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Metaphysics of The MindMetaphysics of the Mind: The Roots of Jungian Psychoanalysis & Spiritual Perception in Cognitive Neuroscience

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Abstract: *This paper aims to develop and explore the dynamic interrelation between religious theology, psychoanalysis, neurochemistry and psychology, through investigating the extent of the relationship between positive empathetic beliefs, serotonin (5HT), dimethyltryptamine (DMT), empathic emotional states, elevated serotonin levels, and their combined influences relating to the Jungian concept of mystical experiences and enlightened spiritual consciousness, across a cross-section of the major world religions. It examines specifically how the conversion of serotonin into the potent psychoactive compound, DMT, within the pineal gland, the hyperstimulation of multiple areas of the frontal lobes through the DMT release expands the bottleneck filter of perception which then combined with the gland's unique photoreceptive properties, effectively enables and facilitates individual mystical experiences based on prior serotonin saturation of religious experience. It is proposed that psychological experiences of enlightenment or heightened spiritual consciousness, which may be linked to heightened perceptual awareness of all pervasive divine presence of an almighty supreme being have a neurological and psychopharmaceutical basis which is a basis for Carl Jung's theoretical and experiential conceptualisation of spiritual awareness, psychic experiences and religious experience. This multidisciplinary approach to evidence and theory from separate domains of academia incorporates recent findings from neuroscience, psychopharmacology, cognitive psychology, and religious studies to draw together, define and explain the exact underpinning psychophysiological mechanisms are underlying the creation of mystical psychic states of consciousness.*

Keywords: Jungian psychoanalysis, mystical experience, serotonin elevation, dimethyltryptamine release, pineal gland, spiritual psychology, transpersonal psychology, bioenergetic fields, perceptual filtering, bottleneck processing.

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INTRODUCTION

The scientific and theoretical analysis of the dynamic intersections of classical theology and psychoanalysis with neuropsychology has for many scholars long been a fertile hunting ground for exploring exactly how human consciousness and awareness interacts through our cultural conceptual paradigms of the mystical, spiritual and the divine. Central to many of the known religious cultures and mystical traditions is that of subliminal perceptual experience of an underlying and transcendent reality, or supreme energy of being, often facilitated by and experienced as an induced altered state of consciousness.

These profound and spiritual experiences are frequently associated with empathetic beliefs and empathic positive emotional states, which have recently been scientifically linked to elevated levels or an increased baseline of serotonin (5-HT), a known neurotransmitter central to emotional function and positive mood regulation. However more recent research work in the fields of psychopharmacology and neurology suggest that significantly elevated baseline serotonin levels in synaptic terminals may also help play an increasingly crucial role in religious individuals facilitating and triggering their own mystical experiences, particularly through its molecular conversion into the compound DMT within the pineal gland, a now known of process which has profound philosophical, theological and psychotherapeutic implications for our understanding the neurobiological underpinnings and basis of culturally recorded religious experiences.

Theoretical Background

The role serotonin plays in regulating positive mood and emotional well-being in the synaptic neurotransmission of the frontal lobes in psychiatry and neuropsychology is indeed well evidenced and documented. Elevated or pharmacologically augmented levels of serotonin in synaptic transmission zones have often been associated with experiences of enhanced mental wellbeing and positive mood, increased feelings of enjoyment and contentment, and overall positively contoured mental states (Young, 2007). Such enhanced states of emotional consciousness have often been sought after through religious practices and rituals, whether through prayer, psychotherapy meditation, or participation in communal religious activities, all of which have been scientifically shown to elevate baseline serotonin levels (Newberg, 2010). Therefore initially there appears to be a connective association between positive emotional states of awareness and participation in religious cultural practices and spiritual experience, which suggests an underlying neurochemical basis for the collective feelings of

transcendence, euphoria and a felt connection to higher powers so reported by their practitioners across the various known religious traditions, (James, W., 1902).
In the context of most religious scriptures and cultural practices, these enhanced states of emotional elevation often coincide with the spiritual perception or psychological experience of a connectedness to the fundamental underlying nature of the universe and innate closeness to their cultural divine personality of godhood (Jung, C.G., 2019). This divine connection to a higher state of conscious awareness or enlightened perception is also consistent with the academic work of scholars such as Pargament (2011), whose research argues that elevated spiritual consciousness and religious experiences are deeply rooted in human neurological functions and cognitive processes. As frontal lobe serotonin levels gradually increase, they appear to not only contribute to a general sense of positive mood and feelings of well-being but also they suggest prime the brain for more profound mystical experiences.

Critical Analysis

The human pineal gland, frequently referred to in modern esoteric and religious culture as the "third eye" was defined by the philosopher Rene Descartes as the nexus or bridge between the physical world of corporeal existence and the mental world of spiritual existence, (Descartes, R., 1641). It is a small endocrine gland in the brain reminiscent in shape to a pine cone known to produce melatonin and help regulate the sleep-wake circadian rhythm cycle. It also has the role however of the synthesis of DMT out of serotonin, a potent hallucinogenic psychoactive compound (Barker, 2018). Serotonin, the main neurosynaptic transmitter, also serves as the foundational chemical precursor to DMT synthesis in the pineal gland, where it undergoes an enzymatic molecular conversion from one chemical to another, (Strassman, 2001). This chemical synthesis has a particularly intriguing function and role in the psychological context of religious and spiritual experiences, as DMT is well known to induce profound alterations in perceptual cognition and experiences of self consciousness, including pronounced visual and auditory sensory hallucinations along with a deep sense of connectedness with the fundamental nature of reality or a divine spiritual or religious being (Gallimore, 2013).

The higher degree of DMT's synaptic binding affinity or strength of the bonding for serotonin receptors in the frontal lobes, particularly the 5-HT2A receptor, appears to have significantly increased synaptic activation potential when compared to that of the serotonin neurotransmitter, with a binding efficacy of synaptic stimulation estimated to be up to eight times greater, (Nichols, 2016). This heightened state of synaptic receptor activity could therefore easily explain the apparent intensity and clarity of spiritual and mystical experiences that are reported by those who experienced DMT-induced states

of consciousness, whether through endogenous pineal gland DMT production or external ayahuasca preparation ingestion.

The pineal gland is unique among brain areas and endocrine hormone exuding glandular systems, for within its structures are cells receptive to wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation, whose wavelength is above and below the frequencies of photonic light, similar to those found in the retina of the eye, (Klein et al., 2006). The photoreceptivity of this sensory organ in having this unique capacity suggests that the pineal gland is not merely a passive organ secreting wake and sleep inducing hormones, but may actually be playing an active role in modulating and inducing spiritual states of enlightened consciousness in response to the serotonin saturation of a religious experience reporting experiences of spiritual light, aura radiance or a halo of energy.

During transcendent, spiritual, shamanic or mystical experiences, particularly those involving the ingestion of DMT, there is evidence to support the claim the pineal gland takes a more active role in our psychology, due to its photoreceptive properties being processed in an expanded bottleneck of perception, (Scalf, P. E., Torralbo, A., Tapia, E., & Beck, D. M., 2013; Lavie, N. 1995). The gland's reactive sensitivity to fluctuations of electromagnetic fields and radiation, particularly in the ranges commonly associated with human bioelectric activity, may explain the vivid descriptions given in common reports of people seeing auras and halos of light or perceiving an "energy field" surrounding or emanating from individuals during spiritual and mystical states, (Roney-Dougal, 2010). The accounts of this electromagnetic aura phenomenon could be rationalised as being the brain's attempt to interpret extra sensory perceptions of the electromagnetic aura, enhanced through the heightened sensory processing capacities associated with the effects of DMT upon serotonin receptors.

The prefrontal cortex area of the brain, often associated through neuroimaging techniques with higher-order cognitive processing, has also been implicated in the formation of a sensory processing bottleneck that filters sensory stimuli into perceptual representations, (Jeon, H.A., 2014; Jensen & Mazaheri, 2010). Under non-experimental environments or normal conditions, the role serotonin plays modulates these cognitive bottlenecks of perceptual sensory metal representation, ensuring through the lobes processing that only important or relevant synaptic data in the dynamic unconscious actually reaches our conscious awareness, (Frey-Rohn, L., 2001; Jung, C.G., 2014; Hauke, C., 2012). However, it can be argued that within states of heightened serotonin elevated through religious rituals, when the excess serotonin baseline allows a conversion rate into DMT is at its apex, these sensory processing perceptual bottlenecks may be bypassed through ineffective filtering or possibly expanded through

hyperexcitation into allowing an increased perceptual load and range of sensation to be processed by serotonin activated synapses, (Robbins, S.E., Logan, D.R., 2022).

This cognitive expansion of the sensory limen of perceptual processing capacities of the frontal and prefrontal cortex could arguably enable engagement with a much subtler degree of sensory stimuli, such as the detection of and then perception through one's human electromagnetic aura, typically lying outside of the range of our standard spectrum of cognitive sensory abilities, (Janaway, C., 2010; Persinger, 2003). The unique ability the pineal gland has to detect subliminal wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum and transmute these electromagnetic signals into perceptual data for the frontal lobes to process and represent to our conscious mind, specifically under the psychotropic influence of DMT, forms a formidable argument for consistent cross-cultural accounts of bio-energetic field and aura perception occurring during the psychotherapeutic relationship, spiritually enlightened states of consciousness and mystical experiences, (Marlo, H., & Kline, J. S., 1998).

DISCUSSION

The scientific crossover and philosophical convergence of theology, psychology, psychotherapy and neuroscience provides a dynamic matrix for schematising a conceptual paradigm of religion, spirituality and mystical experiences. As states of positive emotional euphoria and elation are commonly associated with engagement in religious practices which are closely linked to increased serotonin levels, which through conversion into DMT inside the photoreceptive pineal gland, may account for the neurochemical elevations of the psychoactive which are triggered when profound alterations to normal consciousness and cognition associated with psychic perception and spiritual or religious phenomena occur. These altered states of consciousness, typified by expansion to our cognitive capacities and a heightened degree of sensory perception, aligns with the characteristic descriptions of spiritual phenomena, psychic perception and mystical experiences to be found in the religious scriptures of the major world religious movements and personal accounts reported by mystics and spiritualists across all cultures.

Carl Jung's exploration of the varieties of diverse symbolic language across a diverse range of reported mystical experiences of a broad cross-section of vastly different cultures, can be seen as the emergence of an early psychological framework for understanding these phenomena under a psychological scientific lens, (Valadas P.D. and Schäfer, L., 2013). Carl Jung identified that belief in a spiritual faith and the incorporation of mystical experiences into the regimen of our daily lives are an essential

component of the development of the human psyche, inducing forever deeper levels of self-understanding and layers of spiritual growth (Jung, 1938). The exact neurochemical and psychological mechanisms of action outlined in this theoretical research paper may provide a biological causation for Carl Jung's psychoanalytic theories, suggesting that the heightened states of expanded awareness associated with shamanic journeys, psychic perception, spiritual awareness and mystical experiences described in his work may in fact be rooted in psychopharmacological and neurophysiological processes.

CONCLUSION:

This theory constructing research paper has now detailed the exact psychophysiological mechanisms of action which underpin the reported dynamics of religious practice, spiritual awareness, psychic perceptions and mystical experiences across the major world religions and faiths, aligning together preceding positive emotional states of mind, elevated serotonin levels, DMT, and the philosophical foundations of the pineal gland's elusive and unique spiritual properties. The findings of this research suggest that the perceptual experiences of a supreme personality of godhood, psychic energies, halos of light and the human electromagnetic aura, common themes in the scriptures of most religious cultures and traditions, may in fact be deeply rooted in normal human neurobiological functions.

The expanded cognitive and sensory bottleneck processing capacities of the frontal and prefrontal cortex associated with DMT-induced states of neuronal synaptic activation provides scholars a novel and plausible explanation for extrasensory perceptions of the divine and the human bioelectric aura experienced during psychic, spiritual and mystical experiences. This new interdisciplinary approach not only bridges the gap between theology, philosophy, psychotherapy and psychology but also offers a unique and compelling model for Jungian psychoanalysis with the intention of developing our conceptual schema and theoretical paradigm of understanding with the neurological correlate for spiritual awareness.

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