



AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ

The content of complex psychedelic experiences resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine

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STEPHEN KAGAN* 

Independent Scholar, 2337 French Road North, Sooke, BC V9Z 0M5, Canada

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ORIGINAL RESEARCH
PAPER



ABSTRACT

Aim: This study examines narratives describing complex psychedelic experiences after smoking N,N-dimethyltryptamine. *Methods:* The narrative accounts examined here were gathered from a variety of online sites and analyzed in order to discover themes, categories and patterns in the phenomenon of the resulting psychedelic experiences. *Results:* Subjects reported seeing complex and unusual visual and synesthetic phenomena, leaving this world and entering into extraordinary places, encounters with a variety of strange entities, interactions with unusual objects and a wide variety of powerful feelings. The general categories of Places, Objects, Entities and Feelings were found in the phenomena experienced by people who smoked N,N-Dimethyltryptamine. These provided a framework within which more detailed subcategories were found and the range of most frequent to least frequent experiences were identified. *Discussion:* While DMT experiences are commonly described by people smoking N,N-dimethyltryptamine as indescribable, unique to everyone and taking place in a single domain called Hyperspace or the Hyperdimension, this research found distinct subcategories of frequently visited Places as well as frequently encountered Entities, Objects and Feelings. From these a more comprehensive understanding can be developed of the unusual and profound experiences resulting from inhalation of N,N-Dimethyltryptamine.

KEYWORDS

N,N-Dimethyltryptamine, survey, subjective experiences

INTRODUCTION

Smoking N,N-dimethyltryptamine produces profound, deeply meaningful, personally transformative psychedelic experiences that, at first examination, are extraordinary in variety and complexity. People who smoke DMT, and can recall their experiences in detail, frequently describe seeing vivid and detailed geometric structures, experienced synesthesia, visions of alternate worlds, encounters with strange autonomous entities and divine beings, interactions with complex technological objects, profound emotional and mystical experiences, and being transported to unusual and complex hyperdimensional places. Along with physiological and neurological research, the main area of phenomenological research with DMT has so far been focused on cataloging and analyzing the frequency of encounters with various kinds of entities (Davis et al., 2020).

While it is important for us to gain a more detailed understanding of the electrical activity of the brain during DMT experiences (Timmermann et al., 2019) as well as dosage levels that correspond to basic subjective effects of consciousness (Strassman & Qualls, 1994), a more extensive understanding of the diverse content of those experiences has immense psychological and spiritual value through both personal and transpersonal experiences and insight. Initial investigations in the phenomenology of DMT experiences are helpful, however, they are too limited and do not clearly discern the variety and range of these profound, complex and varied experiences.

*Corresponding author.
E-mail: ste4en@gmail.com

 AKJournals

Gaining a more comprehensive understanding of DMT experiences and psychedelic experiences in general will become increasingly valuable as a result of the growing movements for decriminalization and legalization that will no doubt lead to increased personal exploration as well as use for performance enhancement, creativity and learning to navigate these experiences for therapeutic growth.

METHODOLOGY

This study examined 100 DMT reports from online resources including Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/>), Erowid (<https://www.erowid.org/experiences/>), 340 DMT Trip Reports (https://www.serendipity.li/dmt/340_dmt_trip_reports.htm), DMT World (<https://dmtworld.net>), and DMT-Nexus (<https://www.dmt-nexus.me/>). The reports included in this study were written or recorded and offered publicly without participation in any formal research studies. And so the selected reports included people recounting their experiences with no prompting from researchers or interviewers. Videos from Youtube were found through searching for DMT Trip Reports and DMT Breakthroughs. These were transcribed to Google Docs as spoken or their transcriptions were copied from Youtube's built-in voice to text transcription application into Google Docs so the natural language and original descriptions of the people providing the reports was preserved. Written reports from the other sites were copied into Google Docs for review and analysis.

After transcription and copying, the reports were reviewed and analyzed through content analysis and an iterative process. Each report was assigned a unique number and row in a spreadsheet within Google Sheets. The cells in each row were used for the titles of each DMT report, as well as keywords for the structural elements and processes described by subjects. Frequently used keywords were found that described the significant content such as Tunnels, Hallways and Rivers. The elements that served common purposes and were functional synonyms were brought together in new sheets resulting in general categories such as Places and the subcategories of Thresholds, Passageways and Environments. Columns were then made for each subcategory on the sheet for Environments that included Cosmos and Space, Rooms, Domes, Caves, Cities, Jungles, Pyramids, Temples and so on. The reports that had an occurrence of each subcategory were noted numerically, the totals of each column were summed and the results were organized from most frequent to least frequent. The data were exported to Excel and results were converted into Tree Map charts for each category. The size of each Tree Map's subcategory rectangle is proportional to the frequency of associated keywords. Subcategories that had less than 5 occurrences were not included in the charts.

The ability for people to describe their own profound psychedelic experiences varied dramatically. This study required reading and listening to over 1,500 reports of DMT experiences and in the majority of reports found online, people said they could not possibly describe their experiences, that they were overwhelmed or given valuable

knowledge either about their own lives or the nature of existence. This study focuses on examining the reports of people who had more complex and varied experiences of having seen or entered alternate worlds and had encounters with strange entities or objects. The reports that were selected were of more detailed and complex encounters and the people providing the reports had good recall of their experiences and an ability to describe more specific details without interpretation.

Characteristics of participants

The people in the video reports varied in age, gender and appeared to vary in cultural and ethnic ancestry. The reports were all given in English and the majority of written reports included no personal identification or characteristics of the subjects such as age, gender, ethnic identification, education level or religious affiliation and so none of those factors were included in this study.

RESULTS

The five main categories found in the DMT experiences were Places, Objects, Entities, Feelings and Attributes. In order to gain a more detailed understanding of DMT phenomenology these categories are broken down into further subcategories that reveal the complexity and consistency of the content of those experiences. The percentages listed and charted below describe the number of people out of 100 who reported experiences in each category. They do not describe the number of times these experiences occurred since in some reports multiple Places, Objects, Entities, Feelings and Attributes were encountered during a single psychedelic trip or journey.

The general narrative structure of the DMT reports most often consisted of an introduction where each person described the preparation and setting, followed by a description of their experiences and sometimes ending with a reflection of what they learned and how the experiences changed their life or their view of their place within the universe.

Visually powerful psychedelic experiences were the most common form of experience reported with inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine. The results were in general agreement with previous phenomenological research and also challenges the idea that these experiences can be described as hallucinations (Cott & Rock, 2008). In the majority of reports, people who encountered complex visual and synaesthetic phenomena and had the experience of entering alternate realities did not describe their experiences as being manifestations of their own minds and frequently described what they encountered as being autonomous of themselves and independent of their influence.

Some people also described the content of their experiences as being more real than real. This often meant that what they experienced was more vibrant, complex, varied or detailed than what they normally experienced in their daily lives. In most cases the ability to perceive their normal



surrounding reality did not remain intact and if it did, then the content and structure of their DMT experiences were superimposed upon and within the external world. Visual-auditory synesthesia was most commonly reported along with telepathic communication. Tactile and olfactory experiences were rare. The experiences reported were not only visually complex but mysterious but described as rich in meaning and potential. Each Category or Subcategory is presented with a chart that shows the number of people whose reports where those kinds of phenomena were encountered (Figs 1-10).

Places

In the reports, people frequently described experiences of leaving consensus reality and a complete submersion within other worlds, landscapes, alternate realities or other realms that are here listed within the category of Places. People reported that while their surroundings were dramatically different and often did not follow their normal experiences of color, shape, structure, space and time, their self-awareness and sense of self were clear and unaltered. Sometimes people would view or enter into these Places as explorers

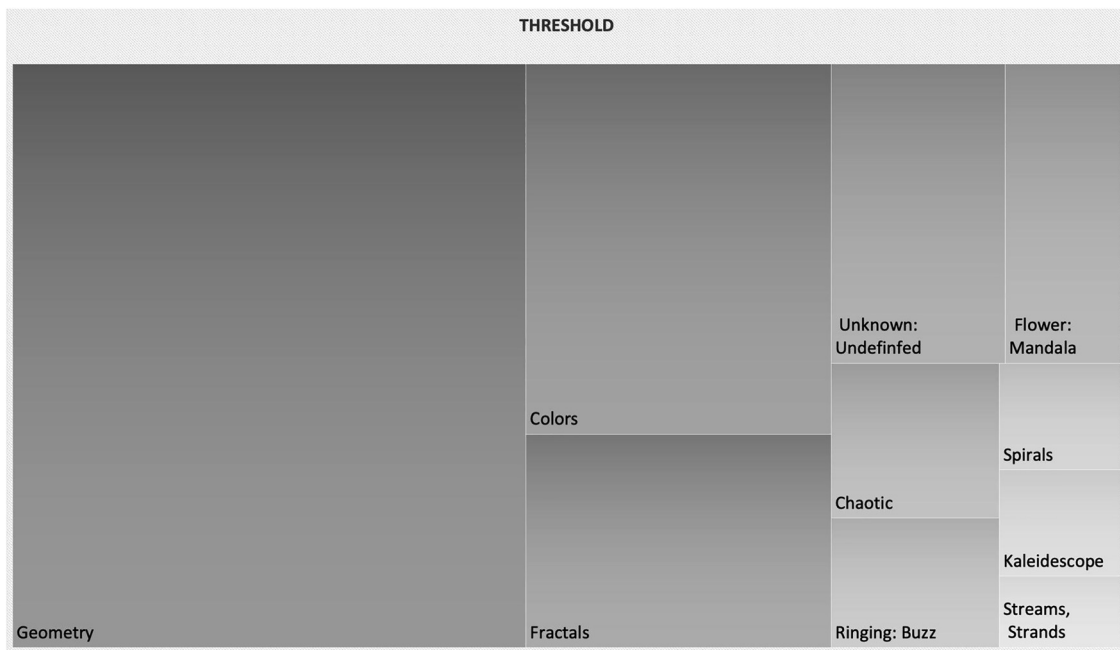


Fig. 1. Threshold experiences resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine

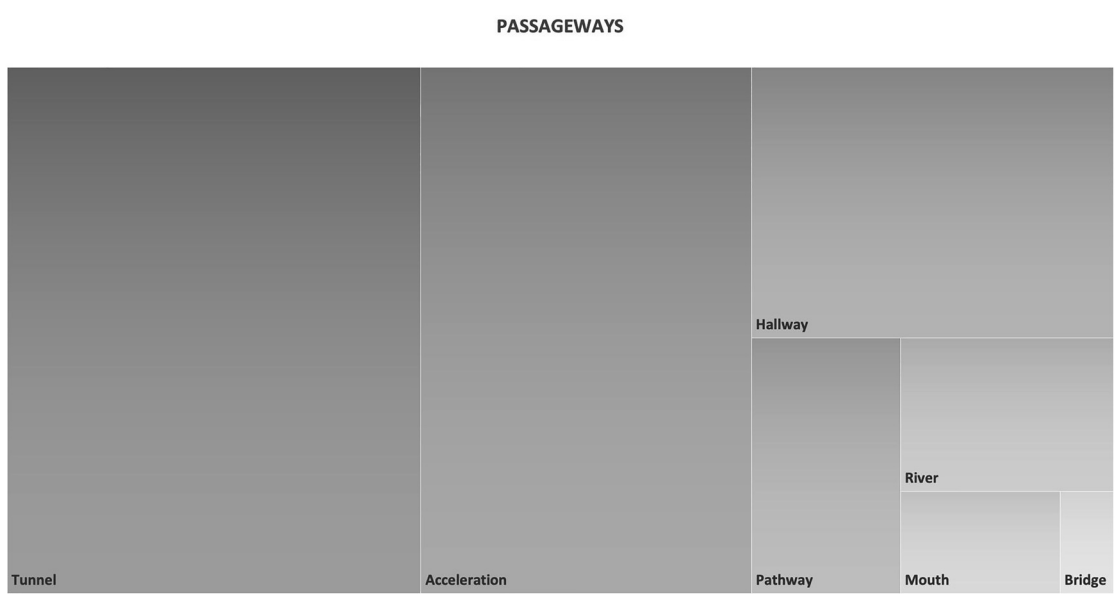


Fig. 2. Passageway experiences resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine



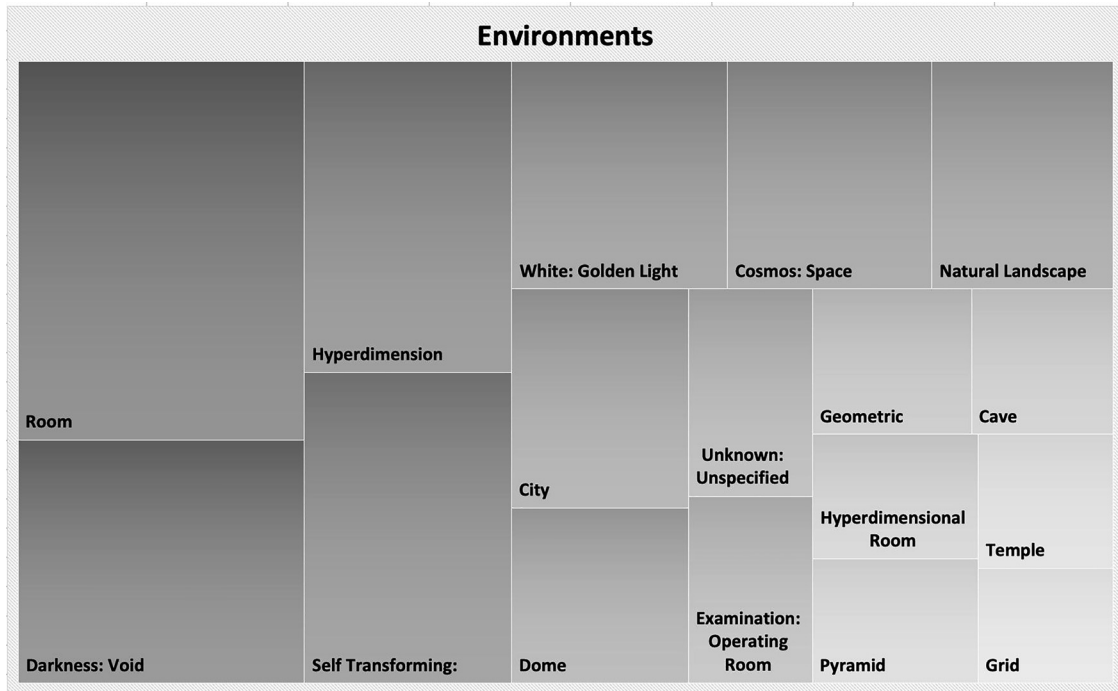


Fig. 3. Environment experiences resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine

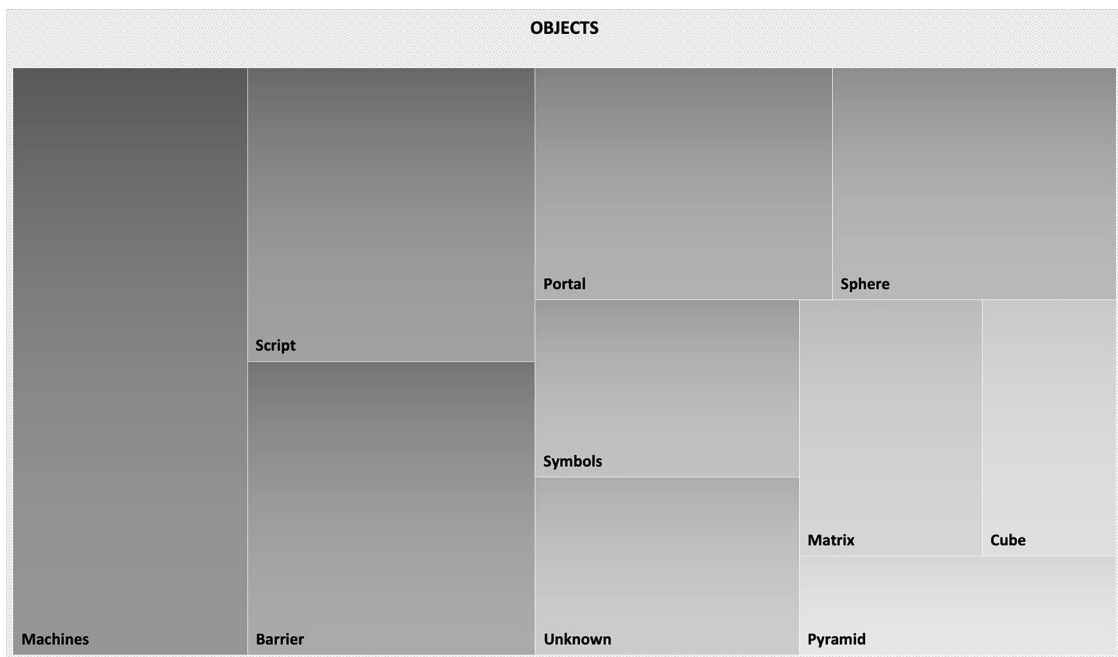


Fig. 4. Objects encountered resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine

and participants, other times as observers passing through without interaction since they were peripheral or insignificant to what was happening there.

The top level category of people’s experience of Places was broken down into the subcategories of Thresholds, Passageways and Environments. These usually correspond with different stages of the trip or journey but there were occasions when people reported travelling through different

Passageways and entering different Environments in a single trip.

Threshold. During the onset of the DMT trip 73% of people described encountering a Threshold before entering different Places. This most often consisted of observing complex visual phenomena (70%) and a minority reported auditory experiences like Buzzing and Ringing (5%). The



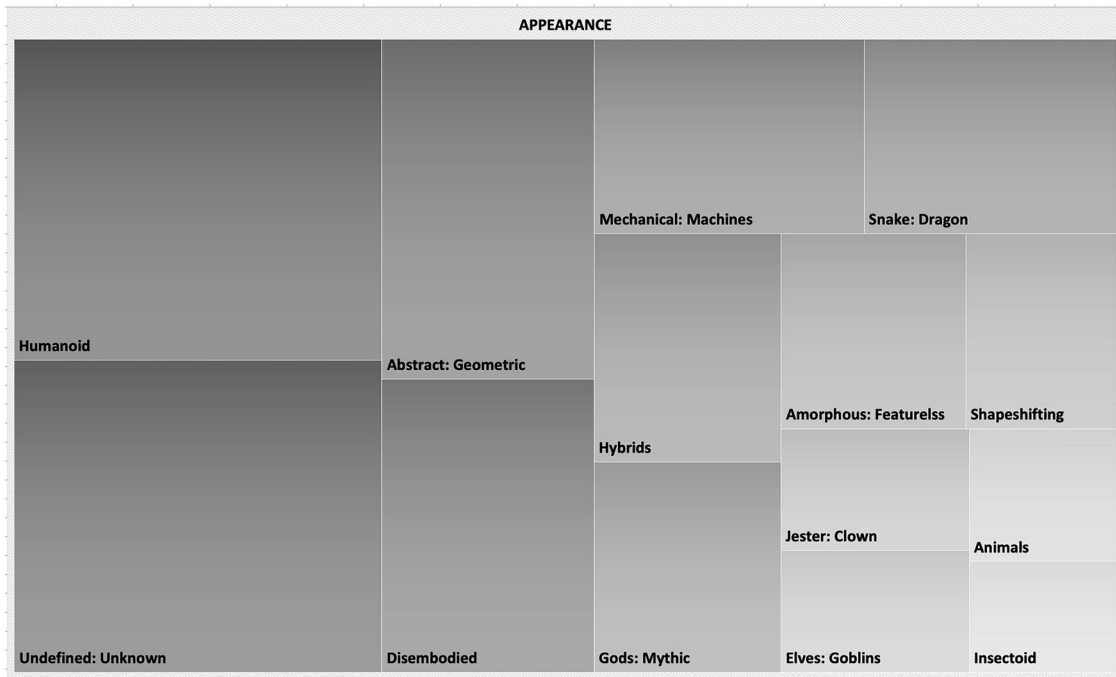


Fig. 5. Appearance of Entities encountered resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine

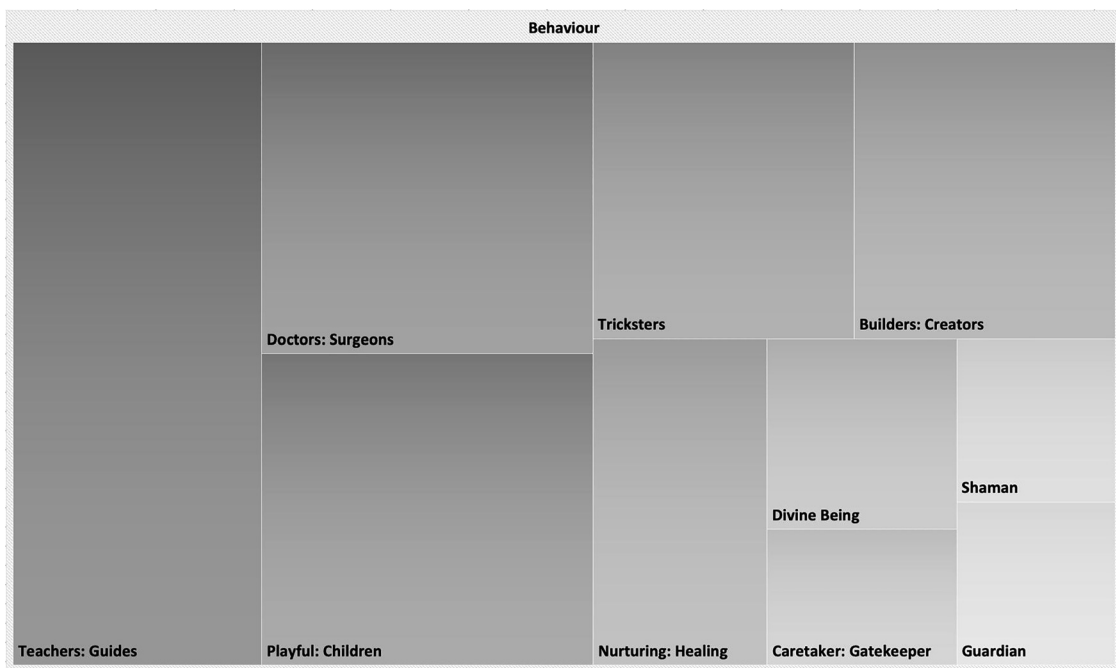


Fig. 6. Behavior of Entities encountered resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine

majority described seeing Geometric Structures (53%) while others reported Colors (26%), Fractals (15%), something Unknown or Undefined (12%), Flower and Mandala shapes (8%), Chaos (6%), Spirals (3%), Kaleidoscopic patterns (3%) and Streams or Strands (2%). It is possible that some of these subcategories are the same experience but described in different ways. Fractals for example can also be described as Geometric Structures, Chaos, Spirals and Colors.

The purpose of these phenomena was always unknown and at times were described as evoking a feeling of awe and filled with potential. And frequently these phenomena were not static but described as dynamic.

Geometry. The most common Threshold experiences were various forms of visual Geometry. Often they were complex and dynamic and the longer they were observed,



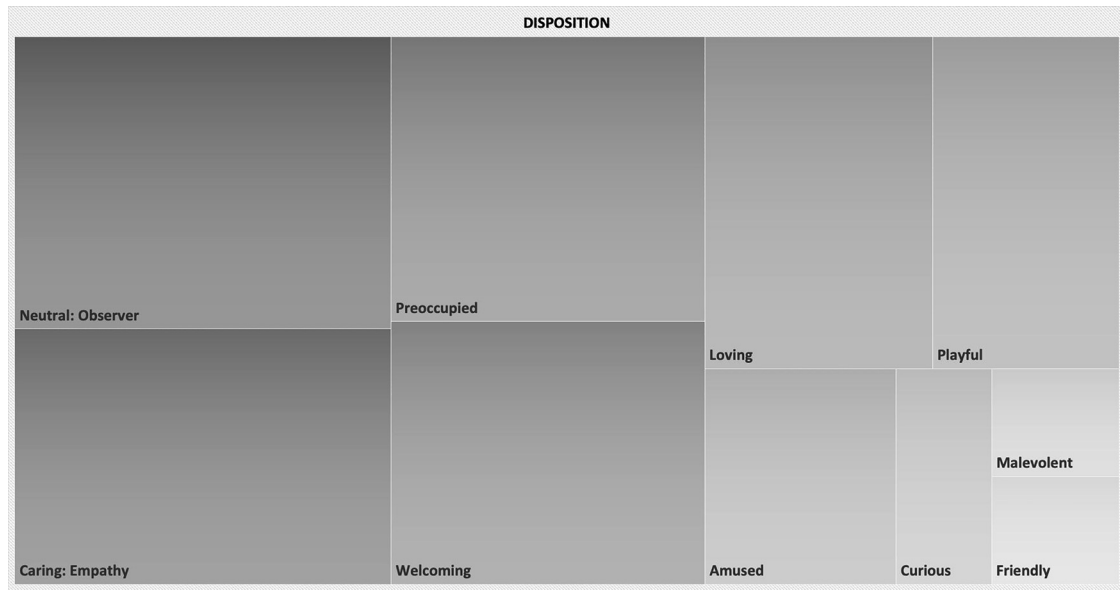


Fig. 7. Disposition of Entities encountered resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine

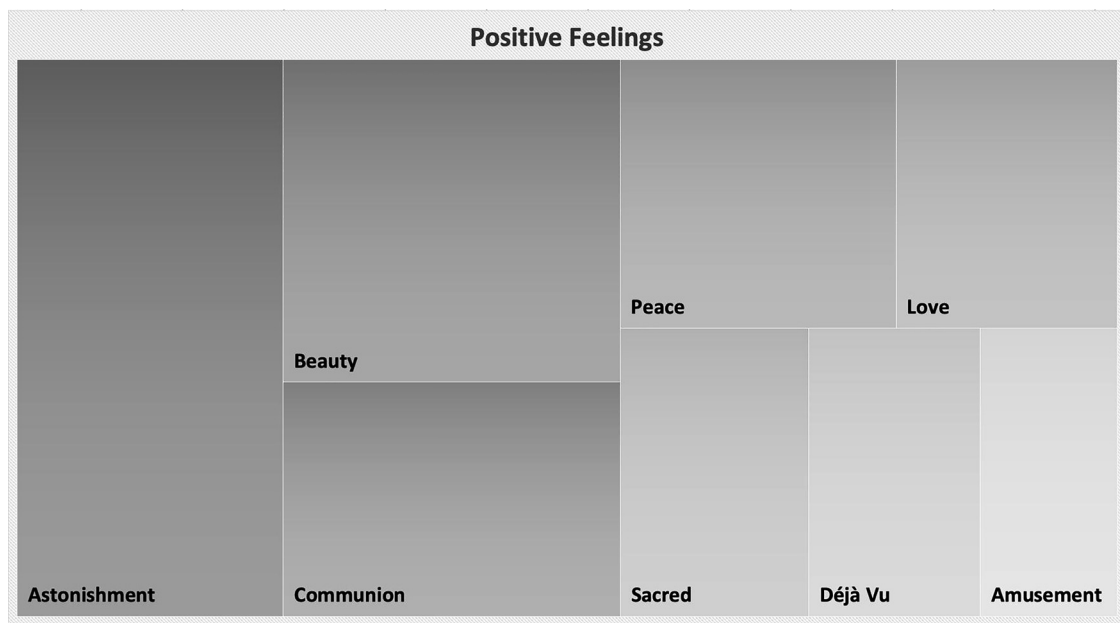


Fig. 8. Positive Feelings encountered resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine

the more they changed and grew in complexity. They were usually autonomous, occasionally became personified, and frequently disappeared or changed into something else. Sometimes they became membranes between Places or gateways to someplace else. The Geometry appeared as grids, webs, blocks, sacred geometry, fractals, kaleidoscopic as well as flower and mandala patterns.

Passageways. Passageways of different kinds were frequently encountered after the Threshold experiences. Some were experienced as Tunnels, Vortices or Wormholes (40%), Acceleration or great Speed (32%), Hallways (18%), Pathways (7%), Rivers (6%), Mouths (3%) and Bridges (1%).

Tunnels. Tunnels were the most common means of travel from the Threshold into various Environments and between different Environments. Sometimes they were filled with colors, fractals, honeycomb patterns or eyes and sometimes they were described as Wormholes or Vortexes. On rare occasions the Tunnel became an Environment that transformed its surface designs and a place where Entities and Objects appeared. In the majority of time Tunnels were a means of transport to move rapidly from one place to another.

Environments. Submersion in various environments was notable and sometimes people entered several environments in one trip. The types of environments encountered were



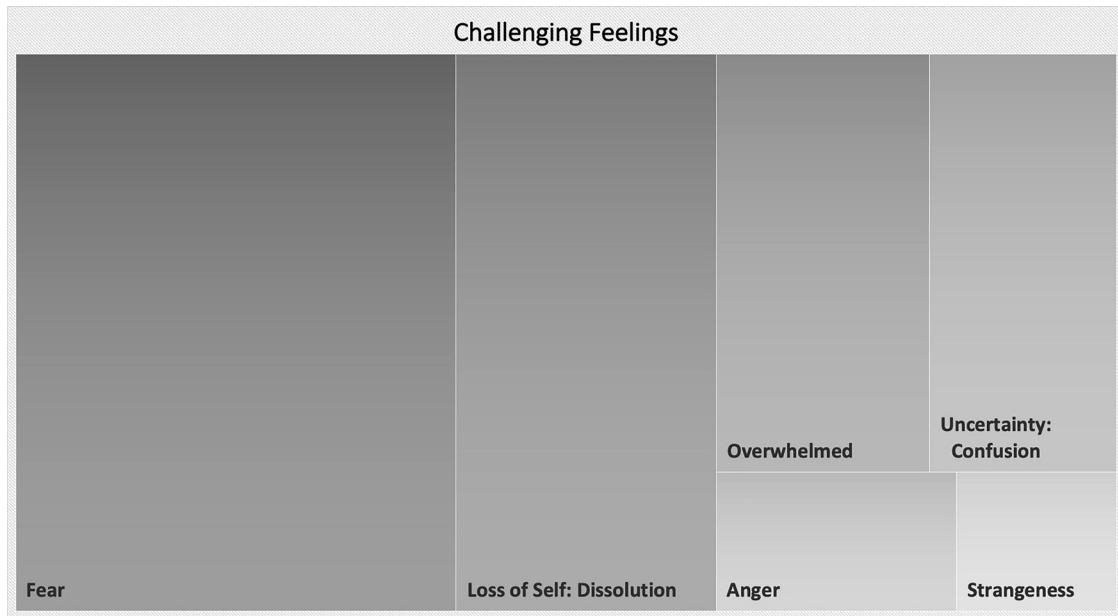


Fig. 9. Challenging Feelings encountered resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine

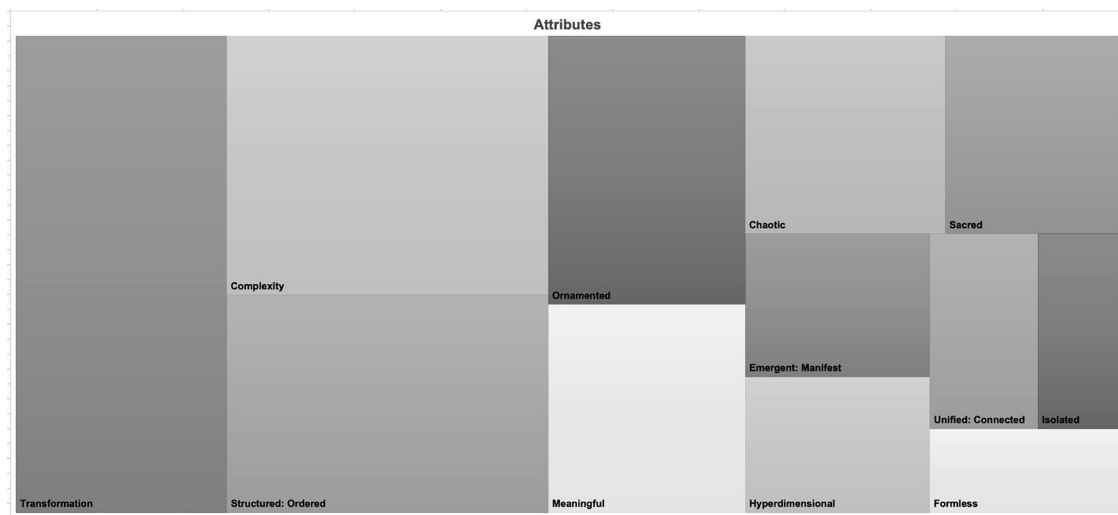


Fig. 10. Attributes of Entities, Objects and Places encountered resulting from inhalation of N,N-dimethyltryptamine

Rooms (42%), Darkness or Void (27%), Hyperdimensional (25%), places that were Self Transforming (25%), White or Golden Light (19%), the Cosmos or Space (18%), Natural Landscapes (16%), Cities (15%), Domes (12%), Unknown or Undefined (10%), Examination or Operating Rooms (9%), Geometric places (9%) and Caves (8%).

Hyperdimension. The Hyperdimension was one of the most common, complex and mysterious Environments encountered on DMT. It is possible that many of the Unknown or Undefined places people visited were also hyperdimensional and by their nature, these places are frequently indescribable. Some of the characteristics of these places were surfaces folding and becoming gateways to other places, seeing things from many angles, Entities and Objects emerging out of flat surfaces,

objects folding in seemingly impossible ways or peeling outwards and inwards at the same time.

Objects

Within the different Places visited there were sometimes a wide variety of Objects reported. In some cases these Objects were devices but not all were reported as things constructed or something to interact with. And even though many appeared as things that could have been built, most often there was no sign of those who built them. This is especially for the case of Machines (44%). Scripts and Languages (27%). These appeared spontaneously in various Places, sometimes on Objects as decoration or serving an unknown purpose and with an unknown meaning. People



also reported encountering Symbols (15%) and it was difficult to determine if these were different from Scripts and Languages. Combined they would be 42%, almost as much as encounters with Machines. People also encountered Barriers and Membranes (27%) sometimes as obstacles that could not be passed and other times they passed through them forcefully and sometimes gently. Likewise Doors, Portals and Gates (22%) were entrances that the people passed through on their way to other Places or less often on returning to their body and opening their eyes. Distinct Objects appeared in various Environments like Spheres (21%), Unknown (15%), a Matrix, Cage or Grid (15%), Cubes (11%) and Pyramids (10%).

Machines. Machines or Mechanisms are constructed or made devices that come in various shapes and sizes. They are Objects that are sometimes familiar in function but strange in shape with unique decorative elements and other times strange objects of unknown purpose. Some are described as pyramids, spaceships, vehicles, toys, tablets, portals, control panels, organic machines, spheres and cubes.

Entities

Within the various Places people visited they frequently encountered a different kinds of beings, presences, creatures that are here itemized under the category of Entities. While previous studies and discussions focused on the appearance of Entities, here I've expanded the examination to include Appearance, Behaviour and Dispositions. This is important because sometimes an Entities that shared an appearance displayed different behaviours or dispositions. For example, an Entity that appeared as Clown-like acted as a Trickster but alternatively others acted as a Guide or Doctor. Their Disposition also varied from being Malicious, Playful to Friendly, Nurturing and Encouraging.

Appearance. Humanoids were one of the most commonly experienced entities in reports (36%) along with Undefined or Unknown entities (36%). These were followed by Abstract Geometric (22%), Disembodied (19%), Living Machines (16%), Snakes and Dragons (15%), Hybrids (13%) of human animal combinations or different kinds of animals mixed together, Gods and other Mythical Beings (12%), Amorphous or Featureless entities (11%), Shapeshifting entities (9%), Jesters or Clowns (7%), Elves and Goblins (7%), Animals (6%) and Insectoids (5%).

Humanoids. Humanoids were one of the most common forms of Appearance of entities encountered and they took on various shapes and sizes such as small elves, normal humans and immense god-like beings. Sometimes they appear as aliens, family members, have strange shaped bodies or heads, limbs with extra joints or that separate in unusual ways. Their clothing varied from spacesuits to tribal to that of ancient Egyptians or Greeks and their skin varied in color, sometimes blue, red or golden. Their language was usually telepathic or easily understood.

Behavior. The Behavior or Roles that entities took on during encounters were not as numerous as their Appearances and several types dominated. Teachers or Guides were the largest group (30%), followed by Doctors and Surgeons (20%), Playful or Children (20%), Tricksters (15%), Builders and Creators (15%), Nurturing and Healing (11%), Divine Beings (7%), Caretakers and Gatekeepers (5%), Shamans (5%), Guardians (5%).

Teachers. Teachers and Guides are the most common Behavior entities displayed, although they come in many different Appearances. Some Teachers and Guides looked like jesters, fractal like, geometric shapes, angels, humanoids with strange heads, had flowing bodies or clothes and some shape-shifted through different forms. What these Teachers and Guides do is to bring people to different places, give gifts, perform ceremonies, show the visitors symbols and equations, give unusual objects, teach secrets and share profound knowledge.

Disposition. The Dispositions or attitudes and demeanors of Entities encountered were also varied (Michael, P. 2019). While there was no large majority of reported dispositions there were Neutral Observers (14%), Caring (14%) Preoccupied (13%), Welcoming (12%), Loving (11%), Playful (9%), Amused (6%), Curious (3%), Malevolent (2%) and Friendly (2%).

Having unique Dispositions and their own agendas was largely what made entity encounters unique and powerful. Some reports were of encountering different kinds of entities with different Dispositions in different places or in different stages of the trip. In a few encounters, Entities changed their Disposition toward the person either when challenged or when the person was overwhelmed.

Feelings

Feelings are the subjective and affective responses people had to the Places, Entities and Objects encountered during the journey. There were both Positive and Challenging feelings that each person encountered and these were usually very powerful during DMT induced experiences. Sometimes the Feelings are associated with or triggered by specific Objects, Entities or Environments. They are usually unpredictable and uncontrollable.

Positive Feelings. The most frequent Positive Feeling encountered by people was Astonishment (32%) followed by Beauty (22%). Other Feelings encountered were Communion (16%), Peace (15%), Love (12%), Sacred (11%), Deja Vu (10%), Amusement (8%).

Astonishment. It is common for people encountering unusual Entities, Objects and Places to feel overwhelmed or filled with Awe and Astonishment. Sometimes the feeling is transferred from within the trip back into the experience of the normal world. Sometimes the feeling of awe and astonishment was independent of any Objects, Places and Entities but more often were triggered by encountering



highly complex and changing Objects, unusual colors and the experience of leaving the mundane world and entering into strange Environments.

Challenging Feelings. The most frequent Challenging Feeling encountered by people was Fear (22%) followed by Loss of Self or Dissolution (13%). Some people felt Overwhelmed (8%), Uncertainty and Confusion (7%), Anger (3%), Strangeness or Eeriness (2%).

Fear. Sometimes Fear was felt because the person felt out of place, because they felt like they were dying, that something or someone was controlling them, that they were trapped and could not return to the normal mundane world, their sense of self dissolved, they were falling apart or because they encountered strange Entities. In some cases Fear and Astonishment were felt at the same time or together in the same trip. Frequently fear gave way to other feelings such as peace, spiritual unity, comfort, ecstasy, safety, awe.

Attributes

When we examine the various reports we discover that Entities, Objects and Places share a unique set of modifiers or attributes. Sometimes within a single trip or journey Entities, Places or Objects share the same attributes. The most frequently experienced Attribute was Transformation appearing in 76% of reports. This was followed by Complexity (63%), Structured (53%), Ornamented (40%), Meaningful (31%), Chaotic (30%), Sacred (26%), Emergent (20%), Hyperdimensional (19%), Unified (16%), Isolated (12%), Formless (12%), Two Dimensional (7%), Intelligent (6%), Static (5%), Mysterious (4%), Profane (4%), Infinite (3%) and Timeless (2%).

Transformation. Transformation affected existing things so that they were morphed, fractured, changed or changed shape. The most common forms of transformation were to become split, fractured or divided and reorganized. Objects like blocks and Environments were broken down or dismantled and structurally re-arranged. Entities changed shape, melted in amorphous forms, were built up from Objects and became alive. Patterns on walls changed, evolved and moved. Walls folded inward into new dimensions. People even found themselves taken apart and put back together or dissolved into disembodied states.

DISCUSSION

The original goal of this research was to examine the progressions of psychedelic experiences induced by smoking N,N-dimethyltryptamine and to see if significant relationships between different worlds subjectively visited and between entities and worlds could be found. In the process of this investigation though, I discovered that neither of these goals could be achieved without a clear identification of the phenomenological content of these experiences. And so this

study then became an investigation into the variety and range of the content of those profound psychedelic experiences.

On the different sites where people have posted reports of their extraordinary experiences resulting from smoking N,N-dimethyltryptamine, the Environments observed and subjectively entered into are commonly called Hyperspace. A prime example of this is in the DMTNexus website with their dictionary of terms called the [Hyperspace Lexicon](#). The name Hyperspace is used as a shorthand or simplified label for a seemingly unfathomable multiverse of worlds. In this study I have shown that while the Places experienced are diverse, a limited set of the most frequently and least encountered Places can be found. And these Places can be discerned with greater detail within the categories of Thresholds, Passageways and Environments. While various Objects have been encountered in these Places, some Objects were observed and interacted with in significantly higher frequency than others.

Likewise, while some of the most common labels for Entities were Machine Elves, Jesters and Aliens, they were not the most frequent. This was in agreement with previous research (Lyke, J. 2019) and when we examine Entity encounters through this study, we can now begin to recognize with greater clarity the differences of Entities from their Appearances, Dispositions and Behaviours. With this in mind, I now can move forward with the next study, examining if there are any consistent relationships between specific Entities, Objects and Places. Do certain types of Entities more frequently inhabit certain Places or interact? Are some Places more consistently connected with other Places? Do certain Objects more frequently appear in certain Places? Do certain Entities appear more frequently with certain Objects?

Further research can also be done to examine the experiences of Deja Vu, hyperdimensionality, the Sacred and Eternity in DMT experiences. With the current data we can also now revise the stages of a psychedelic journey or trip by arranging the basic elements in a simple progression: Threshold, Passageways, Submersion in Environments, Encounters with an Entity or Object, Return and Integration. From the current data it appears that there may be other progressions, such as subjects entering into Environments without moving through Passageways or having encounters with Entities without entering into Environments.

With the categories and content found here, we can now build a mature survey for gathering more comprehensive data and we may be able to develop better models of the psychedelic experience in general that can help therapists and clients as well as guides and explorers. This may especially be useful as there could be similarities between DMT and high dose Psilocybin experiences. In numerous reports subjects claimed that their DMT experiences were some of the most profound and transformative experiences of their lives. Further investigation of this is certainly warranted and if this is true, because DMT is faster acting it may be more manageable as a clinical treatment than psilocybin.

Data integrity and availability, ethics: The benefit of using reports already published is that there is no risk of



influencing the accounts or content of people's experiences. On the other hand, although many of the reports included in this study show detailed recall of such extraordinary and strange experiences, the reliability of people's eye witness accounts in public might be called into question. This may be balanced out by the profundity and intensity of these experiences that have been reported as some of the most memorable events in their lives. The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the author upon request.

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Conflict of interest: There are no interests to disclose.

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