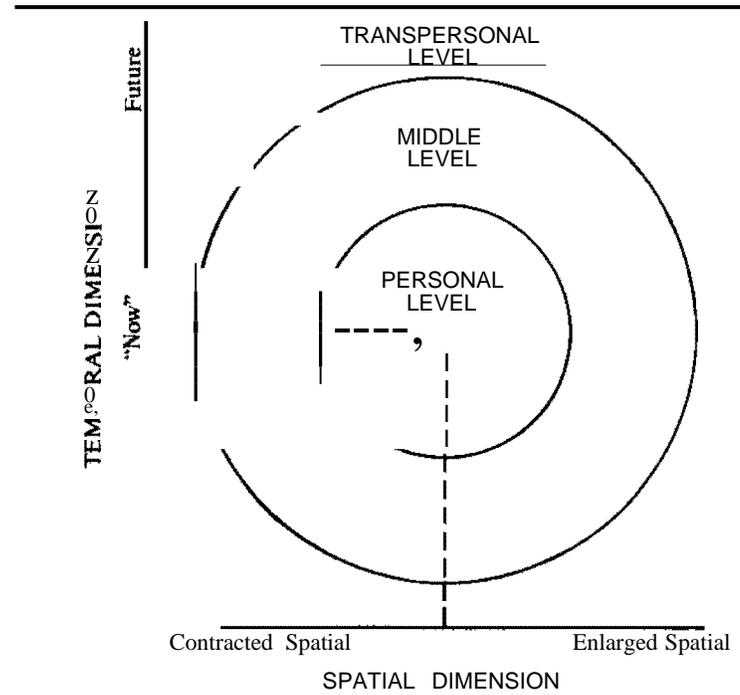
in his approach to present-centeredness as delineated from a past or future orientation. The combining of these two dimensions offers an important advance in the mapping of the self-concept.

level of self: expansiveness

A key construct in this conceptualization is the *level of self-expansiveness,* which is defined as the amount of the self which is contained within the boundary demarcating self from non-self through the process of *self-conception.* This definition is based on an assumption of the expanded nature of the self. Specifically. the position is taken that the relationship between self and non-self is inherently unlimited- to such an extent that all absolute distinctions between the two are untenable. The self is thus seen as inextricably embedded in the universe and, ultimately, self and non-self are equivalent, invariant and unmeasurable. The self-*concept,* however, does vary in terms of self-expansiveness level. Deikman (1973) reflects this view:

> The limits of the self are the experienced limits of the individual-those based on sensory perception, language, and

the space-time of the object world. The self is all these things that I consciously include in the zone of my personal organization (p, 324).

The perceived boundary of the self and its related expansiveness level thus constitute an important aspect of individual differences in self-concept. The implication of this view is that the degree to which individuals manifest expanded self-concepts reflects the extent to which they accept or deny their unity with their true unbounded selves. Self-expansiveness level can therefore be considered to represent the degree of self-realization, or alternatively, spiritual development, transpersonal actualization, or other concepts central to much of transpersonal theorizing.

An advantage of this approach to transpersonal theorizing is obtained by focusing on the self-concept, rather than the self, so that metaphysical assumptions and their resulting methodological problems can be minimized in the development of a measurement technique. Transpersonal approaches that focus on concepts such as mind and consciousness, for example, are placed in a difficult position in regard to developing consensual approaches that distinguish science from dogma. By focusing on the level of analysis of the self-concept, exploration can avoid some controversial entanglements while clearly being conceptually related to the transpersonal area.

focusing on the self-concept

The spatial and temporal dimensions, which are conceptualized as outlining the territory potentially encompassed by an individual's self-concept, are viewed as intersecting at a point called the personal level, which is unique to each person and defined spatially and temporally as the here-and-now of the individual. Furthermore, each of these dimensions is considered to be bipolar and orthogonally positioned in a two-dimensional space, extending away from their point of intersection in two directions. The spatial dimension extends toward both an enlarged and contracted sense of identity, while the temporal dimension extends toward the past and future. Extension of the self-concept sufficiently beyond the here-and-now, such that there is a dissolution of the individual's perception of self as an isolated biosystem existing only in the present time, is viewed as a transpersonal self-conception.

spatial and temporal dimensions

The construct of self-expansiveness level was derived from this cartography and defined as the amount of the true self, or the universe of all possibilities, which is contained within the boundary demarcating self from non-self through the process of self-conception. From this construct, a self-

report instrument using a Likert-type scale to rate the degree of willingness of an individual to identify with items from different levels of self-expansiveness was developed. A Personal Scale was included to measure the degree of identification of an individual with the here-and-now level of the self, considered to be roughly equivalent to various conceptions of positive mental health. A Transpersonal Scale was included to measure the degree of identification with aspects of reality beyond that which is ordinarily conceived as being an aspect of the individual. Greater conceptual elaboration and more detailed data presentation, particularly on the method of construction of the Self-Expansiveness Level Form, are presented elsewhere (Friedman, 1981). Self-report methodology, which may be questionable as a technique for *direct* exploration into the transpersonal self is here considered appropriate for research into the self-concept, when it is viewed as verbally mediated. The semantic problems inherent in communicating within the transpersonal area, when restricted to the domain ofthe self-concept, are similar to semantic problems in other areas of psychological inquiry into the self-concept. Efforts were taken to minimize these problems through careful wording of items in what seemed to be an objective way and through the empirical selection process which excluded items considered problematic by subjects. The semantic problems which remain are accepted as part of the error variance that accompanies all measurement effort. It is acknowledged, for example, that different frames of reference in relationship to the transpersonal area can interfere with the validity of the results on the Self-Expansiveness Level Form for any individual. For research purposes which utilize group data, however, individual semantic preferences may cancel out each other and be considered as a source of random, rather than systematic, error.

the self-report instrument

METHOD

An empirical strategy involving exploratory factor analysis and discriminatory analysis was used to develop a measurement instrument operationalizing the construct of self-expansiveness. Data was then collected to validate the measure.

Instrument Construction

The following is a brief summary of the instrument construction procedure which outlines the methodological approach employed. The Self-Expansiveness Level Form was based

on the development of several preliminary instruments. Data collected from groups of college students and members of transpersonal organizations were gathered over a period of several years, culminating in a form consisting of 42 items operationalizing different levels of self-expansiveness. This 42-item form was then administered to college students whose responses were factor analyzed, yielding two major factors which were interpreted as Personal and Transpersonal Factors. It was also administered to members of a local group with transpersonal interests. Items were selected based on their theoretical congruence with the cartography and based on empirical results. Specifically, congruent items which loaded highest on the Personal Factor for the college students and that did not differentiate the two groups were used to construct a Personal Scale, while congruent items loading highest on the Transpersonal Factor for the college students and which did differentiate the two groups were used to construct a Transpersonal Scale. Additional items, representing an intermediate level of self-expansiveness, were used to form a Middle Scale, serving the purpose of providing increased face validity for the overall instrument. Exploration into the meaning of the Middle Scale was consequently minimized, although potential value in that scale is suspected.

These three scales were then combined into an instrument named the Self-Expansiveness Level Form *(see* Figure 2). This instrument is composed of I8-selected items, randomly ordered. The brevity of the form provides the practical advantage of ease of use in a variety of research settings. Two items operationalize each of the two directions of the spatial and temporal dimensions of self-expansiveness for the middle level, while one item is used for each for the transpersonal level, a total of 12 items. An additional four items operationalize the personal level, while two more are used as a global personal- and transpersonal-level item. The Personal Scale consists of all personal-level items, including the global one, while the Transpersonal Scale consists of all transpersonal-level items, including the global one. To score each scale, a scale value is assigned to each item as follows: A = 5, B   4, C   3, D   2, and E   1. The value for all scale items are then summed to obtain the scale score.

Construct Validation

After the Self-Expansiveness Level Form was constructed, its validity was examined. This is a necessary part of the scrutiny of any measurement instrument prior to its utilization, but it is particularly important in the transpersonal

FIGURE 2

SELF-EXPANSIVENESS   LEVEL   FORM

Each of us has a unique sense of who we are, our conception of self or identity. The following concepts could possibly describe a person's view of themselves. The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore the degree of willingness you have in using each of these concepts to describe yourself. Using the scale below, carefully consider each concept and choose the letter which best expresses your willingness to use that concept as an answer to the question, "WHO AM I?" Write that letter to the left of the concept in the space provided. There are no right or wrong answers and you are requested to answer on the basis of your own experiences and beliefs, not just on the basis of logic. Take your time and feel free to go back and change your answers. If you have trouble deciding any of these, please make your best choice and do not leave any blank.

VERY WILLING TO USE; TO DESCRIBE MY SENSE OF SELF OR IDENTITY

SOMEWHAT WILLING

NEITHBR WILLING NOR UNWILLING

D   SOMEWHAT UNWILLING

E   VERY UNWILLING TO USE TO DESCRIBE MY SENSE OF SELF OR IDENTITY

1. My emotions and feelings as experienced in the present. (personal level)

2. Thoughts and feelings I experienced as a child. (middle level, past temporal)

3. The unique individual that I am in the present. (global-personal level)

4. The social relationships which I experience. (middle level, enlarged spatial)

5. The way I behaved in living my life as a child. (middle level, past temporal)

6. Experiences of all life forms of which I am one. (transpersonal level, enlarged spatial)

7. Sensations from parts of my body, such as my heart, that I experience. (middle level, contracted spatial)

8. The way I behave in living my life in the present. (personal level)

9. Future happenings which I will experience. (middle level, future temporal)

10. My thoughts and ideas as experienced in the present. (personal level)

11. The way I will behave in living my life in the future. (middle level, future temporal)

12. The individual atoms in my body. (transpersonal level, contracted spatial)

13. The physical surroundings which have an influence on my be-. havior. (middle level, enlarged spatial)

14. All that happened before my lifetime which has in some way influenced me. (transpersonal level, past temporal)

_____ 15. The behavior of parts of my body, such as my facial expressions. (middle level, contracted spatial)

16. My attitudes and values in the present. (personal level)

17. The entire universe beyond time which is me in an ultimate sense. (global-transpersonal level)

18. The beings who might descend from me in the distant future who may not have human form. (transpersonal level, future tem-

Note: The level and dimensional direction of each item are added in parentheses. They were not part of the form as administered.

area. Since the nature of the self-concept of an individual is not open to direct observation, the primary form of validation available is that of construct validity. One approach to construct validation is to demonstrate evidence of convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is shown when independently derived measures of the same construct yield similar results, while discriminant validity is shown when independently derived measures of distinct constructs yield disparate results. Another approach is to explore the internal structure of a measurement instrument through factor analysis. Both of these approaches were used in exploration with two college student groups. In addition, the reliability of the instrument was examined since reliability is a necessary condition for the establishment of any validity. *construct validation*

The Self-Expansiveness Level Form was completed by two separate volunteer groups of 80 and 86 college psychology students; research instruments were administered during several class sessions. The mean age of the first group was 19.7 years with a standard deviation of 4.7 years, while the mean age of the second group was 22.6 years with a standard deviation of 8.8 years. For the first, 55% were female and 45% male, while for the second, 70% were female and 30% male. The first group was also administered the Self-Description Inventory (Fordyce, 1977), a measure of happiness; the Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrum, 1963), a measure of self-actualization; the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965), a measure of positive self-evaluation; the Self-Expansiveness Level Form in a second administration to examine test-retest reliability. The second group was administered the Mystical Experience Scale (Hood, 1975), a measure of acknowledgement of having had a mystical experience; the Otis (1954) Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test, a measure of intelligence; and the Crowne & Marlowe (1964) Social Desirability Scale, a measure of the attempt to present oneself in a socially-approved manner. They were also administered a projective measure of self-concept developed for this study which did not provide a meaningful pattern and is not included in this discussion. Background *administration of tests*

demographic measures were also collected from both groups.

Known-group Validation

differentiating groups

A second phase of validation studies was conducted with two groups known to be composed of those supportive of transpersonal approaches. The purpose of this exploration was to determine whether the Transpersonal Scale of the Self-Expansiveness Level Form could differentiate between these known groups and one of the student groups. The first transpersonal group consisted of 13 volunteer yoga students who completed the Self-Expansiveness Level Form and were rated by their teacher (whose approach is from the Indian Hatha tradition) on a 9-point scale of transpersonal realization. They had a mean age of 38.8 years with a standard deviation of 15.2 years and all but one were female. The second group consisted of 20 members of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology with a mean age of 40.7 years and a standard deviation of 9.5 years. Seventy percent were male, while 30% were female. They were the respondents from 44 solicited members who had been randomly selected for inclusion in a mail survey and who had completed the Self-Expansiveness Level Form along with some background questions. One question concerned their perceived agreement with a transpersonal perspective and another concerned their perceived personal achievement of transpersonal psychological development.

RESULTS

reliability measurement

The data gathered on the student groups were used to examine the reliability and construct validity of the Self-Expansiveness Level Form. Data from the first student group *(n* 80) were used to examine the reliability of the instrument in two ways. The first involved calculating the internal consistency of the items on the Personal and Transpersonal Scales using the Spearman-Brown Prophecy Formula which resulted in a reliability coefficient and estimate of expected correlation of each score with "true" scores. The reliability coefficient for the Personal Scale was found to be .81, while its estimated correlation with the "true" score was found to be .91; for the Transpersonal Scale, the results were .66 and .81, respectively. The second involved a two-week test-retest reliability measuring the stability of the instrument over time, based on an *n* of 73. The *n* on which this and subsequent findings are based is variable due to incomplete data from some subjects. The correlation

between test-retest scores for the Personal Scale was .83, while it was .80 for the Transpersonal Scale.

Data from this same student group were also used to examine the factor structure of *the* Self-Expansiveness Level Form in a confirmatory analysis to substantiate the emergence of a Personal and Transpersonal Factor. A principal components analysis was used and six factors were extracted from the data set with an eigenvalue of greater than 1, accounting for 67% of the variance *(see* Table 1). The first factor, which accounted for 27% of the variance, was one on which all items, except 2,5, and 18, loaded higher than a .4 level. Items on the Personal Scale tended, however, to have the highest loadings on the factor. The second factor, which accounted for 12% of the variance, involved two Personal Scale items loading above .4, but in a negative direction, and two each from the Middle and Transpersonal Scale loading above the .4 level.

Convergent validity was examined on this student group by comparing the scores on the Transpersonal Scale of the Self-Expansiveness Level Form with the scores from the Mystical Experience Scale. The correlation was found to be significant, r (76)   .32, $p <$ .005.

convergent and discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was examined by correlating age and sex, as well as intelligence (using the Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test) and social desirability (using the Social Desirability Scale) with the Self-Expansiveness Level Form. Age, based on an n of 75, correlated significantly, $r = .22$, $p <$ .05, with the Transpersonal Scale, but not with the other scales, while the other correlations testing discriminant validity were found to be nonsignificant at the .05 level.

Data from the second student group *(n   86)* were also used to examine the reliability and construct validity of the Self-Expansiveness Level Form. Using the same technique as in the first student group and based on an n of 86, the reliability coefficient for the Personal Scale was found to be .78, while its estimated correlation to the "true" score was found to be .88; for the Transpersonal Scale, it was found to be .68 and .82, respectively.

Six factors with an eigenvalue of greater than 1 were derived from this data set through a principal components factor analysis, accounting for 65% of the variance *(see* Table 2). The first factor, accounting for the 21% of the variance, had all Personal Scale items loading heavily. The second factor, accounting for 15% of the variance, had all Transpersonal Scale items loading heavily, except one.

TABLE 1

RESULTS OF FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THB SELF-ExPANSIVBNESS LEVEL
FORM POR THE FIRST STUDENT GROUP *(n =* 80)

FACTOR	ITEM	LEVEL	LOADING
I	1	Personal	.67
	3	Personal	.62
	4	Middle	.46
	6	Transpersonal	*048*
	7	Middle	.59
	8	Personal	.65
	9	Middle	*042*
	10	Personal	.60
	11	Middle	.45
	12	Transpersonal	.45
	13	Middle	.52
	14	Transpersonal	.47
	15	Middle	.62
	16	Personal	.54
	17	Transpersonal	.52
II	I	Personal	-.41
	5	Middle	,45
	9	Middle	.59
	10	Personal	.47
	12	Transpersonal	,42
	18	Transpersonal	.46
III	2	Middle	.73
	5	Middle	.52
	11	Middle	-.40
	14	Transpersonal	.46
	18	Transpersonal	-,48
IV	9	Middle	.45
	II	Middle	.54
	17	Transpersonal	*-Al*
V	7	Middle	-.50
	16	Personal	.58
VI	4	Middle	,47
	17	Transpersonal	Al

Note: Only items loading above .4 are included.

Convergent validity was examined on the data from this student group by correlating the Personal Scale of the Self-Expansiveness Level Form to the Personal Orientation Inventory Time Competence, r (67) = .52, $p <$ .005, and Inner Support Scales, r (67) = .54, $p <$ .005, the Tennessee Self Concept Scale Total Positive Score, r (79)   .58, $p <$ .005, and the Self-Description Inventory Total Scale Score, r *(56)* *.37,p* < .005. The correlations obtained were all found to be significant.

Discriminant validity was examined on the data from this student group by correlating the scales of the Self-Expansiveness Level Form with age and sex, as well as with the Self-Criticism Score, Distribution Score, True-False Ratio, and Defensive Positive Scale of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, all of which are measures of response style. The Distribution Score was found to correlate significantly with the Transpersonal Scale, r (79) = .21, $p <$ .05, while age was found to correlate significantly with the Personal

TABLE 2

RESULTS OF FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE SELF-ExPANSIVENESS   LEVEL
FORM FOR THE SECOND STUDENT GROUP ($n = 86$)

FACTOR	ITEM	LEVEL	LOADING
	1	Personal	.50
	2	Middle	.41
	3	Personal	.57
	4	Middle	.52
	6	Transpersonal	.48
	7	Middle	.51
	8	Personal	.71
	10	Personal	.62
	15	Middle	,44
	16	Personal	,70
II	5	Middle	.43
	12	Transpersonal	.61
	13	Middle	.53
	14	Transpersonal	.58
	17	Transpersonal	,65
	18	Transpersonal	,63
III	5	Middle	-.44
	9	Middle	.69
	11	Middle	.55
	18	Transpersonal	.42
IV	6	Transpersonal	.66
	12	Transpersonal	-.44
V	7	Middle	-.49
	13	Middle	.59
VI	2	Middle	,59
	15	Middle	-,45

Note: Only items loading above .4 are included.

Scale, r (79)   .22,$p < .05$, of the Self-Expansiveness Level
Form. All other correlations were nonsignificant at the .05
level.

In order to further test the validity of the Self-Expansive-
ness Level Form, known-group validation studies were
utilized. The mean score on the Personal Scale for the
second student group *(n   80)* was found to be 20.16 with a
standard deviation of 3.70, while that for the yoga group
(n = 13) was found to be 22.38 with a standard deviation of
2.87; a significant difference, t (91)   2.06, $p < .025$, was
thus found between these two groups on this scale. The
mean score on the Transpersonal Scale for the second stu-
dent group *(n   80)* was found to be 15.10 with a standard
deviation 00.55,   while that for the yoga group *(n = 13)* was
found to be 18.15 with a standard deviation of 3.16; a sig-
nificant difference, t (91) = 2.90, $p < .005$, was thus also
found between these two groups on this scale. In addition,
the rating of the yoga teacher on the degree of trans personal
realization of her students was correlated with both the
Personal and Transpersonal Scales. The correlations be-
tween the Personal Scale and the rating, $r = .58, p < .025$,
and between the Transpersonal Scale and the rating, r .84,
$p < .005$, based on an n of 13, were both significant.

known-group
validation

The Self-Expansiveness Level Form results of the second student group were also compared to those of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology group. The mean score on the Personal Scale for the Association group was found to be 20.5 with a standard deviation of 4.24, while on the Transpersonal Scale, a mean score of 18.0 with a standard deviation of 4.86 was found. The Personal Scale was found' not to differentiate the two groups, t (98) .36, $p > .05$, while the Transpersonal Scale did significantly differentiate them, $t(98)$ 3.02, $p < .005$. There was no relationship found between the measures of either agreement with a transpersonal perspective or degree of realization of transpersonal values in their lives and the Self-Expansiveness Level Form for the Association group.

DISCUSSION

findings justify further use of the measure

The conceptualization of a transpersonal construct, the level of self-expansiveness, and the derivation of a resulting measurement technique, the Self-Expansiveness Level Form, were examined in this research. Furthermore, this measure was tested for validity, which not only provided a test of the usefulness of the measure, but also of the conceptual framework from which the measure was derived. Though there are no absolute standards for accepting or rejecting the reliability or validity of a measure, it is concluded that the findingsjustify its further use in exploratory research.

In terms of reliability, the Self-Expansiveness Level Form demonstrated high Spearman-Brown reliability coefficients and test-retest reliability. In terms of its factor structure, for the student sample with an n of 86, the emergence of a clear Personal and Transpersonal Factor was evident. For the other student sample, the pattern was less clear but still congruent with this factor structure. The convergence of the Personal Scale with the Personal Orientation Inventory scales, the Tennessee Self Concept Scale Total Positive Score, and the Self-Description Inventory Total Scale Score suggests that it is measuring an aspect of integration of the person at the here-and-now level of traditional mental health. The convergence of the Transpersonal Scale with the Mystical Experience Scale suggests likewise that it is measuring something related to the acknowledgment of having had a mystical experience. In addition, the known-group validity studies support the ability of the Transpersonal Scale to differentiate between known-transpersonal groups and a student group. The extremely high correlation between the yoga teacher's rating of her students and the

Transpersonal Scale further supports the validity of the scale, though the questions asked of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology group do not. The results in the tests of discriminant validity are also in general support of the construct validity of the measure, a major exception being the ambiguous relationship between age and the measure. The relationship between the Distribution Score of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale and the Transpersonal Scale poses the possibility of an interesting relationship between this style of response and transpersonal self-expansiveness. Finally, the results that the Personal Scale also differentiated the yoga group from the student group and that the yoga teacher's rating correlated with the Personal Scale suggest another interesting possible relationship.

What is particularly noteworthy about the findings, though, is the evidence provided for a stability of pattern in the transpersonal area. This may encourage a meaningful scientific approach to be used in the area of transpersonal research by those who have previously excluded the area from the domain considered accessible to traditional research methodologies. Several particularly promising areas of research with the Self-Expansiveness Level Form include mental health/illness, parapsychology, and religious experience. For example, in the area of mental health, the possible relationship between high levels of self-expansiveness and positive well-being, as well as between low levels of personal identification and neurosis, provides intriguing hypotheses for future exploration. A further hypothesis in this area includes the possible relationship between a low level of personal identification, in conjunction with a high transpersonal identification, and a psychotic pattern. In the area of parapsychology, high levels of transpersonal identification may have some relationship to parapsychological phenomena, consistent with traditional beliefs in participatory magic. In the area of religion, the Self-Expansiveness Level Form might provide a useful tool for documenting antecedent and consequent conditions of religious experiences. Hopefully, the existence of this tool will stimulate research into these and other transpersonal areas of inquiry.

stability of transpersonal patterns

The cartography of self-conception based on the dimensions of space and time thus has broad implications. Hopefully, it will contribute to an increase in our understanding about the most fundamental mystery, the self. James (1973) wrote:

> One great splitting of the whole universe into two halves is made by each of us; and for each of us almost all of the interest attaches to one of the halves; but we all draw the line of division between them in a different place. When I say that we all call

the two halves by the same names, and that those names are "me" and "not-me" respectively, it will at once be seen what I mean. The altogether unique kind of interest which each human mind feels in those parts of creation which it can call "me" or "mine" may be a moral riddle .... Each of us dichotomizes the Kosmos in a different place (p. 166).

To help heal this split and transcend this moral riddle stands as a worthy goal for this and all trans personal psychological exploration.

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