CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY

Trust me...there is order here,
very faint, very human.
Michael Ondaatje

14. THE RITES OF PASSAGE MODEL

This model predicts that the following conditions must apply for eastern spiritual affiliation to occur:

1. Unconventional people

2. who have recently endured disruptive and aversive life events, especially those concerning social-exits,

3. which they appraise as having had intense and aversive psychological impact,

4. endured in the absence of adequate acquaintances and friends,

5. for those who have a history (subjectively viewed) of sub-optimal experience of their parents, in childhood and adolescence,
6. and diminished wellbeing and increased distress in the recent past,
7. who have a tendency to oppose traditional conceptions of authority
8. and are somewhat impulsive and unconstrained,
9. who have an absorptive, mystical perceptual style
10. and are generally spiritually intense
11. with an orientation towards eastern conceptions of the sacred

will be drawn towards NRMs of an eastern nature.

15. DESIGN

The study is a comparative, prospective study contacting three of the five experimental groups prior to movement membership. Affiliates to eastern New Religious Movements are the focus of the study, and they are viewed as, in part, self-help agencies, in the comparative context of a secular self-help agency, a therapy group, and those who have not contacted such agencies (the student control group, and the general population control group). A western NRM was included, to permit exploratory consideration of the differences in recent life circumstances, and the recent psychological response to them, personality, perceptual style and beliefs. Since prospective contact for this group was not possible, it permits consideration of the effect of membership in a movement which acquires its new religious status via doctrinal innovation rather than importation from another culture. This group does not unproblematically permit the illumination of differences between members and affiliates of NRMs, as the spiritual orientation of the group (and hence the origin of its
"deviant" status, and perhaps the degree of its deviance) also varies as well as the status difference between affiliates and members. Since part of the new religious status of western movements is likely to be sustained by a strategic distancing of their beliefs and practices from the 'cultic milieu', it is expected that the western NRM will provide an extreme contrast to the eastern groups on most measures. Those measures which are expected to prove the exceptions to this are the measures which address the perception of the parents in childhood and adolescence, and the intensity of assent to spiritual items deemed central to any spiritual worldview regardless of denomination or spiritual orientation.

The differences expected to be most salient, and whose salience and significance are crucial to the predictions of the model are, in the early parts of the value-added model, those between the eastern groups and the control groups, and the eastern groups and the western groups. For the most part, there are few differences expected between the eastern groups and the therapy groups for the early measures, as the rite de passage model assumes that they experience disruption and loneliness to a similar extent. It is this similarity of their existential situation (presumed to tax their personal coping resources and the benefit derived from their social contacts) which is viewed as part of the motivation for involvement in a self-help option and specifically a social self-help option. If religious involvement does meet these kinds of needs and 'make good' these felt lacks, then it is expected that the western NRM will be in a position of relative privilege on certain of the measures, such as having a sense of community, less stress, and a higher level of wellbeing. Of course, religious involvement may
have nothing to do with these needs, in which case the model will be falsified, and disruptive life circumstances and loneliness will not characterise the affiliates’ lifestyle in the last twelve months. Or, the affiliates might have a troubled life situation, might be lonely and hold spiritual beliefs, (believing that religious involvement is the answer to their current predicament), and there may be no improvement in life circumstances and perception of them by graduate affiliates, or no relative insulation from trouble and privilege in terms of social community on the part of the members of the western NRMs. In this case it is not the model which is wrong, but the affiliates who hold mistaken beliefs. It can still be unproblematically alleged that these life circumstances and the beliefs as to an appropriate course of action to ameliorate them are important precursors of movement involvement. A belief in an inland sea in the heart of Australia has lead to historic treks! The veridicality of beliefs is not essential to their role in directing an individual’s motivation towards a given behavioural outcome.

Later on in the model, when the importance of a spiritual worldview in the form of an absorptive perceptual style and a high degree of assent to items of a spiritual nature which reveal a predilection for eastern conceptions of the spiritual is expected of those drawn to these movements, differences between the eastern groups and the therapy group will be expected, and the hypotheses will reflect this. This funneling effect, whereby differences are expected on later measures between groups similar in terms of earlier measures, is a reflection of the value-added form of the model. Certain events and experiences of those events are viewed as necessary for some course of action to occur, (for example, a high incidence of life events which have a relatively high
degree of psychological impact, which are experienced in isolation) but not sufficient in themselves to produce the outcome of spiritual affiliation. Differences may occur between the therapy group and the eastern groups on earlier measures, but they are not crucial to the validation of the model. If they do not occur on the later measures however, they will thoroughly disconfirm the predictions of the model.

The broad scope of the model requires a large range of measures, on a wide variety of groups. This resulted in rather small sample sizes within each group, though a large number of subjects participated in the whole study. Despite the relatively small sample sizes of this study, its strengths lie in:

- **The Comparative Nature of the Study:**

  Three modern eastern spiritual groups were contacted and compared to a western movement which is a charismatic offshoot of the protestant orthodoxy, in addition, three control groups were contacted, of which one was a therapy group. Both Eastern and Western groups fulfil the criteria (specified in the introduction) of *New Religious Movements* insofar as they are non-normative in spiritual focus (due to importation or doctrinal innovation) and centre on (a) living spiritual leader(s).

- **The Use of Control Groups:**

  Two groups were contacted: a student control sample and a sample of people from the general population. A therapy group was also contacted which provides a point of comparison with a group of people who were sufficiently motivated to contact a
social resource group, which nonetheless was not a new religious group. This group is in some sense an 'active' control group.

- The Psychometric Rigour of Scales and Comparability of Data in Form and Time Frame Across Groups:

Psychometrically comparable data in detail and time frame were gathered from all groups to avoid the need to compare detailed psychometric data with pre-existing survey data which is often gathered at another time and place with a different aim. The completeness of the data varies across different measures, since data were being collected from a very early stage in the study, and as new insights occurred, new scales were added to the test battery. This means that comparisons are incomplete for some measures, as certain instruments were not in use from the beginning. The richness of the comparisons made possible by the inclusion of these measures is offered as justification for the mosaic which results. Where specific results are being discussed, it will be made abundantly clear which groups are involved in the comparisons.

- The Prospective Nature of The Study:

The study had the firm goal of contacting subjects prior to any prolonged involvement (which might be tantamount to membership) in the group with which they are aligned. An Eastern NRM group consisted of 'graduate' members of the Community of Living Waters, who had been involved in a three month residential programme. This group was included to permit comparisons of participant
characteristics before and after the movement's programme. For both of the other Eastern NRMs, data were gathered at point of first contact with that particular movement, in order to separate precursors from the sequelae of movement involvement. This was not possible in the case of the Western group, so data for this group is representative of people who have been members for periods ranging from one to thirteen years. A clarifying distinction is made between members: people who call themselves members and are considered as such by the leaders of the group, and affiliates: people who have recently made contact with a movement but who do not call themselves members and who do not have a history of involvement with that particular movement.

16. THE SAMPLE

16.1 The Researcher

The researcher comes from a Scottish protestant family. Her formal religious affiliation became desultory around age thirteen. She has no spiritual or religious affiliations, is non-theistic in her beliefs, and takes a thoroughgoing determinist, materialist interest in the philosophy of religions, and considerable interest in the phenomenology of new religious movements.

16.2 The Groups

A number of groups were contacted as potential experimental groups. There was much contact with the Rajneesh movement initially, but they were formally disbanded
in the year the experimental work began, and became diffuse as an organisation and
difficult to contact. The Nichiren Shoshu of Australia was also contacted, and almost
a year spent in familiarisation with the group’s theory, organisation, leaders and
members. When the time came for the test batteries to be distributed, it was made
apparent that access to subjects was not possible without the researcher’s formal
membership of the group. The researcher could not proceed with data collection for
this group, though much understanding was gained from participant observation
regarding what members hoped to receive from membership, the witnessing process at
weekly meetings detailing how the belief system and practice had materially helped in
the daily life of the members, and the close sense of community provided by group
involvement.

There are eight groups of subjects:

- A general population control group \([Control_G]\)
- A student control group \([Controls]\)
- A western pentecostal group \([NRM_W]\)
- A therapy group or ‘active control group’ \([Therapy]\)
- A Rebirthing group (graduate) \([NRM_{ECLWG}]\)
- A Rebirthing group (novice) \([NRM_{ECLW}]\)
- A Siddha Yoga group \([NRM_{ESATYA}]\)
- A Theosophist group \([NRM_{ESHAN}]\)
The demographic and descriptive characteristics of the sample with regard to such factors as age, sex, history of involvement in the family religion, religious history regarding extra-familial involvement in eastern and western groups, drug involvement will be discussed in detail below, as there is an entire preliminary section in the results which details age, sex ratios of the groups, religious history, marital status and so on. Briefly, the subjects are predominantly female (73%), Caucasian and middle class. The average age is 30 years (with a range of 17 to 65 years). Sixty-one percent of the sample were single, 22% married and 17% separated.

Since it has been suggested that affiliation is promoted by an alignment between an individual’s needs and the movement’s perceived promises of satisfying them, there is reason to describe the belief systems of some of the groups, and the structure of the groups in terms of courses and leadership offered. No attempt will be made to critically evaluate the beliefs. Bar the unavoidable selectivity of the researcher, here a limited attempt is made to allow the movements to represent themselves. These beliefs will lend plausibility to the accuracy of subject’s responses to the SOS and will provide the reader with personal insight into the consonance of individual beliefs and movement ideology which this study will reveal.

1. **The General Population Control Group** \([Control_G]\) The general population sample approached was matched to the NRM affiliates with regard to age and socio-economic status. This was achieved by selecting suburbs which were of moderate to high prestige ratings (using data from Cunningham, 1980). Two techniques ensured a representative, matched sample. The telephone book was
opened at random pages, and search begun at a random place until the first of
the specified suburbs occurred on a given page. The number was called and the
respondent asked to participate in a study regarding social resources, beliefs and
life events. If they were in the appropriate age range, had a reasonable
command of English, and agreed to participate, a battery of questionnaires was
posted to them. In addition to this technique, so that those without telephones
would not be systematically excluded, the researcher went to one of the specified
suburbs, and using random number tables, selected houses, and turnings into
new streets, and directly requested participation of the respondents. There were
roughly 50% of the general control sample selected by each of these means.
There was an extremely high willingness to participate, as feedback as to results
gained was offered. Seventy-two percent of those approached participated in the
direct personal approach, and only 62% by the telephone technique.

Further criteria of involvement were negatively specified: subjects must have had
no history of involvement with therapy, counselling or new religious movements
in the last twelve months.

2. **The Student Control Group** [Controls] The student control group is comprised
of a sample of first year psychology students from the University of Sydney,
Australia. Criteria of involvement were once again negatively specified: subjects
must have had no history of involvement with therapy, counselling or new
religious movements in the last twelve months. They received course credit and
feedback as to their results for participation in the research.
3. **The Western Group** [NRM<sub>-W</sub>] The Western Pentecostal group was organised around a young minister and his wife. The group takes a charismatic approach to religion, involving witnessing, and singing. It was not possible to gather data at point of first contact with this movement, as the minister believed the test battery to be rather too confronting and felt it might lead people to examine excessively their reasons for involvement. His views were respected.

4. **The Therapy Group** [Therapy] This is an eclectic gestalt group which focuses on the 'here and now' and organismic processes. It is run by a methodist church group, but did not select participants on the basis of religion. This is in a sense an 'active' control, in that those involved have sought help beyond their own social networks and coping resources by becoming involved in a therapy group. This group had a 'mutely' spiritual focus as it was conducted under the auspices of an orthodox church group. This group will facilitate the drawing of fine comparisons, as for whatever reason, affiliates of this group were not drawn to NRM<sub>s</sub> in their state of need. The course was of 10 weeks duration, and participants were contacted and completed the battery of questionnaires before their course began.

5. **A Graduate Rebirthing Group** [NRM<sub>ECLWG</sub>] at The Community Of Living Waters This group was contacted on the final day of a three-month intensive rebirthing course, (which is described in some detail below), and were asked to complete the battery of questionnaires independently and return them by post to the researcher.
This group had never been involved in a rebirthing group before and were about to commence a three month residential course. They indicated that they had heard about the group from group advertisements in 'new age' magazines, or had heard from friends, or had encountered the leaders on one of their many tours in Australia and New Zealand where they offer day and weekend intensive courses.

The rebirthing community has a syncretistic collection of beliefs, relying on the works of Jung and Reich. The belief system and the practice it informs attempt to get people to gain access to an awareness of, and to emotionally "work through", difficulties and emotional complexes, releasing emotions via bodywork and dance, dynamic and quiet meditations, dreamwork and rebirthing sessions. It is a residential group run by two eclectic leaders, a man and a woman, involved in Jungian psychology and shamanism. The group's belief system addresses, in a manner akin to Transactional Analysis, the 'child within', and in the light of Jung's writings, the 'shadow' part of the personality.

The co-founders, and leaders, John Jansen and Ahrara Bhakti, have worked together since 1984. John was a Catholic priest, and is now concerned with Jungian views of spirituality. Ahrara is a trained psychotherapist who studied at the Esalen Institute, and has studied shamanism.

It is perhaps appropriate to use an account of rebirthing written by a participant,
in the group’s newsletter to convey the experience afforded by the group.

For those of us who have forgotten, rebirthing offers a way back - a method for accessing instincts and emotions, for accessing the heart and soul of oneself...There is a difference between reconnecting with a lost instinctual and emotional life and never having gone beyond it. For many of us, rebirthing brings not just the possibility of a retrieval of a lost path but of the opening to realms of consciousness beyond the ego - of opening to the divine. The more so the more there are emotional blocks to traditional religious paths, such as Christianity....The urge to fulfil one's potential - that is what brings one to rebirthing. To fight back the forest of the unconscious, to see the primitive levels of oneself...to get beneath the persona to where the primordial energies soar up to the divine - that is rebirthing, (Maxine, 1988).

The centre offers a three month residential diploma and an advanced ‘post-graduate’ diploma of 3-months duration. It also offers an introductory weekend, a 5-day intensive programme and month-long programmes. This study approached two sets of people and asked them to participate in the study: those who had just completed a three-month programme \([NRM_{ECLW_G}]\) and those who were just commencing one \([NRM_{ECLW}]\). The importance of getting an exhaustive sample rather than a subset of volunteers was stressed, and an 80% participation rate was achieved.

7. The Hindu Yoga Group: \([NRM_{SATYA}]\) at the Satyananda Ashram This group
has a male leader around whom exists a permanent ashram. The focus of the ashram is Yoga, in the Siddha tradition. The group's philosophy focuses on the attainment of liberation from the cycle of birth and death (samsara) via devotion to a guru who is believed to have special perceptual powers and to be able to awaken special forces within the individual. The Siddha Yoga group offers a variety of self-help courses informed by spiritual beliefs and practices. The director of the Satyananda Ashram at the time of data collection of this study was Swami Akhanada Saraswati who is subordinate to his guru, Satyananda. Swami Satyananda has been guru for over 12 years. He founded the International Yoga Foundation in 1963, and modernised tantra. Swami Saraswati does not claim enlightenment but does claim some of the highest perceptual powers gained by activating the chakras [nodal points of energy], for example an ability to listen in to the ethereal plane and to receive direct transmission from Satyananda.

Siddha Yoga is essentially a tantric movement linked to Kashmir Shaivism. A siddha is a holy man who practises yoga and who has acquired various Siddhis, or powers, and attained a state of spiritual perfection entailing a realization that he is one with the ultimate reality. This state can only be reached through the grace of a guru, who alone can awaken the kundalini force. This is believed to be a latent force or divine energy which is coiled up as a serpent at the base of the spine which can move up through the chakras (nodal points of energy). Siddha Yoga is a monistic sadhana. Sadhana refers to a system of spiritual
discipline based on unconditional devotion to a guru. It is monist, because, like tantric yoga, while it is designed to awaken the universal consciousness within and by this awakening achieving moksha (liberation from the wheel of samsara rebirth and suffering), it does not propose that the world is illusion, (as Patanjali yoga does) but that it is a manifestation of ultimate reality. Monism here implies that there is only one ultimate reality, that to see things in duality or multiplicity is a delusion. The aim of such devotion and practice is self-realisation, an awareness of one's true identity, and the further realisation that all is one with the Ultimate Reality. What prevents us from realising this is our 'false ego'. Muktananda (1983) says, "Ego has possessed us and made us forget our natural yoga" (p.16).

In Siddha yoga, the final source of authority is not found in a sacred text or holy book, but rests with the guru, who is the centre of sacredness and the only path to salvation.

There are a number of foundational beliefs which inform the practice of meditation: the use of a mantra (sacred words or sounds), the practice of yogic breathing (pranayama) and the devotion to the guru. It is believed that at the very core of the universe there is sound or vibration. One may articulate a mantra through spoken words but its essential function is to permit contact with the inner source or one's true nature with which contact is believed to be essential. A mantra can be defined as sacred words or sounds imbued with power that is able to transform the user of it. The actual syllables of the words
of a mantra have come to be thought of as containing power. "Mantra is itself
the form of God: between his name and his nature there is no difference"
(Muktananda, 1983:25).

There is also postulated a life force known as prana pervading the universe. On
inhalation (pranayama) it is taken into the body and in the tantric cosmology the
inhalation (sam) is shiva which is characterised as the male principle and is
passive and benign. The exhalation (sa) is shakti, the female principle which is
active and energetic. In this way, breathing is believed to partake of the tantric
myth of Shiva-Shakti; one's thoughts and breath are stilled in order to transmute
the body into the divine.

Our age is characterised within this tradition as The Kali Age, where the world
is governed by anger, hatred lust and greed. It is the fourth and last age of
creation. In Tantric metaphysics, absolute reality is a state of Absolute Unity
wherein all polarities are integrated and united. Creation represents the
shattering of the primordial unity and the separation of the two principles (Shiva
and Shakti). In consequence [wo]man experiences a state of duality, of illusion
and suffering, and bondage that is frequently our lived experience of the world.
With appropriate spiritual practices it is believed that there can be a reunion of
the two principles within the subject's own body. The more one is attuned to
one's spiritual body via the activation of the chakras the more one is attuned to
receive direct transmission from the guru.
8. **The Theosophist group** \([NRM_{ESHAN}]\) Ananda Tara Shan is the "mother founder" and head of the church of the Sacred Heart of Maitreya which was founded in Melbourne, Australia, in 1987. She claims that the souls who originally established the Theosophical Society are the same as those seated in her movement, the Shan of the Rising Light. She claims she was informed in 1980 that she is the reincarnation of Madame Blavatsky. Born in Denmark, she claims to have "always been clairaudient and clairvoyant and when I started to meditate in 1973, I immediately saw guides and teachers from the inner levels" (Ananda Tara Shan, 1987). She had been told by 'the masters' to "apply theosophy practically in helping to purify humanity and the earth itself". In her own words:

> Where previously the masters had given the chosen founders the divine principles: the law of karma, the law of reincarnation and evolution, we have had to bring in a meditation system and a healing system which would enable followers to grow more quickly, to purify their inner bodies and balance them totally. (Ananda Tara Shan, 1987).

Her eclectic eastern and western focus is captured in her belief that the risen Christ will reincarnate in 500 years and will become the Buddha of the Earth, suggesting: "He no longer wants people to see him as the suffering Christ but as the living risen Christ in every living Being's heart" (Ananda Tara Shan, 1987). She believes that he will create a new world religion of which hers is the forerunner.

This group has a series of churches, centres for healing and yoga, to help the
devotees to develop their understanding and training to fulfil their mission and
dedicate their lives in the service of Lord Maitreya (the Buddha to come). The
Yoga centre has lectures, meetings, workshops, meditational practices, and is a
meeting place and information centre for those wishing to learn theosophy, and
Shan Dharma philosophy. It is termed a ‘Healing Sanctuary’. In the
movement’s own words:

This seeks to achieve permanent change on all levels of
consciousness ...[working on those who] suffer from
chaos and confusion, bringing them peace, stability,
harmony, joy of living and the understanding of their
purpose in life....Illusions and misapprehensions created
over many lives are cleared. Enmity changes to
friendship, pain to knowledge, sadness and feelings of
isolation and depression to happiness, purposefulness
and a feeling of oneness with all that lives, all that
breathes. (Ananda Tara Shan, 1987).

There are two retreats visited by this group in Darjeeling and Luxor. A third
retreat will soon be established in New Zealand or Australia. The promise of
this system of Yoga, Dharma and Theosophy is that: "Every [wo]man who
enters this system will find [her] his joy". In addition, "You discover that the
gods of India of ancient Greece and Rome exist....A specific number living
amongst man on earth appear before certain aspirants and disciples when these
need reassurance, the guidance and the comfort to commence, continue or
complete their task of perfecting themselves as human beings...". (Ananda Tara
Shan, 1987).
17. APPARATUS: An Overview

Since there are a large number of measures pertinent to the model, a brief overview of the individual scales and subscales will be presented in the order in which they will appear in the results section. This overview will be followed by a detailed account of the measures from which the individual subscales are derived, where the psychometric adequacy of the measures, their scoring systems and modifications made to them to suit them to this study will be discussed.

18. DESCRIPTIVE MEASURES

18.1 Spiritual Background

This questionnaire (see Appendix 3) was designed to assess the nature of the respondent’s family religion in terms of its eastern or western orientation, whether each parent had a different spiritual affiliation, and until what age the subject had been involved. Questions regarding the intensity of their involvement in their family religion, in western religions (other than that of the family), and eastern spiritual groups, had five categories of possible response:

Not at all
Slightly
Moderately
Quite Seriously
Intensely

The questionnaire also had free-response questions regarding: the degree to which the subject has experienced sadness at the end of personal relationships, whether s/he finds it difficult to critically evaluate differing authorities’ stances on an issue, his/her desire for one person to provide guidance and acceptance, and whether s/he felt s/he had
found such a person. A simple yes/no response was required for experience with drugs for their altering effect on experience, a free response question regarding time involved with drugs, and a five category option (as above) regarding the intensity of that involvement (see Appendix 3).

18.2 Involvement in Self-Improvement

This simple checklist was used to ensure that no miscategorisation of control subject’s occurred. It entailed a list of possible involvements with health agencies (physical and psychological) such as doctors, counsellors, therapists, weight watcher programmes, exercise clubs, religious groups, and meditation and yoga groups. This was attached to the front of the Recent Life Events Inventory, and was quite unobtrusive (see Appendix 4).

19. THE PSYCHOMETRIC SCALES

Where existing scales appropriate for the research endeavour did not exist, they were created for this study. Some existing scales were modified with the authors’ permission, or recognized abbreviated forms were used. It is thought useful to provide a brief list of the relevant assessment domains and the scales used before giving a detailed account of the individual measures, which are then discussed in psychometric detail.

A) ASSESSING DISRUPTION
A) ASSESSING DISRUPTION

19.1 The Recent Life Events Inventory

The recent life events scale by Henderson *et al* (1981) was used to assess recent disruption in lifestyle, (see Appendix 5). Five additional items (which were separately scored) were added by the author (these are marked * in Appendix 5). These referred to recent worries about coping style and personality. This scale provides indices of the incidence and impact of recent life events, and permits assessment of the degree to which particular types of psychological impact characterise certain individuals or groups. One impact item was added by the author (marked * in Appendix 5).

19.2 The Stress Subscale of the MPQ

The relevant subscale of Tellegen’s Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire [MPQ] was used to assess habitual experience of stress. The entire MPQ and scoring schedule may be found in Appendix 6.

19.3 Recent Interpersonal Discord Subscale of the ISSI

The relevant subscale of Henderson *et al*’s (1981) Interview Schedule for Social Interaction [ISSI] was used to assess recent discord. The abbreviated self-report form of the ISSI used in this study may be found in Appendix 7.

B) ASSESSING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

19.4 The Interview Schedule for Social Interaction: [ISSI]

Henderson *et al*’s (1981) Interview Schedule for Social Interaction [ISSI] was modified with the permission of the authors, and an abbreviated version was developed; on the
basis of item analyses of the original authors and rendered appropriate for self-report responses. A pilot study was run with a sample of 54 subjects from the general population, and three interviewers, using the full form in interview style, the abbreviated form in interview style, and the abbreviated form as a self-report measure. The data from the self-report form and the abbreviated form were found to be similarly complete, and, for the restricted purposes of this study, were viewed as adequate.

The abbreviated ISSI provided indices of the availability and adequacy of acquaintances and close friends.

C) ASSESSING MENTAL HEALTH

19.5 Marc Galanter’s General Wellbeing Scale

Marc Galanter’s scale developed with a sample of the Unification Church was used with the author’s permission. This scale may be found in Appendix 8.

19.6 Auke Tellegen’s Wellbeing Subscale from the MPQ

The relevant subscale of Tellegen’s MPQ was used to assess subjects’ usual level of wellbeing.

19.7 Marc Galanter’s Neurotic Distress Scale

Marc Galanter’s scale, developed with a sample of the Unification Church, was used with the author’s permission. This scale may be found in Appendix 8.

D) ASSESSING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS
D) ASSESSING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

19.8 Parental Appraisal Scales
A series of Likert scales were developed by the author, using Ullman’s (1982) conclusions from in-depth interviews with ‘cult’ devotees. These facilitated the assessment of each subject’s appraisal of his/her mother and father in childhood and adolescence. Open-ended questions were provided as a validity check for the numeric responses given. This questionnaire may be found in appendix 9.

19.9 Parental Satisfaction Item
A single Likert scale was used to assess the degree to which each of the subject’s parents fulfilled their needs. This item may be found in the same appendix as the parental appraisal scales (marked * in Appendix 9).

E) ASSESSING SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY

19.10 Submission to Authority - Subscale of the Balanced F Scale
The submission to authority subscale of Ray’s (1972) new balanced F-scale was used to assess the degree to which subjects endorsed traditional moral authority. This scale may be found in Appendix 10.

19.11 The Unlikely Virtues Subscale of the MPQ
The unlikely virtues subscale of Tellegen’s MPQ was used to assess the degree to which subjects adhered to fine points of morality, to an extent which is unlikely for the general population.

F) ASSESSING IMPULSE CONTROL
F) ASSESSING IMPULSE CONTROL

19.12 The Constraint Composite Scale of the MPQ

The appropriate higher order scale from Tellegen’s MPQ: the Constraint Scale was used to assess subject’s pleasure/pain regulatory style, to assess whether eastern spiritual groups are ‘impatient for paradise’.

G) ASSESSING A MYSTICAL PERCEPTUAL STYLE

19.13 The Absorption Subscale of the MPQ

The Absorption subscale of Tellegen’s MPQ was used to assess the degree to which subject’s experience an emotional sense of fusion with the objects of perception and recollected memories.

H) ASSESSING SPIRITUAL WORLDVIEW

19.14 The Spiritual Orientation Subscale

The Spiritual Orientation Survey developed by the author was used to assess the intensity and orientation of subjects beliefs, in terms of General Spiritual Orientation, Eastern Spiritual Orientation and Western Spiritual Orientation (see Appendix II).

20. SUBSIDIARY APPARATUS: Assessment Scales Utilised

I) ASSESSING ASOCIAL TRAITS

20.1 The Alienation Subscale of the MPQ

This subscale assessing the degree to which a person feels the victim of bad luck, and the target of potential harm from others.
20.2 The Aggression Subscale of the MPQ

This subscale assesses the degree to which a person takes pleasure in harming others, in participating in and countenancing violence.

J) ASSESSING SOCIAL COMPETENCY

20.3 The Achievement Subscale of the MPQ

This subscale assesses the extent to which people put work ahead of other endeavours, and persist where others might desist.

20.4 The Social Potency Subscale of the MPQ

This subscale assesses a person’s persuasive and leadership abilities and interests.

K) ASSESSING HABITUAL MODES OF ENGAGEMENT

20.5 The Higher Order Negative Affectivity Scale of the MPQ

This scale assesses subjective distress and unpleasureable engagement that subsumes a variety of aversive mood states.

20.6 The Higher Order Positive Affectivity Scale of the MPQ

This scale assesses the extent to which a person feel enthusiastic, active, and alert.
21. APPARATUS: PSYCHOMETRIC SCALES IN DETAIL

Each scale will now be discussed in terms of the dimension of variables it assesses, its descriptive form, the theoretical reasons for its pertinence to this study (in brief), an outline of any modifications made for this study, and empirical issues associated with its application.

22. ASSESSING DISRUPTION - Recent Life Event Inventories

Lofland and Stark (1965) suggest that disruption occurs in 'old obligations and lines of action'. McHugh (1972) suggests that it occurs due to 'normatively meaningless events', a 'disruption in routine' and 'subverted interpersonal relations - the isolation of individuals'. Zygmunt (1972) suggests that a 'weakening of attachments' must occur 'at least to those arrangements' which are to undergo change. The empirical features which may result in such disruption are numerous. Because of that the net was cast wide in order to isolate the particular type of disruption associated with NRM affiliation. Two scales are pertinent here, as they address life events and the social context in which they occur. Whether social ties buffer the effect of stress or provide an independent positive resource in their own right to the person who has many life experiences, are effects which Thoits (1982) noted are confounded in much of the literature. Life events in general, and life events concerning a depletion in social ties in particular (termed social exits in Cohen, 1988), are pertinent to this study. The distinction between life events and the assessment of social ties breaks down somewhat, for this study.
The most obvious empirical feature of the recent experience of life disruption lies in the assessment of recent life events. There are two related concerns; the recall and report of events personally experienced, and an assessment of the degree of impact which the occurrence of those events has on an individual.

There are numerous methodological difficulties in the sampling of life events. Standard inventories have been criticised because, as finite lists, they may not cover the range of events an individual has experienced and may focus on those which occur within a subgroup of the population. Moreover, they are usually retrospective accounts and the time between occurrence of the event and recall might result in inaccuracy.

The finite nature of the inventories can be overcome by their being lengthy enough to be representative of a broad range of possible experiences and by the inclusion of open-ended questions to allow for details of personal significance to be tapped without compromising the ease of comparability of the main body of data. More difficult to overcome is achieving adequate motivation for adequate recall without having to resort to the open-ended questions and unstructured probes of the interview technique recommended by Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend (1974, cited in Henderson, et al, 1981:58) which are impractical on large samples such as that required by the overall study using the rites de passage model. Brown and Harris (1978), cited in Henderson, et al, 1981:59) also suggest the use of detailed probes in an interview situation, the data from which would be analysed in terms of guidelines (derived from a ‘committee’ analysis) concerning the impact and experience of life events. Undoubtedly the
interview situation and the use of detailed probes have the advantage of maximising motivation for recall, but since sample and test battery size and a single researcher precluded their use in this study, steps were taken to ensure the adequacy of the self-report data which are detailed below.

22.1 Assessing The Psychological Impact of Life Events

Even the most thoroughgoing direct test of Lofland and Stark’s model, the study by Snow and Phillips (1980), did not address the impact of life events, though it did gauge their nature and frequency. The psychological impact of life events is an important feature regarding their disruptive outcome.

Henderson et al (1981) summarize a number of studies relevant to assessing the impact of events on an individual. One approach they detail entails the assumption of an invariant impact of particular events regardless to the individual they befall. Holmes and Rahe (1967) developed arbitrary weights from the life event inventory relative to an anchor point. Events occurring could then be weighted, and the sum of these used as an index of the cumulative impact of life events experienced. However, the development of the magnitude estimation scales [MES] are subject to influences which diminish their validity. The examples given by Henderson et al (1981:60-61) are: culture and ethnic status of the population on whom the [MES] are developed, whether the person rating an event has actually experienced it, and the use of convenient rather than random samples to derive the scales. They cite Gerst and Yager (1978) as suggesting that "the a priori utility of weighting events based on their perceived impact may be counter-balanced by the error variance introduced by the ... instrument itself"
Thoits also suggests that the use of unweighted life events is preferable in this regard.

The work of Lazarus (1966, 1977) revealing intermediary processes between environmental stimuli and organismic reactions indicative of stress, Henderson et al (1981) suggest has significance for any procedure which assesses the incidence and the impact of recent life events. Since events have different impact for different individuals, the application of arbitrary magnitude estimation weights to individual life-events reports would result in the loss of "much information relevant to the personal significance of life events" (p.62). It is for this reason that they develop the weighting for their scale from a large representative sample of people who have recently experienced the events in question. The estimates were made on seven dimensions of impact relating to adjustment required by the experience, and the degree to which it caused distress or adverse emotions (e.g. anger and anxiety). Subjects were instructed to rate each item in terms of how they felt at the time of the occurrence rather than their feelings as to its emotional impact. There are obvious difficulties in directly assessing the success of such an instruction. These impact items were used in the present study (see Appendix 5), and are discussed in detail below.

Since one emphasis of this study is the extent to which past events might retain a differentially strong emotional impact for some individuals, whether the impact indices are answered on the basis of the time of occurrence or the time of recollection is not an important empirical issue. However, the context of recall was an important issue for this study. The effects of delayed recall on the reporting of event impact have
been addressed from the aspect of a person recalling recent events from the context of
physical or psychological disability. Henderson et al (1981:64) note Brown et al's
(1973) suggestion that the need to explain a given set of 'symptoms' might result in
an over-representation of occurrences and their impact. In the context of this study,
this relates to the alleged exaggeration of the difficulties or dissoluteness of pre-
conversion life (Berger and Luckman, 1967) so that the regenerative conversion might
be all the more remarkable. Further, it is relevant to the suggestion that the situated
vocabulary of a NRM (Mills, 1940) and its mobilizing effect on the definition of a
particular problem (Zurcher & Snow, 1976), might result in inaccuracy of recall.
These tendencies all operate in the direction of increasing recall of instances
suggestive of a problematic past. These influences are strongly countered, however, by
an influence noted by Zygmunt (1972), namely his suggestion that converts resist the
'reductive' explanation of their involvement which might result in denial of
problematic past events, a tendency which Cobb (1974, cited in Henderson et al,
1981:64) suggests may well act to reduce recall. Affiliates are likely to resist the
implications that they joined a NRM because of problems and loneliness.
Nonetheless, the possibility of such confounding influences was one of the reasons for
the selection of a prospective study. It was hoped they might be eliminated by
prospective assessment of affiliates where the 'symptom' (affiliation) has not yet
developed.
22.2 Advantages of the Henderson, Byrne, & Duncan-Jones (1981) Recent Life Events Inventory

This inventory is an extension of a list based on the Australian population (Tennant & Andrews, 1976; cited in Henderson et al, 1981:66). The construction of the new inventory took into account the major criticisms of recent life experience lists. They enlarged the item content, changed the phrasing of items to include enduring as well as transitory events, and included two open-ended items relating to recent sources of disappointment and sources of continuous worry and stress. The eleven categories which the List of Recent Experience covered are: outlined in Table 10.

**TABLE 10.** The Eleven Categories of Event in Henderson et al’s Recent Life Events Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM CATEGORY</th>
<th>ITEM NO.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illness, injury and accident</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy and childbirth</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in relationships</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in living conditions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study and Schooling</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and employment situation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial situation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal difficulties</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22.3 Assessing Impact

One of the advantages of this scale is that the researchers opted for neither totally arbitrary magnitude estimation scales, nor totally subjective. A large representative
sample of people rated recent experiences on the seven dimensions of impact alluded to above. They were asked to place a mark on a 10cm scale anchored at each end by statements of maximal and minimal impact. The scoring procedure involved measuring the distance from the endpoint of the subject's rating. Weights were collated post hoc from the mean of the seven impact scale. Where possible the score from the original Tennants and Andrew's scale was regressed on the seven scale means. The result is a mean impact score based on recent personal experience.

22.4 Reliability of the Recent Life Events Scale

The correlation between the frequencies of recent experiences reported on two occasions was 0.94 (p<.001). The correlation between cumulative distress weights derived from repeated administration was .89 (p<.001). While different kinds of experiences reported at different times may be masked by the overall summary score it was found that 70% of the total number of recent experiences were reported on both occasions.

The manner of deriving the mean weights for this test seems to have good face validity, and the range of difficulties monitored by the test makes it quite appropriate for assessing the frequency, duration or distress attendant on the occurrence of potentially stressful life events.

They provide evidence which shows a decline in the frequency of problems recalled and in the cumulative distress weights with time periods of increasing remoteness from the interview. They use a twelve-month time frame and suggest that the rate of recall
of recent experiences over time is quite acceptable, given that the percentage drop from the highest monthly recall rate to the lowest is around 25%. The drop on distress weights is in the order of 8%. This is the time frame used for the present study.

Such acceptable levels of recall they note was achieved by the careful collection of data by interview. The interview technique was adopted for the pilot phase of this study. However, given the large sample required overall and the size of the final test battery it was not possible to use this technique for the main study. Instead, with the permission of Henderson et al (1981) a written version of their test was developed by the author (see Appendix 7), reduced in length by consulting the item loadings in Duncan-Jones’ (1981) publication (see Table 11, below).

22.5 Social Agencies Checklist

As mentioned above, on the front cover of this inventory were a list of possible activities of a personal and social nature which are potentially related to ways of maintaining mental/physical health, and related to the expanded list problem-solving perspectives outlined by Richardson and Stewart (1977). This was to safeguard against misclassification of control subjects, who might have been involved in NRMs or therapy, and as a means of assessing the degree to which people are simultaneously involved in religious and therapy groups. There were only three subjects involved in overlapping groups for this sample in the last 12 months (the specified time frame).
22.6 Scoring Procedure of the Recent Life Events Inventory

The Recent Life Events Scale [RLE] is scored by according one point for every event that is recalled as having occurred in the last 12 months.

There are a number of aspects of such data regarding the incidence of life events which were relevant to the present study.

1. The total number of experiences reported.
2. The mean number of these experiences.
3. The individual's total cumulative distress scores allocated to these experiences.
4. The individual's mean distress score (cumulative distress divided by frequency) to represent the average distress experienced due to life experiences encountered by individuals in a sample.

22.7 Qualitative Analyses of Life Event Categories

In addition to reporting the total and mean number of life events, and since number of events alone has a poor correlation with negative outcomes of life events, separate indices were set up which are based on qualitative analysis of life events, as Cohen (1988) advocated, (see Appendix 12). These are separate categories of event based on the positive or negative quality of the events, and their social or more general nature. These are analysed in terms of their incidence, overall impact, and mean impact per event which will now be discussed in detail.

While measures of the positive or negative quality of recent life events constitute an
important distinction, it is not one which can readily be made *a priori*, as Reich & Zautra (1988) note. Even seemingly closely related notions like pleasantness and desirability are differently rated by subjects, with the former connoting an affective response, while the latter is suggested to tap a more cognitive dimension (Vinokur & Caplan, 1986; cited in Reich & Zautra 1988:154). As perceptions of adjustment, control, personal responsibility and the degree to which a person experienced strong emotional responses to an event are involved in the scales used in this study to assess the psychological impact of each event (developed by Henderson *et al*, 1981), these scales of attributes are differentially pertinent to *every* event, and cannot readily form a basis of grouping events. Indeed much overlap was found to occur in such categorisation in a study carried out by Fontana, Hughes, Marcus and Dowds (1979, in Reich & Zautra 1988:155).

Categorisation was attempted on the basis of the wording of items where little ambiguity existed as to their positive or negative nature: for example, words like ‘illness, problem, difficulties’ were presumed to elicit predominantly negative life events. They formed the **Negative Life Experiences** list. Specifically excluded from this list were items which related to interpersonal loss, of significant others, as these form a special focus of interest for this study. Interpersonal bonds are viewed as important to the maintenance of a person’s identity, and their loss or damage is viewed as a powerful stimulus to a reassessment of life course, within the rites of passage model outlined above. Hence they formed a separate list called the **Negative Social Experiences** list containing items which related to bereavement, separation and to
significant changes in residential location, (a change of city, state, or country). Even if there were positive features of such relocation, the loss of community ties and intimates is highly likely to be aversive in most instances, (bar all but the most ingrained nomads).

A Positive Life Experiences list was developed which included; the incidence of promotions, holidays, and financial gains. A Positive Social Experiences list referred to the addition of a new friend, child or lover to one's social circle, or a new beginning with a spouse of de facto after trial separation. The most difficult item to categorise was the occurrence of an extra-marital affair for an individual. While such an occurrence concerning one's partner's involvement is like to be viewed as predominantly aversive, the valence of such personal involvement is extremely hard to assess. Romance minus anxiety and trauma is not an easily calculable equation. It was included in the Negative Social Experiences list, as, regardless of the pleasure/pain equation, such an occurrence is assumed to increase life stress (in terms of the items of adjustment and anxiety) and is likely to tax personal coping resources.

A separate list of items relating to dissatisfaction with one's own personality was made up out of the items added by the author. The RLE was modified for the purposes of this study in that six items were added to the recent life events scale (developed by Henderson et al, 1981) which referred to concerns about excessive time spent worrying, feeling there are major changes to be made in one's personality, anxiety over how a situation was handled, feeling the odd one out, having a sense of something lacking in life, and having had a problem with no-one to turn to. These
were grouped to form the Discontent with Personality Subscale. The inclusion of these items contravenes the specifications regarding recent life events schedules which Cohen (1988) and Henderson et al., (1981) note are to be restricted to objective life occurrences. However, given that this thesis is concerned with a personal turning point, a point at which a person feels s/he cannot go on living as s/he has before, the information yielded by such items was deemed vital. Since such items do not necessarily directly address life occurrences, and are not free of an evaluative element, they are analysed separately from the other items.

Results from these qualitative indices of incidence of different kinds of life events are each reported in terms of the incidence and impact of a set of life events. An exhaustive list of the RLE categories in the order in which they will be reported in the results section is provided:

1. Total incidence of events: all categories summed.
2. Total impact of events: all categories summed.
3. Total incidence of Positive Life Experiences.
4. Total impact of Positive Life Experiences.
5. Total incidence of Positive Social Experiences.
6. Total impact of Positive Social Experiences.
7. Total incidence of Negative Life Experiences.
8. Total impact of Negative Life Experiences.

10. Total impact of Negative Social Experiences.

11. Total incidence of Discontent with Personality.

12. Total impact of Discontent with Personality.

13. Total incidence of Strain.

14. Total impact of Strain.

As mentioned before, the personality appraisal items added by the author are not included in the total incidence or total and mean impact scores, but form a separate index of discontent with oneself.

22.8 Emotional Response Style

In addition to the recent life events inventory, there were a series of eleven 10-point Likert items of which eight assessed the psychological impact of life events and provided, when summed, an impact score for each domain of event. The individual impact items developed by Henderson et al (1981) are analysed separately to discover whether those drawn to eastern movements are characterised by a different response pattern to life events.

An addition to the individual impact scales was made by the author: it is an impact scale which addresses the extent to which the memory of an event in the recent past still affects the subject. This is to assess the resonance of emotionality to past events which might form a measure of sustained reactivity to stress.
22.9 Impact Assessed By Patterns of Emotional Response

Impact items were reported above in terms of the total and mean impact of particular qualitative categories of life events. In addition results are reported in terms of the degree to which a particular type of emotional response was felt in response to life events, (all events were summed), across the groups included in this study. For each of the eight impact and three locus of control items results are analysed in terms of the:

1. Total impact per item: all events summed.

2. Mean impact per item: all events summed.

These two indices of impact form the basis for reporting in the results section, the patterns of response across groups, for each of the following items of emotional impact:

1. Upset

2. Disruption caused

3. Adjustment required

4. Depression felt

5. Anxiety felt

6. Anger felt

7. Helplessness felt
8. Lingering emotional impact of the memory of the event.

The last item represents an addition to these impact items by the author, addressing the extent to which the memory of an event in the recent past still affects the subject. This was to assess the resonance of emotionality to past events which might form a measure of sustained reactivity to stress. The other measures of impact are those developed by Henderson et al., (1981).

22.10 Attribution of Responsibility for Life Events

The two indices of total impact and mean impact per event form the basis for reporting results for the remaining three items developed by these authors which address the locus of control attributed to be the dominant causal origin of the life event. These are formulated regarding the:

1. Personal responsibility assumed
2. Responsibility attributed to other people
3. Responsibility attributed to chance.

22.11 Assumptions of a Normal Distribution: Statistical Analysis of Recent Life Events Data

Between-group differences in measures of recent life experiences were examined in Henderson et al.'s (1981) study by the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric one-way analysis of variance as they were not sure that the data satisfied the assumptions required for parametric analysis. Analysis decisions in Henderson et al.'s case were based on
incomplete sociodemographic data which precluded use of the total sample in all cases.

It is not denied that whether recent life events are normally distributed the population is a moot point. The incidence of life events may vary as a function of age and economic status and their impact may vary as a function of personality and life support features. It is unlikely that the incidence of life events is normally distributed in the population, as incidence is likely to be a function of age and temperament. In this study the general population and the therapy group were matched to the affiliates of the NRMs with regard to age and socioeconomic status. Further, this study is concerned with the impact of life events, and there is evidence to suggest that there is not a direct relation between incidence and impact. Even if incidence were normally distributed, impact may not be. The justification for using an analysis of variance [ANOVA] with a priori planned contrasts is that a full and matched sample was used for all of these measures regarding incidence of life events, and that the ANOVA is robust to violations of the assumption of normality. It cannot be assumed that normal distribution does not apply across the sample.

There is much speculation and exploratory research regarding personality variables which influence the impact of life events. A factor which may influence the frequency of such events is an individual’s degree of constraint or risk-taking (Tellegen, 1982; Zuckerman, 1979). There is evidence for individual variation in their impact mediated by personality (Rahe, 1974), individual coping styles (Byrne, 1980) and the provision of social bonds (Henderson et al, 1981, p.74, cite: Rahe, 1974; Byrne, 1980;
Henderson et al (1980) and a personality feature Kobasa and colleagues term 'hardiness'.

There is no evidence regarding special features of the sample of those drawn to NRM which might influence the distribution of the incidence and the impact of life events. These studies suggest that more than numerical frequency of life events needs to be considered if the aspect of disruption that concerns us is the extent to which it disrupts old obligations and lines of action. Personality variables are also an important consideration concerning the impact of life events. This study is exploratory in nature with regard to these variables. Since there is no basis by which to predict the skew of life events distribution, normality will be assumed.

23. ASSESSING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS - The Interview

Schedule for Social Interaction [ISSI]

This scale produces four subscales of relevance: the availability of acquaintances and intimates, and the adequacy of acquaintances and intimates. The availability measures accord one point for every person available to the respondent in a particular social category. The adequacy measures accord one point for how well a person is perceived as fulfilling a particular role in the respondent's life, and another is accorded if the respondent feels that that person is 'enough', that they do not wish to have 'anyone else as well' in that capacity.

The ISSI excessive length of the ISSI for this study inspired the development of a self-report abbreviated version. Henderson et al. (1981) generously agreed. They had
published their item analyses in detail, Duncan-Jones (1981) which permitted a principled elimination of items less pertinent to the aims of this study on the basis of factor loadings. Table 11 below documents the items omitted.
TABLE 11. Streamlining ISSI - Availability Items Retained and Omitted using Factor Loadings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Omitted</th>
<th>Kept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number:Loading</td>
<td>Number:Loading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Q1/.51</td>
<td>Q5/.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Q3/.55</td>
<td>Q10/.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Q8/.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship:</td>
<td>Q18/.28</td>
<td>Q14/.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q16/.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q21/.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q22/.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q22A/.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment:</td>
<td>Q30A/.46</td>
<td>Q26A/.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q29A/.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q31A/.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q32A/.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q33A/.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q34A/.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassurance of Worth:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q39/.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q42/.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Q44/.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable Alliance:</td>
<td>Q46A/.59</td>
<td>Q48/.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The abbreviated, written form of this questionnaire may be found in Appendix 7.

It was felt that the form of the probes were sufficiently highly structured to achieve data comparable to interview standard, and a contact number was supplied for any queries.

23.1 THE ISSI: Measuring Social Relationships

In a series of pilot studies with diverse samples over the period of a year, Henderson, Byrne, Duncan-Jones and Scott (1980) developed an interview schedule for social interaction [ISSI] which:
systematically explores the availability and adequacy of persons in specified categories and the provisions obtained for the individual within this primary group (cited in Henderson et al, 1981:34).

This interview is suitable for both healthy respondents in the general population and psychiatrically affected persons. It is called the Interview Schedule for Social Interactions [ISSI]. The schedule progresses in the degree of disclosure required, from questions about superficial social contacts and work relationships, to items regarding the availability and adequacy of relations affording comfort and the sharing of feelings. Such a structure may aid development of rapport and increase the likelihood of more complete recall.

Prior to developing scores relating to availability and adequacy of social relations in each of the six areas, splitting Weiss’ (1973) category of social integration into friendship and acquaintance, Henderson et al (1981) did a structural analysis of the data using a multivariate analysis of contingencies and confirmatory factor analysis. They found that the dimensions of availability and perceived adequacy of attachment, friendship and acquaintance could be distinguished empirically and measured reliably. Two other dimensions; ‘reliable alliance’ and ‘reassurance of worth’ could not readily be separated from friendship, so they collapsed these with ‘acquaintance’ and ‘friendship’ to form a more general dimension of ‘social integration’. They suggest that there is a single dominant factor of satisfaction with social relations, as the dimensions of perceived adequacy were highly correlated with each other (relating to attachment, friendship and acquaintance) while those of availability were empirically quite distinct.

23.2 THE ISSI: Scoring System

They developed a simple scoring system where each dimension was assigned a group of questions based on structural analysis. The responses were dichotomized; zero or one were the possible scores; and the questions allotted each dimension summed (as each item is given an equal weighting). They found there was a dependency of the adequacy of attachment score [ADAT] on the availability of attachment score [AVAT].

The internal consistency of the four main measures as assessed by the Cronbach alpha is high. The co-efficients of the two availability measures (of attachment and integration; AVAT and AVSI respectively) and for the adequacy of attachment [ADAT] are around 0.7, and for the adequacy of social integration, 0.8.

The reliability of the four measures on a test-retest of a small random subsample of the cross-sectional survey (with a time-lapse of eighteen days between testing) ranged from a coefficient of 0.71 to 0.76. The stability of scores over time revealed that the stability of availability measures was very high (a coefficient of almost 0.9 at four months, declining to 0.85 at twelve months) while the perceived adequacy of social relations measures changed more rapidly. Like the availability measure, however, they
had an element of function fluctuation and a tendency to return to an underlying level. They note that these characteristics are normally attributed to personality traits. The evidence presented suggests that the scale has a reasonably high reliability and taps dimensions which are stable over time.

23.3 The Validity of the Instrument

The scale was tested on 'recent arrivals' to Canberra. These people had fewer sources of social integration available (p<.01) which they found less adequate (p<.001) compared to those living in a city for seven months or more. Using the Eysenck Personality Inventory [EPI] they found that availability of social integration correlated with extraversion as expected (Henderson et al, 1981:50).

Assessing the truthfulness of respondent's reports was achieved by having them nominate an informant. The informants were, naturally, better informed about the availability of social relations than their adequacy (see Table 12). But on all measures the association between the two sets of data were significant (p<.01).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSI SCORES</th>
<th>PRODUCT-MOMENT COEFFICIENT</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVAT</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAT</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVSI</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADSI</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using two separate Crowne-Marlow scores (derived from using separately the positively and reversed scored items in the inventory which have been shown to relate differentially to Neuroticism) and the lie score from the Eysenck Personality Inventory, they found there was not a large percentage of variance being accounted for by response style (assessed by multiple regression of all three measures). The items reflecting the adequacy of attachment and integration were slightly more influenced by response style (AVAT 5.8%, ADAT 8.4%, AVSI 5.7%, ADSI 10.6%).

23.4 THE ISSI: A Summary

The instrument seems quite adequate regarding internal consistency and test-retest reliability. The range of items covered and the dual focus of availability and adequacy makes it on target regarding assessment of features of an individual's social networks prior to NRM contact. It assesses the bonding or attachment to person's in the respondent's social environment: the degree to which intimacy is available (in sharing feelings and receiving comfort) and the adequacy of those features, a measure which takes into account differences in individual requirements. The studies relevant to
NRM recruitment specify the absence of proximal social relations in the respondent's life prior to NRM contact. Even the most sophisticated do not address the psychological impact of this absence (Barker, 1981; Snow et al., 1980). The ISSI permits the assessment of the perceived adequacy of a given degree of accessibility to others, retaining an important distinction between availability and adequacy.

23.5 THE ISSI: Statistical Analyses

The ISSI subscales will be analysed separately despite the fact that Henderson et al. (1981) found the separate measures to be correlated. The reason for this is the focus of the study on the difference between structural features of an individual's life environment and his/her appraisal of it. The correlation of these variables also rules out a discriminant function analysis being used on the data gathered in this study overall. For this reason, planned contrasts will be used with a one-way analysis of variance, and the degree to which the measures are discovered to correlate in this study will be reported.

24. ASSESSING PERSONALITY VARIABLES

24.1 The MPQ

The MPQ has 11 subscales and three higher order factor scales. Those directly relevant to the Rites de Passage model are three subscales, traditionalism, stress and absorption, and one higher order scale, constraint. Other subscales are relevant to subsidiary hypotheses and will be discussed where relevant in the results section. Full description of the MPQ subscales may be found below.

The MPQ has a true/false format, and one point is accorded for every item that is consonant with the scale, though some are counterbalanced to avoid yea-saying effects. A modified version of the MPQ was used for this study, using Tellegen's abbreviated forms for certain scales.

In a study by Zevon and Tellegen (1982) the MPQ was compared to the Cattell Personality Inventory, and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, which revealed substantial intercorrelations between the MPQ and the other inventories. When the higher-order structures were compared a "strikingly convergent-discriminant pattern" (Tellegen, 1982) emerged, which suggests that comparable higher order dimensions underlie the MPQ and other multi-scale instruments. Tellegen (1982) notes although, broadly speaking, these different inventories cover the same domain, the manner in which the MPQ scales capture the meaning of the three higher-order dimensions appears particularly apt. From the MPQ findings the first two broad factors, Positive and Negative Affectivity, emerge as complementary temperament or mood-dispositional dimensions. They seem to index the strength of the individual's disposition to experience, respectively, pleasure and pain, reward and punishment, self-enhancement and self-
imperilment, and to behave and think in ways that are conducive to these experiences. The large third dimension, Constraint, may reflect variations in overall pleasure-pain regulatory style: self-restrictive and cautious among high Constraint persons, more self-indulgent and impulsive among the lows". (Tellegen, 1982:3).

24.2 The Individual Scales of the MPQ
These are presented in the order in which they occur in this study, using Tellegen’s descriptions from the 1982 manual.

1. **Traditionalism**: A high scorer endorses high moral standards; supports religious values and institutions; condemns selfish disregard of others; deprecates permissiveness; endorses strict child-rearing practices; values propriety and a good reputation. A low scorer: does not belabour the importance of high morals; considers traditional religion outdated; questions established authority; sees merit in selfishness; values rebelliousness and freedom of expression; does not believe in punitive discipline; is not very prudish.

2. **Stress Reaction**: A high scorer: is nervous, feels vulnerable and is sensitive; is prone to worry; is easily upset and irritable; has changing moods; can feel miserable without reason; is troubled by guilt feelings. A low scorer: can put fears and worries out of her [his] mind; quickly gets over upsetting experiences; is not troubled by emotional turmoil or guilt feelings.

3. **Wellbeing**: A high scorer has a happy, cheerful disposition; feels good about self; sees a bright future ahead; lives an exciting, active life. A low scorer: reports few experiences of joy and excitement; is seldom really happy.
4. **Unlikely Virtues**: Assesses the degree to which a person is willing to disclaim ordinary human frailties. It is an indicator of invalid responding.

5. **Constraint**: (see above).

6. **Absorption**: A high scorer: is emotionally responsive to engaging sights and sounds; is readily captured by entrancing stimuli; thinks in images and has synaesthetic and other "cross-modal" experiences; can summon and become absorbed in vivid and compelling recollections and imaginings; experiences episodes of expanded (extra-sensory, mystical) awareness and other altered states. A low scorer: is not easily caught up in sensory and imaginative experiences; does not readily relinquish a realistic frame of reference. Finke and MacDonald (1978) trace the lineage of the Absorption measure from the newly constructed Tellegen-Atkinson (1974) which yielded a factor called *absorption* correlating .43 with hypnotizability (Tellegen and Atkinson, 1974). The constituent items, Finke and MacDonald note, were based on the early work of Shor (1960, 1962, cited in Finke and MacDonald, 1978:178), who recognized factors of involvement style, and the interview studies of Hilgard (1965, 1970, cited in Finke and MacDonald, 1978:178) who spoke of 'imaginative involvement' as highly characteristic of a highly hypnotizable individual.

7. **Alienation**: A high scorer: is a victim of bad luck; feel mistreated; is a target of false rumours; believes that others wish her (him) harm; feels betrayed and used by "friends". A low scorer: does not see self as victim; feels treated fairly; does not feel taken advantage of.
8. **Aggression**: A high scorer: will hurt others for own advantage; is physically aggressive; is vindictive; likes to frighten and discomfit others; likes violent scenes. A low scorer: will not take advantage of others; is not violent; would rather turn the other cheek than seek revenge; does not enjoy others' misfortunes; does not like to witness physical aggression.

9. **Achievement**: A high scorer: works hard; likes long hours; enjoys demanding projects; persists where others give up; puts work and accomplishment before many other things; is a perfectionist. A low scorer: does not like to work harder than is strictly necessary; avoids very demanding projects; sees no point in persisting when success is unlikely; is not terribly ambitious or a perfectionist.

10. **Social Potency**: A high scorer: is forceful and decisive; is persuasive and likes to influence others; enjoys or would enjoy leadership roles; takes charge of and like to be noticed at social events. A low scorer: prefers others to take charge and make decisions; does not like to persuade others; does not aspire to leadership; does not enjoy being the centre of attention.

11. **Negative Affectivity**: Watson and Clark (1988:1063) note that this scale looks at the general dimension of "Subjective distress and unpleasureable engagement that subsumes a variety of mood states" and suggest that this measure assesses an affective *state* dimension. However, Watson and Clark (1984) suggest that it is not merely a measure of reactive affectivity, such that individual's who score highly on the negative affectivity scale also tend to react more strongly to stressful situations, but, they suggest it is a "very pervasive disposition that
manifests itself in the absence of any overt stress...such individuals are more likely to experience a significant level of distress" (p. 466).

They present evidence which suggests that high Negative Affectivity subjects experience these elevated levels of distress because of increased sensitivity to the prolonged effect of minor failures and frustrations. They suggest that "Negative Affectivity will be related to subjective distress even in the absence of a major externally obvious stressor" (p. 466). At high levels of Negative Affectivity the analytic separation between Maladjustment and Ego Resilience break down "because self-esteem and mood are important components of adjustment" (p. 466). The distress, poor self-esteem and negative mood they suggest derives from a tendency to "dwell upon and magnify mistakes, frustrations, disappointments and threats " (p. 466).

Negative Affectivity scores indicate how people feel about themselves and their world rather than how they might objectively fare in their dealings with the world. Although Negative Affectivity has several components of negative mood, cognition and low self-esteem, it is nevertheless a unitary dimension. As test-retest measures remain stable for six months after which time there is a drop, it has the capacity to assess more than transient mood state. Even at one to two years test-rest delay, the average reliability is in the middle .60's.

Since negative affectivity is related to state anxiety, negative affect under stress and baseline conditions even when the state measures were completed 10 years
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25. ASSESSING SPIRITUAL ORIENTATION:

25.1 The SOS

A Spritual Orientation Survey was developed by the author. The development of this scale was discussed in detail in Chapter Four of this manuscript. The SOS has three subscales; east, west and general spiritual items. The scoring procedure is complicated, and has been outlined above in detail. When Goode’s (1957, cited in Coombs, 1964) algorithm has been applied, the smallest midpoint distance is assigned a numerical value of one, and the next largest a value of two, until all composite intervals may be calculated as they are combinations of already known intervals. The value of each rank ordering is then calculable. For the purposes of this study, these values were scaled to produce a range of zero to ten so that different items with different midpoint orderings would be directly comparable, (see Appendix 13). Within
each of the three subscales, a score is accorded for each ordering representing the person's view of the stimuli, which gives a score for each item, and these scores are summed to give an Eastern, Western and General scale score. A small score for each scale indicates a high level of assent, so the smaller the score the greater the assent for all of these scales. Degree of assent is described as intensity of belief within this study.

26. STATISTICAL ANALYSES

There are problems with this kind of *ex post facto* design, as the majority of statistics typically used are not validly applied in situations where samples are not randomly selected.

The concern of this analysis is not merely the amount of variance accounted for by separate features measured (which analyses such as a path analysis, or regression analysis would reveal), but how the variables distinguish the groups at different levels of the value-added model.

The Multiple Comparison Analysis developed by Andrews, Morgan and Sonquist (1967), which Heirich (1977) used, was considered. The Multiple Comparisons Analysis (MCA) is like Multiple Regression using dummy variables, but it overcomes the problems of attempting to use multiple regression or discriminant functions analysis on survey data. It can 'cope' with 'weak' scales, such as those at the nominal level. It is a technique for examining the interrelationships between several predictor variables, and an outcome variable within the context of an additive model.
appropriate for analysis by the MCA should have an outcome variable in the form of an interval scale, or it can be a dichotomy. It was initially thought that this analysis would be appropriate for a dichotomous outcome variable such as making contact with a spiritual group or not. However, the present model being tested does not have such a clearly dichotomous outcome. Some who have contacted spiritual groups have done so for the first time, others are members. Some have contacted groups of an eastern nature, others groups of a western nature. Therefore, it was concluded that it is not possible with the detailed form of the model used here, to render outcome a dichotomous variable, as required by MCA analysis. There are differences which would be blurred by such an analysis which need to be retained. In a study where the model is composed of a complex array of attributes which distinguish the groups differently, on different attributes at different levels of the value-added form, the question arises, the groups cannot be meaningfully ordered in terms of a single outcome variable. Further, the array of comparison groups selected and the psychometric details of the different scales which assess quite different features of personality and life circumstances with an array of scale ‘strengths’ (ranging from a powerful interval scale in the SOS, to the ordinal Likert scales in assessing family relations, to the dichotomous options of the MPQ and the categorical data regarding prior spiritual involvements), all combine to make such an analysis seem more likely to produce a loss rather than an increase in information. Further, the programme assumes that the data are understandable in terms of a strictly additive model, and is normally insensitive to interaction effects.
It was decided, in the light of these features, to remain with simple statistical analysis which would retain the rich detail of the differences found among the measures. While there are instances where such data might not be readily interpretable, the strict predictions of the *Rites de Passage* model are such that the data can readily falsify its dominant predictions. Further, the form of the model, and the structure of the comparisons drawn between different groups at different levels of the value-added model where the earlier phases are necessary but not sufficient for an affiliative outcome, means that the crucial contrasts between groups are different at different phases of hypothesis testing. For this reason, the use of *a priori* planned contrasts using a one-way ANOVA was selected as the appropriate measure, as this permitted most detailed testing of the hypotheses within the changing frame of reference of the model.

The contrasts are not orthogonal, but this was accepted as a necessary feature of the analysis in the light of the theoretical meaningfulness of the differences tested on the basis of the model's predictions. The use of *a priori* planned comparisons permits the pinpointing of the specific conditions under which an hypothesis does and does not hold. Keppel (1973) traces the following argument. Some maintain that planned comparisons must be independent in the sense that they should provide non-redundant information. At one point in his discussion, Hayes (1963:484) for example refers to the property of independence as a *requirement*. Similarly, Kirk (1968) suggests that we should distinguish between two classes of planned comparisons: redundant and non-redundant. He suggests that we should place the former in the same category as
post hoc comparisons. Winer (1962) states that "in practice the comparisons that are constructed are those that have some meaning in terms of experimental variables, whether these comparisons are [redundant] or not makes little or no difference" (p.69). Winer's comments make good sense, as it seems that the critical nature of planned comparisons is their a priori nature, not their independence.

With this in mind, the contrasts planned are those which are meaningful in terms of the model under consideration. They are not always orthogonal. Most are tested using Scheffé's F test, with one degree of freedom in the numerator and the appropriate number of degrees of freedom in the denominator. Almost all are one-tailed tests, in that there are quite specific differences and specific directions predicted for the occurrence of those differences within the model. The significance level is thus reported in terms of a one-tailed test, except in the few instances where the difference was not in the predicted direction.

Using so many analyses of variance may cause some concerns regarding the total experiment-wise error rate, and justifiably. However, in a very real sense, the analysis of each item is an independent experiment in itself. Exceptions to this are the indices of the availability and adequacy measures of social support which, it is expected, will be highly correlated. The independent measures can only be viewed as constrained, or related, if the model is correct, and since that is what this study attempts to demonstrate, it cannot be assumed a priori.

While the contrasts are not formally weighted in mathematical terms the greatest
differences are expected between the eastern groups and the control groups, and the eastern groups and the western NRM. For most measures the therapy group is not expected to differ from the eastern NRM, and, while a failure to reject a null hypothesis is not strong statistical support in any sense, it is an important feature of the model. Therefore, some hypotheses will address this lack of difference, and if it occurs in a context where other predicted differences are supported by the data, then credence will be claimed for that hypothesis, not significance.

When the more psychological variables are considered, differences will be postulated between the eastern NRM and the therapy group. For example when the degree of personality constraint, traditionalism, and absorptive perceptual style are considered, then at this point differences are predicted between the therapy and the eastern NRM and are viewed as important to the model's validation. These features, and the person's worldview, spiritual or otherwise, are the important 'later' variables of the model, in that they are assumed to direct a person (who by his or her loneliness and distress is presumed to be open to some form of involvement in a social agency) towards a uniquely spiritual kind of involvement. They are termed 'later' as a recognition of Lofland and Stark's (1965) suggestion that temporal 'activation' was an important link between the different elements of the model. They are important in that they form the operational measures of the theoretical notion of Type Two Differential Openness to movement involvement and address the question as to why a person becomes involved in one genre of movement rather than another.
27. HYPOTHESES

While the therapy group is viewed as an important comparison group regarding differences between those drawn to NRM's and those drawn to a secular agency of self-change, they are expected to differ from the other two control groups in a number of important ways, regarding stress and loneliness. For this reason, the therapy group is distinguished as an 'active' control group, and will not be equated with the other control groups in the hypotheses.

Since there are two control groups in this study, a student control group and a control group representative of the general population, a comparison will be reported noting whether there is a difference between the two groups, its direction and significance level. Since there is no basis by which to hypothesise possible differences between the two, (many studies use student groups as samples and assume them to be adequately representative of the general public) this difference will not be included as part of the formal hypotheses. The sample size of the student group in some instances makes it a preferable comparison group, and so differences will be reported with respect to this group \([Controls_S]\). Wherever possible the General Population Control group \([Controls_G]\) will be used, as this group is more comparable to the experimental groups in terms of age. It will be made clear in each case between which experimental and control group a comparison is being made, and consistency within each measure will be sustained.

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a) \[ E < T \]
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c) \[ E < C \]
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d) \( E < W \)
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With regard to the incidence of aversive life events and the impact of aversive or positive events the expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ E = T > C = W \]

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \[ E = T \]
b) \( E > C_S \)
c) \( E > C_G \)
d) \( W = C \)
e) \( NRM_{SCLW} > NRM_{SHAN.SATYA} \)
f) \( E > W \)

This predicted ordering refers to the twenty-one indices of disruption of a largely aversive nature, (bar the two indices referring to the impact of positive life experiences and positive social experiences) included in this study:

2. Total Incidence of Life Events: all categories summed.
3. Total Impact of Life Events: all categories summed.
4. Mean Impact per Life Event: all categories summed.
5. Total Incidence of Negative Life Events.
6. Total Impact of Negative Life Events.
7. Mean Impact of Negative Life Events.
8. Total Incidence of Negative Social Events.
9. Total Impact of Negative Social Events.
10. Mean Impact of Negative Social Events.
11. Total Incidence of Discontent with Personality.
12. Total Impact of Discontent with Personality.

13. Mean Impact of Discontent with Personality.

14. Total Incidence of Strain: Disappointment and enduring worry.

15. Total Impact of Strain: Disappointment and enduring worry.

16. Mean Impact of Strain: Disappointment and enduring worry.

17. Total Impact of Positive Life Events.

18. Mean Impact of Positive Life Events.

19. Total Impact of Positive Social Events.

20. Mean Impact of Positive Social Events.

**Habitual Stress Response and Interpersonal Discord**

It was suggested above that those contacting spiritual movements of an eastern nature for the first time, and those drawn to psychotherapy may do so because they have reached a turning point in their lives. If this turning point is in part due to their habitual style of response to stress, or to a recent escalation in interpersonal discord, then it is predicted these two groups will have elevated scores on the following two measures, but will not differ from each other in terms of their habitual response to stress, and the level of interpersonal discord experienced in the recent past. If belonging to a religious community and sharing a set of beliefs which have implications for attitudes to suffering and one's fellow men and women has an ameliorating effect of stress response and
interpersonal discord, then those who are members of the western NRM should score significantly lower on the following two measures than do the control groups.

For the following two measures the following group order is predicted:

\[ E = T > C > W \]

The particular hypotheses derived from this group order are:

a) \( T = E \)

b) \( T > C \)

c) \( E > C \)

d) \( W < C \)

e) \( W < E \)

This ordering and hypotheses pertain to:

21. The stress index from Tellegen's (1982) MPQ

22. The incidence of interpersonal discord over 12 months.

ii) Styles of Emotional Response to Life Events

Given that the scores of emotional impact are derived from the summation of eight separate indices, in Likert form, it is informative to consider the differences among the groups in terms of the profiles of characteristic experiences of emotion and disruption. It has been suggested that those drawn
to NRMs have had more intense experience of life events in the recent past. The extent of their response to life events will be considered in comparison to the intensity of response to life events of members of other groups. While we will consider below a detailed breakdown of the particular emotions and adjustment reactions which occur across the groups in response to life events, it is relevant to consider first the total or cumulative response.

It might be that those drawn to eastern NRMs have not experienced each event in a more intense manner than the other groups, but that more has happened to them in the recent past, and the cumulative impact of life events has therefore been greater. It is just this cumulative impact of all that has happened which concerns us from the point of view of the rites of passage model. It is for this reason that we will consider the overall responsiveness per impact item scale. (The interested reader is referred to the end of Appendix 5 for the impact item scales).

It is expected that those drawn to Eastern NRMs will have experienced more cumulative impact from recent life events than any other group. Since the Community of Living Waters rebirthing group specifically emphasises the ventilation of intense emotional experiences in the past it is assumed that this group will appeal those who have report the greatest impact of such experiences in the past. It is therefore assumed that those drawn to this group will exceed the other eastern groups on this measure. The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:
\( E > T = C = W \)

The specific hypotheses following from this ordering are:

a) \( E > T \)

b) \( E > C_S \)

c) \( E > C_G \)

d) \( E_{CLW} > E_{SHANSATYA} \)

e) \( E < W \)

This ordering applies to the following indices:

23. Adjustment Required

24. Mean Adjustment Required

25. Disruption Experienced

26. Mean Disruption Experienced

27. Anxiety Felt

28. Mean Anxiety Felt

29. Anger Felt

30. Mean Anger Felt

31. Upset Felt

32. Mean Upset Felt
33. Lingering Emotional Impact of the Memory
34. Mean Lingering Emotional Impact of the Memory
35. Helplessness Felt
36. Mean Helplessness Felt
37. Depression Experienced
38. Mean Depression Experienced

C) ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

C i) RELATIVE ISOLATION: Availability of Acquaintances and Close Friends:

Relative isolation is operationalised as the unavailability of acquaintances and intimate friends; the fewer available, the more isolated a person is assumed to be.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ E = T < C < W \]

Since both NRM and therapy groups are both social options, which according to Type One Differential Openness (whereby much recent life stress experienced in social isolation is assumed to predispose a person to make contact with some kind of social agency), will be more appealing to isolated and lonely people, it is assumed that those approaching social agencies for help are less likely to have help available in their own social networks than are the control groups, and
those who are already members of a NRM. It is hypothesised that those with least resources will be those approaching Eastern NRMs [E] and the Therapy group [T]. Since data exists for these measures of the ISSI regarding a graduate rebirthing group, \([NRM_{CLW_G}]\) comparisons will be made between those approaching that group for the first time \([NRM_{CLW}]\), and those who have recently completed three months of experience in that community. Those approaching eastern groups are predicted to have significantly fewer resources than the Control group [C]. If belonging to a religion does make available a religious community, then the Western NRM [W] will have more resources available than the Control group.

Hypotheses referring to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \(E = T\)

b) \(T < C_G\)

c) \(E < C_G\)

d) \(E < W\)

e) \(C_G < W\)

f) \(E_{CLW} < E_{CLW_G}\)

This predicted ordering refers to the two indices of availability of social resources:

39. The Availability of Acquaintance-Level Bonds
The Availability of Close Bonds.

C ii) RELATIVE LONELINESS: Adequacy of Acquaintances and Intimates

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ E = T < C < W \]

Those approaching social agencies for help are less likely to rate as adequate the resources in their own social networks. It is hypothesised that those with least resources are those approaching agencies of a social nature for the first time; the therapy group \( T \) and the eastern groups \( E \). It is suggested that they will have fewer resources than the Control groups \( C \). It is hypothesised that social bonds will be rated as more adequate by those already belonging to a religion \( W \) than by the Control group.

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \( E = T \)
b) \( T < C \)
c) \( E < C \)
d) \( E < W \)
e) \( C < W \)
f) \( NRM_{CLW} < NRM_{CLWG} \)

This predicted ordering refers to the two indices of adequacy of social resources:
D) MENTAL HEALTH

Those approaching NRMs in some instances have been shown to have diminished resilience, with a relief effect attendant on NRM involvement. If this is so, there should be maximal suffering in those approaching NRMs and minimal suffering in those who have no need of such groups (the control groups) with the committed members midway between.

Regarding indices of wellbeing, the expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ E < T < C < W \]

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \( E < T \)

b) \( T < C \)

c) \( E < C \)

d) \( E < W \)

e) \( C < W \)

f) \( NRM_{CLW} < NRM_{CLWG} \)

This predicted ordering refers to the two indices of wellbeing in this study:
It has been suggested that a high incidence of life events provokes a turning point, a rupture or disjunction in lifestyle rather than continuous adaptation, or a 'muddling through'. Ullman (1982) suggests that this is because these events reawaken memories and emotions connected with early conflicts and disruptive experiences, specifically those related to early bonding and attachment. While in optimum circumstances parental bonding provides role models for the modelling of coping styles, and, attachment figures who provide a sense of reliable alliance, protection, and self-worth, if there have been disturbances in early bonding, communication and reciprocal valuing, then an individual might be left searching for guidance and reassurance, and for someone to idealise. It is suggested that these are among the provisions supplied by religious involvement, especially new religious movements. If this is so, then the provisions offered will appeal as compensations for lacks felt by those drawn to the movements. Since lifetime immersion in a NRM is a more committed option than temporary involvement in psychotherapy, it is predicted that those involved in the Western NRM will be closer to the the Eastern NRM groups than the control groups on this measure, and will rate their parents more adversely than those drawn to the
temporary option of psychotherapy. Since membership of a Western NRM may have compensated already for the lacks felt as a result of past situations, memories may be modified on the basis of the present situation from which they are recollected, (Mills, 1934). Therefore, those long-term members of the Western NRM are expected to recollect their parents as less suboptimal than do those making contact with Eastern NRMs. It is therefore hypothesised that all of those drawn to NRMs, eastern and western groups respectively, will evaluate, more than any other group, their family life as having been disrupted and suboptimal, especially in regard to their specific appraisals of their mother and father, and in regard to the extent to which their parents approached their ideals. It is suggested that those drawn to eastern and western NRMs will have less positive memories of both parents, and will view them as less ideal than do those involved in therapy or the control groups. If participation in a rebirthing group has a positive effect on the ability to reappraise the past, and if it has promoted the sense of some release of emotions relating to past situations, then some relief effect will occur, and a difference in recollections will be apparent between the novice and the graduate groups [NRM_{CLW} and NRM_{CLWG} respectively]. It is expected that the graduate group will be more positive that the novice group.

The following hypotheses consider the retrospective positive appraisal of and satisfaction with mother and father in childhood and adolescence.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:
Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) $E < W$

b) $T < E$

c) $E < C_G$

d) $E < C_s$

e) $W < C$

f) $NRM_{ECLW} < NRM_{ECLWG}$

This order refers to the following eight indices of parental appraisal and satisfaction in childhood and adolescence:

**Childhood:**

46. Appraisal of Mother in Childhood.

47. Satisfaction with Mother in Childhood.

48. Appraisal of Father in Childhood.

49. Satisfaction with Father in Childhood.

**Adolescence:**

50. Appraisal of Mother in Adolescence.

51. Satisfaction with Mother in Adolescence.
F) SUBMISSION TO TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY:

It might be thought that early experience of unsatisfactory parental relations might lead to involvement in religious groups with a living and immediately available leader, and that this might be an expression of the tendency for all of those approaching NRMs to be more open to the sway of any authority. However, there are a number of considerations which lead to a review of the postulate that these people have a generalised tendency to submit to authority. It is suggested that the Authoritarian F Scale commonly used in psychological research is based on a traditional conception of authority, and so, despite the obvious behavioural affiliation shown by NRM subjects in this study in the form of involvement with a charismatic group around a powerful form of authority (a spiritual leader), it is predicted that the eastern NRMs will in fact repudiate traditional conceptions of authority and will score lowest of all groups on this measure. It is predicted that the western group will score most highly of all groups on this measure, as the values expressed in the scale are deemed consonant with their spiritual worldview.

This submission is expected to be expressed in a desire to conform and oblige to what is normatively considered an unrealistic extent, but which is not out of keeping with a spiritual focus guided by spiritual aims beyond everyday ease of
fulfilment. These virtues are assessed in this study as captured by Tellegen's Unlikely Virtues subscale.

The therapy group is expected to be more questioning of traditional forms of authority than the control groups, given the gestalt focus of the group which is more present oriented and focuses on responsiveness to organismic needs rather than obedience to moral norms. These groups have not taken such an unconventional course of action as the eastern groups and is thus expected to score more more highly on this measure than the eastern groups.

The expected order of the groups is as follows:

\[ E < T < C < W \]

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \( E < T \)

b) \( T < C \)

c) \( E < C \)

d) \( C < W \)

e) \( E < W \)

This order applies to the following indices:

54. The Submission to Authority Subscale of the Balanced F Scale.

55. The Unlikely Virtues Subscale of the MPQ.
G) IMPATIENT FOR PARADISE: PERSONALITY VARIABLES INFLUENCING DIFFERENTIAL OPENNESS:

G i) IMPULSE CONTROL: Pleasure-pain regulatory style.

56. Constraint

Perhaps the central feature of new religious movements of an eastern nature, is their questioning of the notions that renunciation and postponement are defining features of a spiritual way of life. It is suggested that those drawn to eastern NRMs are impatient for paradise, and that they are committed to personal change here and now. If this is so, they should appear remarkably less constrained than any other group in this study.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ E < T < C < W \]

Since constraint assesses an individual's approach to his/her pleasure/pain regulatory style and the degree of impulsivity, it was assumed that those involving themselves with non-traditional social agencies like Eastern NRMs would be least constrained, while those involved in the Western NRM would be most constrained. It was expected that those inclined to take action to change their way of life by becoming involved in therapy would be less constrained than the Control group, but not so unconstrained as those approaching the Eastern NRMs.

Hypotheses referring to specific contrasts are as follows:
G ii) A MYSTICAL PERCEPTUAL STYLE?

57. Absorption

This hypothesis concerns the extent to which those drawn to NRMs have an absorptive perceptual style, and almost mystical immersion in what is being perceived or recollected such that the awareness of separateness from the objects of perception is experienced as breaking down. Since this experience is most consonant with the eastern conception of the divine as immanent, as it were "in you out there", where there is no distinction between the natural and the spiritual, and no distinction between humankind and the natural world it is expected that those drawn to Eastern NRMs will score most highly on this variable. Since the eastern conception of advaita and the particular items of the scale used in this study refer to possible perceptions of everyday events and objects, and not a sense of union or communication with a divine being such experiences as walking in the spirit or speaking in tongues which characterise pentecostal groups it is assumed that the western group will not claim this perceptual style to the same extent at all. In fact such perceptions of a special personal link with the material world may be considered quite subsidiary to
good works, and union with god. The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

$$E > T > C > W$$

It is hypothesised that those approaching Eastern NRMs, which posit a monist worldview (where there is a presumed underlying unity of perceiver and perceived) will score most highly out of all of the groups on this measure. Those approaching the therapy group (of a gestalt nature), it is hypothesised, will be less open to absorption than the eastern groups but more so than the Control group [C] as assessed by this measure. Because of the dualist focus of non-mystical offshoots of western religion, it is hypothesised that the Western NRM will score lowest of all on this variable.

a) $E > T$
b) $T > C$
c) $E > C$
d) $E > W$
e) $C > W$

**H) SPIRITUAL WORLDVIEW**

58. General Spiritual Orientation

The following hypothesis concerns the intensity of belief in the General Spiritual Items of the SOS, items which address issues central to any spiritual worldview,
regardless of tradition or denomination.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ W = E > T = C \]

Since these general spiritual items are assumed to be components of any spiritual worldview, the level of assent to them is expected to be equally high regardless of the specific orientation of the NRM. It is expected that those involved in the NRMs will have a higher level of endorsement of these items than the Therapy and Control groups.

a) \[ W = E \]

b) \[ W > C \]

c) \[ E > C \]

d) \[ E > T \]

e) \[ T = C \]

f) \[ \text{NRME}_{CLW} > \text{NRM}_{CLW} \]

59. Eastern Spiritual Orientation

This hypothesis addresses the intensity of belief and the orientation of that belief in terms of level of assent to items of an eastern spiritual orientation.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ E > T > C > W \]

Since it is suggested that an individual's pre-existing beliefs in part determine
which of an array of social agencies is approached when strife occurs, it is predicted that those approaching these Eastern NRM [E] for the first time will endorse eastern spiritual items to a greater extent than either the therapy group [T] or the Control group [C], and will certainly show a higher level of assent than the Western NRM [W].

a) \( E > T \)
b) \( T > C \)
c) \( E > C \)
d) \( E > W \)
e) \( C > W \)
f) \( NRM_{CLW_G} > NRM_{CLW} \)

60. Western Spiritual Orientation

This hypothesis addresses the intensity and orientation of belief as assessed by the level of assent to items of a western spiritual orientation.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ W > T > C > E \]

Following the suggestion that a consonance of belief is not only a predisposition to belong to a NRM but will also characterise those already involved, it is suggested that those members of the Western NRM will show a higher level of assent to Western spiritual tenets than any other group. Since the majority of
people in Australia are Christian it is assumed that the Control group will reflect this and be more Western than the Eastern NRMs but less Western than those involved in a charismatic offshoot of Christianity. The Therapy group is expected to show greater spiritual assent than the Control group, and they are expected to be more western in orientation than the Eastern NRMs.

a) $W > C$

b) $T > C$

c) $C > E$

d) $T > E$

e) $W > E$

SUBSIDIARY HYPOTHESES:

Personality features not directly relevant to the Rites de Passage model

I) LIFE-AFFIRMING EXPERIENCES

I i) Positive Life Events:

The following hypotheses address the extent to which a person’s sense of self-worth and social identity are affirmed by life events which mark recognition or advance in work and social networks, and which permit, as do holidays, leisurely appraisal of one’s life course and one’s place in it.
Since it has been suggested that a rite of passage has been set in motion for those contacting NRMs of an eastern nature, and to a lesser extent those drawn to psychotherapy, it is suggested that they will have had fewer positive life events regarding work and holidays, and regarding their social networks than have the control groups, though they are not expected to differ from each other in this regard. There is no reason to expect that those who are members of a western NRM will have more positive life experiences than the control groups, so while these groups are expected to have a more positively-toned recent past than the therapy and eastern NRM groups, they are not expected to differ from each other.

For the indices of the incidence of positive life events and positive social experiences the expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ E = T < C = W \]

61. Total Incidence Of Positive Life Experiences.

62. Total Incidence Of Positive Social Experiences.

J) ASOCIAL TRAITS

Historically precursors of movement involvement include alienation and frustrated aspirations. This study has made some attempt to assess the experiential basis for motivation to achieve a change of lifestyle. A possible operationalisation of personality dimensions which might capture these posited precursors is suggested by two subscales of Tellegen’s MPQ: alienation and
aggression. In this study, the motivation for change expressed in movement involvement has been viewed as resulting from a relation between recent events, (which perhaps trigger historical issues regarding bonding, attachment and self-worth), response style, personal coping resources, and explanatory framework which has resulted in an existential crisis which has led the person into the first stages of a *Rite de Passage* and exploratory movement contact. Nonetheless, involvement in a NRM is not only due to parameters of a person’s recent existential situation, but also likely to be due to enduring personality traits. The role of alienation and aggression are not central to the rites of passage model, but to the extent that they may be productive of social isolation, they may characterise those approaching NRMs. Therefore it is hypothesised that those recently drawn to NRMs will score most highly of all of the groups on the two indices of alienation and aggression.

i) Alienation

It is assumed that those drawn to eastern NRMs will be more alienated than those drawn to psychotherapy, since they are taking what may be viewed as a socially extreme affiliative course of action. Their affiliative option is highly 'alternative' given social mores regarding lifestyle and belief of the dominant 'western' culture. Psychotherapy is an option which may appeal when people feel that they cannot go on as they have before. This may refer to their appraisal of their place in personal social networks and the wider cultural milieu. If this is so, then the Therapy group will be less alienated than the Eastern NRM
groups, but more so than the control groups. If being part of a group which, while innovative, is formed around beliefs and lifestyle practices which are consonant with the wider western culture, and which provides close bonds, a sense of shared beliefs, community, and affirmation of personal worth, then those who are members of the Western NRM will be less alienated than all other groups in this study.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ E > T > C > W \]

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \( E > T \)
b) \( T > C \)
c) \( E > C \)
d) \( E > W \)
e) \( C > W \)

This ordering applies to:

63. Alienation.

ii) Aggression

Since those drawn to eastern NRMs are expected to be less conventional and less constrained, and to more positively value intense emotional experiences, it
is predicted that they will evidence more aggressive impulses than the therapy group who are expected to have become more aware of their aggressive impulses than the control groups. The western group is expected to be most inhibitive of any expression of aggression.

The expected ordering is as follows:

\[ E > T > C > W \]

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \( E > T \)

b) \( E > C \)

c) \( C > W \)

d) \( E > W \)

This order applies for the index of aggression.

64. Aggression.

K) SOCIAL COMPETENCY:

Is religious involvement a refuge from a hectic, committed and productive life? Or is it a retreat from life’s pressures by those who are not oriented towards achievement and social involvement anyway; is it what is colloquially termed a "cop out"? It is suggested that NRM's are temporary refuges, vantage points from which a recent and acutely-felt 'turning point' can be assessed, and possibilities for the future considered. It is therefore suggested that involvement
is not necessarily the result of a lack of achievement orientation, but that expectations of achievement may continue undiminished in the absence of the personal resources to continue to do so. Achievement expectations in the face of extreme levels of recent life stress and a diminishment of social networks and coping resources may actually contribute to the need to abruptly change life course and move away from traditional achievement-oriented scenarios, to a different kind of achievement which is not necessarily valued in the wider culture. To the extent that people becoming actively involved in new movements are taking action rather than 'muddling through', they may see this as a way of linking up with like-minded individuals. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that they lack social potency.

It is therefore predicted that those taking action, those drawn to the NRMs and to psychotherapy will be higher in achievement and social potency than the control groups.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

\[ W = E = T > C \]

Hypotheses referring to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \[ W > C \]

b) \[ E > C \]

c) \[ T > C \]

These hypotheses refer to both indices of social competence in this study.
L) HABITUAL MODES OF ENGAGEMENT:

The independence of positive and negative affectivity is well established. Therefore a simple split of low scores on positive affectivity and high scores on negative affectivity is not expected to be part of the seeker profile. The rite of passage model suggests that people who feel they have lost their social context will experience their life as in a state of transition. This may also result in a discontent with personal coping style, and a loss of self-esteem. Tellegen's scale assessing negative affectivity captures the mood and trait component of negative affectivity. Have these disruptive life events taken their toll because of an habitual tendency to brood over worries and set-backs? Are those drawn to NRM's searching for a way to change their intensity of negative engagement? Further, are these people not merely suffering from a tendency to brood and consider the dark side of life, but who are to some extent, strangers to joy, and to a rewarding style of engagement in life. Therefore, with regard to these enduring parameters it is predicted that those in therapy and approaching eastern NRM's will score most highly the negative affectivity scale and lower on the positive affectivity scale.

i) Negative Affectivity

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:
E > T > C > W

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E > T
b) T > C
c) E > C
d) E > W
e) C > W

This ordering applies to the following index of strong engagement of an aversive kind.

67. Negative Affectivity: Tellegen’s MPQ composite scale.

ii) Positive Affectivity

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

E < T < C < W

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E < T
b) T < C
c) E < C
d) E < W
e) C < W
This ordering applies to the following index of strong engagement of a joyous kind.

68. Positive Affectivity: Tellegen’s composite scale.

M) LOCUS OF CONTROL:

i) Responsibility Attributed to Oneself

It is assumed that if those drawn to Eastern NRMs have accepted the notions of karma, then they will accept more personal responsibility for all life events than will any other group. The therapy group is expected to take more responsibility than the control groups, who are expected to take more responsibility than the western group, since the Western group may see individual responsibility as limited by, or contextualised by, the will of God.

The predicted order of the groups is as follows:

\[E > T > C > W\]

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \(E > T\)

b) \(T > C\)

c) \(E > C\)

d) \(E > W\)
e) \( C > W \)

This ordering applies to:

69. Personal Responsibility Attributed: Total

70. Personal Responsibility Attributed: Mean

ii) Responsibility Attributed to Others

The attribution of responsibility to oneself or to others is not a dichotomous option. If it is to be treated as such, it might be best to anchor scales with self and others as polar opposites. Those who believe they can determine life options, may also feel aware of the degree to which they are directly and indirectly affected by others. Those drawn to Eastern NRMs are predicted to be those for whom much has been occurring in life recently, particularly in terms of social networks. So, while they may be expected to embrace the notion of 'taking responsibility for one's own life' as expressed in the hybrid of eastern philosophy and thought from the Human Potential movement which informs the belief systems of many NRMs, they may also be people for whom social contacts and social influence are a highly salient dimension in the recent past.

If those drawn to Eastern NRMs believe that they are responsible for life events, it is not necessarily the case that they will exclude the influence of others from the occurrence of events in their lives. It is therefore predicted that they will see others as more responsible for life events than do the control groups and the
Western NRM. Since it is likely that those drawn to therapy have experienced problematic interchanges with others, and will be alert to the influence of interpersonal relations in their lives, the Eastern NRMs are not expected to differ from the therapy group in this regard.

The predicted order of the groups is as follows:

\[ E > T > C > W \]

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \( E > T \)

b) \( T > C \)

c) \( E > C \)

d) \( E > W \)

e) \( C > W \)

This ordering applies to:

71. Responsibility Attributed to Others: Total

72. Responsibility Attributed to Others: Mean

iii) Attributions to Chance

Given that Eastern NRMs promote a philosophy which concerns the causally interconnected nature of all events, and since it is expected in this study that those drawn to these groups already have a consonance of worldview in terms of
the general parameters, it is predicted that those drawn to eastern movements will attribute less to chance than the control groups and not differ from the other groups.

The predicted order of the groups is as follows:

\[ E < W = T < C \]

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) \( E < W \)

b) \( E < T \)

c) \( T < C \)

d) \( E < C \)

e) \( W < C \)

This ordering refers to:

73. Attributions to Chance: Total

74. Attributions to Chance: Mean